

**Camping in a
Middle Class Pasture**

Selected Poems 1971-1999

By

Michael Feil

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This collection of poetry is dedicated in memory of Richard Fiscus, a rare person that was a friend and teacher, a painter and writer who pointed the way.

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Prologue

The trip to
a middleclass pasture
started as advice.
My mentor said
get a middle class life
and make art with and for
each and every care.

I started truck driving,
then a sales career,
courted a wife,
brought children to bare.

Politics, philosophy
came and went,
surviving the game
each payday a claim,
painting and writing
trying not to despair.....

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Part I.

Along The Asphalt Ribbon

Michael Feil

Going On Through

Don't give a damn
for L.A.
Just stay awake
to truck on through.
Breathe the foul air,
bad traffic blues.
But listen all the time
with my radio dial scanning
the F.M. line.
Blaring stereo, rock & roll
drive away them truckin' blues.

December 14, 1981

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Down Time

Disintegrated a wheel bearing
ended up stranded at
Calumet City Truck Haven
(heaven), smokin' rope
with the asphalt natives.
Santa Claus spent the day
wandering from the coffee shop
to his Freightliner, no loads
today, just wasn't his day
as he shook his grubby white mop.
And those weren't angels
or elves banging
on the sides of my sleeper
all night.

Calumet City, IL
10/16/82

Michael Feil

Omen

Southbound U.S., in Tennessee,
fifty-one, Buddha disguised
himself as too many
stoplights gone red, giving
me time to muse and
witness the antics of
careless drivers on the
rain slick streets.

Leaving Covington, was
an omen, twisted carcass
of a mutt, that was the
peril of the rampage
on nature.

1/7/83
W. Memphis, Ark.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Lane Changer, Merritt Parkway

Flighty as a bat in a belfry
Dark at night
The suave blonde
In her Volvo Turbo Wagon
 Flits from lane to lane
On the southbound Merritt
Disrupting the regular toll
Of evening commuter traffic.

Michael Feil

Construction Zone Blues

Bearing down through rush hour traffic
into the construction zone
the scarifier ripped up the slow lane
a poke-a-long bastard moves right too late
a fuck 'em pedal to the metal is flying by
brake lights glare, horns blare, a cop is there,
beware the constructions zone blues.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Joke A Day

East Texas, all waiting
been in a cold front
for eight days out,
and back, been no
bugs splattered on
this windshield this
week. Raindrops then
drizzle, forty-three miles.
Keep on waiting, the answer
to this riddle, no rain today.
Getting dry, easin' on slow.
Bumpy roads, windshield raindrops
linger on, fascinating explosions
of microcosmic world's of their own.
Bugs come alive and splatter,
wanton highway homicide
drowning themselves against
a pitted tinted PPG,
the last thing to go through
their minds? Their assholes.
Driving today is hearing
a joke too many times.

10/11/82
near Tyler, TX

Michael Feil

Technical Difficulties

Lightning charges light
the night sky.
Flatbed trailer passes
southbound, flips his lights,
Lightning charges light
the night sky.
Silhouettes swooping, swallows
in the Kansas summer storm,
Lightning charges light
the night sky.
Passing puppets on stage
say good-bye.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Kingman, Arizona

July 1979

The high desert descends.
Rolling along westbound I-40,
the western sky creeps eastward
from a hard sanded floor,
being gingerly swept
by a broom of dust devils;
there is an invisible spirit
destined to spread his dust
like clouds to the eastern shore.
After a cold front we crossed
the state line into thundershowers
of California culture.

Michael Feil

Buddha Disguised

Picked up a hitchhiker
the other day, his trudging
was made heavy by
the happiness he bore.
Buddha was disguised
as a hippie standing along
the edge of another lane
in life. Thumb hung out
smiling so polite.
So what the hell, I stopped
more willing to share
my last joint than
a ride in my truck.
One led to another, and hours
of idle talk went by
the wayside, as we stumbled
over our s(s), sh(s).
Our talk slurring
and thoughts slipping
until he said this stop
will do fine for this
season. And with reason
I say.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Sloughing through grammar
in this manner, is like
the sludge of a bog or mire
when walking through, it's
nice to know there's
a dry side.
Good day, good bye.

