

Mr America Drives His Car

1

The winds surround us, waves of heat and cold
wash us, we walk on mud and sand and rock
tripping on the low growth the spring makes:
the shutter, the snap. Trip-trap. "All fall down."

2

You start, for instance, losing things.
Tools. Keys. Glasses. You go
a little batty losing things
all the time. Indecision sets in.
You remember other things
you've lost. You see what a loser you are.

3

The underlying warp, the spine
shaken into bits and snippets
by stormbeasts come up from the gulf,
antibodies nibbling our cell walls
ready to eat our tongues break our ears
apart and gorge on the mess inside.

4

Willpower says the rug merchant.
The house of belief we enter at will says James.
Like stepping off the fatal edge of that
Algerian suicide's tightrope, willing
the world to be whatever you imagine
or let be or happen to miss. Playing
with beads. The sorcerer's game. Back to rattles.

*Pullin' ticks off an old blind dog
Juniper crickets don't the sun get tired
Hangin' around while the bitch gets sired*

6

It wasn't always like this, these
shapes and colors coming through
the wall, nonsensical times
machines galloping bare teethed
down the microscopic hall.
So much happening so much registered
so many improbable contradictory

truths that any singling out of particulars
any taking of sides is simplification
reduction artificial privilege
illegitimate assumption of primacy
mere grammatical stance by one befuddled.

7

Why do you think they call it hope?

8

Who is this lonely devil
groveling beneath his sins? —
liar braggart coward cheat
con man jackoff traitor thief
rapist glutton beast abuser
two-timer hypocrite
stuffed shirt phoney fake
three-time bad loser
miserable failure blind
fool clown thing toy.

9

Lady, I'm so tired of games.
Death's got me by the throat
already, and you too I suspect.

10

Well the board said tilt and I was out of nickels
So I went to thr bar and ate a few pickles.
But my head got stuck in that pickle jar
So I walked outside but not very far
When the man came up and said to me
Do you have any proof of identity?
Well I was sick and turning green
And that man in uniform was looking mean
SoI
I shook my head but that pickle jar broke
And the man got wet and I about choked
But he was shaking his head and njothing cracked
So I looked right at him and he looked right at me back
And I said *Say, would you believe what just happened to me?*
And he said *Brother, I believe, I believe.*

11

Mr America drives his car

But doesn't drive it very far
Doesn't reach the nearest star
With his kite-string, key and jar

Ms America's a whiz
At getting hers and taking his
But once she's done with having kids
Doesn't know who she is

Sis America learns to stand
Twisting to the latest band
Likes to get her skin well-tanned
Counts her blessings with one plump hand.

Kid America lays his head
On a plastic waterbed
Beats his beast before he's fed
Thinks of death before he's dead.