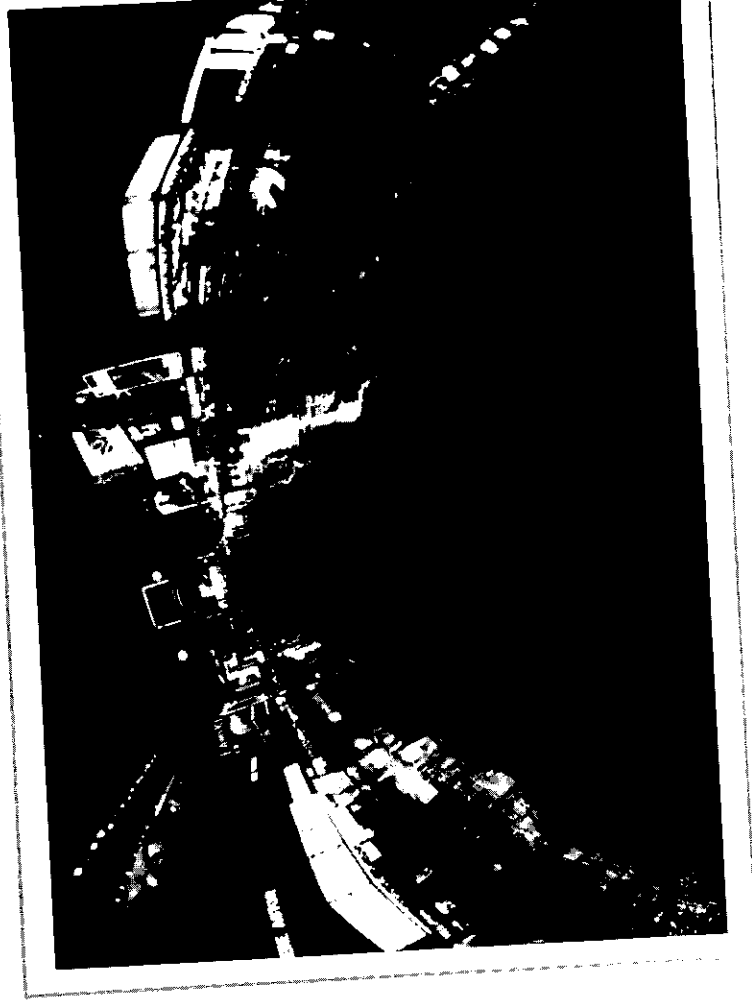


When I am crying
I don't want to be tickled.

[7]

Quite a few things haven't happened to me yet.
I go to bed
too early.



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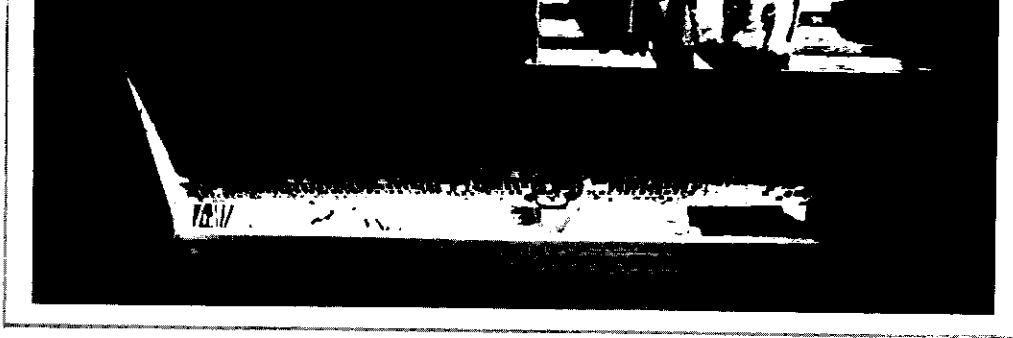
Very very
quietly

I
got up
and stood
at the door
and listened.

They were talking about someone else.

I
went back
to bed.

[10]



stomach gurgles.
throat gurgles.
teeth click.
fingers crack.
toes thump.
nose sniffs.
lips pop.
When my blinks make a sound,
I really very noisy,
in a quiet way.



Shake hands
with the greatest runner
in the world,
for my size.

Sometimes at night
when the house is dark
things I think about get so loud
I can't even sleep.

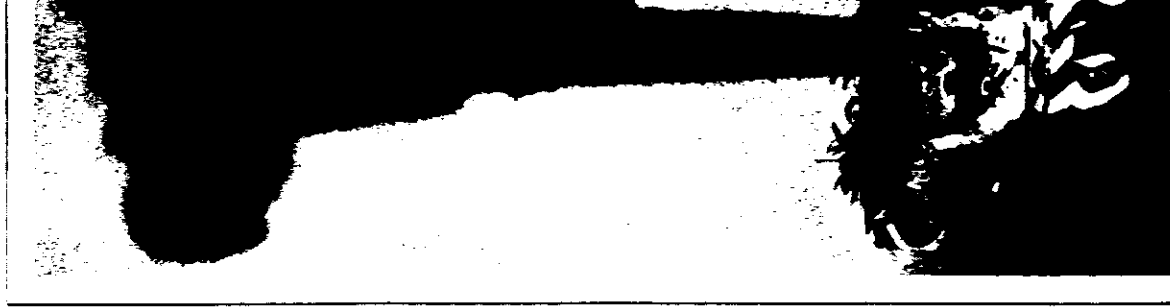


When somebody talks to me
while I'm stretching and yawning,
I just keep stretching and yawning.
My mouth's too open to answer.