12/29/82
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Michael Feil

San Francisco August 30, 1979

The late afternoon sun's warmth
forces down the blossom quilted blanket.
As it creeps over Daly City, lingering,
a silk blanket's ends being drawn
over a hot night whore's body
along the hills bordering a faulted
crevice.

The fog sifts down
stifles the night lights, seals,
vacuumformed tight the aloofness
of the Peninsula's haute culture.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Lunch Special

twelve-thirty p.m.
a highway cafe
the young, and free
of workday morning's
drudge, order eggs and fries
while luncheon specials
pile high on a waitress'
priorities to get neighboring
office workers back into
production. one-thirty
p.m. mmm the
special was good.
wish there was time
to save for a slave
and one more cup of
coffee.

Michael Feil

blonde ringlets a lure
red sports car slow lane to pass
another good-bye

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Shop Talk

Coffee shop talk across
the land, the street
is ugly, poor depraved
in a false sense of reality.
Old friends sit and talk
bouncing checks instead
of throwing careers away.
Nobody ever told the truth,
now it's just all catching
up, when everybody knows
it won't make any difference
day after tomorrow.

10/26/82 Ripon, WI

Michael Feil

Sleep Here Tonight

Thunderheads building up
backlit as if the Lord was,
was on stage for a Wednesday
night Texas shower recital.
Scribbling away, parking lights
lit, a prelude ambles on
the a.m. rock and roll.
Pouring buckets between here
and Sherman. Where?
This is Denton, asphalt
tired, my Michelins stabled,
back row the hustle and
center of many lofty hustle.
That C.F.I. gone round again
giving him the checkered flag
to coerce him to park.
Whoa, as I look around
nightfall has faded the
parking stalls. C.F.I. good-bye,
your coffee and clover fed
honey await you at the
next stop. You're not the
winner tonight, but get
a glimpse of the lightning

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

surprise, miserable rainy
northbound night. Driving
your loser's prize from the
eastern skies. I'll sleep
here tonight, as heaven's tunes
cleanse my tired soul, drenching
this dust bowl. I lay down
my head.

Another day truckin' dead.

Michael Feil

Rush Hour, Garden State

Traffic bunches
like your shorts
creeping up your crack.
Time to pay
the coin catcher
thirty-five cents exact,
Garden State Parkway south.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Sun Glare #1

sun glare blast its ugly stare
into the faces of drivers
and makes them too aware
slamming on the brakes
cutting to other lanes
weaving and stopping
 minivans scatter
 S.U.V.s with a clatter
Cars of all kinds
each a tailgater
all of them over react
to cause the flowing traffic
 to become a parking tract.

Michael Feil

Sun Glare #2

Sun splatter
from behind the hill
on the Conshohocken curve
same time every day.

Minivans and S.U.V.s scatter
commuters have a momentary thrill
unconscious with their swerves
accidents unavoidable this day.

Momentary Highway Lovers

Northbound interstate.
flatbed for a Missouri turn-a-round
trailing, sucking up a wake,
the seventy-four Marquis
“ten-four” Michigan plated
lovely making time.
C.B. mike nervous in hand
can’t understand, they
share their fantasy’s of love.
Concrete boulevards connection
of lust’s lofty dens.
They will return home
to the stand-by shame.
Crawling in bed with
their secrets and dreams
locked away, inside their hearts.

Michael Feil

Missed Exits

North of Chicago, they drive
living in the lanes, a caste
system. One behind the other
not knowing the purpose
of a turn signal,
no lane changers here.
One by one following
blindly they will drive
up the tail pipe of a merging
vehicle. Cussing their wives,
beating their children into
conformity, they often miss
their exits.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

how long and thick
along the asphalt ribbon,
skid marks of the big rig.

Michael Feil

Along the Asphalt Ribbon- Through Bangor, PA

The traffic jam was horrendous.
My boss told me the out of the way
mountain roads would be difficult.
Time consuming! Two lanes,
one winding forever up and down.
Trucks geared down to pull
the upgrades, geared down,
not to run away on the
downsides. Small towns
and villages splattered along
the asphalt ribbon, most
with too many stop lights,
too many stop signs, far
too many curves. Then
there were the detours!
How could there be this
long of a hold up?
This long of a line?

