

GRANDPA'S ATTEMPT TO COMPLIMENT MRS. NUGENT ON BUILDING
THE FINEST HOUSE IN TOWN

"Mrs. Nugent, that certainly
Is a fine house you're
Building there."

Mr. Griffin, I'll have you
To know that I've lived
In better.

-- Larry D. Griffin

Norman OK

DEPARTURE LANE: 27

"So, you don't really have to go."

Two suitcases under my left arm
and an overnight jammed in my right.
"I think it's probably best," I said.

One of the suitcases was swinging
and catching me in the crook of my left knee
every second step.
It was about three miles from her place
to the bus station and about 27 degrees centigrade.
I was wearing the extra clothes
that wouldn't fit into the cases.

"No, really," she said.
"Maybe I was a little hasty."

She was wearing a blue, knee-high skirt,
white frilled blouse,
having taken off from work
to walk me to the bus station
during her lunch hour.
"Maybe you should stay another day."

WHACK! The corner of the bigger case digs in.
A trickle of sweat runs down my sideburn
onto my cheek.
It's been a mile and a half
and I can't feel my hands.

I turn towards her.
"Look, we decided. It's best that I go."

She gestures with her right hand,
holding her pocket book with her left.
"Yes, but it doesn't have to be today.
You're just being an asshole."

WHACK! I can feel the blister forming.
"Yeah, well, I've moved outa my room
and paid for my ticket. It's all set."

It's two miles and the fumes from the lunch rush
are starting to beat in on me,
my arms feel like it's the eighth round.

WHACK! "Well exchange your ticket
for tomorrow, please."

A small gust twirls smeary papers
and columns little dust clouds.

"Look, the wheels are in motion.
Gotta stay with it."
But I'm weakening. The bus station
is only a few hundred yards ahead
and the urine-lonely smell is present.

WHACK! TUMBLE -- the suitcase in my left hand
flies out and cracks open
spilling mostly dirty clothes.
The wind ruffles her white blouse,
lifts her skirt up her graceful thigh,
her perfume pulls at me.

"Oh, my!" she exclaims.

A car horn blaers and a couple of thugs
leer out of a shitty colored Chevy:
"OOH, BABY, FUCK ME!!!"

It's high noon,
the sidewalks are shimmering,
sweat is pouring down my arms.

"That's fuckin' IT!"
I toss the remaining suitcases
down, kicking the cases and clothes
all over the sidewalk
and into the street.
She stands back, looks scared, looks excited.
Her mouth is slightly parted,
a soft, pink 'O'.

"I'm exchanging my ticket for tomorrow,"
I say in a nicely, icy-cool voice,

"and you're phoning the office
and getting the afternoon off."

Later, in the cool dimness of her apartment
we eat take-out Mexican food
and make long, sweaty love
in our cool, white skins.

Satiated, she purrs that I can stay
even longer, if I want.

But her dirty panties stick out
of her blue skirt, lying crumpled
in the corner. "No." I say;

my blister is going down
and I have enough change to catch the subway
to the station, in the morning.

STRIP SHOW

Tungsten lights
blink off and
on off,
clean air devices
whirl
with mechanistic un-
effort.
The beer tastes homogenized
tiles are blanched
soap dispensers
dispense
and the perverts
who peek
at cocks
without pissing
are polite, un-
offending.

The girls strip
piecemeal, layer
into layer,
designed dainties
falling through
dioxane-blue twilight.
By the last song
they're down to the mound,
razed, gaping,
the mystery of the black hole
displayed,
the pudendum shiny as fins.