

## Men in Groups

take their shirts off and chase basketballs across city pavement. They say *nice block* and *good job, man* and *dude*. They're electric. They're sweating. Men in groups find someone to pick on, someone they like or don't like—

it doesn't matter—fat or slow or stupid or smart. *Hey retard! Hey faggot!* They talk about *tits*—who's touched them and hasn't—or they don't talk or listen or smile. They touch hands in huddles and pray into helmets,

smack asses, *good game*. Men in groups carry caskets. Men in groups stare at women. They wear backward hats and backward glances. Throw rocks and punches, drop bricks off bridges. They flex. *Same as me* is their motto.

Men in groups spray-paint walls, smash windows. Men in groups hurt women in woods. Men in groups take their shirts off and dance. Men in groups carry guns. Are brave. Are cowards. Are solemn and crazy

and lonely. Men in groups hurt men in woods. Men in groups clear sidewalks. Men in groups are locked up. Men in groups stare at men. Men in groups pull their pants down. Men in groups slam their fists down.

## Safe

We weren't supposed to touch  
the guns lined up  
under our parents' bed, rifles  
for hunting, pistols *for protecting*  
*our home*. The carpet was burning  
lava, we'd dangle our feet,  
the barrels mysterious beneath us.  
Headstands on the floor,  
inches from accident, from sadness,  
and always we knew not to tell.  
Nobody home, I lay my body the length  
of the bed, all the barrels  
facing out. I pressed my back against  
their silent ends, metal tips  
poking neck and spine—a firing squad!  
a stickup! Sometimes I'd face  
them, a microphone, or love  
their tiny lips—tongue-deep  
between my teeth—practicing the kiss  
the way my sister used her fist.

## Lucky

Apparently there was a line you crossed  
thin as Kenny's stream of piss  
when he stood too far from the urinal  
and poor Jeremy Simms walked through it.  
Who knew they'd punish you for knowing  
your turquoise shirt went perfectly

with black sweatpants and turquoise  
Chuck Taylors? Everyone laughed  
and laughed because Kenny pissed on Jeremy,  
and that was, even you had to admit,  
funny. And someone must have thought  
it was funny when the new kid Dean

thought you were a girl in the bathroom. You'd  
spoken too loudly or acted too happy  
with your turquoise outfit and hair-sprayed hair.  
He thought you were a girl and told everyone.  
Because they had hair under their arms,  
they turned on you. But you were lucky

they never made you lick the toilet like that one kid  
or stand in the middle of the room  
with your pants down. They never made you say  
*faggotcocksucker* was your name.  
You were lucky you were only laughed at.  
Lucky they never did that.

## **Fatal Attraction, 1987 (Movie Review and Trivia)**

It was before caller ID  
when you could still hassle the married man  
who knocked you up  
and wouldn't leave his wife  
and her textbook hair.

The world was gauzy,  
city-smudged,  
seen through a powdery sheen.  
Buttery sunshine behind the movie-magic downpour!

I said, *Look, Steven, it's not really raining.*  
*It's sunny in the background.*

Then Michael Douglas with cream cheese on his lips.  
Then pants around his ankles.  
Then he and Glenn Close fucking on the sink  
(water pouring out beneath her ass).

A blow job in an elevator  
(we only see their feet).

*If you ever come near my family again, I'll kill you!*

*I won't be ignored!*

Crazy smiles  
more phone calls and build and build and  
deadrabbitdeadrabbitdeadrabbit

- Glenn Close (Alex) took the script to two psychiatrists to ask if her character's behavior was possible.

- Barbara Hershey, Miranda Richardson, and Debra Winger all turned down the role of Alex.

- *Fatal Attraction* received six Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, but won no awards.

## Fat Ass

The woman in the next cubicle: fat ass,  
the man on the train: fat ass, the director  
of the nonprofit where I work  
(though always dieting): fat ass  
and a bitch. Me on my fourth cookie:  
fat ass. My mom in her chair: fat ass.  
My dad in his chair (reclining): fat ass,  
and my sister (though she'll never forgive me).  
Jeremy, Annie, Brian, Lois, Chip, Jan,  
Nancy, David Groff and David Trinidad:  
all fat asses. My editor: fat ass. The employees  
of my publishing company (if I still have one)—  
every single one of them—a fat ass.  
Louise Glück, Ted Kooser, Charles Simic:  
fat ass, fat ass, fat ass. Robert Pinsky,  
Rita Dove, Billy Collins: fat ass, fat ass, really  
really fat ass. David Lehman: Best American  
Fat Ass. Jesus fat ass. The devil fat ass.  
The fat ass pope in his extra big fat ass robe.

## **Psalm (Queer)**

Mom held the belt  
in her hand, said she could

smack my face over  
and over and enjoy it.

Yes, she really said that.  
Yes, she loved God that much.