I entered the town
of Bangor. At a snail's pace.
Had the snails been out
they would be passing me.
Maybe it was the trucks
laboring home before the

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Fourth of July weekend.
There seemed to be a god-awful
amount of traffic for a middle
of this Thursday afternoon.
Holiday weekend or not, approaching.

Bangor was an old, old
town. Probably settled to
service the quarries and
coal mines in the surrounding
mountains, before the turn of the century.
The street excruciatingly narrow,
Route 512, wove through
a maze of switchbacks
and tight turns. Tractor
trailers took minutes to
develop a swing and clear
the intersections. Truck drivers
in each vehicle going
up the hill, through town
were pensive grabbing gears.
Finally the show
to make them cheer,
to bible totters in sedans a sneer.
But they all stopped
for a moment the same.
A gang of late teen ladies
spending buckets laden
with water balloons

Michael Feil

in a parking lot.
Drenched wet T-shirts,
tight cut-off denims
made the mercury
of sensual desire soar,
climbing to a new summer high.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Commuters Slow

slamming on
the brakes
to get into
the fast lane
at the curve
ain't a day
for sun glare.
cop in the
median
might be there
brake lights flashing
it's only
a paranoia scare.

Michael Feil

Groundhog Crossing

sunshine bores early eyes
traffic slows, swerves, from the shoulder
a groundhog tries crossing
in the blind curve
losing his nerve, disappears.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Losing Game

Got on a Jack Daniel's drunk today,
last time was '75
when I sold my first truck.
I gulped it down
 from four a.m.
Starting like a tired relief
for a driver gone weary, fearing
to face the sunrise, that burns demise
into the eyes.
 So heavy laden
 eyelids fall
across the white line,
California center line,
 thumpity
 bump, bump.
I wake up and pour down
 swish it around the empty jug,
'til I fall on my knees
and puke in the gutter
the last Peterbilt sputter
of a trucker gone lame.
Don't want to crash
no shame, no pain.
Park this truck, find a new game.

January, 1982

Michael Feil

Part II.

Talking In A Tongue Called Love

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

feelings of love lost
pass into obscurity
a glass of ice melts

Michael Feil

Lost Love

Camping by the mailbox
the letter carrier
passed me by.

Lost, the starlight
fills my eyes and radiates
light years of lost love.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

**At Cooper Hill, Vermont
July 7, 1983**

Met casually enough
in the parking lot
that expressed a divergence
among all souls
present. Her smile
enshrouded a warmth
about me. Enveloped,
as the clouds weathered
the tops of the afternoon
mountains preceding a
frontal summer change.
The change brought rain
and an easy friendship,
though tense and alone,
as love wandered in
the woods
waiting to pounce.

Michael Feil

**While Camping Near The Lodge
Cooper Hill, Vt.**

The bears stood by
in a thicket lighted
by moonbeams parting
the maple boughs.
They giggled under their breath
as nearby, lovers of another species
lay entwined panting
and ruffling down filled
sleeping bags. Not to disturb
these two, even though
they stayed in a Gore-Tex
velcro enclosure. At least
their language was not like
them that stayed in the big house,
intellectual. These folk were closer
to nature and talking in a tongue
understood, called love.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

I Miss My Love

Filling the Philadelphia air
is her soft stare,
the smell of her hair.
The days passing slowly
knowing I would rather
be there.

She's coming via St. Louis by plane,
not letting love wane
keeping me sane.
I'll be there to meet her
and taste her soft kisses,
pure cane.

Sweet dreams
I have of you all day.
Restless nights I toss, turn,
bursting my seams
with visions, as love teems
lonely, wanting your love my mind
screams.

Lost past
in Vermont's moonlit nights.
Now laying alone tense
predict moonbeams cast.
Our love shall last
much longer than they who think aghast.

Michael Feil

Our course to be together plotted
bonded love spotted,
not just cotted.

 Shown, our beauty
 Alone suffering,
from lost time allotted.

July 16, 1983-August 6, 1983
Philadelphia-Keokuk-Philadelphia

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Lovers Are Like Hot Rodders

Lovers are like hot rodders,
fine tuned racers
from our youth.
In musty old garages
we tinkered and toyed
'til our dreams raced
full bore to the finish.
We now lie between
fresh laundered sheets
adjusting and torquing up
our emotions. Precision
rhythm not a contest.
A finish is an end
no place either of
us shall ever share.

