

Suburbs, Parts One Through Seven

One

Pleasantries, popping
sprawling and falling
away from city lines
away from billboard signs

“House after house
like bricks, all the same
uniformity, simplicity
waste of resources,
consistency”

“Families plant their roots
in the perfect soil, flee
the dirty urban toil, free
and living the Dream.”

Two

Somewhere, in an attic
or a study, on a bookshelf,
in an album, a photograph
glossy but dark
of a baby
but no parents
on a booster seat,
eating cake,
with his little hands,
and a caption on the back:
Second birthday.

It was a safe place,
for a baby to learn the world.

Three

Sprawl (noun):
an ungainly
or carelessly
relaxed position
arms and legs
spread out.

Sprawl (noun):
the expansion
urban area
disorganized
and unattractive.

Sprawl (noun):
two children, limbs
spread in the lawn
watching the sunset.

Four

Swimming pools in summer,
with light twinkling on their ripples
being watched by families
and a lifeguard.

And shopping centers that
host the occasional fair,
with a Macy's, and a thrift store,
a theater, and food court,

And teens in the daytime,
driving around and searching
for treasure. The treasure is Fun
and they'll never find it.

And teens in the nighttime getting
wasted in basements or in
bedrooms hugging their pillows,
hiding from families behind closed doors.

Five

5 am,
get up, get dressed,
pack your briefcase
start driving west

2 hour commute
into the city
2 hour appointment
with nothing but air

100 miles,
of driving in circles,
gallons of gas
dumped out on the street

2 times a day
into the city
2 hours drained from
the clock on the dash.

Six

Several generations, stuck
in the cycle, slipping and
separating away from the
sprawl. One at a time,
each human will follow,
graduates grateful to
be leaving it all. Each
twentysomething becomes
like the house they grew
up in, hundreds of miles
from the source of their
soul; and just like the
suburbs they vehemently
berated, these new adults
are identical.
Are these kids all
identical?

Seven

A home,
fifteen windows,
3-car garage,
2 stories,
in a cul-de-sac
where kids used to play.

Twenty Years from now,
the clones these clones created
will take a second look
at this Picture, and they'll
realize
that their wild City Dreams
were only wasted gas,
empty moving boxes,
and they left their heart
somewhere else.

Sprawl (Noun):

A safe place. A warm place. A happy place.