

## Mike Faran

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### Chicken-Wire Nights

He sat dejectedly alone at the kitchen-table &  
wondered how many gallons of  
Jim Beam does it take to trash a marriage,

a 4X4 truck, a chicken coop, a line full of  
laundry, a swing-set, etc.

A tornado lasting two or more weekends;  
although he knew the marriage was due south.

He wondered if the phone still worked & if  
it *ever* worked;  
he never used it, never liked talking on it -  
didn't like people.

He figured that the least he could do was to  
call her at her mother's,  
ask about the kids, say he was sorry & just walk  
away.

To save what he could,  
to round-up the few chickens that weren't  
dead or dazed.

But first he needed a drink.

**all dizzy dames will fall**

*Dedicated to the Homes For Battered Women.*

i'm conscious now  
thank you  
i'll go & see about  
supper

no thanks  
i'll sew up the cuts  
with fishing-  
line

if i may?

no  
my mother need not know  
nor yours

yes  
i still love you with all my  
heart

## **mutha earth**

they try & burn the brown grass  
but brown grass doesn't burn well

will not allow itself  
be lit into a fire

somebody yells to toss vodka on it  
like in the revolution

but nothing but stink  
smoldering stubborn shit

so i tell the boys to knock off -

to leave the grass to its own misery  
someone will pull it up &

take it someplace.

i tell the boys to grab their shovels  
to bury the empty vodka  
bottles

but the ground will not let us -  
it is too hard

like in the revolt  
the earth will not allow certain things

## The Girl With the Elvis Smile

Perhaps it was on the order of a grin;  
the left side of her lips would curl-up  
into a sexy, devilish smirk,  
or maybe a sneer.

But it was her smile, unique the way she  
did it &  
I called it her Elvis Smile &

whenever I mentioned it  
she'd talk back to me in this big deep voice &  
laugh happily against my chest.

She cut her brown hair short, swept to one  
side & her blue eyes were as soft as  
blue suede;

She was short but sexy, somewhat on the  
the plump side, & I was madly in love  
with her &  
everything seemed to be working.

But it was this crazy Elvis Smile that attracted  
the other men &  
she liked the attention -  
she *craved* the attention as if it were

deep-fried peanut-butter & banana sandwiches.

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She left me for Memphis one hot July day,  
more overweight than ever,

but she kissed me on the cheek as she ran for  
her cab, yelling that I'd  
always & forever be her hound dog.  
Something I didn't need to hear.

## **What If Hell Is Hell**

It could be.

What better way for us to be  
punished -  
& perhaps soon after an  
excruciating death from  
cancer or blunt-force trauma?

What about all those  
insanely sincere prayers to  
God -  
your many spontaneous acts  
of compassion?

What about when you threw  
yourself on a  
live grenade saving the lives of  
eight Wal-Mart shoppers?  
& the list goes on.

What if hell *is* hell - the one  
pretty much described by Dante?

Could you pray & bullshit your  
way out of that one  
or change the course of destiny?

So go ahead.

That second round of JD on the  
rocks,  
that long leer at the waitress -  
may be as inconsequential as holy  
water.

**Mike Faran** is the author of *We Go To A Fire* (Penury Press) and has appeared in *Barbaric Yawp*, *Homestead Review*, *misfitmagazine*, *The New Laurel*, *Iodine*, *The Main Street Rag*, and many others.