

The Hearses All Line Up in Rows of Nine

I haven't known
many women,
but I've known
some

all of them
different
from one another
while still
being
the same

all of them
have been artists
at some point
in their lives

which means
they were all a little
crazy
and a little bit
damaged

I don't know what
it is about a woman
with wounds

perhaps its
not having to
lick my own
in the dark

like we were both misfits
both survivors of some
great war

we were both
a bit salty
and a bit mad

not that

everyone isn't
wounded in one way
or another
but an artist
knew it better

and I suppose
it was because
they had a better
shot at
understanding me,
as well

creators should be with creators
and destroyers with destroyers
because if it's the other way around
the destroyer will always
triumph over the creator

how something as mighty as fire
always loses out to water

alone they are impervious,
exact opposites
but together
one is a superman
and the other a feeble
element

and all my girls had fire
just some where hotter and bluer than others

one would drink
a fifth of whiskey
like it was
a pina colada

and whenever
we'd be somewhere
and we'd send someone
out to buy beer and booze
a few people would
call out,

"Pabst Blue Ribbon!"

or

"Heineken!"

and then there would be my baby,
tough as nails,

"Wild Turkey 101!"

and she'd curse

like a sailor

when reading my rejection

letters,

"What the fuck do they mean,

'you're too profane'?!"

Fuck them, baby,

you're a champion,

you're a god!"

and then there

was one that only

called me by pet names,

and never drank a drop

of liquor,

and called her farts *toots*

she always wore

a perfume that

spiraled around her

in a glossy, pink haze

smelling like a cosmetics counter girl,

bubbling all the time

calling me *handsome*

and the rest of the

girls fell in between them

somewhere

some harder

some softer

all of them

leaving for different reasons

while all of them

being the same

but because of their
varying degrees
of hardness
I've found that
hard women can become
wonderfully soft
when you need them to be

they can love
you with a mother's love
and shrink down into
a little dwarf of
compassion and understanding

while soft women
have a hell of a time
getting hard when
you need them to be

they shrivel
and usually stay their
normal depth,
shallow as a puddle
in an uneven groove
on the road

I would prefer a woman
who tries to be hard,
and then falls to pieces,
letting their image shatter completely

because they are the ones
with something to hide
and there is no better feeling
than when they finally decide
to unveil whatever it is
to you

for no matter what happens,
no matter how brutally your love ends,
you will always share that moment
of vulnerability-

nine women
have come and went
over the years,
and it's strange
to type *years*
because I still
have such a long
way to go

but now
I am alone
and searching for number ten,
although not searching too hard

and I know to
look for my women
the same way I look for
my mattresses
firm yet giving,
supportive yet comfortable,
hard yet soft