

## Poetry Series

# Robert C. Rorabeck

- poems -

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**Robert C. Rorabeck (April 10,1978)**

Robert was born in Berrien Springs, Michigan on April 10th 1978. He graduated from Florida State University with a Masters in English Literature in Summer 2003. Two of his poems, Riverwindwolves and Goldilocks and the Spear of Longinus are published in the British Lit. Mag. Monkey Kettle.

## 500

When Dale Earnhardt died,  
I fell in love with NASCAR.  
Delivering pizzas at the time,  
I understood the dangers of the  
Sport: when I saw her jogging, it  
Was very hard to control the car.  
When in the wee hours after  
Saint Patrick's Day a drunken  
Sorority sister invited me into  
Her portico to exchange my  
Pizzas for sex with her, I accepted;  
And inside her boudoir flecked  
With Johnny Depp and Backstreet  
Boys posters, her drunken legs  
Open  
Like a starting line,  
I fell in love with the inevitable  
Speed of life, and the little death  
Inside women, inhaled like  
The moment of breathing,  
Involuntary, like an erection  
And inescapable ruin of the  
Body.  
Running along her backstretch that night,  
I understood what it took to be stock car driver,  
Applying rubber feverishly under her panties,  
Under the night the world circulating in  
A giant socializing oval that sometimes led  
The victory lane of sex.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **A Bearded Lady**

Before I went down to sleep,  
To work for her dreams,  
I knelt and said the prayer to  
Magnum PI and his Jerry  
(because my grandmother loved him  
More than her husband) ,  
Especially in the newly paved places  
Where we go to church there  
Is a righteous rod on the  
Steeple to  
Attract the lightning  
To bring in the people, between  
The doors where my  
Teeth become a yellow  
Sunday graveyard I go  
Out walking up the rainy highway  
Scarred in the mountain there  
Is a lady she is all rose  
Thorns, she spreads those legs  
To me as if she were trying to  
Serve me a drink from them,  
The elk blow their bull horns,  
And the night on her hillside  
Is a radio  
And the clouds are its sounds,  
The music my feet make  
As they go underground;  
As it marches all toward me,  
The eyes of these things,  
They are opening the thoughts in  
Me  
That I thought before  
Were sold-out.  
After school all 10 kids were  
Dead before their bodies hit  
The ground,  
When their parents drove in  
Circles  
Making the color of noises  
After school  
What a circus!

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **A Flower In The Rain**

I want to fall on you like a flower  
In the rain  
Opening new reason from you  
Scaring all the old bees away from  
Pollinating your bed  
Scaring all the fake men off who  
Can only stand the sun  
So it's just me and you in the  
Meadow  
The rabbits in the hole  
The grasses are wet and beginning to bow  
The forest is damp and sleepy  
And in the meadow  
I bend down and kiss your petals wetly  
Falling all over you  
Letting your pistil slip into my mouth  
Sucking off your honey,  
Almost plucking you  
But not going so far  
Just pulling you so that you can feel  
Your roots leaving  
To let you almost taste  
My world in the sky  
So afterwards you can go down  
Believing  
The words on my lips  
When I fall on my knees for you  
A flower in the rain.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## A New Year And Beowulf Is Dead

New Years,  
Cyclical like the Anglo-Saxons,  
Her monthly period, presidential elections,  
A night (like all the others spent, droning)  
Rolls on, the completion of a circuit, circular,  
Pointless, indistinguishable from the rest with  
Their eyes fawning and making love in the forest,

As the streets under the atmosphere  
(speared by the aerobuses starting and landing in  
The compacted dream) under the stars, always the stars  
(sung to by the multitude, by the  
Minor poets- and I amidst the  
Howl, being lost to her, being drowned out  
By the undertow of all the middle-class  
Traffic of this sloppy dictionary at my hands)  
When her legs are done with the  
Buck,  
When the show is over, and she has cleaned off  
(when they can still  
Find me at the very back of me, but if they go down  
That deep inside me they will be lost with  
Me and drowned like the misplaced diver  
In the submarine before they are out of me) ,  
before the yellow eyes close,  
Like the median telling you  
Not to cross,  
I watch the middle-school kids on  
TV,  
Who are smarter and better tuned than me,  
Spelling words I can't remember (which lubricated  
Me) televised before their first erection,  
(when I am on my second glass on the sofa,  
Already ejaculated into the green carpet of memory) ,  
Pull off erections to the sad president,  
The urban sprawl nightmare,  
They've made pyramids out of her sheets  
And are playing pirates:  
As, across country, younger and  
Younger body parts are being found  
Inside dumpsters (As, she is sure that no one  
Loves her) ,  
My young cousin, Tyler, has won a  
Spot on the Orange Bowl  
Half-Time show, she's  
About 5, and already she's  
Being taught to swing around the  
Pole pantiless,  
Foaming at the mouth,  
For the fame of her sex, the ultimate privilege  
After the Roanoke Virginia mystery left unsolved for  
300 years,

And the green of the bankroll left uncut  
And unpaid for since the time of the dinosaurs  
Under the sun,

As the hurricanes pick up,  
(As Zeta appears on our radars,  
Like the sad caves carving the rest on me  
In the great calcium monoliths removed to the back  
Of my mind) ,  
And drop the windowless  
Chambers of the farm house on the witch,  
Like the drought of the early 20th century,  
We all stand from our seats and cheer (and pay)  
The spectacle,  
The lidless monster flickering in ash

Year less, I have no home  
And no destination to dock success inside,

As the sun rises, Beowulf is dead,  
The cycle is complete and headless (sure  
To come around again and eat itself with the  
pulp fiction, the reticulated python of the masses) :

They strap his body to the front of the  
Grill and spit some Spanish slang on his remains,  
And raise him like a god,  
Before the sirens and the repeating lights  
Of the city this new year.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **A Witch Defeats A Paladin**

my god  
I invade the privacy of witches  
check the drawers to see how many rubbers you've  
had inside you  
while I was in Colorado  
14,000 feet up, wanting to fuck  
rings of sunlight which ascend  
in golden rain  
Oh, if you could have seen  
mountains  
upon the rolling shores of my reddening plain  
you would have not been so jealous, you would have slept  
like a cat in my lap  
and we'd had rolled forth to  
Alaska  
Instead you used sewing needles to pierce  
my throat  
and cut me from  
your crippling ship  
You said you didn't fuck him, not yet,  
and not that you didn't want to,  
but there was only one condom in  
That suspicious drawer—  
meticulously placed for show,  
The box behind it was empty  
I dreamed I loved you,  
but then he was there  
with you in the dark  
and under your skirt  
Now I am left with the need to explore  
the laborious slopes of another's body  
to swim like angels  
into the flesh  
She is a vagrant and a truant  
but at least she doesn't pretend to  
love me  
and doesn't place condoms  
there  
as if she were arranging  
dinnerware.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **A Woman At My Door**

I need a woman at my  
door to drive home to  
some long honey momma  
who will love me  
simply and cook frijoles for me  
a woman I can lie  
down on the couch with  
and just love appreciate her silhouette  
a red earth woman who  
always wants to sleep  
all night long careless in my arms  
a woman who miraculously  
will not look at  
other men to judge  
them sexually or not sexually worthy  
a woman who likes my face  
and the lines and briars it takes  
and doesn't mind  
that the paint flecks  
from my truck when it  
gets up past fifty-five and  
doesn't care how long  
my hair gets  
a woman who can  
show me new ways  
to religion and introduce  
me to this world  
again the right way this time  
and might not care or be concerned  
that I write poetry good  
or bad about her  
or question my questioning  
of capitalism's excess waste  
and this fucked up interpretation  
of Judeo-Christian religion  
that supports it  
a woman who will work  
beside me  
breathe and live on  
my ribs  
kiss me deeply  
with her pretty  
lips  
show off her  
self only to me  
in new lingerie look good  
forgives my atheisms  
shows me how to  
light candles for  
Catholicism reminds  
me of those old  
great saints

who saw god in everything  
wet comes at me like  
bright news like  
bathing my eyes with light  
and doesn't come  
until I come  
lets me use my  
tongue longs  
all day for our  
bed gives me  
head rides  
horses with me  
in those green sea  
washed valleys that  
split the land like  
a woman when she  
takes me back to  
the classic forest  
to let me swim in the  
pool the moon  
birthed her in and  
then to sleep all  
night inside her flesh  
when she sleeps  
with me entwined  
in a tree.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Abuse

Placate the brush of the hand; it's easy  
inside your fingers you have thoughts  
growing and there is like a  
thousand sea vessels going  
atoms swarming on you; take  
the body to God's level and you  
can see the swarm; it's why  
you're always so upset- every bit  
of you is up in action, wanting to  
fuck things up; pieces of you are falling off  
on the plate of the plane  
just like you scrape thoughts  
off on the line of this  
page- under the sun, parts of  
your thoughts evaporate-  
your fingerprint on someone's  
flesh reminds them of riding  
bicycles through bits of sun  
as kids around the old neighborhood-  
they call you a solid? My god,  
I can see right through you-  
your bones are invisible in  
heat hard white loaded  
everything on you has eyes  
and you are falling off to  
love the bed the walls of  
the room outside airing  
bits of you float up  
balloons- there are pieces  
of you on the fucking moon!  
there are pieces of you  
going about on the trade winds-  
there are pieces of you at the bottom  
of the abyssal sea: and your  
body is busy, handling,  
masturbating, recreational  
building more tiny, crazy, chaotic  
bits tomorrow you might shave  
in the mirror recognize  
it, but you have fallen off  
last night and this is the strange  
ghost of the new day  
like when your ears swallow  
music, they take it like a  
pill and they think new thoughts  
that god scrapes from your  
skull to clean out the room  
potted plant: you are an  
elaborate swarm, so loose you  
might fall through the  
floor swarming beneath you  
fall through the liquid world

fall through her like you  
never were your body  
coming apart the bits of it  
forgetting to love  
you come undone like abuse  
coming off into the multitude  
biomolecular wreckage  
crowding the ghost towns and  
graveyards of God's amnesia

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Almost Nation**

I have the Almost Nation in the back of my throat,  
All the armies gathered and defeated who would once  
Have rallied forth to capture her, and to tell her those  
Voluptuous words which grow in fair gardens or hang upon  
The delicate flesh of the youngest women,

All those failed ghosts are caught in me, all the fish  
That Jesus forgot to catch in his nets before the Romans  
And the Jews caught him, his father forsook him,  
And he realized the terminal mortality of all men  
After the Spear of Longinus made a river flow  
From his side, and his eyes became dim, rolling like  
The sea one last time upon Mary Magdalene.

So, I grit my teeth and make my home far away  
Deep within caves within caves, the farther back you  
Go the bluer the blackness becomes, so  
I have returned to my mother, but nothing is made  
Up, for inside here is Plato's Ultimate Form, the illusion  
Of illusions demystified and ugly in its nudity; this  
And all that she saw when she hung up my phone  
And crawled into his bed.

Now I swallow my soul and grit my teeth,  
And from this porch I can see the revolution of  
Far away spheres, their small orbits, when they turn away  
From me, and when they come towards me; and sometimes  
One of the delicate night's decorations will fall, a  
Blazing fire shot down, a God dying, and  
I will watch it come down into me, for me to swallow it,  
The thing that once was but now is lost,  
Inside me the Almost Nation.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Ambulance

When you are on the highway  
going down the lines like  
words of the poem pull over  
for the ambulance her red light  
district swirling, but she'll only  
take in her wounded men  
with poor hearts and gaping chest wounds  
watch her like a red elephant on parade  
like a Christmas tree lit up her automobile  
is the speedy whore of service-  
here she comes, pull over for  
her- it's the law so she can get to politicians  
quicker- she is about to engulf a injured man,  
like alcohol- she is about to  
resurrect the dead  
pull over and wait for the gory  
scene cross the lines and  
put your eyes on that mess listen to her  
scream the ambulance screws  
toward you a battle cry a  
rebel soldier charging a blue  
hillside let her through don't  
let her see your rusty  
underside, don't let her get a whiff  
of your potential wound, or she will take you along  
let her whine on through  
let her come and let her go  
and then put your foot on the gas  
collect your thoughts note the angulations of the sun  
begin to think again about the movie you just  
saw, let her slip on past, trying to forget dead  
love no longer think of the ambulance  
she's picking up another man worse off than you  
how she bled past you for him and didn't but notice you  
how she screamed on this valley through the mountains  
how she hummed murder, and didn't hide her lust for  
her job do not think of the mess she is going to pick up  
to rush to the hospital to replenish him in her bed,  
or to send him on the further journey to the morgue,  
packing with him a new marble color/ think instead of  
the parts the doll's head down in the pasture  
the forgot arrowheads in the red earth in the hills  
do not think of Vietnam just  
Drive on,  
Drive on.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Antechamber of Your 17th Vertebra

At the certain hour after the country has  
finished its bath it goes downstairs  
to its room and towels off in the dark corner  
kneels beside the bed the sun is under it  
when the cats are on the fence and the  
boxers have finished lacing up their gloves  
and the country says a prayer to its manager  
and goes down to sleep while  
David Letterman is amusing two people  
in the living room but the rest of us  
have opened the door between our ears  
and taken the stairwell deep down in  
our throat through to our secretly decorated  
dens dimly lit antechambers just south of  
the 17th vertebra filled with the selected  
ghosts we wish to drink with that particular night  
you walk over in the room and fill the  
glass of an ex-lover with gin and watch her eyes  
she has him in their candle's flame,  
but she promises one drink with you before  
she leaves if only because there's John Wayne  
playing pool with Kurt Cobain and  
Pocahontas is sprawled out naked  
on the Indian rug with Princess Diane  
they are doing the hum of your dreams  
the dead people who you've thought about  
opening through you taking leaps from your open  
jaw drooling on the pillow pretending you know them  
you sit with the rest of your country on the divan  
to watch the interaction of selected parts held up  
with you in the backyard of your mowed gut;  
a religious person might call this room your soul,  
but you figure it is actually a strange inner-body  
void that connects you to the bohemianism of  
an early 20th century impressionistic French cabaret  
in which you imagine leggy courtesans walking up  
and down the nightlife in the Montmartre district  
of Paris through the ten year old interplay of  
adolescent eyes across a South Florida courtyard  
in your high school drunk on vodka the last day before  
Spring Break when someone sets off a quarter-stick  
of dynamite near where you've been quietly  
dancing drunk, watching a special ed. African  
American girl smiling at you, believing in the  
beauty of a single extra chromosome, like a new  
born puppy dog/ when the principal and the  
circus midget hustle over to you  
on the stage with the leggy dancing French  
women doing the high-step, asking if you saw anything/  
when you hold your breath and don't  
declare that you most certainly saw the  
ghost of Baudelaire hang-gliding in

a static capture in a deliberate spot  
30 feet above you trying to outdo Jesus/  
and because Vodka don't smell, and you've  
been drinking it out of a two liter Sprite bottle,  
the establishment and circus clowns leave you  
alone but next year Mrs. Inglis expels you from  
High-school yearbook staff, but not after you've  
posed for pictures in all the clubs you  
were never in like swimming, track and field, canoeing,  
scuba diving, chess, checkers, and Chinese water polo,  
science, mathematics, aerodynamics, the Young Conservatives  
Clubs of America United Against the Kennedys and Gay Marriage,  
and The Gay and Lesbian Cat Tranquilizer Sex Club/  
relaxing back in the static room  
30 feet inside your chest you  
realize Princess Diane and Pocahontas  
have gone off to find someplace inside you that is private/  
and the ghost of your ex-lover has dissolved back  
into the current body of a current lover's bed undoubtedly surrounded  
by the manicured lawns of her newly adorned cock with good paint  
job/ and all that remains in your soul is a pool table with  
unfamiliar eyeballs blinking in Morris Code  
at your back/ when you saddle-up to the bar  
and finish off a bottle of whiskey with the ghosts of  
John Wayne and Johnny Cash  
with Baudelaire drunk under the table serenading you  
little bits of beautiful poems until the morning dawns.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Appomattox

In bed with the early morning shadows  
bleeding the night into another killing  
where glorious colors like afterbirth flows  
in nebular jets into the horizon's bowl,  
revealed, I have the presentiment that my  
life will fail, and rising against my Northern  
dreams, I secede against their human impulse  
of hope, and the cities inside me scream,  
"You will never have her. She will never love you! "  
and through me a million men suddenly  
charge into battle, slamming into each other  
like tectonic plates mounting inside my body; after  
a few bloody seconds there is a fissure running  
through my forehead and over 650,000  
of them fall dead, and my deep southern  
thoughts fall down like sweat to the oppression  
of my continuing hope for her; many of the  
confederates are hanged, the remainder forced  
to sign their lives away in indentured  
servitude in the back of my mouth, never to  
be spoken out loud; and so I go to sleep in the  
North, victorious, the day beginning its bloom  
in the low cut bodice of a harlot, my last words  
being, "She will be mine. She will love me."

