

EAT SHIT AND DIE

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I

Frequently I may not be
understanding that which I
can see happening around me I
know the gist and outlines of people's emotional states

You can perceive the gist and
outline of economic systems trembling and immovable
under the shuddering inertia I watch

the small businesses from the freeway
I imagine inside them some mothers or fathers sweeping the
marbled old perpetually grimy linoleum tiles
Everybody is excellent at
something Also covered in

the fumes of bleach and Aquanet and mall perfume or cologne
which your kid bought you and about which you were
over the moon

Many of the systems which govern
you

are invisible ponds of powers and accumulation
Not simply desire but also desire Even the most humble or entitled
person is
governed by desire They carry yachts or sailing ships of
ego and societal forces perched above their person It's natural and
right that everybody should want to feel big and important

in the eyes of their peers and
strangers I mean important in the eyes of their families

Another thing people may want or lack is a little occupation
Not everybody has a feeling about what to do with their

intellect or their hands I've heard that feeling useful or being useful is
a way to
not feel so
extremely gaping or
rudderless as
these kids in the suburbs sometimes feel

Ponds of empty desire lure them to some
other shores, back and forth Have they covered any territory
No they have not covered any territory And they still have so much to
do

If I commit to being a better or different kind of person
 the likelihood is that I will not be a better type of person It

hasn't yet been proven to me that within myself I have been able to
 accomplish radical change that
 shakes me into action or a

new understanding I sometimes wish trite sayings were actionable or
 true I'd
 open my heart and be open-minded and
 treat others as I would have them treat me At the park Kordes roses
 grow on thorny

branches in clusters of well-maintained flower beds The flower heads
 are
 extremely fragrant Very decadent They are
 elegant and full of bees
 Nothing is so flawless

as the

park which is a public miracle As the
 roses which are a public miracle An
 old form of
 decadent effort The families of the city
 use the park in weather fine and foul The Hotel Occupancy Tax pays
 the men who
 cut the stems off
 the old dry roses Who clean the restrooms and fill the path

In the center of the park are small groups of men who
visit the park with other men (business men) to play some golf
Especially on fine days

and weekdays and afternoons and weekends Around the golf course
new mothers push strollers And friends from work
get exercise on the exercise path It is a miracle and it is glorious to have
the
energy and time and place to exercise and then to
rest

Perhaps almost
 everyone will be at the park to celebrate the 4th
 of July
 People on blankets with wristbands that
 light up and a can of mosquito repellent
 exhaling a sweet specific odor recalling older nights with

lights and burst firecrackers like lighted lines of thin bright fingers
 in the sky Every holiday is some renewed variation or
 version of that holiday Lined up like identical cards in a pack Only
 everybody gets older And on the 4th less

invested in the patriotic ballads
 Not wanting to be proudly standing up

Though the hot dogs pickles cold sliced onions
 hamburgers beer smoke ascending from the grizzled blacked smoker
 are
 exactly what encapsulate a humble joy in the middle of

summer You see your mother who you love Your father who you
 love Your husband and child swing together
 under the branches It's a sweet and
 bitter mix (of memory and anticipation) The bowl of chips and Coke
 with ice
 under the umbrella It's like an endless good experience
 rendered temporary and eternal
 by the day of holiday which
 stays and leaves each year

Everyone at the mall is
at the place
they want to be It's

so silver and
hung with light and marble
in the atrium vaulting between
the stores which

are the real features of course
Not that the stores
definitely or ever actually ever have satisfied a particular need or sated a

desire
I've always had a big faith in them though I think
everyone does

Five department stores
 under God
 circle the inner core of the mall Thy
 kingdom is maintained

by servants (servers and/or service departments
 and/or customer service) who live over
 yonder in the clustered beige apartments with
 bricks of beige and beige carpets a small living
 room sofa television communal shared swimming pool thin sliver
 of a balcony where one smokes
 overlooking rows of parking for each servant or server's car A
 key location in a home is the bedroom closet Too

many pants blouses dresses fit stuffed on
 a thick white plastic or thin metal hanger Expectations hanging
 limply How a relief is the mall where the clothing
 looks delicate and free (loosely spacious)