Philadelphia, 11/26/83

Michael Feil

She Cat

I met my wife
When her cat was four
And in its life,
 of the ways of men,
It knew much more.

The She Cat hated men
With a seething passion
And from way back then
 'til the day she died,
At men always bitin' and slashin'.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

A Wedding Poem

After seeds were sown
in Vermont,
on Green Mountain's side,
and time together provide
today's harvest of love.

We shall be
husband and wife
let no one weep.
Our families and friends
bring joy together
at long last,
so they may keep
an eternal flame
to fuel a fire
built on tradition
from their past
that with this desire,
shall burn and forever last.

Michael Feil

Trust

In bed we were swathed
with satin daffodils.
You were like me
on many occasions
before. “What’s on
your mind, our wheels
are spinning?” The gears
I hear clashing from
your feather pillow
as you stare blankly
to the hovering plaster
heaven of high rise row.
On our minds, penetrating
our souls, our problems
burrow deeper permeating
our brains, creating holes
until inside we resemble
Swiss cheese with corridors
for manipulative moms
demanding dads and
sorrowful psychiatrist
to race through until
we know only to trust
each other.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Life Into The Plot

Huddled on the bed
she dreams a serial,
not the shallow soap opera.

Literate, the pages
of a pulp best-seller
leaf closed on her belly.

Inside the bulge
a new series kicks
some life into the plot.

Michael Feil

First Child

Springtime, first child
more love than a litter
of speckled puppies.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

First Snow

First babe's first
snow, we share
"GEE" the glee
in our frozen tears.

Michael Feil

rarely finishing
you suck the spaghetti strand
tomato sauce smile.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Respite

An evening, newborn
 daughter learns to suck
a thumb while rocking
 in her father's lap, winding
down from the day's toil.

Michael Feil

You hold me in
the night sings.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Part III.

**Vin Rose and Coffee,
a Salesman Sips**

Michael Feil

Monday Morning

swallows flitting in
Monday morning fog,
commuters' headlights on,
streaming down the pike
the week awakens.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Slow Days (Daze)

Sitting alone, surrounded only
by mechanical beasts begging
buyers to pour in, instead
the rain pours down.
Sometimes abhorrent waves
not making me a man who saves,
but slaves to look busy
as the rush waits, another day.
Drink another cup o' coffee
write another line
hoping a customer will show to sign.
No sale today,
this week no pay.
I'll go home to lay
through distraught night waiting
wondering, for a clear day.

Michael Feil

Tire Kickers

Trying to sell a heap
bring turmoil and tedium
toward profit we reap.
Sales manager screams “get ‘em”
makes the salesman leap
as the customer enters the door.
We need a sale today
qualify your prospect to the core.
Then bring ‘em in to be put away
make ‘em a buyer on this floor.
The day of the salesman is gone
negotiators now sing his song.
Hunters that lay a net
tire kicker’s appetite they whet
tightrope walker without net.
Maybe, they say,
no not yet.

Profit and Faith in Management

Selling the Cadillac
looking downward at its
reflection in the gleaming
nine by nine squares,
dancing, the salesman
moved deftly from one
to the other until
all had been covered.
Backing the sedan
from the floor in a rush
to make the cash register
ring, the sales manager dented
the Firemist Desert Dusk rear
right door, and the whole damn deal
went bye-bye, for fear of a wrecked car
into a Denver Sunset Mercedes 300D.

Michael Feil

SOLD!

I sold my soul
in a hundred used cars.
On occasion, very warm
the intense lies would ooze
out unknown into a community
full of friendly neighbors.
So easy for old buddies
getting together over warm suds
boasting about a burnt out
whore, more fantasy than fact.
They went unknown through the future
a host of mechanical or maniacal
never sorting out indulging
in a piece of mind instead of ass.
Our true wealth unknown,
the highest bidder at auction
a prostitute, a devil,
sold, sold, sold!

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Late Morning Flight

The sun reflects
in the billowed clouds
a moon image as if
it is appearing
from the other side
of earth
during a late morning
flight.