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Barren Room

I shall never feel her body's  
rush  
the long slow pain she  
has inside her  
it is no longer for me  
she is now the strange  
vegetation  
the distant pornography  
again the lady on the  
street  
that goes down the way  
without brushing me  
she no longer yearns for  
my body's heat  
she left the furnace  
unlit  
naked she goes out of my  
house into the snow  
to die or find another  
she does not care which  
only that she is through  
with me  
before she started  
she is the startling ice on the  
lake  
she is the fog on the  
mountains gone before I awake  
her heart is ethereal  
on another man's plate  
her eyes hiss for him  
her body is a heat mirage  
for him  
when I have gone onto the frost  
pasture to follow  
her she has gone down to  
him and the wind has  
covered up for her  
leaving me to stagger  
lost, orphaned to the  
night and the loneliness,  
my barren room

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Become

It's time to leave now,  
Before the last Christian dies,  
The way I am dying; it's time  
To take up all the few things I  
Know and walk away—Sylvia  
Plath stuck her head in the oven  
And turned it on, so I can do it.  
I can't stay here with the last  
Christian after the sun has died  
And all the lights are turned out,  
Still waiting for Jesus, still  
Believing. I have to work these  
Bones, because she never loved  
Me, and I always was alone,  
So I must move upon this earth  
As the days grow hotter and  
The tears run in floods, I must  
Go toward her and forsake  
The ark, the forgotten  
Goddess who hears my name  
As the wind whispers through the  
Leaves of trees still high upon the  
Mountains. I must escape the cities  
And find her there, alone, naked,  
To make love one final time  
To a truth no one else sees, there  
I will disappear near the summit  
Of the highest peak and become.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Beds of Concrete**

Her eyes the  
Deep deep aqueducts  
The sunlight skated on  
Like water spiders  
And beautiful couples  
Never revealing  
The murdered love  
Down so very deep

The skeletons peeling  
Inside  
The rusting landrover  
Flipped over against  
The bed of concrete

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Biomolecular Sex**

While I was thinking of  
another girl's atoms  
and how even  
though distant from her  
I had touched her  
once or twice on the cheek  
and how bits of her skin  
must have come off  
like invisible apples  
and mingled around with  
my bits  
and all those bits dancing  
and having posotronic sex  
before my eyes like  
unseen ballerinas you  
were playing Little Red Riding Hood  
in a dark forest of books  
thinking of your high-school  
crush-  
you'd fuck anyone  
and not even care about their atoms,  
just to get rid of me  
when I some  
dysfunctional Plato  
was content to feel  
the unfelt flesh  
of my dear love-dryad-  
from a distance  
let her envelop me  
with subatomic particles  
and let her eyes and organs  
revolve like hurricanes  
inside my head, a flashing  
galaxy of her parts,  
but I wasn't cheating  
you had to go and get  
fucked by some  
booky, hook-nosed nobody  
and I bet you  
didn't even think of  
the tiny bits of him  
floating around your head  
in our bedroom  
you destroyed  
with his cum  
overspilling your vagina  
like rainwater in a  
barrel.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Blackbeard**

You were my fiancé  
And I loved your cleavage  
Milky in the phosphorescent  
Hiss of kerosene lights  
Burning like a fuse  
So close to your flesh  
But the night when Blackbeard  
Came in, you swooned  
You left me and straddled  
Him at the bar  
And served him  
Rum the color of sunset  
Dripping from the inlet  
of your breasts  
Shallow waters where  
His black lips swam  
And you let yourself drip  
Down his long unruly beard  
That frightened the men  
And tickled the women  
And all the lights turned out  
In my head  
Like a ship sinking,  
Cut on the rocks,  
I turned very grim  
I resolved to kill the pirate,  
But when I came up to him,  
Fists clenched, face set,  
He just chuckled heartily  
In a motion like a drunken sea,  
He twisted around and gave me  
The boot  
And made you laugh and squeal  
When he pinched your flesh  
And kissed your cheeks  
He sent me rolling out with  
The other artisans  
Into the humid salt air of  
The night exhaled from the sea-  
I made to go back in  
but my brothers held me back-  
When I looked, you were already  
Topless your flesh open to  
The famous pirate who only  
A week before had capture the  
Port of Charleston-  
You were so impressed,  
You undid your self for him  
And slid like a salacious mermaid  
Between his thighs-  
Completely devastated,  
I went across the street to

### The Dry Bean

I got drunk on cheap rum  
And crawled down to the docks  
To drown myself,  
But I fell asleep instead.  
In the morning the gulls flying  
Through sunlight awoke me  
And there you were  
Walking in Blackbeard's arms to  
The Queen Anne's Revenge  
Your eyes were hostages in love  
And so pressed against his body,  
His unruly black beard fell in your  
Blouse, coarse hair scraping against  
Your softness,  
And I knew then that night before  
That he had had you many times  
Slippery from rum and coconut butter,  
Feeling you like the steerage of a new  
Vessel  
Though you had said to me with a kiss  
That you were saving your womanhood  
For the night we were wed-  
The hung-over sunlight of that new  
Terrible day showed me how you had  
Changed for him in love,  
A devilish cutthroat who had plundered  
You out from under me-  
I did not stay to watch the ceremony  
On his ship  
I went right away to get drunk  
And then I went and signed up for  
The Queen's Navy,  
But my brothers told me he did marry  
You that day on that ship, and then he slipped  
Into you, making you swoon as he took  
You to his private quarters  
He made love to you for two weeks in port  
Only to leave you compromised,  
In a needing position,  
Stranded, immobile,  
Helpless and weeping as you watched him go  
Did he promise to come back for you some day,  
To steal you away once more?  
Your belly crawling with his bastard  
Seed  
I suppose you broke down then,  
Tore at yourself and meant to heave yourself  
Into the natural force of the sea,  
But the other whores pulled you back,  
Though they were weeping too  
To see their captain leave

Word around Nassau was you  
Came looking for me, a far second  
When only weeks before I'd been your first,  
Wanting me back  
But I had joined the naval forces  
Under Governor Rogers  
Whose sworn purpose was to hunt down  
And garret Blackbeard  
They gave me new clothes and a pistol  
They ordered me into a new life which  
I gladly took, since you'd  
Destroyed the one I left with your frivolity  
I became a sailor in Her Majesty's  
Armada,  
My heart pierced from you infidelity  
From your one lasting night with him  
My eyes a stormy birth  
I left your needing for the sea  
Chasing after the man who had forever  
Stolen you away from me for two week's game,  
For the rest of my life,  
Hurricanes, my wrath,  
I would end your love for him and stop  
His for you with a bullet plugging his heart  
I would take his scalp and go home to show  
You and his child the prize I had made myself  
From your cheating,  
but when I came  
To his frigate he shot us down with cannon  
Bucks from his broadsides,  
And I nearly drowned,  
Sinking to the coral deeps  
With your anchor chained about my middle,  
When I emerged I was a ghost,  
Fretful, destroyed, I threw down the  
Badges of my past  
Hearing Blackbeard's laughter,  
I walked far inland away from your sea.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Blueprints To The Banshee**

I cleaned myself in the shower  
And thought of the sea upset by  
The hurricanes cast outward from god,  
I followed the blueprints to the  
Banshee-  
To where the rocks part in the  
Unreachable kiss of two things always  
Moving away,  
In that isolated throat where there  
Is autumn,  
And she is always there, her  
Breasts the twin mounds where Rome  
Was founded in the dropping twilight  
Where her pups play and nip amidst the  
Shoals of the falling ocean around  
The tree that is also falling,  
Phosphorescent leaves the  
Crippled angels of dreams for her,  
Shot and clipped they surrender into  
The pools,  
Waiting around my feet  
As I stare into her across the  
Gulf of the dying storm that is  
Wildly blowing eastward and  
Away.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Boothill

Now the words are thrown out  
Ashes of the dead beloved to scatter  
From where the breathing look  
Across the desert atmosphere.  
Here, where pedals soon come to wilt  
After the crowds of distant families  
Disperse, the words lay thirstily  
Upon their backs with open throats,  
Waiting for the generosity of the  
Universal bartender, but it does  
Not rain for them. They are laid  
In the row of tombstones jutting  
From the jaws of Boothill,  
And their ghosts do not speak to them,  
The way their mothers once did when  
They were still young and learning their voice.  
They are the empty center of this town  
Which moves the way ants do— never away  
From their work, the forgotten dreams  
And ancestors their unattended to garden,  
Beautiful bones that once displayed lips  
left to scatter by the  
Elements, the cold things, the only  
Things that bother to brush them,  
Scraping away the entirety of their meaning,  
Until they are caught up in the earth  
And twisted under the boots of the workers,  
The only things to remain, marching, accounting to  
The government, and the words, the unblemished  
Memories that once touched the fingertips of lovers  
Lay barren and muted, scattered upon their dry hill.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Branded

Anything can be purchased  
Inside 7 seconds:  
Hard-ons, hangovers,  
And Happy-Meals  
Here in America's  
Drive-thru (Dear God)  
We are all up for sale  
Our love-lives are commercials  
Selling our loin's lettuce,  
Product placements  
We drive around with our children,  
We remove their heads early and cheap  
With pacifying machetes /free trade genocide/  
And tattoo them with the  
Billboards of our  
Gods/ Headless, driving over the land  
The tin herds run on  
The sheer surface under the sun/  
Everything is the constant motion  
As this sphere is sold,  
Bodies moving and pretending  
To succeed in getting things done,  
Like trees playing around  
In the storm

The marketplace trembles  
Opening 24 hr. systems of thought  
Dedicated to the cycles of deliberation  
We work and celebrate under,  
The categorizations of the day to better ourselves:  
The gated community, the name-brand  
Purchased and inspected by the well-manicured  
Hand moving around and around like  
A pair of roller-skates under the sparkle of  
Dead skins draping our shadows in a  
Pretending light.

Branded:

Spread across the cock as it shoots and  
Stains, wasted in the cement when  
Bastard things continue to grow  
Neon lights blazing the filament garden,  
Our heads beginning the steady drift together,  
The tide of buying and selling,  
The natural selection of this community  
(And I so God-damned estranged to it!)  
Taught to us, pitched into us like the Spear  
Of Longinus from every angle available:  
The hideous beautiful torture available to us,  
Like bolts from Medieval crossbows  
Quilled in skulls, like eager housewives

Warming to the false brightness, the gentle  
Death of the shopping mall, the flytrap-  
Middle-Class concentration camps

Their men fat, balding,  
With great flatulence from  
Sunday afternoon chips and guacamole,  
While they watch College football,  
The useless education of the State that  
Schooled them,

Propaganda in the kitchen:  
Their women the beautiful shells,  
The plastic dolls  
With multitudinous curves,  
Like a highway shooting it's  
Body northwards along California's  
Coast,  
That allows them to slip down  
The road like silver-gilled  
Fish  
Their bounding boobs  
And fat blue lips  
Catching my eye

As they crawl in and out  
Of their shells.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Bright New Cars**

They decorated the star-well  
Until they became the center  
Of gravity's loose attention  
And all the eyes of their peers  
Shone toward them like Cadillacs  
Falling headfirst down a sinkhole  
Through the highway/  
They went to bed naked and  
Had ceaseless love until their  
Sheets became like the heavenly  
Layers leading up to God,  
Stained and bleeding

Who promoted them to  
Squad leaders, put a down payment  
On their house in a gated and well-lit  
Community  
And bought them both bright  
New cars.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Broken Apart By The Waves

You get home and take a  
Shower trying to wash off the  
Molten day, how the sun has made love  
To you and is now done with you;  
The way it flooded around you:  
The swarms of eyes and tongues  
Directing with noise and implication  
The thoughts, desires, and rejections.  
Each day awakening,  
Arising up from the oily bed  
Into the old but always triumphant furnace  
The body aching: the teeth throbbing  
In bloody gums, the skin chapped and  
Burning, blemishes under a mask of  
Promises, the joints twisted and rusty,  
Squealing like old gates and rodents,  
The flesh weak and changing,  
The simple, repeated needs of the  
Animal repeatedly thudding like your  
Heartbeat  
Getting dressed, moving out of the  
Door and into your car,  
Turning the keys in the ignition  
Deliberately starting the day,  
Remembering the faces who wait to judge you,  
Driving on the mercurial sphere, drowning  
In the rich and disgusting layers of  
Polluted gravity and polluted oxygen,  
God's hands pressed upon you,  
Knowing Religion is the cheep out  
Of a weak mind  
Who follows it's own shadow  
Down dead-end caves-  
By the time it comes back up,  
Everything is sold and everyone has  
Gone home for the evening;  
Your father deciding to have a  
Son, so he fucks your  
Mom and out you come,  
His ascendancy, his hope,  
The successor of grief and the  
Family business  
With the eyes scrutinizing hard upon  
The flesh, your mother the very worst,  
The knuckles flickering white-hot  
Around you,  
The undertow taking you  
Further and further,  
Stretching you until you  
Become the dissolution of  
A self broken apart  
By the waves.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Delaware

A same old night in the city  
Shedding like a river of holidays the  
Preciously bought lights of movement  
Pale and heavenly bodies  
Revolving forward and missing,  
The shift of direction,  
Even more akin to the delicate veins  
Inside us, the precious mineral inherent to blood  
Depleting only to surge forth again,  
A cavalry charge,  
The purpose of continents, lungs,  
And women giving themselves the  
Chance to look again:

This the two lanes of traffic moving  
With the direction and drive of red  
Ants through the dusty body of their hills.

Jammed into the places they've  
Been made.

Here,  
The old cat is on the roof tonight  
Pawing the meaningless motion above my head  
Then resting, trying to  
Lick itself into  
Heraclitus' river;  
Here in Lake Worth the  
Electricity finally comes back on  
Two weeks after the hurricane,  
And everything is the same and  
Moving again

And I have to look at everyone's  
Face again,  
Most horribly my own  
Before I can forget and pass away  
Like Christianity  
To become the expanse of materialist wasteland  
My mind the repeated batter in servitude,  
A zygote born to die incomplete  
And needy in a spasming orifice:  
After all this time I've forgotten  
To take account of things,  
Inviting the creditors to come  
Pillaging in me like Conquistador  
Virgins eager for a first time  
And ever after exchange  
In 3 piece suites  
With bags of ice and posed relief  
Hiding agendas and papers to sign  
With fire axes behind their backs

Waiting in line-

I lay on the bed and let  
Them on me and all over the  
Furniture they dropp their DNA  
In a dazzling miasma excreted from  
The fornication of this life  
Like pollen dripped from the bee  
Wasted from flower to flower  
All over the furniture and especially spread  
Across the bed  
Pistil stained I see ghosts of  
Her opening every door every day she's getting  
Out of the shower  
Undressing the way specters do  
Before them:  
Too fast and speeding down the  
Interstate,

A reckless waste of gasoline  
Spilled from the lips

I don't know her, but my mind  
Keeps falling back down into  
The luscious sinkhole of a brain  
Destroying 3 lanes on I-95  
Dreaming of 3 bedroom  
2 bath sex spread eagle willingly  
Rings on ring fingers,  
bones and flesh pressed like flowers saved in a book,  
And all those middle-class values,  
Cheap wishes that come true:  
The possibilities of Feng Shui  
A lottery of Pre-Socratic philosophy  
Clothed in Judeo-Christianity  
With Jesus still fresh and on the  
Hunt for a star on the walk of fame;  
All of this laid down the suburban lanes  
Like paradise

So far away from me

I see her in the blue revelry  
In the expanse of tomorrow's  
Wetness, an ocean reaching for her.

I sate the hunger for her  
With  
An expensive hooker called in  
After mom and dad have left  
With their racehorse for  
Delaware to place in in the stakes/

She has Pape tattooed  
On the nape of her back like the  
Graffiti on the side of a building  
Given up in the ghetto  
That keeps staring at me  
After she tells me to  
Do it to her doggy style  
So she and I can finish and  
Move on to the next lovely boy  
Homeless for a night under the dark overpass;  
She's the first Latino I've  
Been with, but she tastes the  
Same (and puts my score  
Up in the double digits)

Now the waves crown,  
Rush and come to us  
On the beach, the city  
Is panting,  
Tortoises  
whores  
Wasted and dark swimming  
In the water's orgasm  
ignited  
and  
We ignore it;  
The sea spills away from it  
Like her hair falling in  
The sink of a vociferous garden  
Outwardly beckoning me,  
As if I were a classic hero  
With a sword able to do something,

I think of brushing her hair  
In a bed next to her.

But both the cat on the roof  
And Heraclitus are liars,  
And Zeno knows I will  
Never reach her,  
But the tree next door  
Still whispers

Her name

To me:

There she is and here  
Am I,  
Two ends of an ever  
Extending line.

When I get a day off work  
I go to the movie theatre  
To break the law, remaining  
There all day  
Falling in love with the  
Dark emptiness and the illusion  
Of light,  
Attainment flickering flatly  
Magical before me,

As if she were bared there  
The two us dreaming together,  
A Zoetrope of  
Children suspended forever  
In a black and white film,  
The revolving carousel  
Holding hands and laughing through  
The disguises of Halloween, pictures of forgotten  
Relatives taken in rapid succession  
Before the world could change us  
Into the inescapability  
Of a paused existence.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Dissolving

Your roots never charmed me  
I did my best  
to prefer the silence of numbers  
laid out so I could see them  
on my bed  
the failures  
show up on my hangdog  
face  
eaten into  
scorpions  
the burrowing of my  
fears for you,  
the hunger in my gut  
for life  
on the dead plane  
OH GOD  
the life's bastard  
I have you inside me  
dehydrated  
sunk, wounded  
righteous  
we both need HER  
water inside us  
OH GOD I can see her  
for 3 days now  
fucking a big strong man,  
occasionally thinking of  
me  
the #s I need out on my  
bed, I need her to solve,  
since the watering hole  
of high school I've needed  
her  
since I saw her legs take  
off on the runway  
since she showed me  
her pistol  
and claimed to be some  
great deciduous mathematician  
seeded with numbers  
the snow of chaos  
in her eyes  
her legs the easy reason  
the swollen fulfillment  
of my needing  
bed  
empty  
bottomless  
the night strains me  
silence harasses me  
and she repeats  
in my eyes

scrolling  
like a bad reception  
human desire  
divine creation  
I swore not to  
when I looked at my face  
I know I cannot  
OH GOD  
I need her roots in  
me, dripping sweat from  
flesh  
arms spreading on me  
and her eyes back to  
the origins  
planning  
understanding  
solving dissolving  
me.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Dreams

Those are the littlest bits of  
things, the color of God's  
Eyes too dangerous for a  
Man to touch, for brought  
Up to his heart  
They would cause it at first to  
Cry and then to bleed,  
But there in the rainless gutter,  
Where they lie like a stained-glass  
Mural, shattered,  
And no longer describable,  
The heat coiling upon them  
Like poisonous snakes,  
As the cars drive by in schools,  
In Scottsdale, AZ, those are  
The littlest bits of things.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Drifters

Long ago two people made  
Love, with their eyes long steady,  
Flesh and bones pressed, in mid April,  
Two days after my birthday— at 8,000  
Feet above sea level it snows in the  
White Mountains where I finished my  
Work early to have time enough to  
Think about dead relations facing eastwards and the  
Marble tombstones that ornament their  
Skulls on far away hills like crowns or trophies with  
Birds fluttering hollow-boned and darting shadows along  
The cemetery's black iron gates, as I open  
A popular book beneath a cloud smothered sun.  
I look up and dad has brought home a  
Drifter named Joe to help with the  
Horses—19 pregnant mares whinny amidst  
The pines before the hillside slopes steadily  
Down to Highway 180— Joe was walking  
The 60 miles between here and Showlow,  
Singing songs to his newborn son, his eyes  
Following the line of highway to a home unseen—  
Now, 27, Joe sleeps in the room near mine,  
And when Grandmother comes this Sunday,  
She will greet us both the same, and pretend  
To worry that I didn't go to Japan to teach,  
And say now, it is too late. I will smile because  
I can not explain to her, like an Indian who  
Passes through the boundaries of another man's  
World, those things, beautiful extinct  
Animals, which can only be sought in the  
Frosted steps miles above the world's highest  
Mountain.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Drunken Ambers**

Amber hair which ends dip drunkenly  
In amber beer,

Frame amber eyes which gaze drunkenly  
Through the diffuse, swimming light,

Move in intoxicating currents, swaying oceanic  
Alongside the patrons' tilting continents,  
Where they collide like yellow ships disembarked  
Without crews, drunken boats  
Who dock up to amber  
Haired barmaids back in port through early morning

All the heavens smashed,  
Slanted angels sing,

Winds grasp their steerage, directed by drowsy fates

Overfilled vessels,  
Spilling

Her lips brush his amber hair, her amber eyes  
Roam across his brown skin, dimpled chin lifts up to say a  
Word to his ear and her inebriated tongue writhes forth like  
A creature from its bright shells to taste last  
Night's beer, numbly, for the last time  
On his amber lips.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Dying of the Fourth World**

I saw the parade of envious dreams  
Board the colorless ship with fish bone  
Sails and the tigers the color of cold amber,  
The way you looked up from the  
Other side of the glass as it began to rain  
To where things began to move across  
The empty sea, and you tried to breathe,  
Like distant people lighting up momentarily  
To hold each other and failing, so the  
World opened up to the great things  
Feeding near the bottom, and I watched  
My infancy go down the maelstrom, the  
Animal's screams like a ship full of slaughtered infants  
Somewhere far across the world where  
Everything was the same as this neighborhood,  
Destroyed, the prophecy stood fulfilled,  
And from the thrashing waves raised the great totem  
Of the drunken Indians dead in the gutters of the reservations,  
At the apex the wisest of the Hopis beat their breasts  
To the dying of the fourth world.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Energy Left Over

Each of us is the decaying  
Static of the initial  
Action each of us is  
Resonating outward from  
The center a metamorphosis  
Of the first energy  
The great fucking bang  
That explodes in  
Us still  
Reverberating to a point of  
Singularity we are a  
Defined to return to  
And though our  
Decadal ideologies  
Tell us we can do  
Great things with our minds  
And our morality plays warn us  
That we get to choose  
Our black and white  
Paths there is not  
A single one of us  
Who can step beyond  
That sufficient energy  
That is not just inside us  
But the wave and hum  
That we are still resonating  
Busily outward  
From the center not knowing  
How quickly we are to  
Collapse back into the  
Great black pit  
Where those nothing dogs  
Nip and gnaw our bones  
As they are destined to  
So are we predestined  
To live upon the line  
That we are space and  
Time stretched out from  
The center and us a  
Manifestation of that initial  
Incredible action we are  
Going nowhere but outward  
In our decaying energy  
We scream for  
Personal freedom  
Lost to our society  
And all of this still  
Only a desperately  
Kicking wave of red shift  
Shooting outward all  
Of us God's first  
Breath