The first thing
when you learn to swim
is get in the water.
The second,
if you're thirsty,
is ask for a glass of cold water.
I Don't drink the lake.

If once I smile
if twice I laugh
if ever I cry
I know it, I know it.

Last night
before I went to sleep
I thought of something very big.
When I woke up
it wasn't that at all.
It was small.



When I grow up
when I grow up
when I grow up
I'll be
GROWN UP.



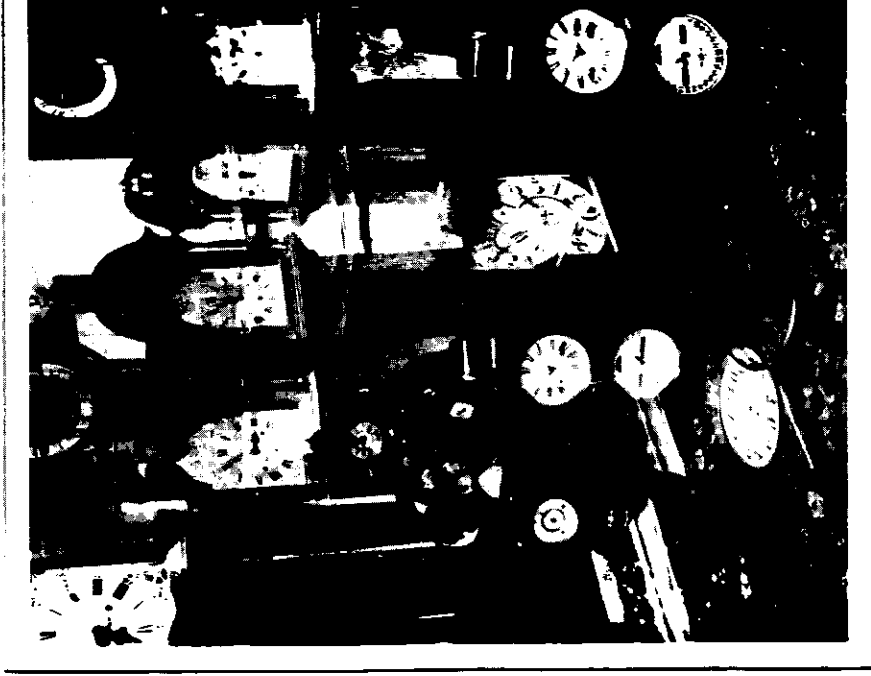
Will I remember
how I looked
and what I did
when I was young
(when I am old)?

Will I remember what I wondered?
When I am old
who will I be?
Still me?

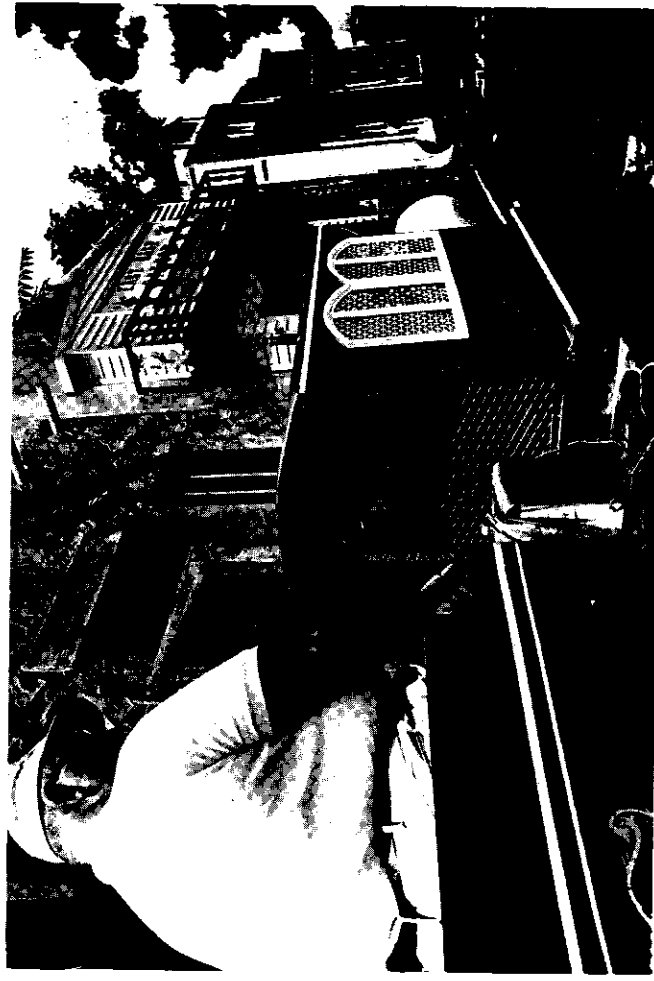
Red and yellow autumn,
they said,
looked just like a picture.
I drew a red and yellow picture,
but it wasn't autumn.

