

Handsome Family, Lake Geneva

You are crouched before the fire
In a state park by the highway
And through the heavy pine trees
Ten-ton trucks go groaning by

Like the screams of your Aunt Barbara
Who went crazy in the '70's
Wrote poems to Jimmy Carter
But forgot to feed her kids

But, it's the first time you're together
Since he got out of the hospital
Raccoons in the darkness
Drag off your hot dog buns

But, you're happy just to lie there
In your plastic tent from Wal-Mart
Like sticks and fallen dead leaves
To feed the fire of the world

Because which is more important
To comfort an old woman
Or see visions of the heavens
In the stumps of fallen trees?

Albert Einstein trembled
When he saw that time was water
Seeping through the rafters
To put out this burning world

Next morning you're at Waffle House
Toast and eggs and hash browns
Truckers chain-smoke Camels
Over plastic cups of juice

And you remember how he cried
When they strapped him to the stretcher
Convinced his arms were burning
With electricity from heaven

You remember how he told you
That black holes were like Jesus
And the crucifix was a battery
that filled the air with fire