DEADMAN AS PRESIDENT

There is a new war every day. 
Deadman sends everyone; 
babies, old women, 
even the half dead are thrown in.

Every day Deadman goes to airports 
to count the bodies. 
He never eats or sleeps, 
but lives as though 
this counting were a form of food.

Finally, no one but Deadman is left. 
The stacks of bodies blot out the sun. 
Deadman loves this kind of darkness, 
loves to lie down in the canyons 
formed by the dead 
to watch the sky 
blacken with vultures, 
their screech becoming the Deadman's Anthem.
DEADMAN’S RELIGION

He buys a new suit,
goes on TV,
speaks with a Texas drawl,
puts his hands on the camera,
asks the women at home to move closer,
put their breasts to their screens,
all of them unaware
that Deadman has learned to turn his body
into electricity:
Deadman’s tongue arcing blue fire
drifts like air into the housewives
of America.
Each home becomes an altar,
women kneeling by the thousands.
Deadman jams the voltage past infinity,
and billions of tiny hairs stand erect,
aimed like tiny rockets
at the black space of his eyes.
DEADMAN AS A WOMAN

To Deadman, breasts speak
to the inner body.
He stares into the mirror
minus his male organs,
leans close,
puts his nipples up to their reflection,
his breath fogging over his woman’s face.
His fingers trace:

I love me.
I love me.
I love me.
DEADMAN AS ROCK STAR

His is the music of broken bones,
charred flesh,
the voice of an evangelist gone maniac.
Deadman uses his guitar like a cattle prod
charged with lightning.
He stands on the edge of the stage,
turns up a hundred amps
churning their eyes to liquid,
the entire audience going up in smoke,
a smell Deadman seals in his nostrils.
Later, backstage, Deadman listens in silence,
for the sound of souls
walking back through the aisles,
all of them looking to have their spirit bodies
melted down into the small, black amulets
Deadman plays with like change in his pockets.
DEADMAN OVER DETROIT

He’s been circling for years,
in a slow holding pattern,
no desire to land,
just the daily, lazy turns over the suburbs,
rising and falling toward Hamtramck, River Rouge, Inkster, then back up again,
his heart fueled by leftover car parts, exhaust fumes drifting out of abandoned auto plants.
Each pass and his belly fills with rusted engines, broken glass, the bricks of abandoned houses.
Sometimes at night, over the ghost of Briggs Stadium,
he dreams the city back to how it was . . .
lost neighborhoods rise up out of the charred dust,
he sees Milt Plum and Bobby Layne connecting again,
Gil Hodges sprints back to life,
sifting under Deadman’s shadow as if it were a pop fly,
his glove waving in the air,
the sign to bring Deadman on home.