And with inhalation  
Eternal death  
Forever until  
God breathes us  
Again.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Esquidilla

Words on the cherry trees  
bring out the eyes  
of the mountain lions  
who strut prehistorically  
through the fire sewn  
aspen groves on the back  
of the Buffalo Mountain,  
Esquidilla, a high lady  
of rocks rises nakedly  
from the white Arizona  
plane of blistering sun  
and sadistic desert cactus  
where once the conquistadors  
passed her in a trail of  
glinting armor ants to the  
city of gold the city of their  
bloody bone meal  
watched by the lady Esquidilla  
laying naked on her couch of  
the world the mother of earth  
waiting centuries surpassing wars  
and evolution coming alive  
in different fires being riddled  
by grizzly bears and their nastier  
ancestors and ridden by  
mountain lions, lumberjack  
beavers and madmen who  
talked to the stones of her skin  
through this time she waited  
for me  
I am hers and in  
seasons I move on her  
every week up to the  
ranger tower, the tiara  
bejeweling her 11,000 ft. head  
so she may pollinate  
me and I can go home  
impregnated with  
mountain wisdom  
my legs burning as I  
think about her pretty  
skin and the august  
in heat coyote that followed  
after me howling like  
Picasso after my hiking legs  
wishing to have sex with  
me or my dogs, until I  
threw bits of her flesh at  
it, I would not be  
unfaithful to her, though  
she may take on many  
other seasonal lovers

none, not even the reoccurring  
forest rangers and  
firewatchers, are as  
forever constant and faithful  
to her as I am  
I'm her #1 love with  
my lungs and all my bits  
are a sauce for her, and  
my smell drives her  
trees and meadows wild  
I know every bit of her  
trails and I can break  
down our love making into  
parts from the aspen forest  
around her snow white legs  
to the hill side up her powerful  
flanks to the open meadow  
around her stomach to  
the dark and ample wood  
of her breasts and finally to her  
majestic head I listen to every  
part of her panting and moving  
as we have sex over the course  
of an at least 2 hour session  
on average, as I go back down  
her she rises and heaves and her  
winds moan the words of her  
pleasure as her woods tingle  
with my footsteps  
and when its over  
like a true lover  
she silently releases me  
and I drive my truck  
off her knowing that I will  
return again in spring, summer  
fall and winter  
I've been with her on  
Christmas morning  
with a 65 lb pack  
and her soft snows licking  
up past my knees, she's  
given me her frostbite mark  
I've scrambled on her,  
become lost in her woods,  
laid and read books on her  
ejaculated in hidden wooded  
groves into her naked, I've  
scrambled up the hidden rock slopes  
on her north face, I've  
searched like an Indian  
for her mythical ice caves, I came  
to her when my bad woman

left me  
she is my good woman  
she is my only woman  
I've written novels about  
her, I've drunken the beads  
of her dewy sweat and listened  
to her breathing with my  
ear pressed to her heart  
and plucked her lashes of  
wildflowers I know her better  
than I've ever known any woman  
of the earth, better than the 14,000 ft  
Amazonian whores in Colorado I've  
given conjugal visits too when they  
were not blistering season, when  
they were in heat in season,  
and she's expecting me now  
she may take on many other lovers  
while I'm gone, but this is just  
her way,  
she accepts everyone on to her,  
she's not a murdering mountainess  
like some of the Himalayan women are,  
and she hungers above all for me  
and the feel of my bones on her  
earth as the wind takes her  
clothes off and I am enveloped in her  
atmosphere her breath the pollinated  
gravity she pulls  
me to her  
as she lies bare naked  
and hauntingly beautiful under  
the star bejeweled plane of celestial  
spheres  
the Arizona sky  
where the moon hangs down  
engorged a full stomach  
ready close to have a look at  
her flawless pretty face  
she is the one I travel to  
she is the one perfected by  
time  
where she looks she can see  
far off Mexico ancient human  
sacrifice towering over Aztecan  
death pyramids  
the death of all dinosaurs  
the ice age  
and she will stand still  
when one day the humans  
recede into caves  
like a vampire she will

always remember my love  
and feel my rotting coffin  
with her mineral veins  
when I am buried  
in the earth near her  
feet  
this, my constant love  
my rockslide of passion  
my Arizona Mountain Queen  
Mount Esquidilla

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Everyone Sits Alone**

Life is the cage  
We are all born into  
The zoo  
Drives down the long  
Snake in the rain,  
Everyone sits alone  
In the park  
In the car  
In the theatre  
Everyone sits alone  
And looks through bars  
Of their flesh and bone  
No eager hand  
can grasp out of this  
No willing hand has the  
Reach,  
We touch our flesh  
To the flesh of our cages,  
We lay down chained  
And little birds sing  
Beside others miles away  
And barking  
We touch steering wheels  
As the lights cross our eyes  
We learn to believe  
The birth of shadows  
We drive, a line of slaves,  
Down the road  
Everyone sits alone.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Falls City

The factories of our lives  
The managers  
Create us on the assembly  
Line of needing parts  
The duality of sexes  
Requires insertion  
Like light sockets  
Like a slaughter house  
To come undone in  
Midwestern planes abandon/ feeding it/  
Streets and long fertile  
Fields roofs and fences  
Fencing overweight lives  
Fed on troughs of bright TV  
Caged in by slick cords  
Of power-line and preaching Elvises  
Towering sentinel communication  
Towers broadcasting sparks  
Above the prefabricated  
Houses across the street  
From paradise city trailer parks  
Lined up in rows of  
Forgotten promises and  
Christmas tree lights  
Subordinates to the factory  
Processed meats  
Great conveyor belts  
Running down hands  
To put us together on  
The long dead end roads  
Of dust  
Of America's heartland  
Forever looking out windows  
Seeing inside the panes  
Trains leaving down the tracks  
Of another's childhood  
While the power lines  
Stream with electric  
Clatter  
Of minimum wage  
Fallout  
The alienist  
Our life here  
The dust bowl of America  
Manufactured

\*For Brandon Tina

Robert C. Rorabeck

## For A Kiss

Away from the night  
Everyone moves across the street  
To be together, far from,  
They are attracted to the light  
And the music the flesh makes  
As it dies  
Traveling away from home  
A cross to where I have no eyes, intersecting without hope  
And I can not see where she is, gone,  
The thing that never was between us  
And the flowers in the gutter leading  
To the sea- before the sun rises,  
The thing that never was dissolves and goes away  
In tiny fragments before the sun  
And her kiss imagined, always felt,  
But never,  
All the pleasures of the system, petals budding  
From the glowing stems,  
Like lines on a road,  
The conduits of rushing people,  
Discarding me  
And I am roadkill lying dead beside  
Her bed (as they make some kind of attempt at love)  
And forgotten on her neck, a broken gem,  
Once priceless- now trash-  
In the shadows beside where all  
The lives move  
Dances to the lights and forgets  
Neighborhoods drunken and empty, abandoned museums,  
And the life flipping over in mausoleums  
Pages in a book read but  
Not understood, a bed of transgressions  
And falsehoods made-up to hide the stains  
Like the nights coming on attracting the  
Insects calling our humanity, a god of weekends,  
And spirits past,  
Forgetting to resist the temptation,  
Where my wrist lays open and waiting

For a kiss.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Free Falling

When last I saw her, her eyes were exhausted acrobats  
Who fell to my shoulder and then plummeted away.  
Like off the cliff, they went.  
She did not scream. She went quietly and free-  
I think she meant the fall, for her body looked as if it'd been  
practicing - I think she'd had enough.  
As she went, she went down and her head turned away  
Toward the distant drop- I mean, she did not look back.  
She was like that- She was real gone! And all I could do was  
See her go, falling forever through the sea that way.  
She created my new exhaustion as the city's lights died  
Where the old cars circled me as if for an execution.-  
They were so hungry and the lights were out so  
No one could see.  
The pallid streets roamed my flesh beyond which my  
Legs walked to the bone and walked on, because I was  
Broken. I could not stop walking. I had a few drinks,  
But they did not get rid of her salt or her sting, and she was  
That photo in my eyes made by the sun. The realness of the  
Image in bed with another man and free, free, free-  
Like the type of thing you see after staring at the sun too long,  
Something that doesn't go away. She's still there in another  
Bedroom across the world.  
Free falling.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Ganymede

Long lost passageways come down  
sometimes from the sun they help  
you remember how the holy ghost  
burned when you were young  
and still going to church you  
thought John Wayne was a real  
cowboy and wondered how he could  
die to be reborn the next showing  
The Cowboys The Searchers  
there were so many movies that  
taught you to watch in your grandparents'  
trailer even if parts of the floor  
were missing don't you remember  
the night you slept with them in that  
bedroom overflowing with the backlog  
of dirty laundry and new born kittens,  
do you remember smelling your grandfather's  
armpits- strong basic stuff, like the earth  
but it's been so long since your  
father's parents were together-  
their love gone, Clarence cheated on  
Jackie- He found another mother  
the same age as his first daughter  
Laura, a messianic Jew, you hugged her  
once and how come? You don't like her,  
you politician; it doesn't matter what  
everyone thinks- spit on her, that's what  
it takes to be faithful to grandma Jackie-  
you've got to hold your own in this world,  
even with your face coming off, you  
have a certain power- isn't it true  
to get out on the street to get arrested  
like Johnny Cash for picking daisies-  
or starting forest fires with you axle  
sparking flames on the road, while you're  
hopping on pills, getting drunk and  
crawling down the throat of the Nick-a-  
Jack caves to meet your maker- the stoned  
loneliness of life comes at us all, and we  
all got to play ball until we drip into the  
grave- not everyone can be Shakespeare-  
not everyone can change down the drain  
into Lewis Carroll's wonderland, but you  
still might stop the red queen from painting  
the white rose bushes- bet your cowboy  
boots Alice was a real girl and the places that  
she went were no more real than what  
Lewis Carroll wrote about her I want to fall  
down the hall in love I want to get my own  
place in the ocean to meet and maybe you  
know who will love me far away when I write  
this it's okay, the sky's coming down- there

are plans in the village, places for you and me  
to come down to the chapel to swap  
spit and rings I love you or the memory of you  
like the ghosts high in the skylights of  
the city; I still have a jaw though it was  
broken and wired shut at age four when I  
fell out the back of my father's truck/ let's  
have a round to that and my defunct grandparents  
alone- Grandpa's in West Virginia  
with his messianic wife Laura whose first  
son died from an overdose and Grandma's  
homesteading in Oregon with her mother's  
ghost- And I'm riding on here in Arizona  
listening to Johnny Cash's rendition of  
Ghost Riders in the Sky trying to  
communicate the true love across country  
and tell you all this so I can be like Johnny  
Barleycorn, somehow something important  
in this country alone at this table.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Goldilocks And The Spear Of Longinus

Daddy laid me down in bed  
He said,

"I saw Goldilocks  
In the surf up to her  
Breasts holding the Spear of  
Longinus  
The caps of waves  
Swirling in little red pools  
Sunlight riding hoods  
Of the giant beasts circling  
Her.

I yelled, 'Goldilocks,  
What are you doing? '

Goldilocks replied in the  
Sun,  
"I've already killed 3  
Grizzlies and ate their  
Porridge,  
Slept in their beds too-  
Now I'm sporting  
Deadlier prey.

Come in  
And kiss me  
If you dare."

"Did you kiss her? " I asked Daddy.

"No, " he said. "I was too afraid.  
So I married your mother."

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Grandmother

Wearied by her day's long work,  
She finally draws away  
And prepares for rest.  
She looks onward as her  
Hands become still—Sunlight  
Is falling through the window,  
From which she can see her  
Children coming towards her,  
Their baskets overflowing from the crops  
She has planted for them,  
Now come to harvest.  
Though just silhouettes moving  
Amidst the falling light,  
She recognizes each of them,  
And calls them home to her.  
Though weary and unable to  
Do more, her only wish is  
To carry their burdens for them.  
She does not think pridefully  
Upon her work, now completed,  
Her life spread out before her,  
A blanket in which each thread is a  
Single moment, woven together  
The tapestry of her life she has  
Given to shelter and warmth for others.  
Before she goes to rest,  
She will use it this final night  
To keep her children warm.  
So after her sun sets,  
She warms them still,  
Her kind words and actions  
Lightening their thoughts and  
Lifting their burdens  
So that she remains always with them,  
A gentle song sung in their hearts,  
Mothering them still, sustaining their souls  
Until, with the morning,  
The meadow reawakens  
And springs to glorious life.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Here I Come, Darling

I cannot keep giving you,  
The flowers I twist up my soul in red bouquets  
Tied around stolen bricks, I smash your windows,  
Crushing the pedals meant to show you, crumble  
And die before you awake in the morning,  
But never alone—you come up with your crew,  
And they hurry you out the back and through the dew,  
So I don't even get to see you shower! But the sun  
Comes up and shows me the morning.

I am out there on the front lawn screaming all day  
Come out! Come out! There is something you are meant to see,  
But I am already too late. You are too brave to watch  
The new ways I take myself apart for you, a carnival  
Near the street—I line them up the whiskey bottles and  
Sing for you. I have a match and gasoline,  
But you have already evacuated.

I swear, if your feet got cut on the sharp glass I've  
Made over this, hidden and broken in the cold early grass, I  
Will hurt myself.

So what is the use? I put out the fire with gasoline  
To water the flowers, and the red tangle you don't see  
Is my heart unraveled and trying to breathe as the wind  
Stomps down hard on my throat. I am having so much  
Fun, I pass out, and the fire straggles on down the street,  
Hoping to find fireworks to fuck with the same desire in it's  
Heart as I have in mine over you.

At 2 am, a car full of fraternity brothers pulls up and unzips their  
Guess, whooping, whooping, and beating the crap out of each other, They try to put  
out my fire, peeing all over me. Laughing and  
Whooping—I recite them  
My poetry, and they fail miserably, because I still love you.  
And I went back to sleep on the road's cold black bed, and  
Fought for you in dreams romping, stomping in my head.

I swear, you were so near then,  
I couldn't even smell what they had done. (I had peed myself  
Anyway.)

Arriving too late, Firemen come, screaming, they try and make me  
Pay for the broken glass, but I show them how  
You've cut my wrists, and they back away and  
Apologize. Even they do not see the bouquet tied around the  
Red brick, now smoldering ash. You would like these men if you were here, I think,  
But inside the living room is empty and burned out, though you've seen these  
Same type of men before on daytime t.v., when your eyes  
Couldn't let off watching them, until you'd drunken too much  
And had to stop to pee.

Sober, but not over you, I follow you door to door and move in as you leave,  
Naked, I roam for your scent and ordered it pizza  
Late at night, but you never come home, leaving me to  
Gorge myself as I hunger upon you. Alas!  
No more. I can not pay off that debt, even if  
Your summer eyes ask me to move—  
I know now it is only because you have your fears  
Of how your heart might flee  
From the beautiful boy at the skate shop you  
Compared me to, unto which I failed, but I can get plastic  
Surgery, or kill that boy when you and he are sleeping.

Already you have cast me down the sink hole.  
My feet slip in the mud and I crush the delicate ferns  
Underfoot, when it rains and the bottom of this devil's  
Mouth fills up with the beautiful tears of woman  
Who I cannot see, but who are looking down, even  
While you look away, kissing your strong bucking men  
Whom you had toss me down here in the first place.  
Look here, pretty flowers. Let me pick you some  
Before you leave.

Don't leave.

It is hell under your overpass where I sleep,  
Blind but seeing the naked bellies of your cars run over me, going  
Either way but either way leaving me as quickly as they  
Come, but I am homeless here and tired and cold. I know  
There is another woman fifteen minutes to the east on the  
Fort Lauderdale pier who is even now catching fish she  
Would cook for my super, if I would have her near me.  
Are you even here to listen? No, for you are still running fast over  
Me, crushing my guts out my throat, following the new men who sit  
Easily down your beer halls, but I have to get out from under that  
Fifteen ton carriage. College has been over for many years,  
And that woman near the sea will douse my fire.

She will let me into her house and even stay and cook  
For me. In the morning, she will rise and put me to sleep.  
She will tuck me in every day.

I am hungry. Here I come, darling.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## How Terrible The Weather Is

I was just about dead.  
My girl had laid me beside the road  
And driven off with him. I couldn't see if  
She looked back, but I knew she'd have to  
Remember me to do so, and by then she'd  
Already forgotten. The exhaust smelled  
Like her perfume and the gutter her pussy.

The University  
Didn't want me, and the sun had long  
Since collapsed into the sunken backyard  
Where the professors threw darts at me  
And branded me a plagiarist, before playing  
Friendlier sports with different sorts of boys  
they took on dates around campus,  
And spun cotton sugar for down at the fair  
In the fall near the swamps and the alligators.

After four years, I tried to find work teaching  
In South Florida, but I wore the same clothes  
As the day she left me, so I was thrown outdoors  
By the janitor well before the interview began.  
I could see now that the streams ran too  
Quickly off the hillside, and between the trees  
Metal rusted in beastly uneasiness. Every thing  
Was money, and there was never enough.  
I lay there,  
Panting up to the lesser sky which paradoxically  
Went on forever and everywhere, like an escalator  
That went in four directions taking me nowhere, waiting for  
A jetliner to shit down on me, waiting for  
My heart to listen to reason and stop whatever  
It was doing.

Cops tried to harass me with billy clubs and empty  
Boxes of donuts and dogs pissed on me.  
Old ladies kicked and farted on me and priests refused to fornicate  
With me. One uncle I didn't care to know very well  
Came by and offered me a job selling used cars.

I tried not to call her name, or look her up  
In the phonebook, but I still went to the park where  
We used to swing together, and there was our tree sadly  
Bowing as if it knew. I could only stay there for one  
Moment before I saw the moon had recognized me and saw  
That I was destroyed and alone, so I left weeping, and I heard  
The moon weeping with me.

I gave up and packed my bags and lived for a week  
And ten days under the filthiest trailer in the filthiest  
Trailer park. These accommodations cost me \$400  
Dollars a month, but they were worth it, because I didn't

Have to pretend I was rich and there was no reason to  
Hire a lawyer.

By then, I thought, they must be fucking on a Kodiak  
Rug in Alaska letting the Northern lights pool on the  
Blushing opalescence of their entwined coital bodies,  
Warming the forty below weather by a good ten degrees.

Finally, refusing to hitchhike, afraid I might  
Be kicked again or made love to by a mountain man  
With a full and masculine beard but no teeth  
I crawled back to the mountains, but I could  
No longer walk in them, or even look their way.  
I became celibate not by choice, and the wind  
Scraped my body deliberately doing its best to  
Reveal all the flaws, making willowed out  
Caverns where none belonged while the mountains ungluted  
Enticingly, as if they knew what I wanted but could  
No longer have.

