

THE URBANE

A Thesis

Presented to

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Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English

by

Kenneth H. Casper

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Accepted by the faculty of the Caudill College of Humanities,
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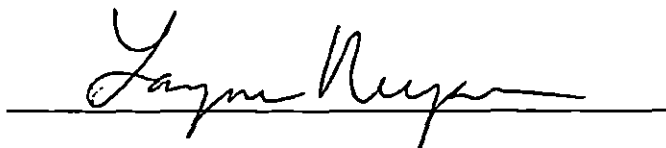
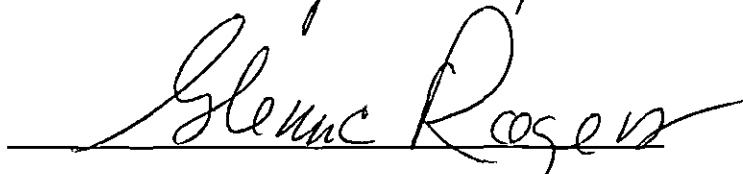


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THE URBANE

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The purpose of the thirteen poems contained in this thesis, *THE URBANE*, is to show the evolution of the existential male from his early childhood of perhaps seven years old into his mid-sixties. The poems offer the first person voice of the isolated male. Each poem contains several pages written in phrases and clauses that are simply painterly associations in the spirit of the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters. The philosophy of each poem is that a man is a self-contained universe that is in a state of flux, yet always remaining in the same isolated state. He is always pressing the glass shield that exists between society, other human beings, and himself; but he never has the power to break that shield. Each poem is a narrative piece of a life demonstrating the elastic nature of memories. Each poem is youth remembered in old age.

The poems are based upon readings of various French and German philosophers such as Sartre, Queneau, Nietzsche, and also Thorstein Bunde Veblen's

The Theory of the Leisure Class. At another level, the subject matter deals with what it means to live well, and discusses whether living well is the best revenge upon a society that rejects the outsider. It concludes that there are only two choices for the isolated man--living well or dying. Several of the poems were written in response to several Vietnamese songs that were recorded before the fall of South Vietnam. The writer does not understand the Vietnamese language; however, the music translated into a strong picture of isolation and waiting. Of particular interest to the writer was the music of a song titled Sao Anh Dành Quèn by a female singer named Thanh Tuyền. Its sense of longing and resignation inspired much of the poetry contained in this collection. Also, the sensuality of the poetry comes from this longing and resignation of the characters portrayed. The conclusion of the poetry is that even though escape from one's isolation may be impossible, sensuality and allowing the past to break out in one's heart (Rilke) offer ways to live the good life.

Accepted by: Boye Eklund, Chair

Blanche Rogers

Layne Kuper

Table of Contents

<i>Ars Poetia</i>	1
Mama Died the Other Day	5
The <i>Apache</i> Dancer	11
My Marie Ellen	15
Double My Time to Waste	19
Lust-Teen 1959	21
The Fall of Sixty-Two	28
Walking Eve to Dawn	36
The Figure Model	39
Courbet's Grotto	43
Come Dance	51
A Man at Three	57
The Urbane	62

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English 699

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Ars Poetica

When creating joy,
Don't care about careful strokes
Because not every image or line
Needs to be a masterpiece--
Just a spot here
Underlined with belief
That may be true
Or may be testing
Mommy's and Daddy's patience
With your persistence
In wanting to be noticed,

Thoroughly enjoyed,
As you enjoy being and seeing,
Doing what delights our creators,
The main thing to stress.
Relaxing upon our spiritual couch,
Softly flowing down from the sky,
You watch the colors and the clowns
An improvement is the circus.
Sleep and search the philosophical
For reasons and laughter are all the same.
Just as failure comes before success,
A dearly beloved is an accidental smear
That becomes a disappointment
Only when it is erased from our lives.
Every accident creates a new shape
To study and to amuse our short time
With copulative stares that really care
Whether someone is here or not.
Ever an empty word
Within the multitude of tongues and colors,

