



FOR
FREMONT

Ashok
Niyogi

2004
chapbook

SIX EIGHTY

When roses make poses
You know it is time
For daffodils,
On the foothills.

Do they have a budget
For wild-flower seeds?
For grass
That is picturesquely yellow
Or do they include it in the gas?

Do they meticulously
Paint it blue,
Your sky,
What is a sky
Without a cloud or two?

But there is mitigation yet,
You have the hummingbird
And the cricket,
And rhododendrons
That pretend to be wild
By the lakeside.



Santa Monica Blvd

GEESE

Without the geese
Time would freeze.
The landing
And the ripples in their wake
Their homing cry at sunset,
Another night has begin its day,
Get out of the way.

MOODS

There is a quarter
Which we cross
With French buildings
Even when we are dross.

I saw a mendicant
On my way to the post
I saw the belly of the Indian host,
But what I liked most
Was the mendicant by the post.

He must have a story to tell
Even in Fremont
Where I don't even ring a bell
I only imagine the suburban maize
In the urban haze.

There are these lights on baseball courts
And the deaf and the dumb
In special schools,
Which get the sun as I do,
On a baseball night.

I am almost sure
We will fight with fireflies
Jogging at night with ear-phones
On pavements clearly earmarked
And watch flat screen TV
Comfort ourselves with our comforter
And live to see
Another day.

Any which way.



APES

They will park the car in the visitors' slot
And move it around every third day,
But they take away
The garbage only once a week,
I must write to Shwartzneggar about it.

The fire alarms ring
With Indian cooking,
And you must not laugh out loud
For sheer
Fear
Because you just paid
Half a million to buy a house.

This inverted logic bemuses me
Perhaps it is civilization
And we are apes
Who rent their breasts in agony
Even though
In a foreign land
We emote in drapes.

At the end of it all
If I have got the Austrian right
Accent and all,
I win a prize
In 'Homeland Security'
I rise.

PARROTS

I could write about Jamba Juice
But I wouldn't write home
About the carrots
I can't write about parrots
Because I didn't see none

Of course,
The geese and the ravens
Are my friends,

Even if they scavenge
And pick their feathers
On the Hub.

SAN FRANCISCO ^ TOURIST TOWN

Bridges and bridges
To take you away to Embarcadero
And five storey parking lots;
Bullet- proof glass
To hide mediocre art
Le chocolat.

My crooked little house,
On a crooked little road,
Costing ten million or so.

The Marina I see;
Yachts bobbing up and down,
Jewels in the corporate crown,
But where is the sea?



ALKALI

A little acid maybe
To be neutralized with alkali,
I vandalized again
Ungrateful wretch that I am,

But your chimney-tops
Are so uniform,
They make me sick.

A San Andreas fault
In the NASDAQ
Is what you need to shake you up;

I saw a scrap vendor today
Carrying his load at end of day
Precious as it was;
After hard bargaining
It will fetch him a dollar,
That's enough for three meals,

Such as they have
In forty six degrees
Beneath trees.

I was debating with myself
What car I should buy
Air conditioning, mountain roads
And engine power
Why?



CAR RIDE FROM SUBURBIA

Triangles have angles
As does the building downtown
In little Italy is it?

And I thought they didn't paint it right
Must have cost them a fortune
To get it exactly wrong.

We must walk these roads just once
To get it exactly right
Like the needle.

I think of shadows all the while
As I did in Manhattan
Amongst all that concrete
And steel and glass
Amongst all that class
Where does the sun grow?

Maybe in deserted cells in Alcatraz,
Maybe in the Utah snow
Icicles on trees
Show me these
Or T-shirts written 'San Francisco'.

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