

milwaukee day

a coffee shop
10 tables deep and encircled by
10 plywood-were-once-outdoor-signs
 booths against the wall
pictures covering the side walls
all framed, meaning something

front windows that face the street
are clear and clean and
the autumn afternoon is dipping below the row houses
still milwaukee bright
and pours through the glass and
highlights the small collection of band and show posters
and a few house neons that hang helter skelter
with no form or plan
against the inside glass
the outside light fades 20 feet from the door

and the back counter
every inch covered by decals, skateboard wheels,
napkins, stirrers and more decals, hand cards
and more posters, band stickers and rows of
muffins, croissants, cookies and pecan bars,
rice krispie squares
and then sandwiches,
wraps and a number of
hard to see into mason jars
containing eggs, pigs feet and
some gooey blood sausage

now the sun has reached an angle
such that it reflects off the table tops
and creates a shadow world for anyone sitting way,
way in the back, in the dim lit area
by the takeout counter
and every manner of human form
that can clutch a skateboard
slowly wanders in for coffee or some
form of solid food
and escapes into the dim regions
that now extend to the back wall and the
side wall booths

luther allison and hound dog taylor
are on the stereo
and the setting sun, the dim calm of
the background and the soothing
ebb and flow of the table chatter
is peaceful, quieting and
gives serenity to this
small corner of repose and reflection
far from the outside world
far from the downtown turmoil of milwaukee
up here on river west
at central and highland
at the fuel cafe