

and known to have enjoyed  
over twenty years of correspondence  
with him,

one-half of the literary world  
considers me an asshole

while the other half concludes  
i must be one hell of a guy.

how very interesting.

you know, in all the decades  
of studying and writing and teaching  
and fatherhood and women and travel  
and friends and enemies (few but powerful)  
and economic realities,

it never occurred to me that this one  
almost accidental connection  
would loom so large

on my public opinion report card.

— Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

#### WALMART HAS EVERYTHING THAT A MAN COULD WANT

at the local walmart the  
man in front of me is buying  
some dowel rods, big ones  
and the girl is having a  
hard time sacking them keeps  
trying to cram them into the  
weak plastic and making little  
faces of accommodation and the  
man eventually leans over and  
says thats alright honey ill  
just carry them my wifes  
waiting in the car and im  
going to beat her with them  
the sack would just get in  
the way he winks at her to  
say, its just a joke and  
walks on out, swinging one  
of the dowels like a base  
ball bat i can hear the  
crack of her head now.