I began to wear my gravestone about my neck  
And called my dog my best friend. I refused to live  
I in a house and found a den with collared wolves.  
The she bitch, seeing I was wounded and in need of  
A good mother, licked me and let me suckle off her  
Tit, and in their snow cave it no longer mattered how  
Terrible the weather was outside.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Huddling In Septembers

There are places I still believe in  
Where I never met you  
Huddling in Septembers  
Near the sea,  
Where I walk past your window  
Every evening and never see you  
Though your curtains are drawn  
And you are sitting at the  
Dinner table, holding hands with  
Your family,  
Praying,

And though I walk past you  
Time and time again,  
It is always the same night  
For the moon is hung and  
The stars, like ornaments  
Decorating your neighborhood,  
The way they did for us,  
Now the blue whispers  
Resting in graveyards of  
Rooms we once occupied  
Now occupied by others

The night I was with you on  
The walk, where I still walk alone,  
Your night lies  
Further  
In the necessities of carrying-on  
Where I am the thing best  
Forgotten in the seas  
Of many nights passing,

Where I now walk,  
Looking forwards,  
I can never see you  
Through your window,  
Though you are always  
Occupied there  
As you set your table  
Carefully under the lights

You are singing to yourself  
And are warm inside

I am outside

And the green lawns  
And the newly washed cars  
The tiny stone walkways  
Curling beneath cypress,

And through it all the quiet  
Sounds a neighborhood  
Makes when it is contented

All this  
Decorates your new mind  
And everything here serves as  
Pillows on which  
You rest

Where I walk now you  
Never go, and your eyes never linger,  
Though I am always right there  
Walking by you, looking in-  
Every evening is the same evening,  
And all the evenings huddling in  
Septembers,

When once we walked together by  
Your house and held hands and  
Swung in the park. Where we had  
Tremendous dreams of children  
And publications  
Here you never go  
Alone. You bring your husband and  
Your children, and when you go this  
Is now your park,  
Your green space in which you grow,  
And I am to you like a thing thrown  
Deliberately out to sea,  
Washed away from your memory

So I am left walking alone  
In front of your house, every night  
Looking for you through your window,  
But never seeing you,  
My footsteps moving backwards,  
Year after year,  
Remembering you as you  
Step forward

Leaving me  
huddling  
In Septembers.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **I Am Always Her Yesterday, And She Is Forever My Tomorrow**

I never let off loving you,  
Even after you moved so far away from my soul,  
You took that with you in pieces you butchered  
And stuck down into holes you carry on yourself,  
Like protection.  
I used to drive your car because I didn't want  
To waste my gas, but in the back seat you made love  
To another man with your mother's approval,  
And even so close I never saw  
For I was the cuckold 2,000 miles away  
In Colorado trying to touch God, to grab a piece off  
For you as proof, but you didn't wish to see Him,  
Because you'd already found it in that other man. Now

I try loving strange women in dimly lit bars,  
In the back of my head or not at all. I have always  
Loved these women, even before you, even after they have so long  
Forgotten me; it's as if I am something primordial to them,  
Just someone in the far shadows, forgotten behind  
The shiny metal show of these new knights just out of med school.  
And these beautiful women are poor archeologists with short memories,  
Yet their intelligence resides through the lust  
Caught in their eyes and the men glimmering there.

All the pieces  
Have come off and nature is so barren and mundane.  
It's as if I've finally become the working middle class.  
I try to press these lines like flowers, to show that something  
Beautiful remains obtainable, even if it isn't her,  
Because I might be getting published soon and won't that  
Bring some part of her back to me, even if all the roads are  
The same she might find her way back, if she ever knew at all.  
And even after all this time, I might find a teaching position  
At some forgotten university lost in the woods, and I might  
Soon marry and then soon be divorced.

There will always be someone beautiful I love, just  
Beyond today she spends with another man as the sun bled  
Round and dead and the king fucked the queen on their marriage bed,  
But she still will never remember me, for I am always her yesterday  
And she is forever my tomorrow.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **I Only Have God In Me When You Are Near**

We both have tailbones  
Which means not so very long ago we  
Were fish,  
In the greater scheme of things  
Those godly days which stretched for eons  
In slow interludes between the arc of the sun,  
Way back when the Lord was still young and  
Adventurous and would spend all day in his artistry  
Creating the new words which caused those very things  
To grow upon the earth, the first couples in spring  
Molded by his hands and breath, and then at evening  
Settling down upon the first stoop under the soft door-light  
Of his modest middle-class abode, and enjoying a pipe,  
He would smile satisfactorily and with admiration  
At the two of us playing for his show, the first of our kind,  
Leaping through the waves, that earliest sunlight dancing  
Upon us brilliantly, as our streamline bodies tried on the  
New world, skimming along the young sea and leaping  
Youthfully upon his eyes alone—Our only thoughts were  
Of each other, and that was all we knew, the two of us our world.

But then one day God was gone and so were you—  
There were more of us now, but those were the same ones  
I still do not care to know—The two of us was all I've ever needed,  
But maybe God felt differently, and seeing how we were many now,  
And maybe all the same to him, he may have lured you out  
And packed you up for lunch, to fry up with some salty chips.  
That was when I forgot how to breathe,  
In my gills that stretched out and brushed along your silvery sides,  
That touched your neck and exhaled into your throat, and you into me,  
But with you gone I had forgotten how, and began to drown in the sea.  
And I flopped out and began my devolution into Man,

So now the only thing remaining to remind me of you is  
That useless hidden tailbone down the back of my spine, that  
Still in ghostly fingers sometimes tries to wag—Now, stranded,  
I am always an atheist—And though the world is filled up with  
All the many things God made into it, I don't believe in a single  
One of them, because I cannot feel them running through me,  
Coursing the first purest thought through me—you through me—

But there are those rare days where my spirit awakes and you  
Come around me, when I see you trying to jog, putting on your new  
Legs he must have given you after he realized his mistake, you moving  
Like the first of your kind down the lane beneath the deciduous trees  
Shady in Central Florida, the brightness of faith before the faded lawns  
Near the University—I watch you go by at 4 am, after my shift is over,  
And I am proud, because though you seem to have metamorphosed into  
Someone else, I can see you all the same, and it is as if you are swimming  
With me in the sea again like those very early days when it was only me and you,  
And I can almost taste you again—

a mirage, He only allows you in my  
Vicinity maybe once a decade, and that is when I saw you last, when I had  
To move away from where you continued to swim in those schools far away from me.

I do not know why you go and do not come back to me, unless it is because  
You have forgotten how we once were before anyone else arrived.  
And without you, I cannot breath and I am virulently faithless, but in those  
Fleeting instances when we share the same atmosphere, it is almost as if  
We could shed our clothes once again and let our truthfulness grow outward into  
The sea, wetting out tailbones, that I become alive—those few times,  
When you breathe near me, are the only  
Ones when I allow God once again to enter me.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **I Ran Amongst The Trees**

I ran amongst the trees today  
following the path of a dozen  
of my ghosts the uneasy boot prints  
of my nostalgia when I daily  
inhale these woods, when I go into  
them to scream to open up my  
wind to suck in the air between  
the pines, to think her name  
and to run through the disillusionments  
I know you don't call, I begin to  
understand the chaos of the world  
on this track, inseparable from  
it: we are not above it,  
we are but one of the infinity of  
incarnations from these woods,  
we are like one of these trees  
subatomic we are the same material  
as the woodpecker-  
we go down thinking, we rise  
up believing, we are the appendages of  
the mother- we cannot be removed  
from her- we are a manifestation  
of her thought- How come the  
Indians knew this and she destroyed them,  
creating white men with muskets  
and joneses for blood out of her  
centennial dreams- we come out of  
her conscious while we sleep we  
move on her as she turns on that  
celestial bed, and each time she  
comes awake our personal consciousness  
dies- before we moved through  
woods, now we are buried in coffins-  
returned to her- swallowed up by her,  
our manifestation is complete, but her  
conscious is infinite, longing, dreaming,  
arising, changing, dressing and undressing  
on the moment, I run through the woods,  
knowing it, knowing she has dreamed me, and  
my limitation is that I will die, yet  
she will dance forever, she will dream  
up her children forever, she will  
forget me to birth anew, but I will never  
leave her  
descending into her my unfulfilled desires  
will settle and leave my body-  
they will go nowhere they will  
vanish- running through the woods,  
I recognize this part, and yet  
continue my human hunger for the woman  
across the country who is yet another manifestation  
from the same source; in my dreams and

poems I would have her, I would recreate  
the power of the mother, but I am only an  
arm, I am only a thought reaching out,  
and my only comfort is that very soon  
we will return to the same source  
under the deep river's water  
under the great earth's bed  
we may lie 1,000 miles apart, but  
in this breath, in the dream of her  
world, we walked here together  
we breathed and rejoiced in our  
living in this point in the infiniteness  
we saw each other- what a  
miracle it is to see another of her  
dreams, what a miracle to lie a  
hand upon another dream and know your  
love for it even when it steps away  
from you and is forgotten- in the  
nocturnal cycles of the earth, all of her  
dreams are forgotten and her dream of  
me is like this, fleeting, unreal-  
once I am laid down once I am no  
more I will have run through the woods  
on the same night of the dream I  
will have scribbled this in inky  
gusts in flashes of awareness the  
fish makes coming up- and in my  
dream I will have loved her, and  
after I go down, another dream will love another.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **In Coitus With The Devil If Only For A Second**

As the night laid her somber dress  
Across the street and fondled the  
Drowsy corners of the houses,  
All these ordinary members of  
The neighboring family  
And the prefabricated dreams  
They held like cheap eggs  
In a carton,  
Dozens and dozens of  
Them planted along the street,  
The children continued to play on,  
Fumbling blindly,  
Hoping to soon figure out,  
To understand without the aid  
Of helpful trained animals;  
They tried to pick up the  
Tools and vehicles they were  
Practicing to be made into,  
All night long  
When their parents prayed for  
Them,  
The sun sinking behind them into  
The sea  
Where I joined it's army and sailed  
Out to the West, across the  
Prairie where the dark silver  
Conquistadors marched in the river  
Into granite extinction of text books,  
All the way to the other place,  
Long forgotten and run over,  
The sexless chambers of God's bedroom,  
Where he swiftly took us up  
And made us and the earth  
Into a great red brick he threw  
Through his ex-wife's window  
And disturbed her, if only for  
A second,  
She in coitus with the devil.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Is It Beautiful To Say I love You**

Is it beautiful to say I love you  
Even though I haven't seen you for ten years?  
But you once kissed my neck and you are not my aunt.  
I still feel you there, and you are behind me eyes.  
I look upon you though I haven't seen you for  
All this time.

You said two years ago that I don't  
Really know you, but that was on the telephone.  
How come? I want to know  
You, and in the language my hands create, I pretend  
To know you. I know you! Or I am just foolish  
And have never loved.

Stand in front of me and tell me you  
Do not love me, and then I will leave you alone,  
Though you might follow me if you wish,  
With the trail my heart bleeds.

My favorite high school teacher says these  
Poems are good, even though they are all about you.  
He says get over you, but he also didn't know  
That I could graduate—I say, I don't need to  
Get over you. You are all that I have.  
In fact, I need you.

And is that all there is when I touch myself  
Involuntarily in the night, because I need you there?  
Or will you finally come to me, and allow us to  
Create for real all that I have hoped  
And written.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Kelly #9

They make their lives up in rows  
Of tumbling houses  
Glitter transformingly under the sun,  
And even so far away you might  
Reach your hand out to try and touch  
This skin, like the way a sexy fish  
Swims in a brightly lit television.  
All the houses rise up in silver spirals,  
Collecting the light off the sea, turning windmills  
On the ancient coasts of Spain,  
The forgotten ancestry spread over her hills,  
And in dimly lit bars where she reached out to  
You and spread her fingers on your cheek,  
Like spiders walk on water  
Before breathing, the way her bee-stung  
Lips parted trying to parse that she loved you  
Between sips of beer.

All the way to her  
Shores, where dead knights glitter  
In the bosom of her bays and  
Billboards read you can buy a home on her  
For \$139,000 and I know this =s a very  
Good price for South Florida,  
And by the end of the year my bank account  
Will have enough that I won't even need a  
Mortgage, and can just lie out and love her,  
And spread everything I own out to her  
And the silver flash of her breath which moves  
Like a speedboat against the break of the sea.

I drive with some kid across the  
Intercoastal, and begin to search for her  
Here in bed before I wake up I just  
Saw her cross the street right next to my  
Old high school before you turn into the  
Housing development where my ex-lover's  
Parents used to live, but I cannot be sure,  
Because they all hurried and packed up to  
Begin the post-modern Diaspora. But I am  
Sure it was her, Kelly #9, because I started  
Loving her blonde locks in 4th grade, and hid in the bathroom  
While her friends handed over my poorly thought-out  
Gifts of love; but soon she was a bad  
Girl, already taking advantage of that wicked beauty,  
Forsaken the bobbles I spread out to her for a map  
Towards me,  
She took many lovers on back-country roads,  
Bumping against her young men in the languid beds  
Of American pick-up trucks. Beer in left hand  
Cock in right, she moved far away from  
Me. Finding her purpose in dead ends, she never returned

To school, yet my eyes still lingered down the alphabetized  
Dirt roads of Loxahatchee; she lived down E Street,  
Never minding all the sacrifices I left for her—

She lives here now, on this forgotten island off  
The south coast of Florida, where she lays forever  
Naked upon her small green front lawn, her tanned thighs  
Sweaty on the tongues of her pink lawn chair,  
Still dreaming of men she has yet to meet—

Me and the kid drive across the intercoastal  
And the certain part of the day when the island  
Materializes—I've looked her up on the internet,  
Found her phone number and checked the maps.  
She lives on Albatross Lane, so I go to her;  
But soon I find that all these roads flow into  
Each other like rivers or lovers, they drink each  
Other, so the ways leading to her are devoured  
By watery legs that sex in flashy ways under the sun,  
So that this woman of my heart still defies me,  
And I give up, buying a house somewhere close by,  
Using up my bank account, I never forget her, and  
Walk the flashing streets,  
a bachelor struggling up the steep hills,  
My eyes squinting in the spears of sunlight she  
Calls down to blind me between sips of her  
Salty liquors; Always, I can smell her near,  
And always hunger for her, and she escapes me,  
Playing with the lost sailors she calls up from the sea,

So even after I awake, I still search for her,  
Waking from the bed, I smell her, and lick her  
Salt off my palm, and I shower and prepare to  
Walk outside to feed 100 horses.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Last of the Conquistadors

A coyote yips somewhere close.  
I pause the movie to listen,  
And step outside and masturbate.  
The new stallion is penned next  
To my glass door. Unsettled,  
The beast screams and tries to escape  
Nearer the females' scent.  
Startled for a moment, my eyes focus on  
The small points of light above me,  
A beautiful map I cannot read.  
Before I finish one of them falls.  
I feel alive, but soon  
I will die as distant obsessions surfs  
The beaches of Saint Augustine, trapped  
In beauty, gated by men, and the empty  
Echoing of high school where her mind  
Roams forgotten. She is an addict  
With metallic bouquets in her forearms.  
I think of her, that warm continuation  
Like floral wallpaper at the right  
Moment feels alive and saintly next to  
The porcelain basins. She still serves drinks  
And I pretend to be a Catholic walking drunkenly  
Through the emptiness of the University  
I once attended, trying to find her, yet  
Only seeing her twice far down the halls  
Many years ago  
As my mind becomes disinfected from  
The weight of bones and takes off  
Through the dropping palm fronds which  
shade the stone benches of resting students  
somewhere in the center of Florida, where a hart  
Stumbles blindly upon four legs before  
Kneeling in an unknown space before  
The last of the conquistadors.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Loretta?

It is not proper to call her,  
The woman you never knew but  
Once walked besides and shared the air  
And street, when the light fell upon the  
Both of you and you glanced her way.  
There, on the moment, you were together  
With the world, when the spirits and her  
Legs brought you so close to her, see  
Her lips open as if they would call your name,  
Or take off and fly, like something gentle  
To land softly on your cheek and whisper.  
When you were so close to her, the  
Brief eternity of your life, and her skin so  
Near that you can smell her bath she had  
That morning, then and only then you  
Are sure that there is a God, and maybe  
He has finally taken notice of the world  
And he is ready now to begin anew the  
Tangible creations of beast and man, by  
Bringing her nearer to you and having her  
Tell you her name, to pollinate your ear,  
Like a great conductor  
Waltzing the crackling light down from the sun  
To lance off her open bosom, to share with  
Your eyes the ornaments of natural selection,  
And then to embrace and spend the night with,  
Curled together in the soft moonlight washing  
This young city to the beat of the sea still  
Sucks off the pill of swallowed conquistadors  
From so long ago, where wolves live so far away from,  
But then she has passed, she is gone from here,  
Where clouds now cover up the sun, and the strange  
Ugly people reemerge along with the honking and  
The flashing lights, and the world has lost its color,  
And the word red no longer exists, and the empty  
Crowded street has returned once  
Again to it's natural chaos where the sun is so distant,  
As if in winter on the wrong side of the earth,  
but all you can do now  
Is to live desperately in the moment passed, the moment  
When she came so near to you and you were so  
Sure of divinity, and so you live with her still, destroyed  
By the permanence of the fleeting vision, still sure that  
You speak her name in kisses upon her neck when  
She comes to you in dreams, but waking, you are  
Torn apart by the lonely paradox of having her in  
Your heart, and not knowing where she is.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Mary Full Of Grace

I caught myself dancing in the  
Front seat of my pickup  
Truck with aunt mary in  
The passenger seat replacing  
All the old ghosts, now  
She's one too, because  
She's been there at that  
Lonely place beside me  
On the bed she was talking  
About making money and  
All the various ways to  
Pay off your debt; she does it  
By selling produce in south florida;  
She went on like an economist  
My eyes journalists  
Fell to their side to  
Watch her tongue roll  
Little bits of her children  
Are on her cheeks, blond babies  
They are her hope  
Planted into this world  
To take first tiny firm roots  
Into the pots she's planted  
Them- they are her karate  
Kicking security when she  
Tells me how her husband john  
Broke his finger today  
Moving for her; she sounds  
Excited about the break, and I  
Don't tell her about how  
This Mexican loius who  
Once worked at their fruit stand  
Saw john frequently at the pool hall  
With other women he frequents  
I hear the truth in mary's  
Voice- she's not dumb she  
Knows about john but there  
Are her kids and  
house payments she still  
Needs help on and  
Most of all there's that  
Hungry maw of loneliness  
That blows in the off  
Season from the east  
The hurricanes of her  
Humid thoughts when she  
Sits alone in the front  
Of my truck's rusting bed  
She's trying to catch me  
To tell me something she's trying  
To whisper a kiss from 2  
Feet into my ear or to

Reach over and touch her hungry  
Painted nails to my knee to show  
me she remembers  
How we use to play  
Doctors after seventh day  
Adventist Saturday Sabbath  
Behind the wooden pallets  
Not far away from my defunct  
Grandparents' mobile home,  
And that she passionately  
Recalls the forts we put together  
With Indian blankets over  
Chairs arranged to let only  
The light play into our secrecy-  
How we'd then stomp the  
Blankets between chairs tipping  
Our houses over to make  
A felty boat to sail  
Out of the maudlin living  
Rooms and into her Atari set;  
But she knows that all those  
Memories are sunk- she's  
Grown up to that responsibility  
And I a lonely sailor am left  
Adrift waiting for sharks to end it  
When she asks me- so,  
You figured out what to do yet? And  
I try to assert my  
Throat like some  
Great capitalist investment  
Thinker when I give  
My excuses and on top  
Of them that I've saved  
Money and maybe next  
Tuesday I'll go fishing  
To catch me a trout,  
Mary pretends to  
Understand all my  
Wanderer ways;  
Like her brother, she  
Tells herself I just  
Don't want responsibility,  
But deep down, like the  
Rest of the family, she  
Knows I have the love of  
Jesus, which will one  
Day bring me  
To the bank- she's  
Still trying to touch me  
In her mind, she'd touch  
Anyone to keep from  
Drowning- I wonder how

Long before she divorces  
Herself into her children  
And finds the long  
Legs of a new love  
Warming her in a strange sailing  
Bed; she should know  
I cannot help her,  
All I am is secret  
Mischief, a fallen Peter Pan  
Thinking that all this light  
Is the lure from carnival, and  
When we reach our destination  
At the dojo where her  
Children are  
Learning to combat  
She thanks me  
I thank her  
She goes around the  
Back of my truck to  
Check the taillights  
And gives me the  
Go ahead to leave  
There as I drop her  
Off back into her life  
Without any kind of lifejacket.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Miss Chinese Water Torture

What can I do for you,  
Miss Chinese Water Torture?  
You say it's your birthday, well  
It's my birthday to, yeah, but  
The last time I saw you, you  
Were packed into a 10 second dream,  
Before my return to consciousness at 8 am  
April 23rd, 2007; T minus 13 days.  
I dreamed we were sitting close in  
My family's church, which is something  
You'd never do, because Judaism always  
Trumps the protestant splinter cells,  
Those who grew up barefoot in the weeds  
Of America's last century, versus  
Those armored in Tefillin who continue  
Defying God, sheckling in their Babylonian  
Temples, crying for another paternity test;  
But, somehow, you didn't seem to mind,  
And they had set up carnival rides in the aisle  
Between the pews. Me and 3 young, but not  
Very nice kids, got on the Zipper and waited for  
The lady on the organs to start us up  
While I tried to make eyes  
With the farmer's daughter, and after that ride  
Was done I played my Sega Dreamcast while  
The old bald preacher did his job—Near the end we  
All went out, but you weren't there at my side,  
The uncertain short thing that used to anchor  
Against me, you who gave me balanced purpose.  
They said there was a gas leak in the church  
And reporters came—One wanted to interview me  
Because I look good from a certain distance, but  
As he got closer he kind of just gave up and walked away—  
I went back into the church to find you,  
Miss Chinese Water Torture  
But the important religious people, well dressed but not  
Altogether bright, pushed me out, saying it was  
Going to blow, but then I saw you coming  
Toward me in the darkness of the walk— I asked you  
Where you'd been and, breathlessly,  
You said it'd been great—  
You'd just traveled 5 states in  
Twenty minutes to inform the authorities,  
And look, for just then did not the firemen arrive  
In great red screaming trucks, leaping forth with much pomp  
And impressive hoses, their heroic instruments—  
You saved our church, Miss Chinese Water Torture,  
With Justin who drove you; you said  
He was a nice guy and asked me what I  
Wanted to do now as we began to walk under  
The soft streetlights down the sidewalk towards my old truck.  
I wanted to go home and sleep a little

With you before I woke up, but there on  
A gentle hill covered by grass,  
part of the church's landscaping, you'd stooped to  
smile and talk with a pale faced kid with long  
dark hair and thick glasses—  
And you staid with him there, Miss Chinese  
Water Torture— You didn't come with me  
As I awoke to work, but your ghost rides near  
Me still, leaving me thinking I must  
Have done to you something awful.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Mom, I Am A Good Guy**

Mom,  
I'm a little bit tipsy,  
But I'm a good guy,  
Mom.

