

Joy Division

These are the happiest days of my life.
There is no fuel or fire in jail.
Speed freaks, with ballerina ankles,
whine, "What's today? Where am I?"
There are no guards named Roxanne.
The bookguy says no to Seuss but screams
"Louis L'Amour" with a FM disc jockey wink.
My family calls everyday. My brother,
insanely seeing meaning everywhere,
tells me mom cries at dusk. I ask
if Ed Meese writes. He says yes,
Ed McMahon, thus certifying my fears.
I must revoke visiting privileges.
The Episcopalians write: most of the minor
stuff is forgiven; I can come back.
I will one day learn to tell the truth
but in the Floridian spaces of this cell
guilt seems smaller than it should
and other gifts come as quickly as sins
and salmonella--Jesus' inverted suntan,
Abdul Lincoln's hairy palms, or
Jim Bob Lickbox's phallic stride.
My tongue is an orchid in the morning.

("Joy Division," cont., no break)

I need logic, not dreams of my hometown
that become colorized and die midway
when shrubbery fades and sirens grow silent.
I hope to transform this tunnelled boredom:
I could call it "Vacationing in Beirut"
and overdub the copters and flashbulbs
at Madonna's wedding. It could taste
like my cat, Dick Nixon, after she trips
in her box. I breathe deeply my world
that closes around like a noose.
With feet squared to the wall
no matter how I move, my shadow stays.

I can't sleep or eat, I lose at checkers,
and guards sing Manilow. Spike Alabama
greet me each morning wearing rouge,
plastic citrus bracelets, and
Snoopy underwear. When I moan
the French for "I'm dying,"
his choirboy face lights and sparkles,
thinking that I asked for toothpaste.
He mugged geriatrics in Beaver Falls
and my heart aches for his left eyeball
that drifts away when he chants Camus
and Erica Jong. The others smirk
or applaud indifferently and then move on
to crack cells and double beds.
My wife writes: "Your son has stopped growing."

("Joy Division," cont., no break)

The meadow is greener. It's too beautiful.
Come home. You'll find me at the neighbor's."
Praying for a stroke I sneak into the infirmary
and beg for percodans. With Spike's razor
I tattoo "free" and "zero" into my knuckles.
Empty IV bottles form a Great Wall of China
around my cot. I erase racial slurs
from the stalls, light M-80's near the warden,
try to unionize the Commies, and receive
an additional hundred years on my sentence.