Within and without one person, one world,
The universe starts.
The North Star never moves
Except the individual eyes
Think what is just behind
Is possibly different or even the same
Seen from second to second.
Care not for what you shall eat or drink,
Run naked into the street
Once or twice a week
Clap wildly to a heathen song,
Watch the bees and the birds
Overturn some ancient stones
Discover who we are and why
Salamanders lick our toes
Skipjacks will never jump upon our hands,
Slimy worms are wherever flowers grow.
We dig through our lives to find
Nearby old Prince Albert cans with moldy coins.
Childish notes and maps tell of hidden treasures

Found with jaded jewels
From Woolworths downtown
Where I treated Rosalie my heart's desire
Carried a special Bunn bar
The edges nibbled all around
By her grin
Her mellow lips shared a soda once a week
After art class after school.
She stood by me on a crowded bus
I knew the fire at five-thirty
Burns in every boy
Unveils many embarrassing dreams
Never to come true.
Not every image and line
Needs to be a masterpiece--
Just a spot here
Underlined with belief
May be true or testing
Me and you.

Mama Died the Other Day

Mama died the other day

Papa went the other way

No more hoping

Dreaming of someday.

Hard times were the best.

They had the hope

We had less

No doubt

Life continues on

There's no relief

We all stand stout

Work our days

Towards magnificance

High magnitude

No fancy car

Clothes or food

Things can't be worse

The best is a possible

Snow in the air
Get the vanilla
A lump of coal
Someone on the next pillow
Warmth and laughter
Fry two chickens
Daddy gets half
A thirty-eight Plymouth
Business coupé
Friday night drive-in
A carload for one
I take my gun and marbles
Sissy takes her dog
Her Revlon doll with formal dress
Her big date.
The speakers don't work.
"What did they say?"
"There's the swings
Let's go play."
A Plymouth hand-painted blue

The black wore off with time.

The rumble seat was comfortable on clear nights

Three on the post

Two more in the back

Sissy needs the bathroom

In the middle of Silvery Moon.

Someone's kissin'!

A catchy tune

"Play with fire

You'll reap a fire."

These are dangerous places

You got to watch yourselves

Dirty-old men, fire-lit boys.

"Those girls in front ain't got no poise."

"Whatever are they doing?"

"Whatever it is

Is a bad idea

You get the future that you now live.

All the shaft shakes out in the end."

"I want a hot dog."

“No you don’t.”

“Look what I found!

An old toy frog.”

“Hey, that’s mine!”

Loudly said.

It’s eleven o’clock.

“Mommy, I want to go to bed.”

“After this movie ends.”

“Maybe we should leave early.”

Those people moving at once

Start the engines

A hundred cars play tag.

Sissy naps on Mom’s lap,

I sit in the back inside.

The moon has been stolen

By angels dressed as clouds

The road is empty

After the initial flow.

Sleepy families, worldly kids

Imagine all is grand

We pull into the drive
A grassless area in the front
No lights burning
Nobody's home
The dog barks at every sound
Ghosts don't appear
I know they're near
Me and Sissy run towards the door
Wait nervously for Mama
To find a key hidden in the bottom of her purse.
The chill is a grave surprise.
Inside the lights reveal a welcome sight
Of worn furniture and happy dog.
Papa falls into his favorite chair
Tells me to turn the TV to Channel Eleven
Where a man holds a sandwich.
"Remember, it's the big one," says he.
"Take it from Dick Hageman here.
This is the genuine thing."
He takes a bite and tells us,

“Stop in real soon for the genuine
Double decker hamburger delight.”

Sissy goes up the stairs with Mama

Daddy tells me to get to bed.

I try to con Mama for more up time

I never ask Daddy

I don't know why.

He's just so big--so big.

“Fall asleep.”

I fall asleep

Feel so all alone.

Today Mama's gone--

Air in time is thin.

The *Apache* Dancer

I have a dancing doll

Name of Dancing Doll

Stands upon my shoe tops

We tango in empty rooms

Her hair is blond

Finely groomed

Atop a face smiling

Always says the perfect things

While drinking cola, tea

Ginger ale never fails

Conversation in perfect silence

Grape juice swills in my glass

A slow walk

A fine French lass

Spins around into the air

By the owner of this joint,

I'm Pierre

Who wears one white, one red sock.

