

On Explaining To The Judge

Why I Drove Over A Pair of Teen-age Blondes

It's not for me to teach lessons:

I drink pale ale, rent porn,
forget to mail alimony, and don't
call back the lady from Student Loans.

That day Broadway was spine-straight
and bone-dry, and the sun was high;
they came from the left, dancing
through the traffic, certain of relations
between legs and concrete earth,
of familiar sights nearing,
and fearless of death.

I wasn't even in a bad mood--

I had just had lunch
with my new lover and for once
I drove slowly. She is nine years
older than these two, but not as blonde
or happy. She has streaks of grey
threatening to engulf her head's canvas
and she stumbles and lisps
when she tells me, please, please, please,
stop sucking my skin. Her right eye
has a tiny brown bleeding hole

(Cont.)

("On Explaining," cont., no break)

and our days are filled
with facial distortions and fears.
What lawyer would represent me?
My car has a dent the size of a thigh.

Do you remember "The Wild One"
when Brando and the boys
whirled into Compton, raised gravel
with their Harleys, winked at moms,
and drank bourbon down in single gulps?
How our fathers shut down stores early,
the high school was boycotted,
our girlfriends licked Marlon's chrome,
and priests practiced
how to roll cigarettes?
Sneer, if you want, Your Honor,
or go with Brando for a ride,
but that's all it would ever be.
The guilt me
forces this confession:
I remember cocky and cross-eyed
Lee Marvin, on his knees,
on Main Street, swallowing dirt
and blood, and I remember Lee,
thirsty, bruised, teaching me
how to drive fast,
to refuse girls most wanted,
using my legs for handlebars.