

Antler

LIP-LICKING DEER SHITTING MEDITATION

When you become such good friends with black-tailed deer
that live in the black oak forest
Sierra Foothills
That 20 feet away they graze contemplating you
as you sit on a stump in silence
admiring them
And they think nothing of shitting in front of you
looking over their shoulders
across their backs and rear-ends
their black tails lifted
As the perfectly-shaped same-size brown pellets fountain out
in a delicate continuous fountain,
And when they gaze at you
with their big black eyes
while they shit
And suddenly their long pink tongues curl out
and they're licking their lips,
Licking their lips while shitting
and looking over at you
with their deep shy eyes,
Isn't it proper etiquette to lick your lips back,
to think nothing of pissing in front of them,
showing off your cock
and the long arc of urine
saved up for them
knowing they like
its salty savor
like salad dressing
on their grass and mushrooms,
Isn't it proper etiquette you should look at them
curious playful friendly
and lick your lips in return?



THE PUBERTY OF SMELL

(Note: When a friend of mine returned from Vietnam, he went back to the factory he worked in before being drafted. After his first day back on the job, he locked himself in his bedroom. His mother knocked and asked if he wanted some dinner. There was no answer. She thought he was taking a nap. Minutes later she heard the shot.)

If the second before pulling the trigger you remember me,
remember me smelling lilacs,
How every time smelling lilacs I remember
The time my mescalined olfactory system
caught on the early morning breeze
the full-blossomed and blossoming lilacs
at Big Smoky Falls,
How my nose approached like a boy
discovering his cock feels so good
he can't help crying out,
How circling the tree at nose level
caressing with my nose
those purple clouds of fragrance
I experienced where I smell inside my skull
above my mouth and under my eyes
in the very center
my nose's first orgasm,
Not caring if anyone saw my abandon —
Though no one was there, no one but birds
and songs the sun rises in them
and the falls and the song of the falls
and the song of mosquitos
I gave my blood to with joy —
And even if I didn't think then
of the scent between pubescent legs,
Or remember my boyhood cock no longer exists
to caress breasts of early morning dreams,
I saw them opening,
all opening and opening themselves
And glowing in the sun's first rays,
lifting themselves to the sun
in the just-felt breeze

As if they'd waited,
As if everything in the Universe had waited
Till I came, till I could smell them opening,
 my nose caressed by those blossoms, those lilacs,
 those clusters of fragrance and the living color
 called purple,
As I opened and closed my eyes with my breathing,
Every so often remembering where I was,
Remembering I had a face and that face had a nose —
 for didn't it seem to me then
 all I was was that smell?

Jim —
Even if you've already killed yourself,
When the time comes you have my name and I have yours,
 write this for me,
Or when next you're about to pull the trigger,
Remember in that second before you discover
 if you can hear the shot
That for a few grains of the hourglass
 this was me —
That I too had no choice,
 drawn by the smell irresistible,
My nose approaching like the lover
 who believes no one on earth can love
 more passionately —
Remember me then smelling so hard
As if I were the first to aroma
 this peculiar translation of corpses,
As if I were the first to make love to lilacs,
As if I were entering strange houses of early morning
 drawn toward sleeping boys to hold lilac sprigs
 to nostrils of their dreams,
As if I'd discovered the answer
 to all the questions the Universe inside my skull
 could ask.
And so, in the second before you blow out your brain,
 when you look into the gun and feel
 where the hole in your head will be,

Remember you were immortal before you were born,
 that even before this poem
 your suicide must be fragrant as lilacs,
And always remember in that morning the color of lilacs,
How I smelled them till I could smell them no more,
 withdrawing, fulfilled and wondering
If you went to those lilacs at Big Smoky Falls
 you'd be surprised they had no smell
 because I must've inhaled it all,
Wondering if I'd smelled those purple clouds so well
 if you inhaled from my nose
 you could smell them now.



BEDROCK MORTAR FULL MOON ILLUMINATION

Seeing the reflection of the full moon
 in the rainfilled bedrock mortar holes
 where earliest California Indians
 ground acorns with circular grinding stones
And sensing how the full moon
 is like a mortar stone in the sky,
And then seeing the image of my face
 looking up at me from the moonlit surface
 and sensing my own evanescence,
 how my face is like an acorn
 time grinds to fine dust,

And thinking thousands of years
Indians ground acorns here
Singing their acorn songs
gossiping and laughing
or silent and musing
listening to the pleasing sound
of mortar stones grinding acorns
Or after a big storm
gazing in the rainfilled holes
at their reflections
or seeing the full moon mirrored
Or deer hot from play
dipping shy twilight muzzles
in the cool pools
As blue oak and black oak
ponderosa pine and digger pine
incense cedar and manzanita
grew and died in continuous
ever-changing spots
around the site.
Yet just as surely years from now
faces staring here
After scooping out fallen leaves
and feeling with future fingers
the wet smooth tapering holes
in the mossy lichen-covered rock
contemplating themselves
looking up at themselves
contemplating these same thoughts
will vanish,
While century after century the full moon
continues to stare down
and see its face
unseen by anyone in the forest
Reflected in the rainfilled mortar holes
from long ago.