Michael Feil

tethered to desk
inane calls never stopping
closing time won't come

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

End of a Sales Day

Life in the big city
hyperbole, scratch all day
sweat to say
profit I want to make
a paycheck for my sake.
When it's all over
I stop by a busy shop for tea
and get a croissant for free.

Philadelphia, 11/15/83

Michael Feil

salesman terminates,
cold prospects fall in a pile
snowing winter storm

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Rose Respite

Afternoon shade
rose sips a salesman
away from home, alone.

Michael Feil

Going Home

Flying home so high,
across America the clouds
plump, as quilt covering
our brazenness, they hide
from view a panorama
of spring. Is the quilt
weeping a cool welcome
freshness for me to snuggle
with my waiting wife?

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Connecting Flight

Dry autumn relieved
 central Texas cries
baggage loaders relieved,
 rain spatters aerodynamic
portholes as the plane/plain
 readies
 departure early winter.

Dallas/Fort Worth Airport
October 6, 1986

Michael Feil

Late Commute

late commute coming home
joggers in the evening
bouncing boobs, Nike Air,
hitting concrete, asphalt,
working off daily stress.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Corner Bar

Late evening, winter sun gone,
sucked the life out of a workingman's
day. They're lined up at the bar,
meatball sandwiches stacked,
on high-backed swivel barstools.
On special, buck fifty,
onion rings and a beer
three forty-five not fifty.
Gimme yer Gennie, Rolling Rock.
Salesmen argue blue collar
sneer, what a crock.
Cheery 'ello, lament, not good-bye
see you later the mud caked
boots shuffle on by.
There's a few left hangin'
'round to drink the tap dry.

Wayne, Pa. 11/17/83

Michael Feil

baggy sweats, short dark;
jeans tight, flowing blond tall lithe;
working guys' eyes hard

Salesman's Lament

They paint by numbers
you must agree
manipulating us into
mediocrity.

To control our lives with quotas
adjust our flow to hang us
in effigy.
As a pendulum winds down
its swing more narrow
we are educated into a
median

that will come to a stand still
of the final stroke.
A brush wielded in final
passage over a land that
cannot see, for vision
is lost in meaninglessness
subjugated to numbers
that take the place of the lost
horizons in an oblique landscape.

Michael Feil

Mid-week at the Diner

Morning breakfast
with a client cancelled,
at the Mainline Diner
as a weekday patron unknown
to the regulars reading the Times
glancing over headlines
their eyes glowering disdain
an invader causing
a calamity, disrupting
by taking a booth, not “mine”!

The early patrons, men,
career starters in a herd,
after the morning jog
they ingest cholesterol
by the glob.
Then loners of mid-life
what desperation drives
them to be served
Shredded Wheat, one percent
milk, coffee and a double
order of some dark bread toast?

Slipping past eight
couples of ladies
coming for a date.
The final wave
necktied one
and pregnant

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

the other,
their concern,
will this one be
 a little brother?

Michael Feil

Flight From Pittsburgh to Birmingham

Hidden in the mountains
seen only from on high
a chemical plant, spills
turgid bile, nestled
in the valley far
from a ground view,
the pond drains away
a black snake river
marring the region's
natural beauty.

Unscheduled Coffee Break

Rushing up the line
To pickup the kids,
A periodical, prescription,
The pharmacy's closed.
Twenty minutes to kill,
The kids will not be ready.
Stop at the coffee house
Grab a brew, read a
Few lines of verse
The snow coming down
Gets worse.

Order a latte,
Dealt in a cardboard cup
Take a table
Open my read.
The help hurries around
Cleaning counters, stowing
Cupware, and leftover
Fare. Sliding table
To table clicking the vases
The waitress all serious
Never a smile, she rings
Me out.

Michael Feil

Foglietta Plaza

Thunderheads loom
 over Penn's Landing.
Birds shit
 on the homeless
asleep on the park benches.

Sunday night
 in Center City
the urban landscape
 mired and a pity.
Walking the dog
 with my take-out Chinese,
in-laws, wife and children
 hungrily await our return.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Part IV.

Avocation in Bohemia

Michael Feil

Creative Mind

The creative mind
is never at rest.
It wanders aimlessly
when the body's at break.

