

Ohio

it's good to be home

there is history here

maybe not a good history
but a history none
the less

the roads are cracked
and you can see the
red brick underneath the asphalt

the buildings are falling apart
beam by beam

and there is no spark, no sign of life

everything has found its place
and sunk into it
like a fat man into
a comfortable chair

everyone is complacent,
content in misery

the landscapes are
still beautiful

greens reaching
as far as the eye can see

but there's something
about the people

they are defeated

they are what's left
from a fruitful past,
the casualties of a war
that left their city ravaged
and picked over

although there is a quaintness about them,
a feeling of unity
you can't find anywhere else

but unity
has often spread
intolerance and ignorance

in tradition there
grows the roots of
hatred and bigotry

there are clubs
only for Slovaks
clubs only for Italians
clubs only for Greeks

everyone has their corner
of the city

the religious figures
are corrupt
(like everywhere)

but in our house
sits a jug of
clear white zinfandel
for when father
wants to come
over and drink
with my granddad

the white collar around his neck
is only as good as
the white on my
socks

and I had often wondered
why priests
wore all black
with just one speck of white

I thought maybe it
was because they were
suppose to be humble,
meek servants,
forfeiting lavish, selfish things

but now I know it is
to show how black
the world can be
and how only a crumb of light
can shine through
all that darkness

“So, Kris
do you have a woman?”
the father asks

“I just let one go.”
I say

“Was she white?”

“Yes, she was.”

“Good. You never know these days.”

“I’m
talking to a new one now.”

“A new one already?
Is she white?”

“... Yeah.”

and then he looks
at my grandfather
and the two of them
shoot the shit,
taking pistols to the place,
talking about this person or that person,
how they didn’t give enough
money to the church

how so and so's daughter
is knocked up

and it's all grand to listen to

but overall
it is a city in a coma,
not quite dead
but nowhere near
alive

and it makes
me miss the people
I'm away from
very much

as if I'm
too far away
to return

it's a feeling
only home
can give
you.