

## STARE

you know, you stare at people and immediately they divert  
their eyes as if they expected a bomb to explode  
but if they would regress a little back to childhood

remember when we bet each other who could stare into  
each others' eyes the longest without

laughing

## INCENTIVE

the last place I worked  
they started this incentive plan

posters all over the place  
telling me that if I

exceeded optimal output  
(or something to that effect)

a few extra pennies would be  
added to my paycheck.

the others fell for the  
accelerated slave labor ploy

but I kept up my natural pace  
paying no attention when

two weeks later I was called in  
and the Boss asked if there was

something the matter for it seemed to him  
that I had slowed down quite a bit.

I hit him with the excuse about  
problems at home and never showed up

after that.

## IT'S REACHED THE POINT ...

it's reached the point where  
at night my mother says  
to my father I love you  
and my father says to my  
mother I love you then  
my father purses his lips

and then my mother purses her  
lips and then the two pursed lips  
start to move (ever so slowly)

on a line heading towards each other  
and after they touch  
(ever so slightly)

my father says to my mother  
good night and then my mother  
says to my father  
good night

and they go to bed.

-- Al Fogel

Miami Beach FL

Take a magic word like tundra  
or timber wolves  
Malamute  
or North Slope, Yukon  
the gold lust days  
from books of course, Service  
the cremation, the shooting  
rinky-tink dance hall  
women crazy-eyed at the end of the earth  
a place to go  
whooping it up at the Malamute  
the killer frost, and six-gun  
from radio too, as a kid, I  
heard King growl at the friendly trapper  
long before good Sgt. Preston  
found the miner bushwhacked and  
the claim jumped  
"should have figured, a trapper with no furs?"  
so I can understand, Friend Prosak  
the pull  
the frozen purifying getaway  
to leave the lady  
and the son, the Pasha  
pack it in, head north  
maybe a pipeline job  
the ice  
for the first time in twenty years  
no books, just like Thoreau  
the ice  
watch the ice, Friend Prosak  
the long midnights  
and those mother timber wolves.