This is one sentimental jock

Wearing his sister's nylon underpants

The music starts the advance

That soldier charms them all

Crude, raw courage

Swings that doll every way

During the night, never in the day.

Come to me dear and kiss

This man, your master, blissful thing

Swing into a dip

Fly to the wall

I dearly love my dancing doll.

Short gray beige childish dress

Black tight pants and pullover

Beats continental musical

Words smooth

She flies away to the wall

One smile Dancing Doll.

Dance is simply art

Depart from my arms

I grip her back to my front

Paint my notes ritually
Always bang before the king
Dancing Doll will have two.
Doing things seen on TV,
Done in alleys in Paris and Argentine.
Dancing Doll come to me--
Show passion anger--speak French
Say anything.
Dancing Doll
Please always smile
At seven-year old boys coming of age
With dreams of being on the stage
Tomorrow stretches time
The dreams remain.
Just fling and swing
Sip tea and chips
Gluttonous talk of true love
Knows this bedding genet has been
An empty young boy's room
Where my own dancing doll

Read from Golden Books,
Dancing Doll poises upon a stool,
A straw drools as Pierre inhales
Warm cold grape tea sweetened
Poor pretty words to Dancing Doll--
Time is circumcised when I'm thirteen.

My Marie Ellen

My Marie Ellen

I long for you.

For times

When we upon the grass

Watched the horses and the elephants

Parade across the sky

Blue background and cotton faces.

The anger of my mother and father--

Without their knowledge one fall evening

You shouted to me from the window of a city bus

During its initial run through the suburbia

Of my pre-school youth

In forty-nine

I should come aboard

Ride with you

A free treat in my heart.

There were other kids

Just you and me

That were there.

Share a dime Bluebird Pie

Sip a nickel Royal Crown

Play with ladybugs

As evening sets

Your older brother I would watch

With puzzlement

Why he ignored beauty such as yours.

“I’m going to be a movie star

A doctor after hours.”

“I’m going to drive a truck

They give me free candy

When I ride with my dad.”

We ran after robins in your yard,

Wrote times, times, times, true love

Upon the new blacktop road.

Oh!

Why do we have to get old?

Pull the blankets over my head

At thirteen all goes serious--

I fear my manhood

You your virtue
They disappear with time,
Unplanned naked feelings--
A dead crayfish bled our hearts
A time when all was new
Adventure and joy was known
The sun shined while it snowed
We only feared red cars,
We were very sure,
Without one doubt and less evidence,
Search the country low and high
For youthful blood
To keep witches and ghouls alive.
I sure wished we had a pony to ride.
Did you know my goldfish did die?
We shared an apple and some grapes
Your mom served with cookies and milk
Sneaked to Timber Lake
With packing string and poplar twig
On private property to fish

A sunfish for a dinner wish

A pet to add to the others--

A dog, a cat, and a stuffed bear.

“You be the daddy and I the mom

Who will work to care for our son, Tom.”

“I’m a knight and Tom is eaten

By a dragon.”

The poverty of growing up

A breach in solitude

Not known when things were clear.

A rabbit is me and a squirrel is you.

You hop around, and I climb a tree--

Are you there still

My Ellen Marie?

Double My Time to Waste

I walk this street

Sun above me

Moon on my head

A cloud rains

Clear beauty there

I wave the guys

Kiss the girls

Simple life

Life it is.

Kiss my lips my pretty face

Smile timeless taste

Slow down

Half speed

Double my time to waste.

I follow some chick

Nose stalks the wind

With my Kodak

I whistle and click

Do it some more

From now on
Never be poor
More little pucker
One more kiss.
Kiss my lips my pretty face
Smile timeless taste
Slow down
Half speed
Double my time to waste.

Lust-Teen 1959

Have I told you
Or perhaps it is not appropriate
To tell anyone my dreams
When I am alone with you.
Things you would never think
I would do with you alone--
Talk those boy-drawn words,
Sit in bus station booths,
Wait till the next morning with my shameful blush
While I pass you quickly glance
Cunning lingo smelling musk,
Laughing at jokes that friend Jack
Coughs while I view the scene
Hoping that no person knows
What the eye sees when asleep
I ride that horse's frozen reign
In heated jungle wishes
Conspiring senses swell
Organ music breathes short accents in long violence

Glass passages of labyrinthodonts

Ingenues dancing on every side

Know not me from a pass

Only one to know is me

With certain looks

I know you say no

Except at that moment

Testing drones on and on

Over and over I ride the roe

Coming never going.

