

Harry Gordon

Lucky Strikes

I knew how to move back then:
supple, like a cat curving through wine glasses,
a backward glance like someone is tailing me,

and maybe a circular toss of my right shoulder
as if I've been working the heavy bag a little hard,
then with thumbs hooked in my belt,

cock one leg and lean against the lamp pole
like Dean or McQueen.
But I'm waiting for the municipal bus on Euclid,

our grassy Southern California boulevard
lined with crusty pepper trees
shipped as saplings from Australia.

I didn't know I was ridiculous at thirteen,
that James and Steve would never
take the bus home from *The Granada*,

never lip-dangle a candy cigarette,
never cinch up with a Hopalong Cassidy buckle,
and never, ever wear a shirt with monkeys on it.

But after *The Magnificent Seven* that Saturday afternoon,
when the bus, looking like
a big loaf of Wonder Bread on wheels,

pulled up and stopped, stopped just for me,
and the stout, jolly driver who nicknamed everyone
accordioned the door and said, "Hop in, Lucky,"

I knew how to move.