I'm a good guy, mother.

Do you finally understand what I am telling you  
Or do you still not understand?

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Motionless**

The yard in a hot Florida  
Summer grows tall, the grass  
Green and thick. Walking out  
Behind the house, I can sleep  
In her verdant lap and swim  
In waves of sun, motionless  
And free. Shirtless, defined  
By the borders of the street,  
the house and canal, with tall  
Pines and cypress looking  
Down and above their heads, arcing  
From the winds coming from the east  
And blowing to the Gulf, a  
Rolling sea of drifting, thoughtless  
Ships, and behind all this,  
When I close my eyes, the  
Strum of heat and your face  
Smiling as if I was with you in class.  
And the grass, long and green,  
Presses motionless on my back.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **My Head On The Pillow On The 50 Yard Line**

At 4 a.m. I watch the  
stadium getting bigger all around  
campus the sun is getting ready  
she still drives her Lexus  
all over my bones  
while, in the dorms,  
some students have sex  
others sleep and dream  
mathematical vibrancies of ghosts  
floating in the old grotto trees  
outside their windows  
what they don't understand is  
this situation never dies  
but goes down to sleep with new  
lovers  
every 4 years  
she graduates  
and for as long as I live  
a part of my mind will lie down  
on Jefferson Street down the  
lane from the white washed sororities  
how she left me to love  
an undergraduate  
and the day I passed my thesis  
my truck was towed I had  
to borrow some young lady's  
dapper legs to retrieve it,  
she still was my silhouette  
these days she is fine in  
a new yard with marble  
cherubs shooting arrows  
toward her young man's office  
window  
and now one more morning I  
go down to sleep my  
head on the pillow on the  
50 yard line of Doak  
Campbell Stadium while my  
ex students dream of tail-  
gating and the three minute  
swim of their sex  
across campus and my head.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Narcissa On The Cliffs

Overflowing, the spilling of flesh as eyes contact  
With distant virginity on the white cliffs, the drunken  
Boatloads of thirsty men row frantically, with their  
Hearts in it all, the mindless herd of hairless white beasts, speckled  
With the darker, tattooed flesh of their wild occupation,  
and their throats gulping, fish splintered from oaring,  
Newly gutted, surely condemned to death birthed  
Up from the sea, red gilled along the breaches, they bleed  
From the sharp slice of waves, they do not know, slapped into numbness—  
The same with the splaying way their  
Arms make, gills fluttering and ravaged as they use their own newly dead to row  
Nearer, not understanding that they are doing useless work,  
As it is her ebbing boarder's gravity swollen by the spheres  
hauling them in on that translucent  
Line of moon-thread to which their guts are already drunkenly hooked;  
They are all stitched into her deadly pattern.

There to her towering shores that sing out with the  
Promises she gives, her blouse open around her perfect  
Fertile breasts, areole sand-dollars dripping honey and stung by silky wasps,  
Blushing greeters to the newly arriving gentlemen,  
Bared rosily and aroused by the winds she sings in down to the men  
Thrashing their way forwards through the frothy whore of sea spit—  
There she stands high up the marble cliffs once defended  
By Saxons from Norman conquests, her body perched,  
A lighthouse giving forth the trembling light from her lips,  
Beaming salvation, everything about her taught and humming,  
For, truthfully she is the flexed bow before the kill.

She stands bared, the Aphrodite of her wood, and the movement  
Beneath her is her's as well, the salty sea of which she is personified,  
Of which her body these men have drunken and now altogether—the allegory—  
Are drawn towards with her flesh, blood, and bone in them, and her song surrounding,  
Humming like insects already infesting their drowning memories  
The ravenous multitudes fertilized by her, like illuminant minnows,  
Their inner most desires most clear, flesh opaque, they are the little  
Bit of what remains of thoughts after many years; now, they are  
Coming to her dinner table, and they are the eager feast already in the plate,  
Bobbing frantically beneath her feet, as she unhooks her gown,  
And she is the perfection of Plato's nude white marble forms—finally seen,  
Her opalescent clitoris the final lure, engorged,  
The only woman beautiful, the first and the last, and looking up, even now  
Half the men die harmonious deaths with her vision shot through them  
For deadly sport.

Here now, their white row boats hewn from albino hemlocks and foreign  
Aspens chopped down by bachelor ax-men far in the mountains never seen by  
These sea-men, become colorless coffins, a great floating graveyard of dying  
Men, whose families sleep far away in a peaceful light never yet dreaming  
Of this morbid fate, the lightly bobbing sarcophaguses spilling into the sea,  
Crashing brainlessly into the next, a salty necropolis, pale white discs crushing the  
Starving men in between, showing the fractured bones and marrow which

At first blend right in before the amber liquids start their fatal flow;  
But further on, all the sea is perfect calm, and only beneath her does her  
Salty flesh rise up, spilling the sacrifice of ill-suited gentlemen into her  
Throat, like a wine glass she has brought wrecklessly to her lips to taste from, before  
The coagulations set in and the sea contaminates.

There she stands, the one Venus turning backwards, in opposite to  
All the other spheres, looking down from her widowing thrown selectively;  
Inside her grotesquely swollen abdomen, she has enough thread to collect  
Them all, to bring them up and set them free, if they were not already destroyed  
Upon her—but she is now in the time of her abortive need, when the moon  
Resides nearly full, a bloated nimbus crowning her sweaty brow,  
The vice of her nature bleeding unstopped between the thighs,  
She has already condemned these sailors to that  
Nature which roots in her soul, the flesh and bones wasted on her insatiable  
Hunger, in silvery nettles she finally casts down her single bolo, selecting  
A blonde youth for her bed—the one who will die in her mouth and not  
In these waves; there, she wrenches him up, hauling him from the sea, as her  
Hands drag the line up the cliffs, and take him drunken-eyed into her coves,  
So this one does not hear the greedy coming of her one true love,  
The indomitable serpent, the old crooked ancient thing founded on dirty deeds  
That Milton saw in his poetry lumbering like a giant beetle over all the  
Length of England, saying of the darkest him,

... not with indented wave  
Prone on the ground, as since, but in his rear,  
Circular base of rising folds, that towered  
Fold above fold of surging maze, his head  
Crested aloft and carbuncle his eyes;  
With burnish neck of verdant gold, erect  
Amidst his circling spires, that on the sea  
Floated redundant: pleasing with his horrid  
Shape and lovely.

So this humid beast came, and like a carnivore whale of ancient evil proportion,  
In one consumptive gulp, did conclude the tumult of all the rest, those sheathing men  
Like sperm who failed to enter her womb, eaten away by a single thought down  
In the throat of her true gentleman, that dusky sea-serpent, that coiled forever at  
Her lap, a great force enslaved, now sated and left to crawl, gorged, in the sooty  
Ship wrecks far down near her bare feet, deep below the waters of those myriad cliffs.

Bare-chested, aroused, with her nipples full of milk, and her  
Orifices salty and shrunken with anticipation, already squirting, she falls before him  
On the hearth, asking that young fair sailor if he will not love her forever—  
And he must answer true if he is to lie with her on the floor beside the sea,  
But already hypnotized by the sea dressed as a woman coming on to  
Him, he has but one answer, and that is what she wants to hear—her chest  
Heaves and she is ready—He agrees and climbs on top of her  
Like the smallest urchin upon the mightiest heaving wave, the act is done  
In a trance, and she the conductor who cries out at the climax, already  
Bringing the crescendo, filled and soon bored, she licks her fingers, and  
Without another thought bites off the newly destroyed virgin's head,

Rolling over the other side into that wasted heap of similar threads collected  
In the years of her ugly need—And there she lays, belly full and pulsating  
The sick glow of the wormy things, half children of man and half something  
Certainly more horrible, that  
Will be spawned forth from her muggy womb like greenish tadpoles,  
She finally goes down to sleep beneath the waves, the carcasses  
And coffins beating against her cliffs—she doesn't care. Already she  
Is coiled justifiably in the deeply languid bottoms with her serpent.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Nightgown**

Festooned by the night,  
The boys make love to the sea.

On a 1,000 waves they call her name,  
And echo back to me.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Nights Sit Down Under The Stars**

All the nights sit down under the stars,  
The brightest of the rich pomegranates sustaining  
The gaseous orbs, those indescribable places  
Where the tender minds of astronomers roam,  
Dreaming of the silvery comet which rides across  
The dark abyss of sky, monotone rainbows  
Trying the muted cry, those silent worlds where  
God's seeds fail, there is no human anguish on  
The remote continents, no governments, no  
Divorces, no cities and no highways leading away,  
No books or doctrines, degrees, success or failure  
The worlds are muted and beautiful, splashed all  
In one color—rarest violet or indigo shipped on waves,  
but the eye will never see, and it is up to the human soul to guess,  
Inevitably comparing such places to the feeling of  
Lost loves, to the moon and pull of the needing tide,  
Ripe still-life in it's bowl, the naked shoulder of a  
woman looking away, a kiss drowning under the sea,  
the desolate frozen lips of the tall mute mountains,  
But none of these things can actually equate to  
Those windless places, the Titans in the utter dark  
Cast so far away where they swim slowly through  
Their time above the subtle table where all the  
Nights sit down under the stars.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## One Day's Work Thanksgiving

When the thunder spark rolls  
On its eighteen wheels  
You know the hawk  
Driving it is the last  
Holdout from the  
Great confederacy- there's  
The southern cross on his  
Grill and here he comes  
Cheeks full of chew  
With his front set of  
Teeth caved in somewhere in the back  
And they bring their  
Screeching big rigs around  
The tent the  
Power pistons whirring  
And wheeling and  
They come like some  
Mad procession of  
Ancient Titans who've  
Fled here south to  
Enslave us with their work-  
And we must open their  
Iron jaws to let them  
Vomit their North  
Carolina loads in piles  
In our tents, slaving like  
The ancient jews for  
These upper middle-class  
Pharaohs we create  
Strange conflagrations of  
Christmas trees as the  
Mexicans call me "muy fuerte"  
And band about my  
Determined arms to  
Stay alive in the flood of  
Green Noel tells his  
Novia Carmen for me to  
Call myself yo soy un caberon  
Just to be sure that I am  
The bad-ass I've become  
Then, after knocking off  
Their strange head for security  
They follow me blindly  
Religious, I think  
These Mexicans love  
Me, and I am their working  
White lord and they are my  
Disciples when they come  
Together around me and we  
Go out ceremoniously  
Into the field where  
The metal behemoths are

Belching and steaming, clanking  
To release the Christmas gorge  
Of these centipedal beasts  
The southern drivers  
Spitting their rebellious  
Young boy thoughts against  
Our Union work ethics  
Still we work it out  
Through the day on this  
Wednesday when I am  
Made a saint of the  
Work and see strange  
Visions from the inside the bed  
Of a semi truck  
Moving backwards to show  
Me the changing vision  
Of latening evening shrub  
Pines which is  
Beyond the words in codex  
Holy and wild on  
The kitty-corner wood  
Island between the  
Stop and go red light and green  
Yellow light metallic road sloth  
And glut when by seven our  
Day is thankfully over though  
The Mexicans don't want to leave  
Their new Carmen/ we've  
Fed upwards of 700 trees  
Their throats cut and bleeding sap  
To sacrifice in  
Middle-class homes  
The sangre dieses our  
Father son and holy ghost tents  
Which blaze rebirthing when  
The sun goes down  
And the Titans rest  
In the evening empty field for  
4 to 5 hours before  
Lugging their half full guts  
In their silverick ceremony  
South to Miami  
Where the good old southern boys  
The redneck beatniks  
Complain that this is  
Too far south for their  
Metric rhymes- its  
The new mexico pilgrim meter  
Out by the brave central American  
conquistadors and tire-sailing  
Cubanos, but even the drivers  
Have to obey the glut and glory

Of their beastly  
Berth this Wednesday  
The 24th when tomorrow  
The sacrifice will start all again  
Over for the metal continues  
Rolling and the forests strangely  
Moving into middle-class  
Strongholds on  
Thanksgiving.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Our Less Than Perfect Attempt To Remain Beyond Nothing**

Moving away from the Green Beret  
Slanting downward, in the  
Smoky mead halls of travelers  
Lost underground beneath  
The suburban forest,  
The working girls' legs go on  
Forever,  
Pointless, their apex a universe  
And stars expanding outward their  
Bodies a capturing gravity creating  
Planets,  
Recreating and populating themselves,  
Homeless in bed at home,  
Out of body experiences,  
In their silver and pink children  
That drive around and around with them,  
In the metallic haze they are  
Galvanized in, the tin soldiers  
Stored in household tins,  
The evolutionary manifestation of  
Cars and super computers and rockets  
Rolling along the highway of their thighs,  
Forgetting to make love  
They still look good while shopping,  
They scream and scream  
Go away to come back again  
Their inescapable space separating  
Our home from the neighbors,  
Our less than perfect attempt to  
Remain beyond nothing.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Out Back Behind My House

There is a dirt road winding across the earth;  
It goes deeper into the heart of Florida than  
Anyone has ever been, and about it are many  
Dangers, for it is lined by canals blinking with  
Alligators, and thick swamps of mosquitoes  
Make a buzzing mist across the banks  
When the sun rises and when the sun sets.

Before I moved far away and lived in that house,  
In my transcendental youth that even then looked back,  
Down a long lonely road near a zoo where captive  
Lion roared, a yellow  
Bus would drive up, brakes squealing, to take me to school,  
but more often than not  
I would run away out back behind my house  
And down the twisting dirt path, my eyes following  
A set of zigzagging tire tracks which only went  
So far before I could see they got stuck and had to  
Turn around, but I was on foot and could keep going.

Here, where no one sees,  
The dust settles under the hot sun,  
And the earth is flat and covered in a humid blanket;  
This road just keeps going on and on, from the Atlantic  
To the Gulf, and about it the quiet things sleep in  
Hazy dreams shaded only sparsely by the splay of  
Palms and the narcoleptic droop of cypress. Things  
Slip into the reeds along the shore, and long green  
Tails slither just about the surface. White herons  
And blue ones spread their wings like yawning angels,  
Each feather rustling in the sunlight, before the  
Large birds swoop up to the higher bows of  
Scrub pines, with struggling fish soon devoured  
In their needling beaks.

I think of all the things lost here, all of the  
Secrets forever kept, and how the conquistadors  
Tried to bring their cross here, and how their  
Footsteps disappeared when they ventured off this path.  
I am not so brave. I do not leave this shifty walk into the  
Shadows; I stay where my footsteps show under the sun,  
And I never go deeper than the day into the ancient  
Place stretched forever beyond the urban sprawl  
That is West Palm Beach down into Miami, and the  
Shadows of the silvery sky scrapers constructing modernity  
Are still not tall enough to stretch so far, to see the  
Things I have seen here, which are only the flaunting  
Pinkness on the surface, the ripples on the glades,  
The knotty risen stumps of the cypress roots which  
Kneel like thirsty brown men knee high in the green water,  
The subtle hump of a soft shell tortoise, and the elephantine  
Mass of the lethargic manatee, the warning rattle

of the camouflaged snake in the high dry grass and the quicker,  
Darker shadows that do not yet have names. Everything else  
Is quiet and half asleep here, except in the moments  
Of the sudden hunt, evidence pawed in the earth with evaporating  
Drops of life between the conclaves of ant lions sleeping in their  
Dusty dens.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Paper Lions

They loved you  
Far away and in a fallen sun.  
You changed your name  
and where you lived, but  
I still remembered you  
And how we once made love  
On that South Florida beach  
Under the long needles of  
Australian pines; but none  
Of that matters anymore, because  
Old newspapers are never read  
And after someone dies,  
People soon forget that person's  
Name and who they were in the  
World; and that is how I  
Am with you, that near forgotten  
Mistake of youth, the adolescent  
Blemish that soon disappears,  
So now when you turn over in  
Bed he is there providing for you.  
When you touch his face, you  
Smile and you kiss him before  
He leaves for work and there you  
Live together in that house in  
South Florida under the Australian  
Pines, so near to where we both  
Grew up, and made love in my  
Bedroom to the sounds of lions  
Roaring in the wildlife preserve  
Just down the road.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Paula

Arabian horses run through her major arteries.  
She lets them stampede through her heart until  
They tire; there she calms them,  
And gently leads them up to the pools behind her eyes;  
There she stables them. Feeding on light cast through,  
They become hers. She names  
Them, and when she looks out upon the  
Sun douses streets, she feels their power  
Prancing within her.

Saying that she must be cleansed,  
She goes out into the desert for 10 years  
And makes love to a fat red Djin for  
Half that time, and the moisture  
Off their love making floods the  
Arid plateau, nourishing it,  
Upon the banks of which bright  
Red roses grow in thorny thickets amidst  
The shoals, and at their roots  
Scuttle colonies of horseshoe grabs,  
Which birthed from beneath her eyes  
As she was in coitus with the man of fire.

