

through the  
diner's window, out  
across the street  
long shadows of the late november sun  
bounce, absorb and tangle  
with the  
pizza parlor and laundromat  
across the street

the waitress clears my table  
2 eggs over  
now all gone  
and the desolate visage renews itself  
continuously

bare trees  
white wooden, so-worn fences  
harsh red neon competes  
with a setting sun  
who's long shadows  
illuminate off-handedly  
and dwarf the power of any  
manufactured transmitter

the newspapers, the low hum  
of the cold case next to my  
elbow and the low hum  
of the human condition  
in the diner, of the diner  
the human wallpaper

reel me back thru  
the neon  
past the parked cars  
and asphalt road covered  
travel lane  
over the curb  
and back peddle  
thru the gorgeous  
but so-out-of-place  
japanese maple  
back thru the diner window  
over the paper to  
this page

down the road, the long way  
past the center of town, past the antique shops and the  
faceless insurance company office windows  
that have the plain, non-descript facade  
that lost its way and arrived here  
a forgotten hollywood backlot  
reserved for the  
the lowest of the low budget westerns

farther down the road, off to the left  
behind the Quick trip, the cracker barrel

in the center of an asphalt expanse  
sits heaven in berea, kentucky...  
the american motel

close enough to the walmart to be offended  
close enough to the italian take out  
to be satisfied  
the american motel...

the room on the end of the  
huge low "L", closest to the large green field  
is mine for \$20 a night  
with no heat or air conditioning  
it's a steal

a familiar room  
with a microwave and a bible  
a form-mold shower  
and indoor/outdoor  
astro turf carpet

the ace hardware lawn chair loungers  
rust outside in the  
blazed candied yam  
setting sun

On rt. 52 heading south from Cincinnati on the ohio river... it was around 3 in the afternoon, a dark roiling sky was low and threatening and the incessant rain had suddenly ceased just as I came around a bend in the road that put me right in front of the biggest, most vacant, most rusted and most chilling vision of decay I have ever, ever seen... it stretches for a mile and is 7 or 10 stories high... a rusted steel mill on the ohio river, stranded between ohio and kentucky... a huge rusting behemoth, just sitting there...

I pulled over - there were no cars on the road, and the entire scene was eerily vacant and without life... not a bird, not a dog or any human form... all the buildings on the highway were one story boxes, most had schlitz or budwieser signs in the window, there were a few pickup trucks around and the phone wires were strung haphazard random this way and that, criss-crossing the sky between poles that were - without exception - at alarming, obtuse angles to the ground...

I walked into the mill and it was vast, empty, rusting and magnificent in its decay.... and i wrote this:

clamoring  
beneath a portsmouth sky  
in iron bellies of  
days gone by

the rancid smell of decaying dreams  
huddle together  
breathing hard  
awaiting our chance to laugh at  
ageless wonders  
encased in a barbed wire fence

scarred by time unending  
while light winds stroll through our souls  
stranded in space and time  
lost to outside  
light and sound

pleading with the asphalt god  
loose his grip upon my tired heart

just pulled into richmond kentucky... playing here friday night, then to berea, kentucky on saturday night... then to chapel hill, then home for a few days... coming from earls in st. paul...

driving last night from Ft. Wayne on Rt. 30 across southern Indiana to hook up with Rt. 75 South in Ohio... vast, dark, raining incessantly and simply beautiful... I had the yankees and detroit game on, two classic old school baseball teams, one of which I know can trace their heritage back 100 years... and around 11pm, in classic, thrilling baseball fashion, the detroit tigers came from 5 down to tie it in the bottom of the 9th, with 2 on, 2 out, and a full count to the batter, and it was wonderful, and gripping and I listened, glued to the side speakers in the chevy, as this drama unfolded in front of me, live, pitch by pitch, in true radio fashion...

