

About My Dad

by Jerry Ratch

My dad drove a Model A Roadster
and had a photo taken of him on a hunting trip up in Wisconsin
with one leather boot up on the running board
and a .22 caliber pistol in his hand
like Ernest Hemingway and Clark Gable rolled into one
My dad rode an Indian motorcycle
in a motorcycle gang up to Wisconsin
and got hit by a car making a left turn
that broadsided him
and got his leg crushed so bad
they almost cut it off
My dad got in a head-on collision
and had his lungs crushed by the steering wheel
My dad flew a P-51 Mustang Fighter plane
My dad flew an Aero coupe
and crash-landed in a wind downdraft into a farmer's
potato patch in his front yard up in Wisconsin
wrapped around a telephone pole
and walked away without a scratch
My dad romanced my mom when she was a teenager
and drove her all around Chicago in a sidecar on his motorcycle
They wrote "I love you" in the steam of his parent's parlor window
while their parents were playing pinochle
My dad drove a ski boat
and towed me around behind the boat water-skiing
summer after summer
My dad played a lot of golf
right up till the end of his life
and suffered a stroke on the golf course
that led to his demise
My dad smoked cigarettes
standing around in garages most of his life

My dad breathed the exhaust of cars most of his life
My dad was in a barber training school
where they cut off the tip of a bum's ear
and taped it back on with scotch tape
and sent the bum packing
bleeding like a stuck pig
How does a stuck pig bleed exactly?
My dad loved my older brother
who pooped right in his hand
when my brother was new-born
My dad died
before my brother was murdered
Good thing
because that would have killed him outright
My pants are moth-eaten
My wallet's in flames
My dad drove Buicks and Oldsmobiles
and Cadillacs
My dad drank one beer a day
because his dad drank buckets every day
during Prohibition
and drank himself to death
My dad was a complete mystery
to me
A complete mystery

