

## table manners

in the restaurant over veal  
she said  
her mouth stuffed full of bread

i dont need you. i can have any  
man i want.

and i laughed  
spat out my drink and  
fell out of my chair.  
she was pathetic.  
she was also paying.

sat back up  
ordered another drink  
from the waiter who was not pleased  
by my obvious lack of respect  
for ambiance and fine wine  
looked her in the eyes

and farted.



c. earl nelson 1997

c. earl nelson is a lazy nocount  
motherfucker from the piney woods of  
northcentral florida, recently run off to  
the pacific northwest - seattle to be  
exact. while he ain't much to look at,  
he shoots a fair game of yahtzee and  
can outcuss the best.

when asked what he misses most  
about the south he replies, "sugartits,  
barbecue, cane syrup, sweet tea, and  
my daughter - redneck girls, cuban  
sandwiches, and the sun slow setting  
over st augustine also figure into that  
equation."

he is not currently in therapy.

ne' 27 august 1967  
key west, florida

for more information about his poetry  
books, *the strongest man alive* and  
*french kissing the dragonsuited lads*,  
contact c. earl nelson at  
southern@speakeasy.org

# c. earl nelson

poet, cultured barbarian

## song for the blue chair at the end of a boardwalk

what say you  
to me  
dusk,  
this gentle  
moaning  
sun  
as it falls deathlike  
into a night  
three miles past the  
dock  
where i stand  
here at the ragged edge  
of a tilted florida tabletop.  
even the horseshoe crabs  
gesture their fitful  
sorrowdance  
in the stinking mud,  
the gulf water thick  
like my remorse.

## the strongest man alive

i dreamt i  
had a zipper  
running from my  
waistline to  
my sternum

and when  
i unzipped the  
zipper, all sorts  
of things fell  
from my abdomen.

of course, there came pouring out  
my greasy intestines  
two kidneys and my rotten liver  
an orange pancreas and my  
halfeaten heart.

they were to be expected.  
but these were not:

i discovered the pride  
of twentyfour lovers;  
three engagement rings;  
one 1967 chevrolet impala SS;  
my highschool diploma;  
a penthouse centrefold;  
seventy cents in dimes;  
one traumatic childhood;  
a housecat;  
one book of dirty jokes;  
my fathers wisdom;

2 turtledoves, a carton of camels,  
a gaggle of streetwalkers and  
eighthundred milligrams of meperidine.

a sock.  
turned inside out.

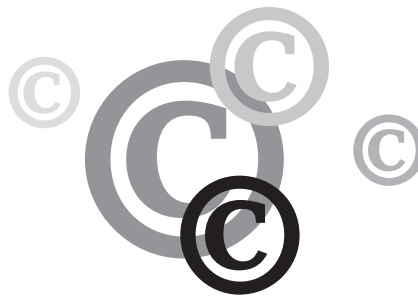
and the meaning of life.

i sat down in a puddle of  
my own piss and sighed.

then, i began stuffing  
everything back into my  
achingly empty self.

well, not everything.

i left the heart  
liver  
pancreas  
kidneys  
and intestines  
laying there.



## see how the tender fruit falls

siobhan lays down tender lines  
of verse for her lesbian lover  
as the first frozen days  
of a new winter fall

much like cummings loneliness.

sadly spiraling through broken glass  
gently brushing the yearning cat  
from her mind between sips of her bourbon  
she begs me not to be jealous:

earl, she whispers, you  
know how i long for vermont.

## savannah

let us examine the bones;

here, one fell from a heart  
crashing through the sullen boughs

and savannah hangs by tooth  
and tongue, longitude lengthily displayed

outstretched hands like a woman's gentle  
hands, perhaps  
being

maybe,  
no.