I could have been listening to sandy kofax or harmon kilebrew or even joe dimaggio... it was live baseball detroit tigers radio as I have never experienced... and I sweated, swung, cursed and strained with the noble detroit tigers as we struggled to beat the visiting Yankees team... then in the 10th the Tigers hit safely into a classic set with runners at the corners and with the screams of the fans by the backstop rolling like waves across the air you could just barely hear the announcer try to get above the din of the hometown crowd and announce in a full throated holler that Detroit had gone ahead by 1 run and the game was over...

I sat backward in my seat, exhausted, sweating and exhilarated, and I loosened my white knuckle clutch grip on the wheel of my chevy ever so slowly, trying to savor the last drop of my emotions and feelings that in the blink of an eye and a swing of the bat had taken me a million years and a hundred lifetimes back to a hot, late afternoon setting sun twilight on a hard dirt baseball diamond and I looked at myself, taking off my mask and heading across the dusty infield towards the dugout on my last game as a little league catcher on a baseball team.... the sweet smell of oiled rawlings rawhide, the moist, thick heaviness of a sweat soaked rough cloth uniform and the magic elixir whiff of a bag full of wooden bats and practice balls reached out and engulfed me, covered me in baseball and boyhood, and connected me with all that is great and good and baseball...

I was cryin' like a 3rd grader by the time I turned onto 75 south and headed for Cincinnati, Ohio and Richmond, Kentucky... leaving the yankees, the detroit tigers - and an amazing moment - somewhere out in the vast, rainy, black emptiness of southern indiana, somewhere between Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Lima, Ohio... and the land of the radio baseball gods...

Can't I become a japanese film  
just for one shinning moment?  
No future and no past  
no references to all of that  
just a little action  
and static imagery

The days and weeks compress  
in strange reality

two skys converge, the meaning is unclear  
a simple shift in perspective  
illuminates all my fear

no character and no existence  
except for what is seen  
how easy and deliciously vacant  
is every well planned scene

its meaning overlaid that swirls and confounds  
it's the asian idiom that I adore  
    where meaning  
    and existence

abound

hey brenda lee did you have a good time?  
I tried it you know  
but they said it was a crime  
love came again and killed  
    the little girl  
    as she stood by her room  
lost in another world everyone said to themselves  
what a shame,  
so hey, brenda lee  
    could you do it again  
    could you really revive me  
    could you take me around?

thru her window in los angeles  
i saw hard evidence  
    on how big it should be  
but i was all mixed up  
    spent money with blood  
toured the kitchen  
    and went back to bed  
filled with the crime at the pizza  
    stand

i talked to charlie  
and he moved in for a week  
then he said he had to go and become a parody to the sea  
but he spoke in such wispers as she called him by name  
he was there once before and now  
he's come back again

hey brenda lee did you have a good time?  
I tried it, you know  
but they said it was a crime  
this affection came again and killed  
    the little girl  
    as she stood by her room  
lost in another world and everyone said to themselves  
what a shame,  
so hey, brenda lee  
    could you do it again  
    could you take it around?  
could you take it around one more time?

what a beautiful note... our lives, so divergent, are still very much linked...

there is always a little cabana in my heart for you... complete with tiki bar, a cute towel boy, plenty of beer and a good view of the pool on one side and the cove on the other, where the finest white sand circles a too-blue-to-be-real cove, gently baked on a setting just below london broil from a sun in a sky so bright it hurts your eyes... there's a soft breeze on shore, the waiters are laying out the noon buffet and the flirty-up flight attendants from last night's carnival are just getting in, and doin' the walk of shame past the front desk, high heels in hand, heads low... the free hand raised to cover the blotchy redness that the cheaper gin can be counted on to produce the day after the indulgence...the boat boys on the dock are washing down the smooth white hulls of the impossibly expensive yachts parked side by side, tied to the dock... and gently bobbing from the wake of the speed boats that occasionally cruise too close... the clink of expensive crystal and the muffled silver-on-silver tumble tumble of waiters' fumbling of the place settings mix with the soft sounds of another cocktail being born... the ice slips effortlessly into the glass, the clear, crisp and splashy gin that follows invades the frozen cocktail-world-subculture-ice and swirls counterclockwise as the dash of vermouth - the final addition to the most perfect martini ever created - blends effortless in the glass...

love you always,

e