

## I MUST

finally admit  
to being jealous  
of the crowds of  
people i see  
talking about nothing  
as i sit alone  
and read.

## THE POWER OF CLICHE

I believe  
every one  
I hear.

## I PEEL

the dead skin off my chest and arms  
and place it in the ashtray to my  
right,  
as I smoke my cigarettes I dump the  
ashes there as well, then putting  
them out I burn the bits of  
skin,  
my own little holocaust.

## LAZARUS

so I'm dead and up  
in heaven. I'm talking to  
Gabriel, who I'd heard of  
many times before. there  
seemed to be some confusion  
about my being there. I was  
anxious to get inside, but  
Gabriel kept me at the  
gates. every once in  
a while another angel, or  
less important page,  
would come up and whisper  
into his ear. a few times  
he got on the big gold  
phone and argued with some-  
one on the other end.  
with me he talked small  
talk; asked me about  
my wife and kids, how work  
was, the weather and what  
all.

I asked if there was a  
problem and he just told  
me to be patient.  
I asked him nervously  
if I was to be  
sent to some other place.  
he shook his head.  
I asked him when I'd be  
let in, when I could  
see God, there were  
a lot of questions I  
had.  
he told me to have a  
seat, that everything  
would be worked out  
shortly.  
I did what he said and  
began thumbing idly  
through a magazine.  
Gabriel got on the phone  
again and then disappeared.  
after what seemed like an  
eternity he came back  
and mumbled something to me.  
I asked him to repeat what  
he'd said but just as he did  
I felt a sucking sensation  
through my body and heard  
a loud POP!  
I awoke in my death clothes,  
the stink of days still on me,  
disappointed to be back.

#### DANIEL

down there in the den  
with all those lions and  
all i could think  
about was a nice fat  
roast beef sandwich  
and a beer, and to this day i am  
still unsure why God spared me.  
we have discussed it but  
He just tells me, "I liked you  
Daniel," and i guess