Some day
I'll go away
and work and marry.
I'll take my bed with me.

A million minutes from now, heigh-ho,
a million minutes from now
is a thousand tomorrows from now, hey hey;
a thousand tomorrows from now
is a hundred Sundays from now, heh heh;
a hundred Sundays from now
is a couple of years from now, ho hum,
a couple of years from now.
I wonder if that's true.



After lunch
I
got up
very slowly
to see
where my
lap went.
I couldn't see.



Some people I know
fill up the whole chair.
They don't share.

What if I had a ladder
that reached to the moon?
If early one morning I climbed to the top,
would I be back by noon?

One hill

I want to climb:

one hill high

and green

with climbing rocks and purple tunnels.

One hill

I've never seen.

One hill.



If you're afraid
of a big dog
he'll smell it
and bite you.
If you're afraid
of a bully
he'll see it
and beat you up.

Bullies and big dogs have a lot in common.



Once on my way to school
I thought my pants were falling down.
I looked
but it was just a feeling.



Peculiar:
I'm strong
but when I wrestle my father
I get rickety.

Wind whispers through the window
and wakes me up. Tree leaves
bump the screen. A bee
buzzes. A squirrel laughs.
I can see the sun.
My brother doesn't hear the noises.
I think I'll wake him up.

Falls the leaf lightly —
old.

Winters the wren stiffly —
cold.

Springs the young panther —
free.

Summers Earth softly —
sky, sea,
leaf, wren, young panther, and me.

Sometimes
when I'm teased
I don't cry,
I go away.
When I come back
they're doing something else.
I remember.
They forget.



Mom pulls the curtains
every night
to keep the street light out.
I open them
every night
to play with beams.
They shoot at me.
I lie in bed
and break them
with my knee.
If I squint carefully
I can shoot them back.
Then I pull the curtains.

Circle a tree,
circle and see:
green moss to the north
yellow grass to the south
red clover to the east
blue shadows to the west.

Circle a hill,
circle, and still:
green moss to the north
yellow grass to the south
red clover to the east
blue shadows to the west.

Circle your days,
circle and praise:
blue shadows
red clover
yellow grass
green moss.



Guess what?
Ten cowboys shot five Indians
with a polka-dot cat.
Did you know I was going to say that?

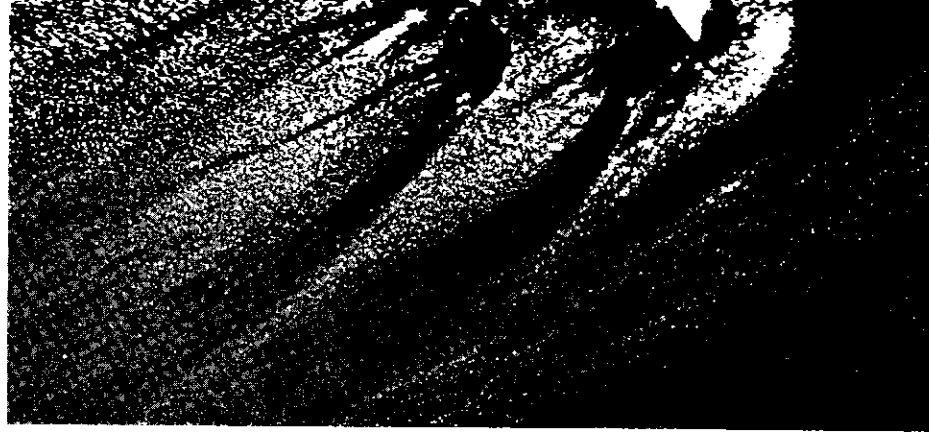


People who are always whining and crying
aren't even
trying.

Standing there before the crowd
(that's my family)
I memorized the months out loud.
I mixed up April with November
and left out some
I couldn't remember.
All the rest I think were straight —
my family clapped and called me great.
Maybe they weren't listening.



At recess
I threw stones
at the tree.
If you throw a whole handful
you don't miss.
Some of the stones
were perfect stones
so I kept them.
Nobody knows this yet.



If in the middle of the night
I dream my little brother is crying,
and with my sleeve
I wipe a tear off his gym shoe —
will he dream it too?



When I wake up
while all the others are asleep
and feel I'm falling
through the deep,
through the deep black night,
I think of light
(to keep from calling)
and then I sleep.



Once on a windy day
when I was running,
my mouth got full of wind.
I couldn't blow.
I turned around and pushed
my back against the wind.
I was low going that way,
that day.



Last spring
I planted sunflower seeds
just inside the gate.
Now I water them and wait . . . and wait . . .
and wait.

If feathers come from birds,
do pillows fly?
If tears are salty,
does the ocean cry?
Do willows sigh and winds reply?
If so, why?

In the car
I steer straight
and race the moon.
The clouds don't know —
they come between us.
The dark trees don't know —
they scrape the moon.
The people in houses don't know —
they pull the shades.
My father doesn't know —
he keeps whistling.
Only the moon and me.