

An Arm And A Leg

Just let me know
when your business is low
and your spleen's not as clean as
a washing machine
you may be down
but don't wear a frown
your heart is as fit as
a fiddle that plays
sonatas, mazurkas
concertos and rags
and things that go fast like
Chopin's polonaise
Steady your hand and
lift up your chin
the trouble you're in
you've been in before
make your fingers let go of
your used violin
your will will do tricks
that will make your head spin

Girl From Mohave County

There was a girl from Arizona
I didn't think much of
she was rather ordinary
short hair
square shoulders
you wouldn't give her
a second look

She really wasn't from there
neither was I
we found ourselves where
our lives took us
away from universities
and libraries full of books

We had eager conversations
about *Being And Nothingness*
and being in Kingman
and looking for wallops
on weekends
with the main drag calm and still
the silent sidewalks napping

One night when things were quiet
we climbed this thing
behind our building
whatever they called it
a hill, outcrop, rise or butte
we pulled each other up
till we stood on top
as far as we could see
jackrabbits, scrub and Oatman
sandblasted majesty

I was the first to pull the plug
an offer far away
so embarrassed
it took a week
for me to say
some words all neatly stacked
that I wasn't coming back
and headed
where tall buildings climb
and the streets all bustle
all the time
her insignificance was hard to bear
as I found town after town
I once set out to find her
but she was not around

Better Door Than A Window

I'll put down my gun
if you say it's no fun
'cause I know
I'm not much of a shot

But where I disagree
you cannot see
and go blind
more often than not

`Femur

After PT
we iced
next to each other
she showed me an x-ray
of her femur
it was snapped
my imagination had it
poking through the skin
like Joe Theismann
Robin Ventura
not wanting to be outdone
I pulled out my phone
and showed the orthotic boot I wore
when a bone in the bottom
of my foot
unexpectedly split
I had to admit
her x-ray was better
but I had a picture of my grandson's
birthday party at the Jump Zone
a dozen third-graders, cake
a stack of presents
she showed me a picture of the
icy corner where she slipped in
Little Village
and then a picture of her daughter
still in Trujillo
whom she would bring here when
she could arrange the papers
and have the money
a *catrachita* with wide eyes
a face whose smile
resembled pottery
left to dry in the sun so long
that it cracked

Americans

Guns don't kill people
the Swiss don't kill people
Aussies don't kill people
Brits don't kill people
Pacific Islanders don't kill people
the French don't kill people

Guns don't kill people
Americans kill people