

## AUGUST KLEINZAHLER / Tranter in America

In the jelly, jam, and haircare aisle of the Waikiki Safeway  
as if in a capsule whose walls bear decals, a shattered fresco  
(*Fatty Arbuckle sipping a Coke at the St. Francis Hotel*, etc.)  
the Man from Moruya, a world then a world away again from the chrysanthemums  
at the farm's eastern gate, is turned inward by The Percy Faith Strings'  
arrangement of an especial old favorite, "*Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues*"—  
iridescent oil pouring from the overhead speakers, lubricating  
the sentiment *we're all, each of us, one, softening*  
and put somehow more at ease by the very available and high-gloss kitsch  
the Big Enchilada loves you to hate

or out on the highway, four miles from town, on a stool in the Snack Bar  
of Empire Lanes, sneering as the pins go down, all at once and on cue,  
with an almighty crack radiating out from Pawtucket to Geyserville;  
and you knock back a codeine between gulps of fries as the TV overhead  
shows a rerun of *Kojak* you saw a decade ago in a Canberra motel.  
You are drifting, drifting ever further from Frank O'Hara's Lower East Side flat  
where you sit daydreaming: it is 1959 and you are staring out the window  
at a finny Bel Air scarred rather nicely by kids or sleet, parked

on a billboard across the street kittycorner to a Nedick's,  
the orange drink tumbling and roiling in its smudged plastic tank  
a slow, piss-scented elevator ride up from the cavern  
Grendel in warpaint flashes and roars through  
and from which the frail sonneteer and critic of ballet  
will emerge in twenty-three minutes to knock ever so delicately

just in time for a spot of Jim Beam to keep off the chill, the first  
of September, as Frank puts the final touch to *Poem*  
the one beginning “Kruschev is coming on the right day!”  
then kicks open the door to his study and, breathless as the young Rita Hayworth  
after a terrible fright, cries out —*We’re on with de Kooning*  
*for a tequila sunrise at eight, then . . . How is everyone? All right?*