

I saw the best breaks in the Eastern Pacific
destroyed by crowds,
hostile menacing locals fixing the Evil Eye
on kooks and transplanted maggots
from some inland evidently, waveless empire
flooding the coast with simple ineptitude,
salt bleached blonde topped rubber swathed
shredheads ripping the tops off
anything resembling swell rolling rolling
rolling into Monterey Bay
and unloading upon the reefs, beaches and
breakwaters like dynamite or hydrotechnic
displays,
where locals born and raised in four square blocks
paddled into the same waves everyday, day in
or day out and even nights under full moons,
where the Question is:
Do I know you?
where the locals spraypainted their ten
commandments
on crumbling stone blocks, or scribbled on
railroad ties
or smashed windows or defecated on car hoods
or spoke eloquently
upon the face of some unsuspecting, smiling
weekend warrior from Silicon Valley,
the explicit rules of blatant localism,
where a special degree of hate was reserved for
the local university students
disaffectionately dubbed Slug Bums and
chased from the water
and doused with transmission fluid:
Your four years are over kook! Beat it!
where we learned to be creative, digging perfect
curls from pockets they never knew we had,
while the lemmings two miles down the coast
fought tooth and nail for precious natural
resources,
where we sat above the Lane in all her
perverted glory,
the face of GOD distorted by the incessant
pressure of population explosion,
and the longboards hate the shortboards
hate the hybrid eggs
and everyone hates the spongers,
unless of course a female with a nice ass
and the old timers sit and drink
their memories better and lament the passing
of the good old days,
where everyone's favorite pests, rodents and
parasitic sea life terrorized the uninitiated
with the inflated bag of tricks
they learned to paddle before they walked
and their first steps,
on fiberglass towards the nose,
where it must be easy because everybody is so
beautiful,

where the water is cold dark heavy laden with kelp
and breeding elephant seals
and always lurking just beneath the fog and
the shimmering surface
whitey, whitey, whitey,
where we sat on the wall in Davenport sipping
mugs of steaming java
and the tour bus unloaded a mob of milling
gapers lusting for sweetrolls and snapshots
of crumb snatching sparrows,
oh the insipid thrills of knowing nothing,
where we crossed artichoke fields and
brusselsprout fields and pumpkin patches
in the dark before dawn,
and the healthiest groves of poison oak the
Earth has ever known, enough to make a
seven year itch seem a minor inconvenience,
a slight rain on the backs of migrant
Mexicans stooped in the rows every morning,
just cigarettes and faint whispers of Spain
in the mist,

(An emulation of Allen Ginsberg's Howl)
by Scott Andrew Barber

Howl For Poodleface

where we stood above the Pacific in mute horror
as we watched the fury of some distant spawn
of the child with a capital N
unload upon the reefs and realize in terror:
This mist is shrapnel!
where we struggled into super suits and slid down
sandstone cliffs in the gloom, flinching at
each and every boom,
is there pre-traumatic stress syndrome or,
am I just stupid?
where I bobbed awestruck, gasping for breath in
the harsh throws of the death of my sanity,
scratching for my life,
for the safety of deep water where pelagic
mountains are not heaving their sea sick
guts onto unforgiving shore,
where I feared panic and chanted the sacred
syllable waiting for the light of day to
reveal to me my doom,
where I dragged myself back onto land battered
beaten broken bruised and I exclaimed:
Enough of that bullshit!

where the last clean swell swept out of the
 southern hemisphere to enlighten the leftist
 reefs,
 a last windless afternoon greasy grey
 oilslick surfaced slithering glass warping
 and bowls smashing into soft, heavy shards,
 and the last gnarly barrel
 on that gorgeous seven foot two inch pintail
 I love like a maiden's thigh and that prover-
 bial split second where time stands still
 where I stand in the mouth of the beast and
 dare it to consume this and it lasts forever
 and ever and ever and only one second,
 where we found Swelldar washed into some submarine
 cavern half buried in sand,
 a waning god bereft of believers,
 a lost chunk of some important machinery
 who's forgotten function still pulsed
 low and primal anxious for rebirth,
 the furious struggle for quality, to pull
 overhead perfection from windy slop,
 as if just changing a V to a T could turn
 a hovel into a hotel.

II

What rarefied opiate seeped into their veins and
 replaced the blood of life with the salt of
 this frigid sea?
 Swelldar the slave driving boss! Late for work or
 missed work or can't seem to hold down a job
 because my god declared war on rigidity on
 fixedness
 on permanent solutions to our problems!
 Swelldar the overbearing mother! Nurturing
 worry and anxiety about weather patterns!
 Cursing the wind! Blessing the wind!
 Obsessed by the wind!
 Swelldar the technological terror! Emitting
 fear through electronic receivers and simple
 radio waves proclaiming:
 Point Arena buoy reports seas 27 feet at 23
 seconds!
 Swelldar the jealous lover! Who made my soulmate
 second class citizen of my heart!
 Swelldar the cursed! Turning mild mannered men
 into vicious snarling surf crazed curs
 foaming at the mouth and snapping at the
 heels and pissing on everyone—drunks
 stumbling in worn taverns too pissed to
 glean the slight bits of wisdom scribbled
 above the urinal.
 Swelldar the great! the fantastic! the majestic!
 Who shone that revealing light into the
 depths of Soul,
 and lit upon, if only for a moment, the
 very pinnacles of existence!

III

Poodleface I'm with you at Rims
 where you get all the good ones, but the
 leftovers are just sooo good.
 I'm with you at South Jetty Moss
 where you can't remember to pop compact and
 I'm forced to watch hundreds of shacks
 squandered before my eyes.
 I'm with you at M.D.C.s
 naked in El Nino's free public showers.
 I'm with you at Horseshoes
 where you gathered the courage to step over
 the ledge and drop into glory,
 and the casualty list grows and grows and
 grows.
 I'm with you at Franklin point
 where you learned to dive like one thousand
 ducks.
 I'm with you in Big Sur
 where we drove off predators with slingshots
 and feasted on the joys of youth
 and sipped fungus flavored tea and wriggled
 into seal costumes and joined the foodchain.
 I'm with you in Mitchell's Cove
 another dirty chunk of creosote soaked
 driftwood
 imbedded in the human scum line.
 I'm with you in Indonesia, in Sri Lanka,
 in South Oz, in Madagascar,
 in Tahiti, in the Andaman Islands,
 far from the maddening crowds.
 I'm with you in Bellingham
 where my sinuses are drying out and my
 boards refuse to age and the muscles in my
 shoulders and upper back we worked so damn
 hard to develop, now atrophy, soften and
 paddling is something people do in boats
 because they are one hundred and fifty miles
 and five hours from the closest sometimes,
 but rarely, good waves.
 In my dreams we crawl dripping from the ocean
 at some impossible perfect point along a
 lonely lovely coast,
 and we never have to work tomorrow
 and the sun never rises above about ten
 in the morning and the wind only blows
 offshore,
 gracing the face of the endless flowing
 line. ⊗