

FOR GERALD AND DAN

it is very hard for someone
who doesn't like to be

misunderstood to write short poems
take my word for it.

— Mark Begley

Fresno CA

MARK MY WORDS

when the young people in the bar
are deriding orange county — its
republicans, its bigots, its wealth —

i warn them, "after you have a couple
of kids, you may find yourself wishing
you could afford to move to
orange county."

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

a woman who overhears me say
that my daughter's first child was
delivered by a midwife says,

"i would imagine that you must
have been concerned by that."

"you would imagine otherwise,"
i say, "if you knew my opinion
of the medical profession."

THE FRYING PAN AND THE FIRE

a bright young female friend of mine
writes me, concerning gynecologists,

"what sort of man would want to look up
a woman's skirts all day every day?"

i see what she means.

on the other hand,
what sort of woman doctor would?

DON'T BLAME ME

a newsletter just arrived
from women's studies
and, honest-to-god,
the lead article is entitled

"busy beavers."

AMERICA FIRST

this morning a toyota pulled aside me
with a person appearing to be
of japanese extraction in the driver's seat.
as the day went on, i noticed
hondas, nissans, mazdas, mitsubishis,
and isuzus, as well as the toyotas,
piloted by persons appearing to be
of japanese extraction.
why aren't these people driving
american cars? I wondered.
they are americans now — why are they
supporting the economy of their ancestors?

after all, i don't drive an irish car.

i drive a korean car.

NO WONDER THE ARABS WEAR ROBES

toad considered it
a cruel inconvenience
of our military leaders
asking our servicemen
to function for weeks
in a "no-fly zone."

HE DIDN'T FEEL A DAY OVER EIGHTY-NINE

the plague cut short the careers
of many major talents of the sixteenth century,
giorgione, for instance, dead in his thirties,
and titian, snuffed at ninety.