

## **Roberto's Barbershop And Overnight Trains To Palooka Ville**

Today, 20 bucks gets you a hot shave  
and a phonebook of yarns from the boys at Roberto's.

Haircut costs extra. Forget about it.  
Speaking of lost deals. Try finding an overnighter to Palooka Ville.

In my salad times, man  
for a fin, not a double sawbuck, me and the boys

we'd take the red-eye from Beantown to Baltimore.  
We'd see Kid Galahad fight on a double bill,

treat ourselves to a huge T-bone steak with Brandy Alexanders  
be back on that train and home by noon next day.

Trains had porters then, men devoted to service,  
we're talkin' classy and we always tipped 'em good.

And those boxers, man, just hungry heroes all sincere  
and like those salad times they're history now.

Just how it goes.  
Like mist in an uproar, like gold fillings and acid jazz

they happen along to modify what happens  
just like you do until one Saturday morning

you're loud like me in a barber shop and full of malarkey  
you don't wanna hear yourself remember no more

because you can't bring it back and it kills you to think  
it's all you and you were once so much better.

## **Our Eyes Roamed Over Hills**

We'd finish ditches in front of tar-papered  
mill-worker neighborhoods

and lean on humid freshets  
as we stopped at rivers on our way home.

We'd never argue  
over whose fault the imperfections were,

who did the best labor, or who was strongest,  
fastest, most efficient.

We'd split the pay – even shares for all.  
We'd boast of how we'd spend it.

Our eyes roamed over hills,  
and we'd dream of horizons.

At home, sharing toilet, table, bedroom and clothes,  
we learned to withstand each other

just as we learned why some men sing  
arm in arm.

Fights happened, resentments smoldered,  
forms of forgiveness emerged.

When the autumns of later years came,  
one by one we went away.

We knew winters would bring Christmas reunions,  
and we found meanings, wives, partners,

raised our children by our best standards.  
Nothing extra to say.

We grew taller when we saw each other.  
That's how it is with brothers.