Then, saying that she's heard God  
Crying for help in a place far up the cliffs,  
She runs away and leaves the Djin, who finally  
Dies in a ring of ash crying her name.  
She crawls into a black black cave for  
5 months, seeing through a bluish light given off  
By the stallions behind her eyes, finally coming  
Out with God covered in soot. Down below,  
The crowd cheers, and God kisses her and explains  
That he was trapped by his own shadow  
Which he perceived as a giant horned beast,  
But now he becomes demystified, and swiftly  
Sets about ridding the world of evil, though he  
Never goes back into the deeply places which  
Continue to live without his light.

Leaving the world to the newly arisen Lord and his  
Son, she builds a rocket in 2 minutes flat,  
And waving good-bye to the rich red sea,  
She lights a match and shoots off to Mars.  
There she holds her breath and climbs the 17 miles  
Of Olympus Mons. At the top, she learns to breathe  
Without oxygen and finds it easy.

Looking through a telescope,  
A lonely man back on earth sees her and thinks  
That she looks much like the mountain, beautiful  
And soft across the universe,  
But he knows that up close they are both impassible,

With sharp cliffs blocking the ways into the their indomitable hearts  
which beat with the urgency of great herds of stampeding horses,  
So they are nearly impossible to reach, and he turns  
Away and never looks up onto the sky again.

When she is 1010 she finally retires,  
Just to see how it feels to sit in a great rocking chair,  
Grander than the throne of a king before her  
Cities of grandchildren, whom she tells all these  
Wonderful things; and they are amazed.  
But those beautiful horses, still resting beneath her  
eyes, she tells no one.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Perfection Concrete In His Promise**

She doesn't call and I learn to live alone in a hurricane,  
The disembodied eyes falling dead upon me-  
With each pupil dilating, I learn to step further from the  
Door to the soul and embrace the changing medium of  
The wind that sculpts mercilessly until I am the thought  
Unremembered,

I have no place in my body, when she moves so far away  
I feel her breathing next to me stepping out of my skin,  
My hand passes hers' as my thoughts drift back to the time  
That never was, like her lips on my body, pressing what  
She once was mercilessly against the flesh

She is the adaptation, the survival, when I am gone  
She is still here, making love to the boys and the bodies  
Who come her way and line up in her path,  
The curves evolution takes, the athlete's completion of  
The race, stoned,  
She lays in her bed and tries to remember how the rains  
Hit her once as she fell awake, loving something distant,

The passion of a daydream laying in the sun, she  
Walks down the hallway alone never thinking of the  
Possibilities sleeping out on her yard waiting for her to  
Step barefooted toward him, the imperfection of  
His immediacy, the perfection concrete in his promise.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Phoenix

When I saw you after several years,  
You were the young motion of a god learning  
To walk for the first time, as the cars blew by you,  
And how many thirsty boys the same as me did not  
Turn your way, their visions focusing from the blur,  
The eyelids hooked on that form you had taken to  
Showoff how delightfully you could shape the flesh, but it was  
Only I who knew you for what you were, and loved  
You for it, for I could remember coming to find you  
Before I was born, in those first lives where my soul  
Found itself suited in ancestors, I saw you there serving  
Drinks before they invented electricity, you went  
Well with kerosene lamps hissing with the taste  
Of vinegar on the tongue and the sprawling lawless towns  
Of the prairie, where you were the only decoration,  
Too delicate to touch, you somehow survived outside  
In the wind on the yellow grass, all of that which was  
Part of you spread out unto the roots of mountains,  
Which were yours as well, and so to recognize you  
Now, and to see the sway of every sea in your hips, you  
Could wonder how I could just drive on by as you  
Jogged the other way, taking everything beautiful,  
but read this now for that was  
Near a decade ago and still the vision remains, behind  
It all is all I see, you there, a fine young god moving  
For the first time in that decoration of flesh, now speared  
Like a blazing sun in back of my eyes never to burn out,  
So that when this too dies, those of my offspring sure to  
Remember will see you for what you are, an eternal thing  
Meant to flit and leap your beauty through their windshields  
So that they too feel the familiar longing you've brought down through  
their ancestry, thus what you are remains always as you pass them by.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Pickup Lines And Lipstick

Sometimes while delivering pizzas in  
Gainesville, random girls would ask me  
To pick them up and take them with me  
Dressed up to go dancing with  
Men they did not know- this, they said,  
Was their best chance to find a husband  
Who would love them and drive them  
Places for the rest of their lives.  
I told them to hop in and then I drove  
Off campus with them. They sometimes  
Would tell me they weren't wearing any  
Panties, and then they would ask for a  
Slice of pizza, please,  
I never argued,  
And, applying my foot to the gas,  
All I needed was a pair of frosted  
Shades and a hard on  
And I was a NASCAR driver  
Making my qualifying loops around  
The college,  
Where women came out of their  
Apartments wearing nothing but their  
Pickup lines  
And lipstick.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Plate Tectonics

They passed away this time with the  
Nearing of Spring; there were no more  
Undiscovered lovers sleeping in the grottos,  
In the fault-lines of continents,  
And the dictionaries carried like  
Newborns in the wisest of hands  
No longer held the slightest of meaning,  
And even hummingbirds were too big to understand,  
Where they lay suspended,  
Motionless above the wilted lips of consciousness;

For here everything was clearly mapped,  
Raped by the cartographers and put out on the streets,  
The war was settled and the dominate race had won,  
Now busy fucking new buildings miraculously  
Into being along great highways where  
Young children shot out of the  
Thighs of sexy automobiles, and  
The face of God on every billboard as the  
Families caravanned to see the undead wonders of  
Disney Land, down 75 where alligators lay nude in  
The shadows, waiting for sunlight for miles around

The Father and Son selling sports cars with  
Full color ads in Bibles, and their smiles toothpaste,  
With the asphalt charisma that entombed the naiads  
In the sea; they would all get laid out back on  
The dirty straw beside the camels and wise-men  
When their shifts ended and the plates of the earth  
Moved ever so slightly, making little protest.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Prehistoric Red Room

I've created behind my eyes  
A prehistoric red room  
where extinct women gyrate  
to the flickering kiss of  
kerosene lamps, everyone  
who lived before me and  
died in Detroit with the  
junkyard visits me here-  
relaxing on red vinyl  
blood smooth when the  
room changes it goes  
all the way back over the  
hills like yesterday,  
it cools in the shadows  
over the secret valleys  
of an Appalachian gin,  
amidst the alders where  
sun and shade play slowly  
on the suffocating lips of a naked woman  
eating huckleberries  
my eyes are full of immigrants,  
ancestral highlanders, round-headed  
bandits putting the blade to the  
Tories, they come inside me  
for refuge and I introduce them to  
the woman behind the bar.  
In the corner booths, with their  
fingers beckoning, and their eyes  
opening butterflies, women are  
the sexy gray of old photos,  
silky ancestral sisters dressed  
in red corsets their  
eyelashes are silver filigree  
speaking to me, their lips like  
smoke rising the subtle shift  
of tectonic plates moves in my body  
in the booth where  
the analogue radio, in circular  
mouth, plays the bluesy prayers  
of newly freed gentlemen.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Promises of the Dead Elephant

I try to fuck words  
While my dad buys new  
Cars  
To fill the holes,  
Turning with the country,  
Returning to the 80s,  
Zombies,  
Superpowers,  
Worlds of malls of material decay  
Shopping at funeral homes,  
My sister tells me I'm all alone  
And then the moon reaches out to her  
And they make love  
And they are resurrecting Regan  
And everyone is hurrying to get on the boat.

Sometimes looks out my window,  
A rocket ship leaving the earth  
And up above the world is a  
Continuous graveyard with  
Shifting white plates of  
Suicide buildings,  
Eat,  
The repetition  
And hopelessness of a  
Dogged swimmer  
Making love to the undertow,

And how all the life drops  
Into the grind,  
The sinkhole, the Devil's Millhopper,  
Gainesville,  
How all highways lead to the  
Weightless eye  
How they come right through  
Bedrooms  
At high speed taking away  
Love from lovers,  
Leaving the smell,  
Sale,  
And the entire country is turning  
And things are growing stronger  
And more distant  
Where everything is the blue and  
Red of revolutions  
Or dressed in pale patriotism  
When the fingers grasp one  
Last time  
For a name or a  
Word to hold on to,  
To rescue them from the  
Shopping current,

When my father drives away,  
Following the promises of the  
Dead elephant.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Pure, Pure Sunlight**

Her eyes would not give me a red cherry,  
A chance to smell her along the languid body of rises,  
Hiking bone-deep against the plates her body makes,  
Coming up, writhing with the sweat and stain  
Of getting things done on the 3rd plane this  
Planet is known for,

Where her body lies perfectly nude,  
Dripping the juice of the pomegranate,  
Writhing, a holiday for serpents to curl about,  
To surf, and to call those bright eyes a new poem  
Cast out of Eden,  
To saddle on until the buck of the act gets it:

Homer's voyage

Until she calls your name for the neighbors to hear,  
She sinks your battle-ship,  
And all your hopes collide into her, torpedoes,  
Commanded from the thighs which killed the Neanderthals  
Where your class finishes in the overgrown fields  
You learn something new, hidden,  
She slips our childhood into a rabbit hole  
We go down with Alice, in the forgotten wonder  
Of her auburn kindergarten dressed up for Easter Sunday,

And her hair lays in the light without shadow, pane,  
She plays on a field of pure, pure sunlight.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Ra**

The sun's phallus  
Risen in the sky,  
A prehistoric king  
Potent in his Zephyrus  
Harem of magnificent  
Blue nudes portrayed  
Languid on the horizon,  
Worshipped  
Like the prehistoric  
Ra before the son of  
God civilized us,  
Cuts through my windshield  
And parts my eyes with his  
Hands, lays me back  
And makes love to my forehead,  
Driving through the valley  
He penetrates and blinds me,  
Moving against me tidally, like  
The rhythm in heavenly bodies,  
He enlightens me, burns me  
With his efforts of pregnancy, motivates  
Me to sweat,  
Driving through the valley  
The sun, he is moving all over me  
In heat, repeatedly,  
He makes love to me,  
Finishing, his sunburn slides off me  
Into the shadows,  
Cools me.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Rage Like Klaus Kinski**

In our apple-pie and marmalade  
Culture the mother's womb is the first  
Bell Jar the baby is placed  
In  
Glass pornography  
With the Bird of Time  
So when it comes out  
It is trained  
To not cry when the sterile knife  
Cuts away the nature  
Nor to rage against the death  
In the market place;  
And they do not bleat  
When led into the shops  
To put themselves on  
The clothing of social skin  
Where the Sanhedrin meet ;  
They do not rage like Klaus  
Kinski;  
They are cut off from the  
Ferality of the first man,  
The Wrath of God is not in them  
When they wash their hands  
In the stagnant water behind  
Their homes where they swim  
And they are like every other  
Man inside his cage,  
Docile at feeding time,  
Being fed the regurgitation of the  
Masses,  
Slowly flooding the muddy banks  
Of the delta,  
Like a herd of cattle being led  
To gorge the streamline sharks  
Waiting outside the stores  
And parking lots,  
Hunting in the great cutting blueness  
Beyond the slime ringing  
The spoon fed mouth.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Red Into Red

Before he could breathe or reach up to kiss her,  
She loosened her hold and pulled the chain on the light,  
And her smile shifted into dark, and her eyes shadowed the final sound. The red in it  
now  
Hidden, she came back down, a pendulum beginning  
To press the force of a crude experiment  
Carried out with the background noises of  
Traffic, frightened doves, and the subtle knifing of a  
Murder under a lonely bell tower all muted together, like foreboding clouds  
Press under the two.

And in the dark, all of it was red into red,  
But none was seen.

She enjoyed love making on the bed with one boy  
For some time. After the light was out, he could  
Be anyone from her classes at the school and his colors changed until dawn, but he  
was always her familiar stranger  
As his head fit her palm just so, a white egg in her opal bowl, then like something  
gentle  
Newly hatched that pecked wetly around her man o'war stung areolas,  
Before going down on her, and into sharp pinwheels making her sound out colors,  
hungry Red and blue birds, and sometimes, most  
Secretly, she imagined her grey-headed father sitting  
At the green table she had bought from the thrift store  
With a painful silver gun in his hand, watching the door.

At the door came the noise not there's and the  
Only light to enter the room they did not make, up through the small window, and it  
was uncertainty,  
But all the rest of it was in the dark, she knew,  
All of it red into red,  
But none was seen.

For several months they made this into each other in early mornings before the sun  
could see;  
He walked her home from work at the bar, and they separated  
From friends, traffic, and the diminutive constellations of drunken men sometimes  
gather at the doorstep, thus melted to each other and borderless. Confusing  
cartographers, they went into  
The ageless experiment of two mercurial bodies on one bed without gold bands,  
kneading fleshes,  
The pendulums of their hips swing the two by the chain of the light, hands see-sawing,  
her fingernails skating against his, flesh cushioning bone, flower and bee  
Working out the exclamatory phrases from throats which neighbors heard but  
Could not see, strange songs that cascaded through doorways exclaiming the night,  
And she began to try and calculate all the times this must  
Have been done—she kept records on crumbled papers in her desk and doodled all the  
sounds they made as she daydreamed in class— and in the careful dark she began to  
Imagine herself as ancestors with naked ankles moistening hurriedly through green  
grasses and him a wild ax-man she  
Met at the edge of an uncertain forest 5 centuries before their bedding; there were

castles and powerful wild horses on lime valleys she'd never seen before in moments of startling  
Assuredness when neither she nor the University, nor  
The town as she knew lay there, but the sea remained ever  
Breathing to the east. The sea was him against her, tying her up in the stranger's  
arms until the dark was  
Finished.

In the bedroom, with him on top of her, Falling, falling,  
Lapping, lapping, with his salt on her flesh like tears gravity sheds,  
And his sounds in her ears that she had started with the pull of the chain, turning off  
the light,  
In the dark all of it was red into red,  
And her eyes opened up to it all,  
And she was sure she could see.

Many, many times.

But the last night came, and she walked herself  
To her door and uncertainly waited for him to arrive. The bedroom was black inside,  
But there was no color under it, no blown roses from her body  
To begin what they always had done, the studious exchange in the dark,  
For this night she was left alone outside with the noise and  
Changing colors that were not hers, nearby murders she could not  
Cover up alone. She could not understand and there was nothing left for her to do,  
But to enter alone and there lie down and sleep, black and white,  
Of color uncertain, pedals colorless, noiseless and unborn, no longer the nocturne  
pressed sweating on sheets like sails in high winds far at sea before dawn, books and  
records left astray,  
And there was nothing against her to keep out the  
Uncertainty outside.

Minutes pressed on minutes, but one body alone, her fingers barely touching  
The chain on the light she kept on.

She did not sleep, but leapt up before the sun could triumph,  
She roamed out early  
Passed the green table her father kept watch,  
Out onto the early waking streets she ran, footsteps calling, rain pattering, looking for  
her boy, she heard his footsteps rumble out to  
sea,  
A familiar stranger to fill in the night, coloring her books for her so she Could again  
Reach up to pull the chain on the light, starting new graphs and tables  
Against the pulse of his body on her,  
She could not left off these experiments,  
And her ancestors waited inside

In the dark, red into red.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Rocket Launcher

Why in this cold globe  
did you fire rockets  
into my eyes?  
you were not the destiny  
I paid for  
this was an ambush  
and 1/3 of my life  
has run like fetid  
rivers through your legs  
and down toilet drains  
now I am suppose to say  
hello to you, congenially,  
as if you had never  
bitten me, rabidly  
like some foul marsupial  
of my lower regions  
instead, listen dear,  
as I recall the war cry  
of my ancestors  
Rorabeck is German,  
Remember.  
and in 1945 I  
was there adding the  
coal to the cinders  
that baked your  
great aunt  
and now my whip comes,  
crack!  
as I herd the black  
angels through a pale gray  
pain of sky—  
and as you pass by, saying  
your congenial hello—  
I yell, "Schnell! Schnell! "  
and you revert back to the  
naked beast I made you  
and I ride you like some  
Modern Major General  
across planes of fire—  
whipping you lavishly  
for your niceties baked in insincerity,  
your "Hello Robs" and  
oh, P.S., I  
love giving blow jobs  
now that my jaw don't crack.  
but you are my pet now—  
cause you remember  
the mastery of my forbearers  
so when I see you walking  
next time on these  
safe Florida streets  
with these sororities herding

about you  
with their beeping blow dryers—  
"Schnell! Schnell! "  
I will cry, trumpeting  
us into a new  
wicked blackness.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Round

The roads move and move and  
Move,  
People drive down their roads,  
Sit and wait as the movement slows  
As traffic backs up,  
They watch out their strange windows  
The sun and the millioned-knifed sea  
Stabbing upward;  
Like them, kicking frantically,  
Sluicing over,  
Spilling themselves  
Into ennui  
Never escaping the dull light  
Spearing them,  
Cleaning and gutting them,  
Beautifully framed and owned  
By the clothing of their words,  
As they move around and around  
Trapped by the limitations  
The revolutions of the earth's  
Carnival ride  
Never thinking to escape by  
Rolling down the windows to leap  
While the car is still moving

To the beyond....

