

**SERIALIZED**

[UNFINISHED MANUSCRIPT]

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**MORE LIGHT IN DEFILES**

POETRY

by

Homer Kizer

no money down—

bought an acre forty years overgrown  
by lilacs & twin berries, sour cherries & plums

had to chainsaw a path to the cabin  
needing shingles but structurally sound

behind it were three apricots, entangled  
in hops & a vine I didn't recognize  
a chicken house half fallen down  
& a garage with woodrange & bathtub  
& buckets of bent nails

took another week to find the sheep shed  
& outhouse, a year to find the white currents  
I was told were there

I burned brush, more brush & still more  
till neighbors complained  
about me working on Sundays—

but what they complained most about was  
me buying the property  
for its asking price  
twice its probable value:

an acre lot with city water & services  
for \$25,000. I thought about the price,  
but found it hard to believe I, when broke,  
could buy land  
with no money down.

a slipped hock—

living became too difficult  
so it died this morning  
me never knowing  
whether it a tom or a hen

wife said a month ago  
I should knock it in the head  
I shouldn't let it suffer  
with its sprattled legs  
perhaps

so while neighbors prepare  
for church in the foggy chill  
of this All Saints Day  
I watch my young peacock  
drive my one-eyed rooster  
away from salvaged screenings  
scattered under the grafted  
apple as I, standing as I do  
favoring a useless knee  
throw another handful  
of scrap field peas & lentils  
to his hens, noticing  
the young one no longer limps  
after my hearing her leg snap  
last August, noticing  
the tumor behind the left eye  
of the old one might have shrunk

& I shiver a little  
knowing how little  
was known  
about all who die

Ft. Smith—

for 80 turbulent years, Law from here  
parted middle waters & displaced principals  
before outlaws hung peacefully  
along a partitioned strip  
adjoining states & estates & rescued boats  
to a future centered in America

Logging—

if I'm to plant an orchard—  
the ground's steep  
but two, maybe three  
useable acres lie behind the house—  
the hillside will have to be logged...

a poet at LCSC\* was appalled  
when I mentioned cutting trees.  
I'm sure I've inspired eloquence  
but he has a job  
& I have bills  
so a few acres of summer apples  
grown organic of course  
(that's where the money is)  
will pay taxes  
& maybe make a payment or two.

My investment will be low:  
I'll graft my own trees,  
cut my own posts for trellising—  
I'll have to buy wire & rootstock  
& figure how to keep deer away

but the pines have to go  
before I can plant my first apple  
and there might be logs enough  
just enough  
to make this year's land payment.

So I stand before you here  
with saw in hand  
idling  
and challenge you to hire me  
if that timber means so damn much to you.

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\* Lewis-Clark State College

*UFF DA*

When she called from Minnesota  
to say she & Dave looked at land  
Sabbath afternoon  
a prick of disappointment  
slipped like a Teflon bullet  
through my pride  
in her accomplishments—

the banker said they could buy  
any place in town  
with her salary as Chemistry chair  
& Dave's as a CAD draftsman—

they looked at thirty acres  
for ten thousand...  
not enough trees.

She said she'd order another text  
for Environmental Chemistry—  
the text was wrong;  
it didn't have any chemistry in it.  
Carbon dioxide can't cause global warming,  
the absorption rate curves over,  
and she related the figures at what point  
Beer's Law describes the curve.  
I don't remember all she said—  
this is her area of expertise.  
She is the cutting edge yet

I still feel that prick  
of disappointment  
in her turning loose  
of the Sabbath  
that's been around since Creation.

She said when things happen  
her students say *uff da*—

so it will be *uff da*  
as she remains the daughter  
who tested smart as her father.

taboo—

you are a subject avoided  
you who haven't heard  
a word I've said  
for what, now thirty-five years  
your age when you lost  
a child & husband  
on successive Saturdays  
pushing you into flight  
restrained but not resisted—

you are a subject avoided  
but one I must confront  
if I am ever read—  
what should I say about  
memories  
of a routinely inspected  
circumcision?  
what did you hope to find  
in those stitches  
healed but not entirely?  
what did you hope to avoid  
when you leaned over my rifle  
& splattered your heart  
all over a bedroom ceiling?

it took reaching your age  
before I understood  
the depth of your fear—  
before I made peace  
with the madness  
you had seen in aunts  
& great-aunts, in your own  
mother—

it remains hard to remember  
the sweet smell of baking bread  
without also wishing you hadn't  
laced my baby bottles with half  
Karo syrup till I weighed 32 pounds  
when ten months old. Why  
follow doctor's orders then, and not  
when there were five of us counting on you?

