

*Old Bulls on the Hill*

when I got a little older  
my father and I would talk about women  
and when I saw one with a fat ass  
I'd say to him,  
"Dad, look at the can on that one!"  
and he'd say,  
"Nah! You'd stick your dick in anything with a pulse."

and I used to admire  
talk like that  
it seemed real to me  
no pretense  
something a man  
with not a care in the world  
would say

but then I got a little wiser  
and my father got a little older  
and a little closer to death  
and death humbles  
a man

after working 7 days a week  
12 hours a day  
for 20 years  
he was ready to give in  
to give up  
to throw in the awful, bloody towel

and I'd say,  
"Dad, how can you give up?  
You're still a young man. You should be pissing vinegar  
and chasing all the ladies."  
and he'd say,

"You don't understand, boy. I'm an old bull on the hill.  
While you chase the cattle, I sit up there and wait  
and when I see a cow that I like, I go down the hill  
and fuck it... But this old bull is tired."

and in his own way  
he told me that he was finished  
that the machine appeared to be working on the outside  
but it was just a heap of rotten junk  
on the inside

his heart wasn't in it  
anymore

and he sat there like a  
helpless giant

hanging onto something  
no one could see but him  
and watching him there  
depressed me

but right then,  
I made up my mind  
not to end up this way...

sometimes the best way to teach  
a boxer to fight  
is to let him get  
knocked out a few times

and for the first time  
I was certain of what I wouldn't  
do as a man

just as he didn't drink booze  
because his father woke him up  
in the middle of the night  
stone drunk

I would not lose all my life before death  
I would harness it in my fingernails  
and in my eyelashes

and whistle at the ladies  
who stroll past my  
deathbed.