

## met a man on the street

who said, "you've kept me going for two years, it's really amazing to meet you."

"thank you," I answered, "but who's going to keep me going?"

I've asked this question before and all ! ever get back is a gentle smile.

but it's a good question.

they have no idea that I consider suicide several times a week.

they've read some of my books and that's enough for them.

but I only write that crap,  
I can't read  
it.

## **bent**

near the belly of the sun,  
undone by the lambs,  
the red bottle's babble,  
tight shoes,  
right turns,  
the gibbeting ladies,  
the macho farts,  
the rusty bells,  
all the alarms,  
all the hospitals,  
the jails,  
I've gone mad here  
measuring the death of  
time, now  
as white light runs past  
like a dog,  
where did it go?  
where did it all go?

one more drink, Pedro,  
one more  
and we'll get the hell  
out of  
here.

**now**

I sit here on a 2nd floor  
hunched in yellow  
pajamas  
still pretending to be  
a writer.  
some damned gall,  
at 70,  
my brain cells eaten  
away by the  
booze.  
rows of books  
behind me,  
I scratch my thinning  
hair  
and search for the  
word .

for decades now  
I have infuriated the  
ladies,  
the critics,  
the university  
suck-toads.

they will all soon have  
their time to  
celebrate.

"terribly overrated ..."

"gross..."

"an aberration..."

my hands sink into the  
keyboard  
of my  
Macintosh  
it's the same old  
game,  
the same old crap  
and con  
that scraped me  
off the streets and  
park benches,  
the same simple  
line  
I learned in those  
cheap rooms,  
I can't let  
go,  
sitting here  
on this 2nd floor  
hunched in yellow  
pajamas  
still pretending to be  
a writer.

the gods smile down,  
the gods smile down,  
the gods smile down.

## the World War One Movies

were best, I mean those aviators drank at the bar every night, fighting over the one or two blondes, and it was all worth it because in the dawn they might die going after those Fokkers with their Spads, I mean, they just lined up along that bar and slugged them down.

us kids loved those movies, those men weren't like our fathers, those men laughed and fought and had these slinky blondes in long tight dresses.

each dawn was hell, up they'd go in their Spads, pulling on their goggles, giving a wave, and that long white scarf flowing out behind them, they grinned and went off into the blue.

and here came the Germans high above the clouds. they'd spot the Spads, the leader would give the signal and they'd dive downward in a roar, coming through the clouds, their machineguns sputtering loudly and the Spads would see them but not before one of the guys would get hit and roar down in flames—the guy with the sense of humor, the guy who had made everybody laugh at the bar—there he'd go, his hands rising above the flames, then oil across his goggles, he'd wiggle trying to free himself to parachute out but it was always too late—you'd see the Spad crash into a hill exploding into a huge mass of flame.

the dogfight was a real spectacle, like the hero would get a guy on his tail and have to pull an Immelman to get him off.

then he'd be on the other guy's tail and the spurt of bullets would rip through the German, his mouth would open to a spurt of blood and his plane would head toward the earth in a WHINING roar.

the dogfights were exciting and lasted a long time but the Germans always lost and one or two of their remaining planes would limp off and that would be it.

then the Spads would begin their journey back to the airfield. this was always very dramatic because one or two of them would be very crippled, just being nursed back, often the pilot hit by 3 or 4 bullets but determined to bring the plane back in and land it safely.

the ground crew would always be waiting and they would count the Spads as they came back in: one, two... 6, 7, 8... but there had been ten...

the ground crew would always be badly shaken.

the crippled planes would come in first, followed by the others.

it was a very sad time.

but that night the remaining pilots would be back at the bar with the slinky blondes,

even the aviators who had been shot were  
there.

they had their arms in slings, their heads  
bandaged but they were drinking and  
making the slinky blondes  
laugh.

outside the movie theaters they actually  
had parts of a Spad, a huge wing, a  
propeller, and at night there was a big  
searchlight probing the skies, you could  
see it for miles.

all of us boys loved those World War One  
movies

and we built our own balsa wood  
model airplanes, Spads and  
Fokkers.

most kits cost 25 cents  
which was a lot of money in the  
1930's but somehow  
almost every kid had his own  
plane.

we were in a hurry to grow  
up.

we all wanted to be  
fighter pilots,  
we wanted those slinky  
blondes, we wanted to lean  
against that bar and gulp  
down a straight whiskey  
like nothing had  
happened.

we had dogfights with our  
model planes and they

sometimes developed into  
fist fights.

we fought until we were  
bloody and  
torn.

we fought for our  
honor.

our fathers watched us  
and  
yawned.



## the secret

don't worry, nobody has the  
beautiful lady, not really, and  
nobody has the strange and  
hidden power, nobody is  
exceptional or wonderful or  
magic, they only seem to be.  
it's all a trick, an in, a con,  
don't buy it, don't believe it.  
the world is packed with  
billions of people whose lives  
and deaths are useless and  
when one of these jumps up  
and the light of history shines  
upon them, forget it, it's not  
what it seems, it's just  
another act to fool the fools  
again .

there are no strong men, there  
are no beautiful women.  
at least, you can die knowing  
this  
and you will have  
the only possible  
victory.