I haven't met a doctor yet who wants to believe  
my pulse & blood pressure so my heart is healthy.  
I just wish you'd left yours where it was.

## SKELETOS

I AM said, Prove me.  
Shall we?  
With bent knee,  
mind free,  
can we  
absolutely  
know if He  
is mightily  
proved by Land, Sea,  
flowering tree,  
bird, bee,  
before we  
scientifically  
see  
three coffins?  
Ghostly  
readers be  
we  
faith snowy,  
reason icy  
who weakly  
flee  
answering the  
challenging deity.  
Wintry sea  
of bony  
philosophy  
carnally  
shuns authority  
who prophetically  
hung on the tree.  
So sorrowfully,  
we  
mockingly  
thrust godly  
"I AM said, Prove me,"  
into deadly  
parody.

AM I?

Am I a heretic for suggesting  
we die until resurrected  
to work correcting  
the mess we've made . . .

for the consensus of Believers  
Christianity is escapism

but if you were all-powerful  
where would you have humanity  
spend eternity,  
here or in heaven?

I ONCED ROOMED WITH A FINN

from Massachusetts  
who told of his father  
& grandfather rowing  
across the Baltic  
after shooting  
a couple of Russians  
after the War  
a story that kept alive  
his roots  
& a tradition of hatred  
pruned to bear  
fruit for another season  
in the shadow of freedom

VOICES...

Crouched lynx slinkin head swayin  
surplus parka snowsuit fur hat like a helmet  
frosted beard  
Kris, look at the, whats he doin  
screamin at the driver  
Yuhre messin with my head quit fuckin with me  
He wont stop  
driver cant drive  
nobodys movin  
just sittin  
Theres fellas closer  
Bus crowds the centerline, goin across  
the ditch!

One time before on a flight to Seattle  
you intervened  
a stewardess being choked  
nearby passengers looked the other way  
you were younger then, a logger  
He sees you  
turns from the driver  
eyes wild fists cat quick

Yuh lookin to die

Sit down

What the fuck business is this of yours

Sit down

Yuh are lookin to die

Sit down

He steps past you raises his elbow  
Youre ready want to stuff him into a seat  
pinch his mouth shut  
Every nerve every cell says Go  
do it take care of this bastard  
he almost crashed the bus

Hes talkin to himself

Whats he sayin

cant hear, hes mumbling

hears voices, hes answerin em

shakin his head arguin

You look past his shoulder

four six eight men watch

two three women, your daughter

they just sit there

Yuh wanta die, youre too big to be fast

The voices, shakin his head, he argues with demons  
what are they sayin

you dont want to know  
Sit down

Carries himself like hes still at war  
Vietnam vet  
like your brotherinlaw before he OD'd  
A saltin of curly white hairs among the black  
elbow raised poised  
Hes big enough a little taller than you  
two hundred maybe twotwenty  
Wonder if hes got anythin in his left hand

Yuh wanta die, you hear me, yuhre too big to be fast  
The voices, theyre talkin to him  
hes afraid of em  
they know  
know you  
You he stand there  
on the balls of your feet  
your open hand behind his elbow  
You hear the driver radio Security  
another mile, itll be all over

Yuh in a hurry to die, yuh hear  
You wish you could see his left hand  
hes listenin to those voices  
yes they know you  
Everyones silent  
watchin  
waitin

Fella in the first seat worries hell be asked to help  
fella behind him would maybe  
Woman knows this guy, talks to him  
he slings his hat at her  
She cringes  
you move  
he spins to face you, left hand empty  
Hes lookin to use his feet  
bunny boots will slow him  
youll be quick enough  
Voices are talkin to him again  
his eyes, theyre afraid of you  
he believes the voices  
good

Sit down

(Fairbanks 1989)

## KORI'S LEECH

My daughters wade in Dark Lake, herding  
coho fry as if the schools were cattle  
when they see a black leech swimming.  
Kori screams, but Kris, having studied  
leeches, chides her for being a sissy:  
You're warm blooded. It won't suck  
your blood--it has both ends on you  
to do that. But Kori doesn't care.

A leech isn't what I expected daughters  
to bring home. It isn't pink & furry  
cuddly. It is, as Kris tells me, an annelid  
a segmented worm like an earthworm,  
so I'm unsure of what to say when they  
ask, Dad, can we keep it?

