

WAITERS AND GEOPOLITICS

In the left section I seat
the Europeans, mostly Brits
and Germans. They expect it
to be right and if it is
they tip precisely, if it
is not they simply go away.

In the right section I seat
the Japanese who come on
coupon tours, are grateful
for the opportunity and bow,
the exact tip part of the package.

In the middle I seat
the Americans who demand, cuss
and are generally disappointed
by the whole goddamned show.
Yet, by the time the check
arrives, they grunt, see ya,
and, as usual, overtip.

HUMILITY

Coming back to my wife
with my hat
in my hands
not held out like a beggar
with a tin cup
but presented
swept off to the side
and then returned
to the chest
in a most gentlemanly gesture.

CHILDREN

Max, at three
dresses like, The Batman
and asks me
if he'll grow big
and strong

and stop the bad guy.

When he was born
I stopped drinking
(temporarily, c'mon)
partying and carrying
on.
I will

kill
to make sure he
receives all he
is entitled to.

Even myself.

rites of wrong

Eyeing the bra ads
like you're supposed to
you move to
the dark spaces
beyond
mere
fashion.

— Jeff Parsons

Surrey, B.C., Canada

MARY SMOKES: 2

longest I've ever lived in one place
Jack & Kit Webb my original
landlords now both dead
I was living on the Sunshine Coast
tired of the holiday crowds
borrowed a car to look
inland for some secluded spot
it was just luck I stopped at Woodford Motors
(since torn down) to ask if they knew
of any old farmhouses for rent in the area
"we have one" Jack said (he owned Woodford
Motors) "\$36 a month including current"
I was impressed by the way he said "current"
instead of electricity "where is it?"
I asked "Mary Smokes creek" he said
soon as he said MARY SMOKES a book was born
even before I saw the place I knew
I'd have to live there at least
until that book got written
I had never heard such a magic creek name before

20 years later I'm still here
6 books published & 8 one-man exhibitions
if the rent wasn't so cheap (100 a month
now plus power) I never could have done it