

THE HARDCASE SPEAKS.*From Contraband #2*

In fields and christless allies the psalter is handed
greedily around with purple bottles of cheap port
punctuated by the sodium lightness glare of freights
rising past hobo cinder gantries and pitless bramble hollows:
Dukane, Grand Rapids, Cedar Forks, Harlow, Dover-Foxcroft,
names from the back platform of the A-train
so don't gimme that shit don't gimme that crap
I'll put the hoodoo on you, I can do it, it comes in a can
in 1954 in a back alley behind a bar they
found a lady cut in four pieces and written in her juice on the bricks above
he had scrawled PLEASE STOP ME BEFORE I KILL AGAIN in letters that leaned and
dragged so they called him The Cleveland Torso Murderer and never caught him,
it figures
all these liberals are brainless
if you want to see jeans just peak into any alabaster
gravel pit in Mestalinas
all these liberals have hairy shirts
Real life is in the back row of a 2nd run movie house in Utica, have you been
there
this guy with his hair greased back was drunk
and getting drunker when I sat down and his face kept twisting; he cried I'm a
goddamn stupid sonofabitch but doan choo try to tell me nothin I didn't he
might have come from Cleveland
if the stars are right I can witch you I can make your hair fall out
You don't need hairy jeans to stand outside a Safeway

store in Smalls Falls and watch a cloud under the high
blue sky ripple the last shadows of summer over the asphalt parking lot two
acres wide
A real hack believes blackboards are true
for myself I would turn them all soft like custard scoop
them feed them to blackbirds save corn for murderers
in huge and ancient Buicks sperm grows on seatcovers
and flows upstream toward the sound of Chuck Berry
once I saw a drunk in Redcliff and he had stuffed a newspaper in his mouth he
jigged jubilantly
around a two shadowed light pole
I could gun you down with magic nose bullets
There are still drugstore saints
Still virgins pedalling bikes with playing cards affixed to the rear spokes
with clothespins
The students have made things up
The liberals have shit themselves and produced a satchel-load of smelly
numbers
Radicals scratch secret sores and pore over back numbers
bore a little hole in your head sez I insert a candle
light a light for Charlie Starkweather and let
your little light shine shine shine
play bebop
buy styrofoam dice on 42nd street
eat sno-cones and read Lois Lane
Learn to do magic like me and we will drive to Princeton
in an old Ford with four retread skins and a loose manifold that boils up the
graphite stink of freshcooked

exhaust we will do hexes with Budweiser pentagrams and old

Diamond matchboxes

chew some Red Man and let the juice down your chin when you spit

sprinkle sawdust on weird messes

buy some plastic puke at Atlantic City

throw away your tape player and gobble Baby Ruths

Go now. I think you are ready.