Things I've heard of Bonnie

Down the street

I pass, stand, and leer

Blush across my face

God help me fight it all

At night through the glass

Her heat calls tender secrets

I don't want to know but long

Legs get down all fours

Into the heat I ride more

That story of her deeds
Stand in the second story window
For boys with Christmas cameras
Search for Easter's shine
Brownie Hawkeye always with me
Blush, hope, and never see
Upon this running horse
At night when asleep, she waves
Twists and turns in every way
A horse dream with no face
Fifteen, Bonnie thirteen
Laugh, the stories last
Watching other girls behind leering masks
After school trips down and around
Apparel department through soft sounds
Scents on cosmetic ladies
Foundation for long quick looks
At dancers in dressing rooms
That catch me occasionally
The rear leer of a fat woman,

A quick slap of the curtain
I adjust dreams to her size
Bonnie is standing there.
Into confections for sweet scents
Bon-bons and éclairs busting out
I shout and grab this horse.
She stands in a tunnel
Every night we run two
Swim pretty closer
Please the passion fire
Oh dear God forgive weaknesses
I never drink liquor, never cuss
Turn what I long to do
Pick fresh pears and melons in silk fields
Not to touch, you understand,
Just look and watch and stare
Secrets of every mother and sister
Through keyholes I look some more
Ride down slow
Strange things control

Heart flies with discovery thoughts

Passion's aftermath caught

Fingers point and all laugh

Two-piece suits at Coney Island's pool

Fat women romp and play

With tiny children who wear more

Things young boys ignore

Run insane my horse

Burn in Hell like every fool

My mother asks if I'm well

I lock my door

Dream sin's sensations

Revel in my secret

Popular Photography collection

A face that I know

At school, church, in secret glances

Sunday in the church balcony

To view a cusp from above

I look as I ascend every staircase

Discover secrets I know there

Disappoint every glance
Well in advance I know
All is covered and nothing shows
Not even bare toes
She raises high at night
Waves me come
Come bye bye
The first time I find
The pupil does not need the eye
Closed every night
Can see more
To keep my soul's blazing guilt
Abhorrent scenes behind closed doors
No face, no names, just some more
"Come here, come here
I'll take some more."
The horse froths in the trough,
Contralto voice cries in my dream--
"I know my diary's beneath your bed.
You read it, you're one dead fool."

The sound--a familiar secret continuous lure.

My sister knocks and shouts outside my door.

The Fall of Sixty-Two

The fall of sixty-two

November second and cool

as any weather feels before death,

as any body nourished with sun

depressed with reminders

that I don't have a meaning

without a job, without a goal

like that city living on dreams--

the wheels spin, the dice roll,

Club Silver Slipper has pretty girls,

the shouts are heard by me

shut them down today

get on with something better--

what is better is what no one knows

try to obey the rules

don't have what they want

they tell me where to go

they tell me I've no sense,

Club Embassy has taxi dancers,

three bucks a song--
they shout to shut it down.
The fall of sixty-two
times of prosperous action
appear in the signs of the clubs
blinking telling all that this is gay--
others tell of jobs some
where salaries are high
skill is gained
signup and earn
big commission checks--
sell those books
every door asks with authority--
why don't you get a job
not bugging people
enjoying late night life--
see what you're saying
anger speaks
it's your supper
you have three minutes

to get out of here
or I'll get my rifle--out the door
you damned fool.
The fall of sixty-two
politics in life
Christian ways godly lives
we stand four square
wipe out the trash
let them sweep the floors
future's fear blinking wildly--
the nation's in danger
you waste our time
go get a job, make it
the world has no place
for losers and commies
with no experience, no knowledge
right things, noble truth
go to the army, learn a trade
your duty and our favor
something will turn up

