

when i was alive

there are nerves that pulsate
inside your guts
on the night before
a big show

it feels like mice
are stepping on your bladder
and
snakes are sliding
around between the
fins of your spine

but this is good

it keeps you on edge
it makes you ready

I can only imagine
it's the same feeling a fighter gets
on the night before a big fight

when the only way to victory
is through a beating-

you never want to
get too comfortable
reading your poetry
in front of people

they want to know
you're sweating a bit
that you care

because if you don't care
why should they?

and it is easy to say
your audience is arbitrary
and for the most part they are

but it's about the feeling,
about the pleasure
of connecting with another human being

of speaking words
that crawl inside their heart
and sleep there

making your unique joy
understandable to the many

that is the true gift-

the night before my last big show
I sat around a poker table
with two musicians
that shared my gusto
for the physical act
of artistic creation

bugs were drawn to the light
like it was their mother
handing out a lump of experiment
to feast upon

we sat around for hours
and talked art
making ourselves feel like big shots
betting nickels

we talked about everything
and then we talked about it again

the beer bottles
accumulating

each time we repeated something
it sounded truer than the first time

and at that moment
art hadn't been corrupted,
the passion no longer beaten out of it

we were the only holders
of the artistic future

and the future looked bright

revolution seemed obtainable,

it was one of those nights
that I'll look back upon
if death isn't just a blanket
of wilted stars and lightless moons

for in that briefest of moments
it felt as though I knew the true definition of life
and how to live it