

*Ohio*

it's good to be home

there is history here

maybe not a good history  
but a history none  
the less

the roads are cracked  
and you can see the  
red brick underneath the asphalt

the buildings are falling apart  
beam by beam

and there is no spark, no sign of life

everything has found its place  
and sunk into it  
like a fat man into  
a comfortable chair

everyone is complacent,  
content in misery

the landscapes are  
still beautiful

greens reaching  
as far as the eye can see

but there's something  
about the people

they are defeated

they are what's left  
from a fruitful past,  
the casualties of a war  
that left their city ravaged  
and picked over

although there is a quaintness about them,  
a feeling of unity  
you can't find anywhere else

but unity  
has often spread  
intolerance and ignorance

in tradition there  
grows the roots of  
hatred and bigotry

there are clubs  
only for Slovaks  
clubs only for Italians  
clubs only for Greeks

everyone has their corner  
of the city

the religious figures  
are corrupt  
(like everywhere)

but in our house  
sits a jug of  
clear white zinfandel  
for when father  
wants to come  
over and drink  
with my granddad

the white collar around his neck  
is only as good as  
the white on my  
socks

and I had often wondered  
why priests  
wore all black  
with just one speck of white

I thought maybe it  
was because they were  
suppose to be humble,  
meek servants,  
forfeiting lavish, selfish things

but now I know it is  
to show how black  
the world can be  
and how only a crumb of light  
can shine through  
all that darkness

“So, Kris  
do you have a woman?”  
the father asks

“I just let one go.”  
I say

“Was she white?”

“Yes, she was.”

“Good. You never know these days.”

“I’m  
talking to a new one now.”

“A new one already?  
Is she white?”

“... Yeah.”

and then he looks  
at my grandfather  
and the two of them  
shoot the shit,  
taking pistols to the place,  
talking about this person or that person,  
how they didn’t give enough  
money to the church

how so and so's daughter  
is knocked up

and it's all grand to listen to

but overall  
it is a city in a coma,  
not quite dead  
but nowhere near  
alive

and it makes  
me miss the people  
I'm away from  
very much

as if I'm  
too far away  
to return

it's a feeling  
only home  
can give  
you.