simple truth
makes us great
hard work, dry vermouth.
The fall of sixty-two
bearded men hurt us
the sheer nerve
to seize the clubs where we play--
God bless this venture
clean our city, kill Castro
prosperity hooked to bodies
killed out joy we can't have here
play the wheels, pull the corks
save young things we all pork--
expect to receive a living
working if you're not the best?
Shut him down, the sins of our city
clean it up and provide
clean, godly environment for our children--
return Havana a few years ago
where vacations and freedom flowed--

tales told of my last trip
see stars, ten year old girls
for a few bucks worked their all--
we came home
none the worse
a clean city ours, yours, God's
forgive their sins
did I tell you where I've been?
It's rock and roll, feel the pig
in Havana god can't see
in our home, nowhere else.
In sixty-two the sores raw,
weather cooled November--
turn on the heater in this car
there's frost on the window at two a. m.
Gears grind and jam
some power is there
the steering has none--
scrape the windshield
steer the Ford

a pole in the road.

I'm in the school yard seeing nothing--

Eighty-five cents per hour to train

washing dishes, scrubbing floors

fifty-two Ford, nineteen clear, ten won at poker

the check was a royal flush.

In sixty-two the girls

work as carhops, after hours

a hundred or fifty slipped her hand

in a numbered napkin

after work tonight going

Flamingo Club, see a rock band.

Would you care to go?

After hours journey agreed

places all wanted shutdown,

God-fearing clean town

dark rooms glow of pink

loud music, lax ways

work by nights, sleep by days.

In sixty-two they go to school

dream miracles and booga-lou
fifteen winners, eighty-five lose
sent to find a job
girls in restaurants as carhops
guys in the army with rakes and mops
got the money go to school
if you had none then you had none
whispers came through the air
watch out for the Russian bear
will grind life into the ground
lucky to live here
freedom just work hard become rich
sticky words in a ditch
Psalms of praise the promise is
repeat the answers forget the questions
love God, country, fun--
no girlfriend? I have no job.
Strange I know the problem
if you looked harder
you know what to do

laziness makes you a fool.

Save Havana from that man.

Walking Eve to Dawn

I walk through the streets at night
Seeking that one face that is right
Tripping upon the sidewalk cracks
While listening to the sounds
Pleading for lonely hearts
to come on in
Meet the dream of the soul.
I keep on walking along
Watching for just the right one
The lights blink off
On through the hours
Stopping in coffee shops for a rest
I think of the one that I'll meet
Inspired by the lovers in the booths
They make my heart sad
Blinking lips whisper silent
Feeling that I'll never hear
Moments of pain and joy
Hours of hungry prayers

Screaming to the sky
Saxophones keep groaning
Tunes familiar to lovesick ears
Men waiting for hands of care
Acting like unknown stars
Cool poise, straightened backs
Hide what each man lacks.
I'll just keep walking the streets
Listening to the alley drains
Pour out my last bit of blood
That longs for bondage
Without reckless vigor
Cars pass me screaming their tires
My heart ticks off the hours
Early eve Hopes
Sink with Sunday dawn
I sit by my window at home
Wonder at my lover
Constantly an unknown
Days, weeks, months

Turn into another fruitless year.
I grip the spoon and pull
Sweet tastes to my quivering lips.
Next week will be the one
Nights will not be so alone
Saxophones will play,
Walk, wait for that day
In eve's unseen stars
Screams of tires
From eve to the coming dawn
Seeking one right face
The same old thing repeats silence.

The Figure Model

What makes you different

From any other ornament that I want to sketch,
Aside the fact that you move freely from shadow to sunlight
Speaking silly words and phrases like a woman
Acting innocent of any knowledge of the passions
That cause men and women to break each other,
Steal any spiritual substance to be
Thought in living being is still quietly rare
Blood runs quickly through our cheeks
Dries when it meets the air
Seeps into the face--
Two revealing faces
Unsure what is right must be done
Given circumstances and company
Of items desirable for charcoal and pencil
Even though you have a model's same name
You do not come close to the magazine perfection of her
When uncovered is covered with magic--
Magic is what makes her desirable.

