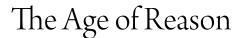
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he'd croon to the barmaids along our long route home

forgetting, even as he said it that all that lovely meat

was spoiling in the car. But I remembered. I knew

the trouble we were in. I could already see us

opening the bloody packages our poor brains, our testicles

smelling up the whole kitchen again, and in the sorry face

of all my father's promises to come home early, sober

a fine example for his son a good husband for a change

one of those smart guys who knew all about meat.

## The Age of Reason

Once, my father got invited by an almost perfect stranger

a four hundred pound alcoholic who bought the drinks all day



to go really flying sometime sightseeing in his Piper Cub

and my father said *perfect!* Tomorrow was my birthday

I'd be seven years old, a chip off the old daredevil himself

and we'd love to go flying. We'd even bring a case of beer.

My father weighed two-fifty two-seventy-five in those days

the beer weighed something the ice, the cooler. I weighed

practically nothing: forty-five maybe fifty pounds at the most –

just enough to make me nervous. Where were the parachutes? Who

was this guy? Then suddenly there we were, lumbering

down a bumpy, too short runway and headed for a fence . . .

Holy Shit! my father shouts and that's it, all we need

by way of the miraculous to lift us in a twinkling

over everything-fence, trees and powerline. What a birthday! We were really flying now . . . We were probably high enough

to have another beer in fact, high enough to see Belle Isle

the Waterworks, Packard's and the Chrysler plant.

We could even see our own bug-sized house down there

our own backyard, smaller than a chewed down thumbnail.

We wondered if my mother was taking down the laundry

and if she'd wave . . . Lightning trembled in the thunderheads

above Belle Isle. Altitude: 2500, air speed: one-twenty

but the fuel gauge I noticed quivered right on empty . . .

I'd reached the age of reason. Our pilot lit a big cigar.