



## Hokay bubkes

*My girlfriend is a philosophy major—which means she constantly tries to prove that I don't exist.* —Woody Allen

“Your problem kid? You’re too smart for your own good  
and you dream in the middle of the day.  
You’ll have nuthin left to watch at night.”  
Max chewed pensively on an unlit cigar  
that shrunk to a stub by mid-day.  
Abby slouched deeper into the divan marked “clearance.”  
All the old man ever dreamed about was retiring in Miami.  
What’s down there but alligators, oranges,  
and federal agents in dope patrol boats.  
What’s the attraction??—octogenarian shufflers  
mah-jongg-playing yentas  
and the thundering Hannibal herds traffic-jammed on the beach.  
Abby slouched even lower to meet his id and ego.

“Hokay *bubkes*, just what do you want to do besides  
not work and sit on my furniture picking your nails—  
thank Gawd not your nose?!?  
Louie’s boychik son went to IN-DI-A for Gawd’s sake.

What's a Jew got to do in Bombay?  
What's he looking for, some eyeball in a triangle?  
Nu, and what's wrong with *our* Gawd, for Gawd's sake?  
I think the whole *bubkes* bunch of ya  
are looking for the day before yesterday."

Zina figured out his mind on some sliding scale chart  
and abandoned Abby in favor of her *apikoros* studies.  
"I need more space, Ab. I need more growing space."  
Fine. Great. Hokay, so go to Mars.

The day cremated into iron filings;  
the sky slouched over the thundering bay.  
Abby listlessly picked at an onion bialy,  
and downed a glass of Russia tea.  
Quitting jobs was something he did on a regular basis  
in between looking for new jobs  
and hanging out at city college.

Zina was sitting with him in the cafeteria  
watching him gesticulate his maniacal ideas.  
"Zina, this is what work means. Find a computer terminal  
at a work station with a printer going nonstop.  
Download all there is to know about anything.  
Forget processing it all—that'll never happen.  
Hook up the continuous paper flow directly  
into a paper shredder which chomps the data which drops  
each godforsaken forlorn word into a spit wad  
all sucked down by a belching monster machine.  
Then you lose any means of articulation,  
get forced into early retirement,  
move to Miami and die."  
Zina shrugged and looked at her lunch  
as if it had just rolled over and died.  
"Abby, in life there are purposes to everything—  
but you are hopeless."

The night was a chimney sweeper;  
the sky was a dustbin of stars.  
Dizzyheaded from a chollent of marinated thoughts  
and caught by the scruff of his existence,  
he seized the moment and asked the stars where Messiah is.