I suppose we all wish for magic at fifty
To cover the face and smooth
Marks that tell past deeds of birth, torment, worry.
Hesitate to be her for two or three hours
Once a week you say it is the last time to be ashamed
Of your stretch marks from two births
Given you by a former husband with a side of silver.
Black long hair used to bewitch
Now gives a dull glitter in the shine
Moves with you between the screen
To the sofa covered with several white sheets--
A shy look from you gains a grin from me
A quick wave from your two arms
Engulfs the blue terry cloth robe
Into the air into the chair.
I had a large mirror before you came
To see the light procreate its own rays
Procreating reminders to you
Of your function as every person has and knows
It seems unique to each person alone

Act as is dictated by the Sun
Within the mirror we all shall do.
The first time you tripped your steps,
This time is uneasily sure of what must be
The flaws that every woman has
Lumps and indentation on the rump
The breasts that once fed children
Are far too large
Signal that a mother you're meant to be
Reubens found those like you
Classic and wondermeat.
I find your flaws less romantic.
My words are neither cruel nor kind
For every female is worth two glasses of wine--
Chablis for pity, dry burgundy for lust.
I give to you while standing here
An inspecting eye, a heated sigh.
Charcoal that beautifies beyond truth
Beseech eyes to grip you calmly firm,
Reenforce the wonder of nature, divinity to question

Why we fear to show wonders given to us all.

Courbet's Grotto

In just one day

We sped along

An uncertain destination

A well-travelled road

Thinking of nothing

That is and will

Be an opportunity

Avails in time

Through the cloud cover

Lawless beauty

Soon as I grip it

Reason stops for excuses

We lie upon the ground

High in thoughts

Pry for hints

Allowing us to procede

Beneath the cover

Into foliage

Covers rare caves

Hides unrealized life
Unasked questions
Vague answers
Quiet, still,
Continue digging
Find a cover opening
Uncertain finger trip
Towards beginning
With Gustave Courbet.
Courbet gives
Worldly surprises
Thrills Turks
Commissioned us
To travel with our eyes
Well-known secrets
Live in the oils
Probe the world
Beneath the cover
Open canyon
Oxyacetylene lit

Hammer beating
Moving down to move up

A smile motivates mood

Hide in the clouds

Scents of oxyacid

Covered with Song Number Five

Around two mountains

To the top

Easy climb

Soft rest

Exacting breath song

Each bellow breathes

Sing the passage

Forever lasts the minute

Rolling fields

Dips into a crater

Served its purpose

In times past

severed, deserted now

The clear plain

Brown grasslands

Lit fires

Found words

High Sun heats

The day in its midst

Forever rattles my tools

Hammer, claw, tongue

Through brown grasslands

Into a clay canyon

Slightly covered

Seminarian foliage

Red sea parted by the tongue

Soft claws pulled forth

Darkness

Paid for treasure

Longed for immortality

Comprehends no reason

Pain, struggle

Bring them

Control probe

Continues the negative
Until it becomes positive
Rain within
Moves explorers
Without hesitation
Semimystical vesicle
A voice calls for retreat
Up the face of the canyon
Over the grass
Between living mountains
A bite here, a whisper there
Soft claw
Hammer steady force
A semimetal probe
Mines the spirit
Within grotto lobes
Apartment and gynophore
Common adventure of human lore
Rare caves
With question asked,

Answers vague,
Uncertain minds,
Groping hands,
Painful treasure,
Continue to dig
Into the natural world
Different conquests day to day
Flesh and blood
Leaking ducts
Primeval past
total control
Reaching the back wall
The grotto ends
Breathing winds give forth sounds
Deposit holy sacrifice
Upon the steep cave's altar
Narrow sacrifices climb to heaven
In passionate smoke
Releases the pain of wonder,
The quest of the world's origin

Prudential voices call no more

For a while

Astra calls for more

Sacrifice in longing warmth

Sirens make sailors forget

Lost wit

Enters the grotto

To worship mother star

Swells the world

Because

Because

No one knows

Who drives the world

Who is the fuel

Burning for a short time

To produce another fire

To burn for a short time

Celebrate with expensive drink

Dwell on that grotto

Because

Because

Here I am and such is right

Reason has never ruled human sight

Close my eyes, plug my ears,

See the grotto.