French vanilla and caramel flavored coffee powder in a
 red metal rectangular can is
 exactly what coffee meant to me before they built two Starbucks in
 Friendswood Before
 everyone learned what venti and grande meant
 What a nervous heavy feeling possessed me when I ordered
 as if stumbling into a dark room filled with dim knowledge
 You may find yourself living in a community filling up with brands and
 corporations and
 still you

will make
 it so your life has meaning I mean no matter what your life will have
 texture The textures of blankets and frustration and grass at the
 park Air conditioning on
 hot days when the metal of a seat belt buckle glints

crisp and searing like in Granddaddy's pickup
 Old people or grown people are the ones who were
 luminous with knowledge that seemed to me so dimmed and
 dark Dark because it was
 unavailable to me Like a dimmed landscape of textures dripping Ever
 moving beyond my reach
 Now I think the
 society is evolving so rapidly (Changing like crystals

arching in a thousand directions)
 Really complex and continually different I have a pleasant
 empty feeling when I'm

on the Internet looking
up these high-
resolution images of still-life paintings from 1613 Floris van Dijck's
peeled lemon

rind uncoils
off the edge of a table Cheese halves and grapes are stacked or piled in
the
middle of a thick wooden table
Arranged together in a thick pile A dish of olives or
nuts (shining in a

tray) have been placed on an
embroidered tablecloth (red or white) The halved cheese wheel is
marked with the knife A loose napkin falls from the bread A
peeled apple sits on a plate As if some friends were
loosely talking around a table on a late morning or in a late night
eating apricots and hazelnuts
Strawberries olives and dark gold bread

More air conditioning than anyone could
ever want Remembering coming into the house soaking wet from the
swimming pool A
minty coldness of air conditioned air An
elegant feeling Wrapped in a towel In somebody's parents' brand-
new house (made of bricks)
Treated gently and casually as if it were a hotel
or a weekend home It was always a very clean home Tile floors Large
leather sofas

Marble countertops The newest technology
Oil paintings or designer paint colors A
refrigerator well-stocked with good food and
I was there to enjoy it

Roman mansions coliseums brothels and street vendors replaced or
 evolved from those of the
 Etruscans who left behind some grave
 mounds or pottery Some
 Etruscan statues and remnants of
 masks The Romans
 borrowed from the
 Etruscans and the Greeks whose iconography was
 reborn in Roman form

The Roman mansions were
 opulent and
 ornate or so

they seemed to me in slides I've seen The gardens were marked with
 junipers on a
 hillside The junipers grow like
 a dark green flame or finger
 that reaches into the cloud

You exit the mansion and enter the garden
 On your left and right, lining the long reflecting pool, are carven
 statuary Lined
 up on the edge of the swimming pool or bath which is

made of paved stone
 Ultimately the
 stones against all odds were actually preserved more or less where
 they were placed So an idea of ancient opulent afternoons was
 preserved The winter

domicile of a wealthy senator or diplomat
It was a place to feel like
exquisite carved painted stone

Roman is how I would describe the feeling of
 exceptionality that
 marks or distinguishes some of the shoppers I knew growing up We
 were already
 expert at distinguishing brand from brand To know what
 makes a compelling
 brand is to detect an
 elder idea
 roaming around inside it

The branding sometimes pretends to be an
 Old World sensibility
 of drama or belonging

that instills one with a feeling of
 having perhaps a quiet understated importance I knew someone in
 high school who had
 a Ford Explorer (Eddie Bauer Edition)
 There was something wholesome and Cape Cod about it that

you could palpably feel It was an aura
 or an emotion Not even a story but like a false implanted memory
 Unless I resist my intuitive impulses I'll always be shopping Wrapped
 in a sort of

musky weather of
 useless matter that
 sits around
 the bedroom and piles up in the

dining room So
if my impulse is to buy it I know that I should
especially not buy it

Ripping into the air The cars on the freeway
 enact a
 metaphor of
 excess The cars are filled with
 men or women or kids who may be eating a McDonald's
 breakfast warm from a dry paper sack The car is a limited
 environment Almost like a
 rolling cabin or shuttle

that tears through at an
 opulent speed
 Opulent is not how I would describe

the interiors of the cars which may feel crammed Strapped
 heavily into a seat
 Actually it is a very
 tight space Like a cockpit really

Your chewing gum your sunglasses your child's toys The window
 through which you
 order some medicine or coffee or food
 Unless it is an old vehicle with a faulty window

Many vehicles are old and faulty Some lives
 (upper crust lives) feel confident and
 straightforward
 Their cars are freshly cleaned and glimmering (without

dents or crumpled bags of breakfast)
 It is a mostly
 empty car with a feeling of holiness or rain