

Old Bulls on the Hill

when I got a little older
my father and I would talk about women
and when I saw one with a fat ass
I'd say to him,
"Dad, look at the can on that one!"
and he'd say,
"Nah! You'd stick your dick in anything with a pulse."

and I used to admire
talk like that
it seemed real to me
no pretense
something a man
with not a care in the world
would say

but then I got a little wiser
and my father got a little older
and a little closer to death
and death humbles
a man

after working 7 days a week
12 hours a day
for 20 years
he was ready to give in
to give up
to throw in the awful, bloody towel

and I'd say,
"Dad, how can you give up?
You're still a young man. You should be pissing vinegar
and chasing all the ladies."
and he'd say,

"You don't understand, boy. I'm an old bull on the hill.
While you chase the cattle, I sit up there and wait
and when I see a cow that I like, I go down the hill
and fuck it... But this old bull is tired."

and in his own way
he told me that he was finished
that the machine appeared to be working on the outside
but it was just a heap of rotten junk
on the inside

his heart wasn't in it
anymore

and he sat there like a
helpless giant

hanging onto something
no one could see but him
and watching him there
depressed me

but right then,
I made up my mind
not to end up this way...

sometimes the best way to teach
a boxer to fight
is to let him get
knocked out a few times

and for the first time
I was certain of what I wouldn't
do as a man

just as he didn't drink booze
because his father woke him up
in the middle of the night
stone drunk

I would not lose all my life before death
I would harness it in my fingernails
and in my eyelashes

and whistle at the ladies
who stroll past my
deathbed.