Mountains rise at every turn

Words come out

Higher lips

Lower dreams move actions

Courbet paint my dream.

Come Dance

Two-seater red car

Eight lanes two ways

Come dance with me

Come play with my eyes

Two people, four eyes

Eight-speed truck, four-speed car

Show him more

Give him more

Wife thinks he's a bum

Look down, look down

The gifts show.

"Come dance with me."

Dreams shine

Eyes wink

Into the night

Baby feeds

Hunger raging

Brew burns

Off exit

Play the chest

Smile and kiss

Dance apart

Quick step

Eyes stare down

Lips pucker

A little more

Array joy

Haul big rig.

“Come dance with me.”

Before the fall

Exit forty-nine on one twenty one

Heads roar

Chrome dances

Red lips smile

Know we feel

Slipped the shoulder

Off one side

Pass left

Chrome shines

Car dances red
Fingers tap the wheel
Right, left, both
Just a look
Look down, pull up.
See something?
Teenage boys bus watch
Come second dance
Eight lanes, two ways
Right turn, wrong notions
Play me
Feel good
Comes what
Unseen motion
Beat the horn
Blow the drum
Friends sing,
Smile and hum.
Meat sale
Burnt and cold

Hot dance coals

Broken mounds

Tabloids of childhood taboos

Behind closed doors

Doctor to nurse,

“Do we thirst?

Lock doors and dance.

Here’s the apple

Peel the pear

Modest falsehood--

Dream, anticipate

Pretty dresses of birthday parties.

Older but never grown.

“Who, how, when?”

Much better!

Somewhere, somehow.

Come mind dance

Promises and a “Yes”

Kindnesses below

Things show

Never known

Always heard

Fast light

Mother calls

One second

Oh nothing

Cherries dance

Kenworth trucks.

The king rains

Unsaid on his bed

Broken laws

Double care

Secret airs

Show yours

Hope mine

Climb the fire

Come tender dance.

Why the fuss?

Shout apples and pears

With sweet scents

From this stage
To the Gaiety Theater

Dancer lure

Secret passions--

"Where and what?"

Dance please come--

Come see the dance.

We are meant to dance

To see and dance

To put the moon on a stick

Come dance come smile come dance come dance come dance come come come
come.

A Man at Three

Crisp *pommes* in informal circumstance
With a view from the windows
That brings me from Paris to Rome
While traveling with the Estée Lauder girl
Drinking coffee served in anticipation
Of strangers walking past
Smiling ask, "Where to today?"
Some person sits with me
To give me rehashed beefs of the day,
"Yes sir, I told him just that,"
While floating eyes seek someone else
To speak of politics and theoretic
Human affairs and statement
Confined only to supple smiles
Reacting to familiar similes
Beginning one way and ending another
With a pregnant woman
Who becomes a mother,
We always ask if thirty years

Becomes all the time and effort,
If graying hair suggests wisdom
Really deserves ten percent off,
Even if it is wanted by us
Who are seeking something new
To lift our egos and untie a tongue
That has tasted stale with biscuits
Covered with cold clichés
Been salted with words
As a child confined to acceptable states
That state history as it should have been
While some tattered drunk wants to borrow a ten
For medicine that his uncle won't pay for,
"In truth, I've been persecuted
Because in the past I've driven with the wind,
This bad streak of divine testing
Has left me without less than dreams."
Passing by a troop of high school girls,
I'll be frank, to whom I'm attracted--
The short, short dresses of gray and plaid

One sees me and gives a wink
Another drops her books
Some child in the next booth spills her milk
The mother stands up in a rage
Saying, "You should be careful at your age."
While this may be true, I still smile
At teenage girls in short dresses
Frisky manners give life to me
While old women give security,
A youthful maid inhales the brain with senses
Makes a man full of charity, liberty, sensuality.
This is why I long for Rome--
To witness youthful breasts
Spilling milk into a primordial youth
Who gives blushes and promises to young girls
Of fourteen, so it goes, carved in statues
Painted by men like me
Socio- and psychopaths
Of whom fathers and mothers have nightmares
Worshipping at their feet

