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Herbert White

BY FRANK BIDART

"When I hit her on the head, it was good,

and then I did it to her a couple of times, but it was funny,—afterwards, it was as if somebody else did it...

Everything flat, without sharpness, richness or line.

Still, I liked to drive past the woods where she lay, tell the old lady and the kids I had to take a piss, hop out and do it to her...

The whole buggy of them waiting for me made me feel good; but still, just like I knew all along, she didn't move.

When the body got too discomposed, I'd just jack off, letting it fall on her...

—It sounds crazy, but I tell you sometimes it was *beautiful*—; I don't know how to say it, but for a minute, *everything* was possible—; and then,
then,—

well, like I said, she didn't move: and I saw, under me, a little girl was just lying there in the mud:

and I knew I couldn't have done that,—somebody *else* had to have done that,—standing above her there,

in those ordinary, shitty leaves...

—One time, I went to see Dad in a motel where he was staying with a woman; but she was gone; you could smell the wine in the air; and he started, real embarrassing, to cry...

He was still a little drunk, and he asked me to forgive him for all he hadn't done—; but, What the shit? Who would have wanted to stay with Mom? with bastards not even his own kids?

I got in the truck, and started to drive, and saw a little girl—who I picked up, hit on the head, and screwed, and screwed, and screwed, then

buried,

in the garden of the motel...

—You see, ever since I was a kid I wanted to *feel* things make sense: I remember

looking out the window of my room back home,—
and being almost suffocated by the asphalt;
and grass; and trees; and glass;
just *there*, just *there*, doing nothing!
not saying anything! filling me up—
but also being a wall; dead, and stopping me;
—how I wanted to see beneath it, cut

beneath it, and make it somehow, come alive...

The salt of the earth;

Mom once said, 'Man's spunk is the salt of the earth...'

—That night, at that Twenty-nine Palms Motel
I had passed a million times on the road, everything

fit together; was alright; it seemed like

everything *had* to be there, like I had spent years trying, and at last finally finished drawing this

huge circle...

—But then, suddenly I knew somebody *else* did it, some bastard had hurt a little girl—; the motel

I could see again, it had been

itself all the time, a lousy pile of bricks, plaster, that didn't seem to have to be there,—but *was*, just by chance...

—Once, on the farm, when I was a kid, I was screwing a goat; and the rope around his neck when he tried to get away pulled tight;—and just when I came, he *died*...

I came back the next day; jacked off over his body; but it didn't do any good...

Mom once said:

'Man's spunk is the salt of the earth, and grows kids.'

I tried so hard to come; more *pain* than anything else; but didn't do any good...

—About six months ago, I heard Dad remarried, so I drove over to Connecticut to see him and see if he was happy.

She was twenty-five years younger than him: she had lots of little kids, and I don't know why, I felt shaky...

I stopped in front of the address; and snuck up to the window to look in...

—There he was, a kid

six months old on his lap, laughing

and bouncing the kid, happy in his old age to play the papa after years of sleeping around, it twisted me up...

To think that what he wouldn't give me, he *wanted* to give them...

I could have killed the bastard...

—Naturally, I just got right back in the car, and believe me, was determined, determined, to head straight for home...

but the more I drove, I kept thinking about getting a girl, and the more I thought I shouldn't do it, the more I had to—

I saw her coming out of the movies, saw she was alone, and kept circling the blocks as she walked along them, saying, 'You're going to leave her alone.'
'You're going to leave her alone.'

—The woods were scary! As the seasons changed, and you saw more and more of the skull show through, the nights became clearer, and the buds,—erect, like nipples...

—But then, one night, nothing *worked*...

Nothing in the sky would blur like I wanted it to; and I couldn't, *couldn't*, get it to seem to me that somebody *else* did it...

I tried, and tried, but there was just me there, and her, and the sharp trees saying, 'That's you standing there.

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You're...

just you.'

I hope I fry.

-Hell came when I saw

MYSELF...

and couldn't stand

what I see..."

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