I brought home life in glass jars  
when young: frogs, newts, salamanders,  
grasshoppers, moths, butterflies,  
even lightning bugs from Indiana.  
I have, I admit, kept nightcrawlers,  
kelp worms, sand shrimp, crawdads,  
salmon eggs in first my mother's,  
then my wife's refrigerator. But never  
did I keep a leech, nor am I sure I now  
want to . . . however, both Kathy & I  
tie flies & a good leech imitation belongs  
in every flybox: If you two can convince  
your mother it's okay, I suppose.

They rush to greet their mother, tired  
& frustrated from dealing with equally  
frustrated customers (she's a drivers'  
license examiner), with mayonnaise jar in hand:  
Look what we caught, & Dad said we can keep it  
in the kitchen. Nothing I say undoes the damage.

Dinner's not the same with the leech where Kori's  
water glass belongs—she's mesmerized  
by the leech's gyrations: it stretches, then contracts  
as it clings, swings, swims from one glass side  
to the other. One minute it's licorice candy sucked  
limp & soft, the next a length of living rubber.

After dinner Kris digs worms—she isn't certain leeches eat worms, but worms are cold blooded so she dumps the smallest ones I could find on the counter. I know what their mother will say if she sees worms crawling across where we eat, but both girls' interest fascinates me... rather gingerly, Kori picks up a worm, drops it into the jar—a third the diameter of the leech & half as long, the worm wiggles slowly down through the water. Within minutes, the leech grabs one end & sucks it into itself like a child does spaghetti, slowly becoming fatter as the worm grows shorter.

One worm becomes many as Kori faithfully changes water daily. She now digs worms herself. Kris is surprised by how fast the leech grows—it triples in size & outgrows its glass house, & I tell Kori, Get rid of it [she has named it, but I never remember what] before you even think about asking for a bigger jar.

Tears form in the corners of her eyes. Her hands tremble, & Kris volunteers to go with her to release it back into Dark Lake, but that merely makes the situation worse...I almost have them get a gallon jar from the basement.

What if it doesn't want to be free? Kris asks.

Don't make a big deal outta this. Just dump it in & come back.

They go together, Kris leading, Kori carrying the jar, but Kris returns without her sister.

What happened?

We waded out & turned the jar over. It swam out, then turned around & swam back in. Can we keep it?

It was probably confused.

But, Dad, it likes being in the jar. Leeches only eat once or twice a year in the wild, & something's always trying to eat them. It really likes being in the jar, really.

Although I say, You're doing more thinking than it is,  
she might be right. Regardless, her mother has  
humored us for as long as she will; she doesn't  
even want this story told. So feeling hardnosed,  
very Republican, I add, If it gets eaten,  
it gets eaten.

CROWING—

my roosters crow at the rising moon  
calling from high on the hill  
coyotes & 'cats that circle  
a buck intent upon breeding  
the doe that ducks behind  
downed chittims & cherries  
there by my spring  
(I'll read in the morning  
tracks of success)  
while I lie beside a sleeping wife  
wishing those roosters would sleep

BEACHCOMBING—

between a faded orange crab shell  
& bleached white razor clam shells  
a brown saki bottle  
with molded characters  
in protruding calligraphy  
lies half buried  
beside a yellow JOY bottle  
full of seawater life—

she shakes sand from one  
brushes it off the other  
discards the dish detergent  
& carries the other by its long neck.

BLACKTAG ALDER—

a foot of snow & more falling,  
falling from bumped alders  
none big enough for a mask  
or a bowl  
though they're older  
than the iron  
of my adze  
once a spring on a DeSoto—

perhaps I can carve  
a spoon from this little one—

the People promised  
trees  
they'd use all of them

but I make no promises  
I can't keep:  
I don't need twigs for kindling.  
I have electric heat.  
I don't need small limbs for pegs.  
I have steel nails.  
I don't need all of this thin trunk  
but I will, I promise, cut with an axe  
as many blanks the size of my arm  
each time catching snow  
that melts on my sleeve  
as I possibly can  
before I turn & follow  
my webbed footprints uphill  
where this century waits.

ON MY WAY TO THE HOTEL'S DINING ROOM

I passed photos of Katmai ash  
a foot deep, blanketing Kodiak—  
a layer of death that forced  
even the mission school  
to be evacuated...

seventy years later, I found  
that layer of ash under  
a stand of cottonwoods  
toppled by a willawaw—

three feet of black top soil  
hid the moonscape gray  
that buried port  
harbor  
plowed meadows  
where generations of priests  
& missionaries taught  
Aleut & Yupik children to husband  
land that puked their ploughshares  
into the sea—they rust quietly  
beside gunbarrels  
from shore batteries aimed at Japan.