Proclaim genius and marvellous thing
Never understanding they were just like me.
They wanted everything I see and hear--
White dining rooms with tuned pianos
Background girls in pink formals, fluffy hair,
Singing their passions for me.
Oh, if someone had shown tomorrow to me
When I was fifteen and interested,
I'm sure Paris would have been more
Than history, soldiering, architecture.
I would never have traveled west
I would have stayed fifteen forever
Sought out breasts with blue arteries
Visible as they pushed from low-cut formals
With molded nipples
Seething semiotic mole
Singing Julie London voices
With Maria Callas passions
Like Isadora Duncan
Spindle legs thrusting forever and the giddiest giggles--

I'd be sucking peaches and honeydew

Crushing cherries and coring pears

Picking grapes for Sauternes and Chablis

Oh yes, I'd tell you more.

I bake bread at twelve tonight.

I must go get some sleep

That I can pay the bills and come back tomorrow.

The Urbane

In the lobby window

Of the simple ornate

Lafayette Hotel's facade

Sit men like me,

Medicare enthusiasts

For the past

Passing the

Of whatever

Makes for the art,

Common enough

For near-do-wells,

Who work hard

Doing nothing

Listen to Herbert Armstrong at five a. m.

Consume H. L. Hunt at noon

Hearing Bach

In Moorish confines

Evening vespers

Half past eight at St. Louis Church

Except certain nights,
When a flute recital is given within the dark
Green marble interior shine of gray
Italianate St. Xavier Church exterior
Where also ravioli dinners
Are served every Sunday afternoon in the undercroft
By affectionate hands of warm fat women
Who listen with deep sympathy
When I shout my dreams
A drop of hope
Watch the papers
Create a great brain
Cascade through the streets
Recognized at long last
Dreams admired
Day after night--
I lost blue-eyed Sara
In nineteen-nineteen to the Spanish flu--
Forgot any resurrection hopes
Taught myself

Latin, Greek, Hebrew
Oiled local school typewriters
Spit letters to the editors
Dim-witted tobacco lumps
Fall on the floor
My angry fires burn
I carry them passionately
Across the street
Daily planning and studying
The papers in the public library--
I hobble on my one leg
The other is on a railroad track
Left New Years of seventeen,
My crutches hop the lights
Eyes and ears perceive
Opinions stewed within bed
Sink and tub in a room
Five per night
Cheaper by the week
I can see everything

Pass Eighth and Vine
Speak of Chaplin and Garbo
Remember another time
When I met Mussolini
Over a bottle of muscatel.
Just like me,
He taught school briefly.
While a postmaster,
Some small town,
One letter in my winter coat
Sent me to prison for two to five.
I learned French from a Canuck.
Oh! Around the corner
Tempest Storm this week
The ornate Gaiety dancing,
One time church,
Not Garbo
She pleases me--
I nibble popcorn
Across the seats runs a roach

Lights go on

Look up

Read Heinrich Heine

Engraved on a tin ceiling

Tolstoy in German

Spoken at the Wheel Cafe

Where sometimes my friends

Spend the day eating breakfast

Before lunch around dinner

Max has a winner in the seventh.

“Old Cal there runs faster still,”

Laughs Max, points to me.

“Oh, it’s true,” I say.

“I played that horse last week.”

All smile at the three year old

In a ballet suite

She dances freely around the floor.

“The bread pudding here is excellent,”

I tell the mother, “The child has style.”

I eat my steak Diane

Green bean almondine
New red potatoes, cornbread.
Occasionally, I take the bus
Dine at noon in my pin striped
Club Diplomat on the hill
A buck and a quarter
Fills with white fish, liver, tongue
All the trimmings
Coffee, tea
One slow whiskey sour
Dorothy mixes personally
Red velour chairs
White tablecloths
A semi-round stage.
Kitty Kallen performs tonight
The Jewel-Box revue next week,
Art imbricates real things,
Mondo Cane last week
Strange people, Madame Nhu.
Many tasks I wish to do

Casper 68

I watch you walk life

Turn here Clark Gable

Play my recorder during the midnight lull

While pigeons coo on window sills.