Each night they return to  
Their road rolling on,  
Ebbing like the tide,  
Traceable and scientific  
The explanation of themselves  
As given to them  
Evident in their surroundings.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Salt River Canyons

I dream I come into her  
salt river canyons and  
she says my name out loud,  
Robbie  
echoes  
down into the Blue  
where the water goes  
we hold hands and walk  
in secret heat and salt  
and it doesn't matter  
where she's gone before  
or where she's going  
after this  
there is only  
the red walls and  
the sun's arrows  
right now  
right now  
right now  
right now with  
her is the moment  
is all I need  
I don't see the fossils  
under her meat Right now  
her eyes are only for me  
her thoughts are on me  
I am in the moisture of  
her salt river canyons  
right now  
right now  
right now  
right now

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Shadows Whisper From The Lips of The Cave**

When I begin to pass away  
and the strange skin upon these bones  
tingles with warning, I turn my eyes  
toward the edge of the cave, to where  
the figures keep walking, strutting  
in show,

and then I begin to eat the  
apple in my throat which is the  
glorious thing, rising there  
the wild sad thing about to  
leap from my voice to devour  
the world,

but I linger  
and I am sad,

And I think about the motions  
I put my body through from rest  
to motion, the subtlty of my  
thoughtless control over the golem  
staring back at me with these eyes

When out side, I stare timidly  
through the blinds and there past  
the shivering palm fronds below  
the melting staves bled from the  
sun, the others like me,  
those emoting atomatons move  
just like me, then lurch  
toward the long great rows of  
malls spreading forever forwards  
like coffins for titans warned  
by the gods. Even afterwards,  
they built their homes upon  
the bossoming sands of the siren beaches,

teeth that sparkle like eager smiles  
waiting to consume those deadly gating  
things

And in this fading way all things come  
marching ever towards me,  
and down into me  
where my body moves and does not,  
incomplete,  
the shadows whisper from the  
lips of the cave.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **She Said They Didn't**

They kissed and they fucked

She said they didn't,

But they kissed and they fucked.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **She Withdrew The Knife And Moved On**

Alone, like the last night before she killed me,  
When snow covered me up before anyone cared to look.  
Then she left me and we separated like the galaxies now do,  
In shifts of red and blue donned by all those far away bodies.  
Nearby where I lay, the little girl's memory tries on  
Disfiguring dresses outback by the sky,  
As the woman struggles to remember  
Who she once loved, but her husband's  
Car moves her so very fast away  
From the long ago virginity, white like the  
Snow over me before it was stained,  
When her world was a block wide and filled with toy horses  
And her dreams were like a Holy-lit Christmas  
In a warm light on Grandfather's lap beside the tree.  
Slowly, the lanes separate, as the cars move like schools of hungry fish.  
She can feel herself separating too, even while looking at him  
They are moving away. Though their bones settle close together,  
Seated with their children, well within, at the bottom of the maze,  
They are drifters, sunken and lost. Still, she tries to call to herself,  
But the billboards and fast-food malls hem her in, clothing her,  
And it is all she can do to put food on their plates in the morning,  
Her skeleton alive and well, while everything else she wears is dead.  
Never once does she hear the pack of wolves crying to the moon  
Beyond her borders, where the world is alive with frost. In that ice  
sheathed world she lay me,  
just as dead as her and like her I no longer remember  
Who I am, but I am cursed with the memory of her, before she  
Withdrew the knife and moved on.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Starved On The Dreams

I wont see you now,  
My eyes have cracked  
    On the edge of the bowl  
And they run up the hill  
Away from the obligations  
You would give  
With the strange sugars you  
Would mix them in only  
To die with another boy by  
The moon dipping into the  
Mediterranean Sea  
In North Eastern Spain  
Where trains drive through Christmas  
With stolen guitars  
Made by grandfathers  
When I am away;  
No, I will not enjoy with your  
Ingredients,  
All the parts you take in your  
Room  
When you turn on and off  
When even dwarves start small  
Where the green ants dream  
They cover the places on your  
Body I would like to cover,  
The places you hang-up at night  
And cloth in the birthing daylight  
Of cliffs  
My body climbs away from you  
Now  
My eyes go way up the cliffs  
Above tree-line where the  
Angels hook them to the  
Burden of dreams  
And they run up from the sky  
The first remembered tears  
Of a young boy caught and  
Starved on the dreams.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Statistics

The lines are still born.  
I've said them again and again to her  
A 1,000 times on a thousand white horses  
I rode up to her sorority doorstep as it snowed all weekend,  
Yet her half nude and drunken sisters turned me away.  
I've sent flowers in the mail. One bouquet  
Cost \$400 dollars, and that made her interested  
For 2 months 2 years ago, but she doesn't remember.  
In return, I got nothing on my doorstep,  
So I pissed her name in the snow, which my  
Teardrops melted. Nearby, the mountain  
Took no notice, but quietly loved on me. I  
Can feel the earth turning under both of us,  
And the gravity which eventually killed my  
Grandmother, pulling us both closer to death,  
But she does not listen, for in her church there  
Are many glowing youths who hover around the  
Blush of her candles. Out here, the winds continue  
To howl like wolves, covering up her name which  
I scream all the way to church, the noises carving  
Out a tombstone in the cliff's face for my grandmother  
Who now only becomes aware each Halloween  
When she rises from her grave and religiously  
Begins to knit, nodding to the tap of the Catholic  
Skeletons who surround her plot in the graveyard  
Under the heavy industrial cross 15 minutes away  
From where I sleep, 5 states away from her, all that's  
Separating us is the man in her bed, and the fact  
That she's forgotten my name.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Strip Tennis

With the daylight dancing  
invisible truth in tiny heated  
segments of God being played out  
through the day's household,  
eons of shadows falling through  
the window's generations, many  
parts of her are laid out through my mind.  
For example, just last night  
while I was jogging in the valley  
on the fertile dirt track my father  
ploughed to train his horses on,  
I thought for the first time  
that I'd like to play strip tennis  
with her on some rich court in  
Palm Beach Gardens; and I  
had never thought of her in conjunction  
With strip tennis before,  
though I am sure I did not invent the game.  
And I think of her in any part of  
the day with God falling on me  
like the spent atoms of the solar system;  
Forgetting to shave, the sun  
looks like Jesus  
when, driving back from the valley,  
thinking of her, my belly full and  
lazy from fast food, gorged, I'm  
ready for a nap, though I just woke  
up this afternoon,  
I think what it would be like  
to lay down beside her,  
the natural juxtaposition of sexes  
on a healthy bed, to never use  
protection when making love with her,  
a full exchange at any time of the day,  
complete, promises of her children.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Sweetheart

You say you've come to love me,  
And this hour is the time. You've raised  
your hands up to the man in the clouds  
And you've laid your father beneath the  
Ground surrounded by bluebirds you raised  
yourself, who sing to him in their tiniest  
Little boxes.

Beneath the tree at the end of the park,  
You've worn your low-cut dress, the very  
One you once let unrecognizable gentlemen  
Take pictures of you in before you went  
With that one woman swimming, by the moon  
And the neon lights of the bar from where  
I watched you looking down from the third floor window  
Of the yellow apartment complex. Then,  
I remember, your smile was nude and warm.

Now, near the University, little kittens  
Are running their tiny paws up and down  
The steps of knowledge, and the mathematicians  
Are counting them, while the musicians keep time.  
You didn't tell me, but you've abandoned your  
Schooling for the sea, where you go alone every  
White night to pray and bathe, and when I dream  
Your skin is the moonlight on the waves. When  
You make love to traveling men who meet you there  
Where they spread out what they're selling on wind swept  
blankets, I see you moving  
With them, as if riding horses together, as I stand with the  
Professors high in the dunes, taking notes, copying,  
And when the ocean takes you up, and tips your  
Chin toward me, your neck is open and supple,  
a creature without a shell,  
your eyes say my name in  
The sexy language of their coloring, before  
The woman takes you and your man back down  
Again, into the bed without my fingerprints.

In the morning, hung-over, I've gone looking for you  
Down the main road where you still work, but  
You've packed yourself up and put yourself away for now.  
There are plagiarists in your park, trying to do what  
You've already done for me,  
So all I can do is leave a message near where I can  
Still make out your sounds, coming from the insides  
Of a shell spared beside the asphalt, that is your sound,  
In the tiny cup, the rush of wind and smell of salt,  
As the traffic hurries by beside those ancient red  
Bricked buildings hours from the sea. They could  
Not keep you in, and yet as I walk to my class, you are  
Here in my hand, whispering that strange distant love,

Like a clock keeping the secret time between sweethearts.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Ancient Planet

She had her dream  
And fell to it,  
Like a kite she took to it,  
And before I could pull out,  
Her sea pulled back  
And left me,  
Before I could pull out  
Of my driveway,  
Mortgaged and broke,  
She left me,  
Harpooned-  
My lungs continued the  
Exhale passed noon  
And all the men dead from  
The gunfight  
As her lights turned red  
And shifted distant:  
She took off to the city-  
To the  
West-  
For the new work  
And the new boys,  
Their sex in strange ribbons  
Laid secretly over her skin;  
I climbed atop the house  
And tried to smell her  
On the wind,  
But the rains rolled  
Like new flesh- rolled in,  
And the world was a  
New wet bitch climbing over  
Another man,  
The morning like a field  
Of beautiful weeds  
Feeding horses, was green  
And multitudinous-  
She made love to her favorite  
Actors  
Cloaked in the darkness  
Of the theatre, the haloed  
Space making them into  
Teenage gods,  
And drove against her  
Hard and stiff between the  
Greedy thighs, the  
Ancient planet,  
I fell asleep in a lawn chair  
Above her vacated rafters,  
The land descended,  
The sea stretched pale,  
Stopped breathing and lay  
Across her bed waiting

For a man into her life,  
A forgotten relative,  
Who would not come.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **The Dying Eyelid of Cain's Unfortunate Brother**

I figured I should call you  
Before I started drinking again.

Because you don't answer,  
I started without you  
Since last night I had a vision  
In which the planes were falling,  
Again, a kind of religious silver rain.  
And you became the lucky number  
That slipped from the pant's pocket  
Of my childhood while incest was  
Dug up behind the tomato vines  
And all the flesh and bones bathed  
In the hot south Florida sunlight  
As the trailer with the holes in the  
Floor was locked tightly before they  
Began the raid on the immigrant workers.

They are advertising human sacrifice  
On the billboards down Military Trail,  
As people pass on from high-school  
Forgetting such detritus as their locker  
Numbers and first loves,  
The way the shadows pooled under  
The overgrown hollies in the early morning  
Beside the bus-stop as the mist rose up  
And the lions roared down the street.

And driving with ex-relatives barking  
At the side of my face only to recede into  
The hills where the snow is quickly melting,  
The world turns old and further away  
From the life gained from the sun  
From which the old god walks away,  
Leaving his destroyed garden to his bastards sons  
Who perpetuate themselves through  
Our sick games played out between the  
Battlefields of eyes upon which even  
The fly experiences strangulation on the  
Dying eyelid of Cain's unfortunate brother.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **The Expressions Of His Face**

Women are easily fooled  
By the expressions of his face.

After 4 months I shave,  
And even my own mother calls  
Me a prince and begins snapping  
Photographs to hang next to  
Her favorite smiles and teeth.

4 years ago my girlfriend left me  
After I came back from Colorado, bearish,  
She cried how dare I show up at her house  
Looking like that before her parents,  
How dare I?

And she went to walk alongside a freshman,  
Who still didn't need to shave. Will he kowtow  
To her flimsy ways, the recessive nature of  
Her color blind eyes, when it comes time for  
Him to become a man and grow a beard?

Or will she cycle down through younger men,  
Until she is old, withered and alone? A spinster, eyesight  
Still poor, Herself beginning to  
Beard, I will think of her fondly and call her grey whiskers,  
And drink alone to that.

For how can a man in good conscious bend  
To such a fickle wind? How can a man with something  
Raging in his head, be reduced to the insubstantial whim  
Of the very thing built to be receptive to him?

Jesus died the lonely bachelor, preferring the long  
Spear in his side, to the naggings of his mother and Mary  
Magdalene. He grew his beard long and dark, rooted there,  
As he to his faith, he would not take up the Roman traditions,  
Clean-shaven homosexual wisps that delight in the surfaces  
Of flesh.

Nor will I when what I have inside me is the wild, needing  
Thing, I want to keep diving deeper into that chaotic abyss,  
Into the monsters who always prevail at the end  
Which know me and make love to me when the very last of  
Women look away.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **The Pumping Jungle Through Which The Red Hearts Love**

The fidelity of the day  
Runs along the chrome gills  
Of her highway,

The glitter of a stream  
Disappears in the shade,  
When she tells you, you  
Do not know her.

When she slips off  
For other men, your  
Dear brothers,

Going around the bend,  
She does not look back  
But cascades

In the tangled memories  
Of skin and bone laced  
With skin and bone

The defeated sun  
Kneels beneath the  
Horizon's teeth to  
Shatter, and fall  
Steaming into the sea,

The gift of the craftsman  
Wasted before honed

When the city becomes the  
Jungle,  
Private detectives working  
Overtime  
Gunned down without audience  
On unseen intersections  
Before all the ladies  
Opening their doors,  
Going out on the walk for the evening,  
The skin of their legs flowing  
Like running facets

Cooling the parched eyes  
Of men, their bodies lighting up  
The safety of nightlights  
Next to the bedroom,  
The doors left open,

Inviting

With All the husbands gone  
On very long and expensive trips

With the objects they wish to possess,

Humid and beginning to swim,  
Women become the sea-wolves,  
The bones of their bodies learn to  
Breathe through the touch of skins,  
Burning through the ancient fires  
Of survival

The glass roof above where  
The commercial airlines  
Fly, comes down

The dryads uncoil their forms  
Swim through the muted clouds

Sweating, rings slip from fingers

Fangs, like roots, moisten

In dark corners paid for by the hour,  
Friends make love to old lovers  
Again,

Back at home,  
Locked,  
Old lovers stand alone  
Hand in hand with a  
Gun

Kissing

Where the sun plummets  
Through the caves,  
Settling amidst the wrecks,  
The hopeless hearts,  
Forgotten and undisturbed,  
Where the greatest man lies  
Beneath green green grass,  
Nameless,

Not even an allusion of movement  
In the graveyard of the deepest  
Bay,

Discarded by the pumping jungle  
Through which the red hearts love.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Rocket That Shot Away

The world is freezing  
On the other side of the moon.  
No one sees the silver trees dying  
Amidst the little boys.  
How many invisible levels must be completed  
Before you find her waiting in the secret room?  
Up the hidden ladder, which the mathematicians  
Had predicted,  
But she's lost her heart  
And the way down to the sea. The sky is in  
A plastic bag- it can not breathe.  
She can only watch you go down  
Like an airplane fireballed,  
While she masturbates atop the red velvet  
Of the curtains you bought her,  
Before her mind turned into the golden  
Arrow that knocked you off your horse,  
And put your breath in the bag with a  
Little fish.  
And something about all of this reminds you  
Of a father, who moved into the gardens  
Beside the highway to sleep with a younger  
Woman, while your mother staid at home  
And roamed the kitchen like a butchered  
Banshee, screaming out the window  
Across the canal- the crickets and alligators,  
And the lions down the street in the zoo  
Serenading her as they execute the moon  
From the second story  
Where nothing remains,  
Placing it's feet in the places where  
You remember stepping before you made  
Yourself into the rocket that shot away.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Searchers

How painful it is to keep riding these words,  
Like a stupid chimpanzee trying to figure out equations  
It can't possibly understand, those cold avenues  
Walked in deadly night that might somehow rise  
Up into her sun, and the golden key stretched out,  
Like a fingerprint and her palm, laid there, open—  
With the right word she will allow you to kiss it,  
The secret equation which will unlock the chests of  
Her eyes to flutter and to look upon you her love now  
Realized, when all the cold marble sinks and the  
Bitter world melts filling the sea with you and her  
To stretched on infinitely, the sun casting down  
A net of a million points, destroying the aching need  
To touch another human being in permanence,  
For that is done, and the word that you found,  
The perfect fit, has joined you to her with eyes  
And lips that never stray.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Smallest Bit of You

Your fingers have touched me some how;  
They have set off on their own and hitchhiked  
To my aching flesh just to brush me once and leave,  
As that's all they could do, those gauzy beings  
The smallest bit of you that cared. The rest of  
You did not even know, where you sailed like  
A merchant's fair ship through the day, the  
Channels of sidewalk moving you easily, your  
Loose garments lapping flesh and light together.

Your lips did not know—  
They did not come so far to kiss my lips, to speak  
Warm words into my ear to ring inside my listening eyes,  
To make my nervous body begin to burn with that pale brush on my soul.  
Nor did your sculpted legs move you close to me, like silky  
Pistons moving your fleeting thoughts upon an ephemeral  
Track hidden in the forests and deserted shopping  
Malls across the desolate states of the nation, jogging  
The starry course of boarders real and imagined to  
My homestead at 8,000 feet.

Your lips did not take off like rosy biplanes to  
Come bombing me with kisses while I sat outside and  
Read and stared out across the valley where Molly's Nipple rises,  
Looking for those parts of your body that might come that way,  
Like parts of angels playing silent instruments the final  
Gifts of God's artistry, a mob of your lashes, hairs, and breasts—  
These things of you did not come marching down from the pink nebulous  
Like pulsating bees in swarms to sting and swell me,  
And blister my tongue from visions of you in parts  
Laying and spread across the harlot's open sky.

Though your fingers came, little thieves, and brushed me only to  
Leave before I could understand, the way those fleshy  
Daggers worked into me, like an infant's need. A contented ease they stole away,  
And in that place a vast and heavy longing lies, an icy mountain  
That knows how to crawl through all of my body, from tip to tip,  
And there quaking movements bring upon heated landslides in  
Thoughts of you crashing down and fumbling like uneasy lovers on me.

For your fingers left their prints in my heart,  
Marks in stone, the smallest bit  
Of you who never even realized.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Sun

In an arching way, like a cathedral's loft  
The sun whirls over us and dispels the gloom,  
Taking gentle fingers to our temples  
And raises us up from bed, sets us  
Out into the tumult like clockwork from  
His spires on high.

Our sphere, the amber king, knows  
Each of us by our ancestors' visages, for  
He still shimmers down upon their bones,  
And lances down upon them his warm,  
Lazy spears, in his strange summer death,  
Rarely spoken of.

That man, who shows us how, who  
Is the candle in our eyes, who presses his  
Hot palms against our foreheads, and turns us  
Into the panting redskins, relaxes near the shore,  
Where the sea is his mirror, and upon her  
He is forever the vane lover.

Yet, there are places that remain naturally  
Outside of his drunken glass of light, those  
Deep ways where everything is shadow,  
For most of the world swims under the dress  
Of the sea, whom the sun makes love to,  
Not knowing how to undress her surface,  
The strange and utter coolness of her luminescent undergarments.

He remains, though, the conductor of our streets,  
The window-man to our cities, a phalanx of burning soldiers  
In the sky marching from dawn to dusk,  
Blindly through our windshields, showing us  
The amber dust of our ancestors, the spores of air,  
Inhaled by our lungs, the keeper of our eyes,  
Reveals to us the day as we rise out of our secret dreams  
He soon has us forgotten.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Thing That No One Saw

I chose to become the thing that no one saw.  
I went to Hollywood not to aspire to act,  
But to play in wrecked train cars that rust like  
Flowers in the dry yellow knee-high grass,  
Before blowing all my money at once  
To return after two weeks to sleep in Arizona.

The last thing I was in high school, which  
Wasn't for very long and even then I preferred  
The muddied easement beside the canal  
Where only I and the animals moved,  
Where I could use shadows for friends.  
I went to school every other week,  
And kissed and fondled invisible women  
In the low subtle branches of the tart orange trees.

For the past year, I have only made love to mountains,  
And those less and less frequent. Soon they too will  
Forget the feel of my weight upon them. I no longer even pretend  
To be with women, for their ghosts haunt me and live  
Inside little castles in my bones. They cry out to me in  
The lonely night, asking me to enter them, but I withdraw  
And can only look at them, like fading abstract art,  
As their beds slide further away,  
Like train cars leaving my side.

Sometimes I see my  
Grandfather staring worriedly at me from the other room  
Before he shuts the door,  
But I never go to visit him or my dead grandmother  
Upon the hill. Instead I drive to a far away town  
And pretended to buy a house, something little in a cul-de-sac,  
Where my father can't bother me, and my friends would  
Be very poor and infrequent; we would live in little lives,  
All together forgotten, but I return to Nutrioso  
After a couple of hours, exhausted and breathing mist.  
Dutifully, I feed the mob of horses, assured that I am no one.  
Needing to be close to someone for a few minutes, I microwave  
Grandfather dinner and he says a prayer.

When my family knew me, they worried for my future,  
But now they don't remember that I was once their son.  
Nor can she remember, the nocturnal flower who blossoms  
In my sleeping mind, how my hips poked her as we made love,  
Because her life is always moving forward,  
Perpetually being filled with the gears of her friends and  
Welcomed strangers, as I am deluded by the darkening night of  
So many passing years, as melting ice-cubes cheapen  
Good whiskey, and when she cries out his name in that  
Secret hour of the cat, she no longer worries that she might  
Speak to me instead. For she is sure I never was, just  
The shadow of a thing she thought she once saw, before

She fired her gun and then stepped forward.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **The True Romance of Pulp Fiction (Or: How I Have 50 Days Left To Live)**

She said our relationship was like Star Wars: The Phantom Menace,  
The worst of the series:  
Flat, without character,  
Distant from the audience,  
Sexless,

Our house a blue screen we  
Acted against (poorly)  
- not knowing the way to the  
Emerald City-

She said she wanted our relationship  
To be like it was before,  
As good as the originals,  
The Empire Strikes Back,  
The best of the series:

Fucking and what they call:  
Making love in a warm bed,  
Making love against the italics of  
Snow fields on Hoth,  
Like Luke and Leia  
With a black man on the fringe  
To be politically correct  
And to sell more glasses

With suggestions of incest,  
The Freudian implications,

But I was tired of going in and out  
And out and in  
Of her cave just to end up back  
Where I was, with my X-Wing  
Sunk in the swamp,

Trying to prove myself to my father  
Who sold himself into a computer  
For the American Empire:

I told her everyone of his movies  
Was just to make \$\$\$ and not art:

To expand the waste of Capitalism's  
Glut,  
To sell more Tupperware (of course)  
And the undergarments and circumcisions  
Made in China made by little men  
With ancient fathers,

Like Darth Vader,

She didn't understand/

Either did I, how she lives in Boca  
With her sister and the hands they've  
Grafted into the Middle-east and the  
Ancient religion they turn to when they  
Need to buy things,

Goyem

We are all the alien species  
When we need to buy things and move  
Far up north to Michigan's northern peninsula  
So we can freeze with a snow beast living inside of us.