I once heard a professor explain  
how long it takes top soil to form  
a few inches a millennium—  
I remembered what he taught  
long enough to pass a test  
& I might have believed him  
if I hadn't dug a cubby set  
under those cottonwoods  
even then decaying & dirty.

Fate—

mayhaws hang quiet  
where turkeys whelp among thorns  
that snag breast feathers

fat on star thistle  
wild turkeys call to mine who  
hear my grain bucket

coyote dung & blue  
feathers—my peacock strutted  
till an apple fell

raccoon tracks & two  
feathers—the old rooster sang  
to the moon often

my barred rooster  
flares grizzled hackle feathers  
when trout slurp hoppers

meadowlarks flutter  
around old apples hanging  
lonely on bare boughs

the kitten stretches  
reaches for the dog's new bone  
then chases a bird

the ruffed grouse cocks  
her head, flinches onetwothree  
times, then flops, flops dead

a hawk scream forces  
a vole from thick cover—swift  
talons pierce movement

## MIDNIGHT IN MAY

The drum of a grouse, a distant siren, drips  
from a faucet—the twilight sounds I hear as  
Fairbanks, a gold rush town burping oil, falls  
awake after a sleep of winter walking  
on the edge of tomorrow.

The city passed a sales tax.

The state is out of money.

The university wants to shut down

Yak Estate, where faucets will still drip come  
September & a siren will again pierce a still  
night. Only the cock grouse will not drum.

## I BOUGHT A PEPSI

from a storekeeper  
in Ninilchik  
who with a man  
she didn't then know  
escaped a Soviet  
labor camp on the Amur  
& rowed towards the Aleutians  
thirteen days  
with only a litre of water  
before crossing  
shipping lanes  
I wanted details  
but her story  
of freedom  
was hers  
not to be told here  
where she had no  
ancient connection

## THE OPENING

Pink bouquets of buoys sprout  
from gunwales, salmon seines disappear  
levelwind reels appear—  
crews hastily nail together baiting tables  
& hook racks as converted seiners  
from Homer, Seldovia, Seward  
raft four, five abreast  
along Kodiak's transit floats

schooners arrive  
white  
fishing fixed gear  
from Seattle, Ketchikan, Juneau  
they pass down the channel  
with neither bow nor stern wake

only a handful of derelicts  
remain in Fuller's boatyard—  
derelicts & Angela  
a narrow seiner with a cramped cabin  
& a translucent patch  
just above her waterline  
she's really a decked-over skiff  
that's too big to fish as a skiff  
& too small to weather much of a sea  
her engine compartment steals  
half of her hold  
her low bulwarks are without railings  
she has no davit—

when Dave said, "50-50 split  
I put up the boat, you the gear"  
I agreed although I knew better  
I wanted to fish halibut this year  
wanted to remain in the fishery  
wanted to feel a bow plow into a sea  
to smell the salt air  
hear the gulls  
see puffins  
seals  
the hold full of iced fish  
one minor snag though: Dave didn't have a boat  
he didn't locate Angela for a week  
"How much repair does it need?"  
"The engine changed, that's about it."

with only a week remaining before the opening

Angela got her new engine, a six cylinder 'Suzi  
that required a shorter prop shaft  
which required a new shaftlog & Cutlass bearing  
the larger engine swung a bigger wheel—  
a prop with more pitch had to be ordered  
the larger engine was considerably heavier  
so heavier engine stringers  
had to be scabbed onto the keelson  
the mast had to be raised  
brackets & guards had to be welded  
for the new muffler  
but the welding shop was running days behind  
the keelcooler needed to be replaced  
but was only flushed  
and the evening before the opening  
almost as an afterthought  
Fuller's mobile crane lifted Angela  
off the oil drums on which she had set three years

after worrying the air from fuel lines  
the 'Suzi started—  
exhaust manifold heated  
I smelled scorched paint  
man against time  
he won this time

the bulk plant would've closed hours ago  
if it weren't for rafts of boats still waiting  
for fuel...appearing naked  
(other boats bristle with gear)  
Angela joined the waiting  
while one longliner  
after another  
chugged out  
the channel  
heading for their fishing grounds

