

## BUTTER ON RICE

Brewer and Ed and Bill House and I climb out of the subway into the trendiest corridor of Tokyo, a sort of video arcade of embassies, steakhouses, women with rich daddies, geisha in rickshas, even imported blondes to rent by the hour. Japanese friends tell me this neighborhood "stinks of butter" and I agree, but once before I leave I have to play happy honky games, just to know why I steered clear. Two locals in miniskirts are crouched on the sidewalk shining people's shoes ... for the heck of it, a joke, we are assured. They pack up and we all head to a place they refer to as a "disco," the decor of which consists of wax Christmas candles, plastic holly leaves, and tin foil. On stage is a Japanese singer and the music is Janis Joplin, sounds just like the record but when I step up to congratulate the performer, she can't speak English. Yet she isn't lip-syncing. Final stop of the evening is Manny's American Steakhouse where Ed, our Santa Monica native, latches on to a Japanese businessman who plies him with \$120 steaks, one after the other ... all this to impress a blonde (attached to the businessman) with hair like a doll's. I order a Dixie cup of ice milk and it only costs five bucks. My shoe-shine girl, who wears a beret, says she's a famous model and here comes her brother. I banter with this person whom I decide may actually be her brother ... a devoted Jesse James fan of Japanese origin ... who leaps up out of the booth when he hears I've studied in Northfield, site of a famous bank job ... don't we all know that? Ed is explaining to his constituency how he, Ed, is the first guy -- ever -- to execute a handstand on a skateboard in a surfing movie. The businessman doesn't get it.

## HAIKU

Flush radiator,  
tear morning glory vines off  
deck rail, haul pots in.