Without universal communicators  
We make love on the football field

So we separate into Galaxies  
Far, far away.

A long time passing,  
Sometimes going through Burger King's  
Drive-thru  
We try to remember us  
By buying limited time collectible  
Watches:  
I have all six

The characters in that cold space,  
The graffiti of our bones.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## The Unpublished Continent

I'm so ugly:  
For instance, I want to join the army  
To leave my dog behind in Arizona,  
To crush the skulls of Iraqi children  
To bleed into the red sea, to prove to  
My parents I am something,

I can feel it in my gut,  
The words which recreate the feeling  
Of a repeating sun exploding the first  
Birth inside me, I have hands which  
Cause prints to forever lay on the  
Carved stone of grave markers,

Everyone has a father, who  
Everyone forgets the name of,  
But they always remember their  
Business and the gross product of  
The year- how people come in,  
Growing the fine plants of the sunlight  
Which bloom best at the end of the year,

Like fashionable coats or the first  
Rainbows to cross the street of your eyes

They take photos of their eyes shiny  
Brightly, always like first born neons  
Under our tents

You can see them now and always,  
Poking out of store windows like newly  
Born words that wilt after a month because  
They have no roots.

So, like I said,  
I have a perpetual tooth ache,  
And a binge to die- I fornicate over the gun  
(I'm a good American with a steady brain)  
Placed to the temple, I have a place to go-  
Far, far away- over the sea they will lay me,  
They will lay me

As I graffiti words on the computer,  
The nameless man makes love to my ex-lover.  
As her face lingers over a fading heart, the  
Beating in me still trying to escape into another  
Century, another heart that is loud and obviously  
Beautiful with many people who love him,

But alone, all alone,  
I must beat on, desperate and far away  
From you,

Know I must have you and the words  
Which linger,  
The bad skin and the eyes on it:

I must go on,

For a little longer,

I must go on

As my arm separates  
As my teeth and eyes take off  
As my heart flutters away,

I must go on,  
Thinking of you naked in the strange  
Ponds in the Urban Heart,

I linger,  
As the grass grows up to God's  
Neck,  
Untrimmed,

I continue  
(toward the unpublished continent  
Of the regional band of the regional city  
With good tits that perk up when two  
\$20s are rubbed together!)

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Try To Remember How She Jogged

My God  
How I've used these lines before.  
Even still, I want to see again,  
Those rivers inherent in her form.  
I want to learn how to live again  
And jog all night just thinking of  
Her legs and how to handle them,  
If I took them and gently laid them down.  
Smooth, like porcelain  
Lamps won in a contest. I can almost  
Remember how I loved her,  
And followed her smell around that  
College town, while my girlfriend  
Played herself against another man  
Who she let plough all the fine fields of  
Her mind. I want to love that way  
Again, foolishly and all the time,  
To give my heart up like an  
Aztec sacrifice to defeated Gods,  
To love a woman the way a dog  
Loves a man, with the unconditional  
Surrender of third world armies to  
The might of our marines, to fall  
Down on my knees to her the way  
My ancestors fell down to Jesus crucified;  
But mostly I've forgotten. Paradoxically,  
I don't drink anymore, but I've become  
Numb to the blister of those red lips,  
The subtle part they take when they  
Begin to speak; it's like I've graduated  
Into the mundane, surrendered to the  
Enemy, and though she remains the  
Beautiful prize, so foreign and alluring,  
I have begun to become the married  
Blind man, deafly celibate with bloody  
Fingers as he endeavors to build a  
House for himself far away  
In these mountains.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Unanswered Pain

The irrelevant hollow  
Pushes from the grave,  
The single plot encompasses the world,  
A cornucopia in perspiring autumn  
Unlooked upon by the young women  
The sun dotes upon, hallowing and warming  
Them as they go about their shopping,  
Followed by many migrating eyes nibbling  
On their breasts.

From the graveyard,  
That unending necropolis without  
Points for definition, I struggle  
Both motionless and wordless,  
I cannot step beyond, neither  
Should I, the language of my position.  
My tongue blind and eyes mute,  
I know I have always been here,  
Defined by the deafness shot down by the  
Bright flow of feminine hair  
Cascading like a picture book  
As she walks along the outside of my boarders,  
The black iron bars she never looks  
Beyond, her first love a lost sailor  
Drowning in the mists swarming the  
Perspiring backyards out of her vision.

In order to breathe, I need this  
Stationary hunger; I need to have a clear  
Line of site to her, but can never move nearer.  
I must stay the tree forever at the edge of  
Her fertile sea, watching the other men  
Disrobe and then to go leaping to swim in her.  
Her waves lap against their chests, and they  
Taste the salt on their hungered lips.  
I know myself by them in her. From where  
I watch, I must not say a thing. Remaining  
The calm permanence of a lover's grave,  
I find permanence in this unanswered pain.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Universal, Expanding Gas**

There are these apocalyptic turds in  
Space  
Hurling toward us  
We give them the primetime  
Time-slot  
Tuesdays after SEX  
And inser them with Mercury  
Car commercials  
Super sexy tanned and slipped  
Spaced-super models  
Before we all danced on the  
Edge of the earth  
And sacrificed 26 men in a submarine  
Before WWII  
We parked our cars on the edge of  
The valleys of Mars to have  
Sex like Tom Parris  
And look half pretty naked in  
Overflowing cities commercialized  
Rush  
Half erect  
Our real-estate skyrockets  
In between molestations the  
Serial killer procreate we  
Ejaculate, pollinate,  
And play pool in small rooms of  
Spain  
And pray to the gigantic emptiness  
To be sexy and skinny  
Like the sticks and lipstick  
On the T.V.  
The fart expanding in the head.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Voiceless Sacrifice**

Every day stillborn words are dying inside me.  
After hours, I go the doctor to cut them out,  
Because I don't want you to know anymore. All these things  
I have to tell you, my vitals spilled in a mess on  
The hardwood floor at your feet. Your cat is busy  
Licking them up, but you have turned  
Away, for there is a silhouette of a young man  
At your window, and he is stepping through.  
With him near you, you are distant and I can't  
Find the key to your house. I am left outside.

This show was for you, but you do not attend so  
I will bandage up my veins and stop the ink. My  
Tricks only captivated you until you saw how they were done,  
And then you stopped showing up so we had to close down.  
I don't want you to know anymore, my secrets laid out  
And curing in the dry meadow under the sun  
Until all that is left is my salt to prove they existed.  
You have found the fingers of his shade, and how  
Quickly you let them slide over you. I am muted  
Without a sound, though my fists are pounding voicelessly  
Upon your door.

I don't want you to see the words I have for you,  
To hear them poured out onto the page like  
A rainstorm in my lap. Tonight I will crumble  
My thoughts up and toss them over the hill where  
They will continue down forever, further and  
Further away from you though you will not notice.  
Sadly, I must disappear with them, though I  
Will remain close to your house, something that  
Roams your lawn, trapped and barren, with  
Your eyes and daylight passing through me  
As the traffic continues unabated back and forth.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **When I Was A Wolverine**

you were a virgin  
learning about Greek gods  
and trying to speak Russian.  
Alone in those shady halls  
I studied tears.  
We sat across from each other  
and made fleeting teases  
with our eyes  
gunning each other down  
as our minds raced like  
Tennessee studs  
and undressed each other,  
fucking all day  
or at least through Latin Class.  
And how my thoughts  
echo for you now  
where you stained  
perfect  
a beauty mark  
in my ugly mind  
across the distance  
of blasted years  
In blasted lands  
I long for you  
and howl your name  
to the mountains  
I hear your beauty  
in the naming whispers  
among the aspens;  
but you are all gone  
from here,  
you have walked between  
the bloody waters  
to your own promised land.  
Here,  
virgins are for sacrifices  
and you would not cut off  
one bit  
for me  
and I have forgotten how to speak,  
with my eyes,  
the language of our high school  
that has laid dead  
for a decade

Robert C. Rorabeck

## When I Write

When I write I write  
Maybe an hour or 2 a day  
but the #s stay with  
Me like lead  
From my fingertips  
Seeping deeper  
Ink on my lips  
My face molts  
I rust  
When I write the feeling  
Creeps through me like  
The morning after too  
Much alcohol  
Cold shivers a mirror  
I can't get it out of my face  
And her  
When I write  
She turns on over my bed  
A lamp shaped like a leg  
Filled with effervescing  
Beer and drunken fish,  
Possibilities,  
Prizes,  
Games  
And carnivals  
When I write God puts  
Her rib back into me  
The first pain  
Her breath in me  
Her love in me  
When I write I can't get  
Her out,  
And it would be okay  
If I had her,  
But I don't even know her number  
When I write her favorite  
Color is blue  
When I write she only  
Wears a fig leaf  
And my fingers  
When I write  
Her fingers tear apart  
My temples  
Like rotten fruit  
When I write  
God flies for hours my  
Teeth taste like microwaved metal  
When I she's just  
There  
She's just there the next door  
Over  
When I write

I cup her breast  
Oh, God, how long it's been  
When I write for just an hour  
It's all it takes  
And she's with me all day  
Nakedness and beautiful eyes  
And milk and sweat and  
Redness and the places on her  
I put myself  
When I write  
When I write  
It's like mercury settling  
In a crown around my temple  
Silt  
Gently  
Higher and higher  
When I write I'm Harvey  
Silver  
Jack Micheline's alter ego  
Jewish actor  
Rimbaudian misfit  
When I write  
I'm with her  
When I write I'm burned  
Through Bukowski's fire  
When I write I'm in Michelangelo's  
Fresco  
Reaching out for God  
His hand the promise  
The self I lie in when  
I write  
She's in my mouth  
I can taste her  
It's just too much not to have  
Her  
I put the pen down to  
Spit her out but I've  
Already swallowed her  
Candy poison  
When I write  
It's like being inside her.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Where Lies The Lost Language Of God

Where lies the lost language of God, his affixed words  
Which were the things themselves, grown sour and  
Sweet things on vines off his tongue to trample down and  
Relax upon the infant earth and there to spread as God  
Directed them, his fingers spindling life through the rows  
And waves, new heads and sprouts arising inquisitive?

She is one of the words, I know, and the sea is another,  
I believe, and strung together make the first and the last,  
Mixed together they join into the unction of love spilled into hearts,  
And they sometimes lead to marriage and mortgage, but  
More often collapse into heartache and loneliness.... And was  
God not distraught by these indomitable forces spat  
Out before they had time to be cooled and tempered  
To fit and lay beside him, as he lounged exhausted under  
The hot word sun, to be tamed beside the nude beasts of nature?

God, like the young  
Poet drunk on lemonade and beer, a waltzing seventeen  
Years old experimenting with his eyes on newly born  
Ladies' delectable parts, the pink sugars and powdery meats,  
To be stung by a sinister star spearing down, ,  
Did not yet know the wild  
Tempest wetted from his tongue and set loose like a  
Herd of primordial horses stampeding down the interstate.  
He had not the experience, a virgin to the feel of grass on  
His sandaled feet, a motherless thing yet to suckle from  
The pearlescent breast. Unable yet to fly, he had nothing to do but stare  
At the results of his gardening, and the succulent flow  
Made him come, but would not stop and lie beside  
Him lovingly as he had commanded.

I don't know, but he must have become lost under  
All that ragged time that soon trampled down on top of  
Him, not expecting the words to perpetuate themselves,  
The sad hungering, and the delighting of the devoured,  
With the words she and sea coming first and foremost,  
Mounting and surging in frothy combs, in sweaty female legs  
Undulating and bucking through a dangerous forest, sweeping him away, feasting,  
drowning his perfect garden and brilliant swing-sets he had set too close to her  
Raging shores, not realizing the moon was hers.

There with him went so many of his words,  
Drowned sailors and lost epitaphs to things yet unseen and  
Possibilities yet unrealized by the young benevolent, our  
Creator, to die so young, only 17, and in a death perpetuated  
From the grief of lost love cast in her sea which engulfs all  
Men ignorant enough to step into her shore when  
Her tides are writhing and her shoals are red. So, He must  
Sleep forever down deep in her coral beds, those later words  
He had yet to speak, those spells which would have come with maturity,  
Blinding cures and multicolored beasts of transformation

Hidden in his breast, are never to seed and grow upon her earth,  
For now in his breathless chest those treasures lay dark and hinged,  
And none may know the vermillion splendors affixed in,  
The secrets her sea sways forever upon.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Where The Sun Rises Over The Ocean

I maintain myself by you,  
The way your bones and flesh glitter in my mind  
Gives me oxygen, though you cannot recall my name.  
You are the clock by which I make my time around.  
I think of you and work my mind in little ways toward you.  
Whatever you are doing. Whoever you are with,  
And however you find yourself moving this night,  
I am right there with you, keeping time with you  
From across the room, waiting for you to meet my  
Eyes and see me. Look up. Once you see me I know you will  
Understand and we will come into one another  
The way the sea meets the shore, in unending caress anywhere you find us.  
We will stay up all night long and talk, keeping anchored to  
One another through the light between our gazes.  
I can love you from where I am on and on, but it is a painful experience.  
If you would see me now it wouldn't hurt this way, because  
I've waited so long for you. You must know. I'm tired of the way  
We move by each other casually, barely even touching.  
I've hung out for you. I've packed my lunch and waited  
All day for you.  
I've sat next to a beautiful woman who smiled at me  
And I didn't even know, because you were there  
In that dim room. You say I don't know you,  
And it's been years since I've seen or even talked to you,  
But you must feel my eyes on you even now, and somewhere  
Close to your heart you might also feel the pounding of mine,  
Alive and keeping time in your chest. So, here I am, still waiting.  
I'll wait all night if I have to, and once you get off work  
Maybe I'll finally see you and tell you your name before  
I take your hand and lead you to where the sun rises over  
The ocean.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **Whiskey**

I get drunk. I tear down  
Mountains,  
Grab my father's gun  
And shoot up and down  
The night until the  
Coyote howls. I kill  
10 Indians.  
I forget to say my  
Prayers. I kneel down  
At the foot of the  
Bed and vomit.  
Then I passed out on  
Her birthday last year  
And wrote her love  
Letters while I slept  
I can't remember.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## **You Sexy Skeleton**

Underneath it all  
Is the skeleton  
Of our natural situation  
That toothpaste white  
Machine put together  
With pins and bolts  
And balls and pistons of bone  
Cushioned with cartilage  
And a gleaming  
Dead smile,  
Like a Halloween mask  
Always on the skull,  
Whether you are smiling  
Or not

Beneath it all  
And all the time,  
The skeleton is with us,  
Fucking with us  
Strangely on our beds,  
Penisless  
Sleeping with us  
Grinding tirelessly, with out  
Hunger  
Always there  
God's machine  
And it will be  
All of us  
Once every other bit of  
Us has  
Eaten up by time,  
Our skeletons will sit  
Counted in coffins,  
Or beneath piles of rubble,  
Or upon high altitude mountainsides,  
Or in deep ice caves,  
Or under the ocean blue  
Waves,  
Our skeletons will  
Sit and sit and sit and sit and sit and  
Sit  
Until every last fleshy one of us  
Is dead and escaped into  
Sleep and space and nothingness  
And then

Those skeletons  
Skull and bat and bone  
Shall rise up through  
Shifting plates of the earth,  
Like arisen stone,  
And sit and sit and sit

Beneath the sky just lying  
And grinning,  
Perfectly,  
Our machines,  
Carriages of our frame and heart  
And brain and blood  
Who never wished nor hoped  
Nor cried, nor felt a  
Single dropp of rain;  
They are us hardened  
Without pain,  
They are the part of us  
Beyond brain;  
They are us true  
And beautiful in  
Elephant maggot white  
Army albino,  
They are perfect  
And they are still,  
When brain muscle pain  
Are gone.

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Your Fucking Sexy Legs

And didn't I mention your  
Legs? They are very nice  
Ones- they have the power  
Of the Indian Nation they  
Are tan and wild- parts of  
You that might come off if  
Commanded by God's  
Lips they could fly- your legs  
Could play baseball by themselves-  
They would have all the eyes  
In the park homeruns of your legs  
Have special sections, divided  
Up they are like a well known  
Hike with its orchestra  
Your legs are supernatural  
In certain places of the country  
Your legs are contraband-  
Your legs are thin air surfers,  
Your legs share their own opinions-  
Lets have a toast to your legs-  
Every time I've seen your  
Legs I've never forgotten them-  
Let's have the audience applaud  
For your legs- I hear your legs have  
Their own late night talk show-  
In Japanese, your legs mean hello,  
Good to see you- when your legs  
Are detachable they have their own  
Apartment and favorite malt liquor-  
Your legs know how to make the very  
Best strawberry milkshake- your left  
And right legs each have their own first  
And last name, but they won't tell them  
To me- your right leg is a dictator and  
Believes in communism- your left leg  
Is a democratic president with various  
Mistresses- in sexy nylons your legs  
Are poison- I would like to say that my  
Dick could penetrate between your legs  
But that's not true, for your legs come  
Off and on- sometimes they are invisible-  
Sometimes they use email to travel across  
The next of your legs are indefinable- your  
Legs to rhyme are delectable- my entire  
Bank account for your legs- my balls,  
Cock, heart, and lips, chest, knees, and chin,  
My cheeks, scars, ears, and breath for your legs  
Your indomitable legs they're mountain limbs  
They're hard men they're professionals of your  
Sex  
Your sexy legs  
Your sexy god damned

Motherfucking legs  
Your twin Trojan jogging  
Breasts \\\\\\\Your legs  
Your fucking sexy legs-

Robert C. Rorabeck

## Zipper

At the fair,  
Seasonally, if you  
Tear off enough tickets  
To the carny who's blown  
Off half his nose on snow,  
He might pretend to love  
You, like a snort,  
If you're tall enough,  
He'll open the gate for you-  
He'll let you ride the zipper-  
The rusty contraption, like  
A convict's cage suspended in  
Outer space,  
My favorite amusement  
(even better than the old standard  
Swing set) -  
If you have 2 friends or one  
Lover in there with you it's  
Even better-  
You're going to fly;  
Finishing off her cotton candy,  
You're going to use your  
Momentum to flip the cage  
Over and around your head  
Umpteen times, like lassoing  
Your own brains-  
Back in Junior High,  
With Jordan and Matt,  
We got up to 15 times in a  
Row- It's like listening to  
Your parents having sex when  
You're ten and then dad coming  
Down with a 9inch raw penis;  
It's like finding out the sky's  
Naked and about dying in it  
Only to find out it's good, fun,  
Cheap sideshow sex  
With the paupers gathering  
Under you their hands upraised,  
Worshiping your flying machine,  
As your loose change falls out  
Of your pockets and maybe some  
vomit;  
It's like looking into the  
Girl's eyes you love and  
Never blinking and she  
Smiles and French-kisses you,  
Giving all of her tongue and  
Body into it, so you can feel how  
God made her under her perfect flesh,  
Then she unzips your sky  
To go down in you turning

You into a Gravitron,  
(They ran until one girl  
Died on.)  
A fly stuck on the wall of  
Her handling,  
Superman with her fingers  
On the trigger,  
She unzips the zipper, and  
You fly off with her into a  
1,000 cartwheels of Kamasutric  
Ferris wheel sex with her.

Robert C. Rorabeck