I paid for the fuel, a hundred gallons  
a hundred dollar bill  
plus the ones in my front pocket  
I charged ten cases of frozen herring  
at sixteen dollars a case  
(there was no ice till morning)  
my wife handed me the change  
from the hundred dollars  
she spent on boat groceries  
& Dave tried to reason with the hydraulic pump  
that wouldn't pump. "It's backwards, Dave."  
he disagreed

but I hadn't time to argue  
I had to bolt a jerryrigged hook rack to the bulwarks  
had to wedge a plywood baiting table between the reel  
& the stern, had to stash gear anchors, snap buoys  
to the handrail atop the cabin, throw groundlines  
into the hold (I couldn't wind them onto the reel  
till we had hydraulics) & I hung our open-faced blocks  
clipped coils of buoy line to the reel's framework  
stowed extra V-belts & a spare roller chain  
beneath the cabin steps

"I know this pump's okay," he's been twisting  
wrenches without a break the past forty hours  
wants to take a sledgehammer to the pump  
"I told you, the pump's running backwards."  
"It's the same place it was . . .  
this 'Suzi doesn't turn the same direction"

turning the pump around required cutting a notch  
in the engine stringer—  
he went for a saw while I hunted extension cords  
fishing is determination  
welded to ingenuity by sleeplessness  
it was dawn when we got the hydraulic pump working  
season opened in six hours & we were still in port  
with radios we hadn't checked out  
but Dave worked on the radios  
while I ran the boat to the cannery  
I didn't like buying "green" ice  
but hadn't a choice  
schooners emptied cannery icehouses days earlier

we took on three tons  
then plowed down the channel  
as steam whistles started canneries working  
we were joined by skiffs & jitneys  
dayboats mostly  
that planned to lay gear near Buoy Four  
but we were headed for Afognak's Izhut Bay  
where leaning spruce  
look at themselves  
& whiffs of fog cling like moss to boughs  
only dollar-size jelly fish  
remind a person that the bay is salt water

#### WENT TO AN ARTISTS MEETING

an association I might want to join

might still  
but for now I'm content  
to send work to out-of-state galleries

when I went to their meeting  
thought they might want to form  
an Arts & Craft drive  
here along the Clearwater

but I didn't bring up the idea  
to do so would've meant scheduling  
new business  
a month or more in advance

have never been that organized  
maybe that's why my poverty  
has always been of my pocket

AFTER FIFTY SECONDS

the mosquito hammers through.  
I wait  
till blood flows  
clench my fist  
harden my forearm  
and watch many feet  
dance snout-locked before  
I crush  
that fevered  
wing buzzing  
in this place  
called Armageddon.

the road I followed had no fork

no detour  
it should have been  
the way of love  
leading to peace  
but when I quit  
running, she was gone  
I backtracked to a stile  
over a rubble stone fence  
& found footprints  
    crumbling into dust

A TRADING POST—

my wife wants a trading post  
wants bicentennial profits  
after all I'm a muzzleloader  
a gunmaker, a trader  
sometimes a trapper  
a little Native  
a lot scoundrel  
knowing a little history  
knowing a lot about adzing canoes

okay, I say, I'll build a redoubt  
she doesn't recognize the word  
but insists it's French  
she's French & a French wannabe  
when rendezvousing—  
I tell her it's Russian  
& she searches the dictionary  
to prove me wrong...

she finds her "redoubt"  
but it's not mine—  
mine are one man stations  
lonely outposts  
in hostile country  
maybe along the Yukon  
maybe on the Kuskokwim  
maybe at Kotzebue  
or maybe here  
where Lewis & Clark  
discovered America

that's not too large a claim  
assuming America needed discovering  
not altogether self-evident  
it might be history books  
have it wrong  
it wasn't Columbus  
but Jefferson's Corps of Discovery  
that discovered this great land  
when they crossed the Rockies  
it is, though, hard to explain  
how an axe forged by the Corps'  
blacksmith at the Mandan village  
found its way to the Nez Perce  
seven months before the Corps  
stumbled over the Bitterroots  
tourists—

if I add a log addition in front  
enough logs for the shop  
to lose its tin cricket look  
it'd make a redoubt  
& I've already been asked  
by a dealer in Pocatello  
to sell "indian trade goods"  
all manufactured somewhere  
dyed chicken feathers  
rabbit fur  
a few safety pins  
a handful of beads—  
spirit catchers

