

My dark job history

by Ed Higgins

Sometime in the late 60s when I was thirteen I had this paper route for the San Mateo Times. I pedaled my young adolescent ass from downtown Redwood City (on 4th. St. where we picked up and folded our papers) for miles along El Camino thwacking front doors, shrubs, or sometimes sleeping porch cats with papers flung from my speeding J. C. Higgins Flightliner bike. Then more miles down Middlefield Rd. where a single-minded German Shepherd named Rex and a pathological Doberman I'd named Satan were excited to end my life Monday thru Saturday around 4:30 PM daily. "Nice Satan, nice boy. Oh, sure, go fuck yourself you sicko dog bastard. Eaten any babies lately? Why don't you do me a favor and go kill Rex up the street!" Satan would only snarl and grab at my terrified faster-pedaling sneakers.

warily the rabbit--
beyond the berry thicket
dog scent

Then finally our Hoover St. neighborhood of friendlier dogs where my mother's friends handed out smiles at their front doors and cookies at Christmas, and usually paid their subscriptions on time when I came around collecting once-a-month--always hoping one of them would come to the door naked sometime. "Oh, sure Mrs. Wilson, I'd love to come in for some of those cookies."

Helen's beauty
reckoning consequence . . .
wall-crumbling Troy

My newsprint-stained canvas bike bags were stuffed to excess with hatchet-folded newspapers banging against the bike's front spokes, catching at my heels turning corners or jumping curbs. Lots

of rainy, cold winter or 90-plus degree summer afternoons on my J. C. Higgins I pursued this slack Norman Rockwell dream. Why anyone in Redwood City wanted the San Mateo Times remained another inexplicable fucking adult mystery to all us reluctant paperboys. Oh, and one tough-as-Hell girl, named Gail, who could beat the piss outa any guy who gave her wise-assed lip about being a paper-boy! Whenever George, our DM--our District Manager (but we called him, George, our BM Manager), forced us out on summer evenings door-pounding, hustling subscriptions for cheesy prizes like SF Giants baseball caps, imitation Boy Scout jackknives, or hooded rain slickers with eight-inch high fucking San Mateo Times letters emblazoned on the back for Christ's sake! Or, for a half-zillion new subscriptions, a flashy new Schwinn with all the chrome trimmings. I never won shit.

old dreams
summer fruit remembered
long past ripe season

