

without a bone.

So, I take my time,

drive slow,

you know, give 'em the tour,

let the rhythm

color the day

like the **CRIMSON SKIRTS**

in that window

over there. You see,

that used to be a corner dive

called Etta Mae's

where the hacks ate a meal

and hung out

after the shift.

It was all **JAZZ, JIVE,**

and **JAM**, back then,

after the war.

That's when the food stuck to you good

like your daddy's Saturday night **LAUGHING**

and your momma's Sunday morning **SINGIN'**.

Today, the food's just mostly okay.

That'll be eighty-three cents.

II.

Thing about driving a cab

is you know all the shortcuts.

Take a left down that street,

turn right up this one,

ZIP straight through the east side,

ZOOM right across the west.

But you can't take any shortcuts

in life, ya know.

This one fella I knew

had demons chasing him

like **COYOTES ON A SQUIRREL.**

Hopped in, said he needed

to skip town in a hurry.

Told me to *head towards*

the clocktower, and

KEEP DRIVING, FAST.

Jesse Owens fast, so I did.

Thing was, it was a parking lot up here,
'cause a great big ol' barge down below
was taking its own sweet time.

Turns out, the demons were The Police,
and the law caught him right here.

It's a shame he got arrested
before paying the fare.

III.

Each time I pass by
that church

I marvel
at its pristine beauty.

The way it **SKATES THE SKY**
reminding this cabbie
to soar
even when you're being pulled down.

But, **MY FAVORITE PLACE**

for all eternity
is the next stop,
and here's why:

It was a Saturday, high noon.
Right after the double feature
I see a **RIVER OF HONEY**,
a lady with the sweetest smile

hailing a cab.

I pull up, next to
the **CANDY-APPLE-RED HYDRANT**,
get out to open her door,

which I never do,
'cause I'm nobody's butler,
and by the time I get to her,
I look at her, stare at her,

start feeling woozy,
like I can't breathe.

Like I'm in **ANOTHER UNIVERSE**.
On a different planet.

Saturn, maybe.
I'm spellbound.
Her eyes
are two moons.

I'm so busy being captivated
that **I FORGET ABOUT GRAVITY**,
which takes Etta Mae's milkshake
right outta my hand

and onto the most beautiful pair
of red heels I've ever stood next to.
She grabs my arm,
asks if I'm all right,

and before you know it,
I'm driving her home,
SIPPING LEMONADE on her porch,
and never missing the Saturday matinee.

We got married
in that fine church, and

I've lived with the **SWEETEST SMILE**
in outer space ever since.

IV.

Now, if you like spices
this part of town has got your number.

We call it The Plaza,
on account of the fountain

and the oak tree
at the **CENTER OF ITS WORLD**:
The white and blue flags
The familial folks

Small fry's playing tag
Women breaking bread
Men playing Spades.
Matter of fact, that's where I'll be.

Not taking any more fares today.
Gotta meet a man
in a fedora.
CASE CLOSED...