

can be safe reading to their high-school classes;  
 even poems.  
     pictures of snow on cactus.

the Governor cited it: "the major  
     impetus building our tourist trade;"  
 then lapsed back grunting  
     into his smoke.  
 snowbirds ask for "The Bible of the State,"  
     send yearly subscriptions  
 to crippled Aunts hacking  
     and blizzard-bound back home

with a note,  
     "picking oranges at Christmas,  
     arthritis all but gone ..."  
 in their spongy air-conditioned cars  
     ride toward the locale  
     of a recent article,  
     flushed and knowledgeable,  
 ride through our forests ...

our eyes following them, the soul's  
 needles knowing  
     of it all the pictures  
     lie the least,  
     the account of a virgin's  
 internal organs, about to  
     be ravished ...

### Soft Tacos

If someone could stop  
     the locomotive that pulls every  
 day at two toward Paisano Pass,  
     going backwards and  
     white volutions of smoke  
 pouring from its rear,  
     a solid tearing into  
     puffs that circle counterclockwise around us  
 from the rickety village we watch,  
     poorly armed with rakes  
     and straw swats; on the hillsides  
 springs stop. cows stand eaten  
     by rust and wired to the stubble.  
     it never reaches the top

midgrade Mescaleros  
     attack it, whooping  
 from burrows, shoot rubber arrows  
 that grow on our roofs.  
     sit astride its back  
     stuffing themselves with cake

and the sea captain  
that greets us, telescope  
screwed to his eye,  
loaded with spangles and charts,  
like a llama spits in our faces.

the green stuff eats our bibs.  
and looking up  
see it already gone  
over the ridges toward Marfa,  
one puff hanging out like a leg  
disappearing into a cave or a mouth ...

### Dogs

The dogs are in the cellar  
and howling to get out;  
they have eaten the noble corpses,  
the silver plate, broken into tombs,  
gnawed the hands off statues;  
and now they climb up the flue,  
through cracks in the ceiling.  
they curl behind our chairs,  
test the cruets, observe our pictures;  
hang from the rafters, singing. and  
we slumped in our chairs  
tasting our thumbs, they push  
us around, statuary on wheels,  
speaking the words  
that flash across our eyes ...

-- Peter Wild

Alpine, Texas

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