(selling trinkets  
seems repulsive  
but it's been done before)

but what will they feed  
the spirits they catch  
as they hurry along  
the highway  
wondering whether they should've  
stopped at Weippe--  
if they would've stopped  
they wouldn't have made  
their motel reservations  
at Walla Walla  
& isn't one Indian town  
just like another

that seems cruel  
afterall, to catch a spirit  
is why they're coming  
& they are coming  
I just wish they would  
bring more to trade  
than VISA or Mastercard

two poles—

intended to have cedar logs  
delivered for the two totems  
I'll carve one of my mother's  
lineage, one my wife's mother

intend to place them where  
they're easily visible  
from the highway  
coming or going  
all the advertizing  
a redoubt should need

but I can afford only pine  
that grows around the house  
pitch pine won't weather  
as well as cedar so the story  
of who I am won't endure

only need the poles to last  
through the bicentennial

the third most asked question  
of the visitor center at Lolo  
is where can they see Indians  
so if my totems are tall enough  
ornate enough  
tell my history since arriving  
on the Mayflower  
my wife's since fleeing Charles  
the poles should be a good draw  
we'll have to stock film  
so photos can be taken  
of whole families posed  
around personal histories  
they can't read

errant shots—

found the blown patch  
for the ball that killed  
something sharp still  
cuts deep  
inside the barrel

thought the rough crown  
was cutting the fabric—  
cut patches cause missed  
shots but I polished away  
that roughness so now  
I need to cast a lead slug  
lap the bore  
(I have some jewelers rouge)  
but to do so I'll have to  
unbreach the barrel  
leaving me without a rifle

that'll be when the bear comes  
for the hanging haunches  
of the buck intended  
to feed us deep into winter

that'll be when a coyote  
emboldened by approaching snow  
will show herself  
as turkeys leave roosts at dawn

that'll be when my neighbor calls  
saying he's located the herd  
if I want an elk  
I need to come quick

so I'll only wrap steel wool  
around the jag  
scour the bore  
& hope I can pay the pawn  
to get another rifle back

hunters—

burdened by red or green ATVs  
orange men in four-by pickups  
as if drawn by primordial instinct  
swarm towards high mountain passes  
where another season begins

K-I-N-Z-E-R

opened the newspaper to find  
our name spelled wrong  
again  
this time  
it's harder to understand  
the reporter has an exhibit circular  
but by now I'm used to  
misspellings  
that go back farther than I remember  
I didn't buy a high school yearbook  
our name was spelled differently  
in each section  
I've had to keep my admissions ID  
to Anchorage Community College  
so I'll remember who they thought  
I was  
even forefathers couldn't agree  
so Keyser became Kiser  
or Kizer  
or some other spelling  
however the insertion  
of a "t" or a "n"  
is difficult to accept  
it's almost as if they don't  
want to remember Caesar  
descends through a name

## STIFF LEGGED

the old barred rooster—  
his spurs two inches long—  
leads a parade  
across the garden  
a meat scrap hanging  
from his beak—  
once again he's everyone's favorite  
as younger roosters  
hens & turkey poults  
vie for who'll be first  
to pull the half swallowed  
trimming from his craw  
& I remember an old Swede  
widowed  
who returned from the old country  
with two younger women  
who thought his home  
in America  
was wonderfully built  
he wasn't a fool  
he'd borrowed against his equity  
to recapture a little of his youth  
& for awhile was once again  
that rooster  
with a scrap of fat

VALUES—

out of pillow ticking  
I ask my wife for linen  
fine cotton  
dress fabrics she hordes  
even after I explain  
I need patching  
for the morning hunt  
a reason I must justify  
to get a skinny strip  
intended for something  
at some future time  
I did less  
to get her to say, *Yes*  
but this she bought  
on some closeout sale  
& if I want more...  
well I'd rather work  
a week carving & order  
a bolt of thin ticking  
from downriver

there're plenty of trees

to keep me working  
if home weren't a battlefield  
for entrenched attorneys—  
am I not a part of the public  
that owns these resources—  
the concept is faulty  
Chief Seattle had it right  
the land isn't owned  
it's held in trust  
by those who live on it  
& we who live here  
have as much right  
to damage trees  
as deer & elk do  
of course there aren't many  
deer in an old-growth forest

COMMON SENSE DIED YESTERDAY—

graveside services are this afternoon  
but the preacher paid to deliver  
the eulogy is still in traffic court  
so no good words will be said  
before the first shovel of dirt  
covers ideas self-evident but extinct  
as Dodo birds, flightless  
defenseless against new predators  
their penises & pussies cluttering the Net

"of making many books there is no end"