Most often it soars
at times when
the rest of me
performs simple tasks.

Driving, my thoughts
careen down avenues
while the car goes on
and I awake once there.

I never know
the roads I took
or scenery I missed,
just a solitude.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Poet Before Spring

Stark, the barren
 maple in frozen angst
awaits the spring.
 A poet's scrawl of
dreams to verse.

Michael Feil

Passing Forty

Growing,
tired
and a
blonde
moustache
turning gray.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Play My Favorite Song

Periodic interruptions
 you play my favorite songs.
Periodic interruptions to program
 my brain you play,
my favorite songs periodic
 interruptions to drive me insane.

Please Mister D.J.
 in your periodic
interruptions today, play
 a favorite song,
 just my way.

May 16, 1982
Keokuk, Iowa

Michael Feil

Religious Experience I

Black coffee communion
with the leafy five fingers,
buds of creative consumption,
mind unlocked and pour forth
Sunday morning rituals
day in day out, page
after page, poetry
a sort of liturgy
of the primitive
soul.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Tastes

I suppose poets grow
moustache, maybe beard,
to dip into au lait,
suds, womb, and remember
in a deprived time
illusions of love gone
past, licking his own
furry surroundings,
typing tastes across the page.

Michael Feil

Safecracker of Reality

Buddha disguised himself
as a daydream, prying with
safecracker's tools, the burning
sensation of an acetylene torch
to crack my skull and snatch
a moment of reality
 from the outside world
 passing by.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Schizoid Religious Experience

the depression
 felt like attending a church
ladies aid bazaar
 and finding your soul
 on sale for fifty-nine cents.

the exhilaration
 was when you unscrewed
the top of your head
 like a bottle of Ripple
 and your sins escaped, in a puff
 of gray smoke.

June 8 or 9, 1979
Keokuk, Iowa

Michael Feil

Discontented Zen Artist

One step beyond poetry,
drawing utterances visually,
simple strokes, not painting.
Abstract wanderings of the young,
another side of the mind's
eye. Plateaus and plains
stair steps down into heaven.
Nirvana reduced to a page
nine by twelve inches (9 x 12").

June 26, 1982
Keokuk, Iowa

Poet Gone South

You can't sit outside
in Florida to write
or read poetry.

The fuckin' bugs
converge on you
to suck Yankee

blood. Little Dixie drillers
havoc your vacation.
The last battle

of a still sizzling civil
war. Staged not North
against South, but

man against nature.
Poetry as a weapon
survives on screened
porches.

Michael Feil

Poet

When after years of research,
living, singing, acting, dancing,
a puppet on stage, loving
 in a poet's rage,
tear up another lost page,
telling, selling, rebelling,
gambling and marrying each lover
 on a new page,
hoping that born will be a sage
 shorn of scorn,
convinced, contrived, grieved,
each child performs
 with a different hope.
Bring home to daddy,
 not your filthy dope,
dying mothers in a lunatic cage,
not another rejection,
 write another page.

Homesick for Bohemia

There are no dreams
of Bohemia in a
six a.m. world.
Scraping my face
with a dull blade
daily, to go stand
among chrome and steel
on a hot asphalt lot,
hawking my cars
to a recession tired public.
No buyers today
a daily blight, might
as well return to Bohemia.
Scrape my face with the same.
Purport my art.

Michael Feil

Part V.

Reflections in the Cup

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

New Neighbors

Looking out, early,
the morning cold
strikes the windows
so blue, so bold.

Across the family room
stacks of unpacked boxes,
a snow filled yard,
the neighbors– three foxes!

In the suburbs seldom
seen near tract houses
it's nice, these red fur coats
do not belong to spouses.

Michael Feil

speaks well of him,
clock on electrician's wall
has never worked, duh!

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

spring mowing tall weeds
splash, into the creek unseen
the bullfrog leaps.

Michael Feil

Discussion at the End of Class

One night at the New School
Led to age, and what was mine?
Thirty-seven going on eight
I was much older than the rest.
It was a night school
For career changers, dreamers
And scholarly wannabes.
Later walking down Fifth
I opted for a beer
At the Lone Star Saloon.

New York City in cowboy drag.
The tinsel and sequined dresses
Didn't add the glamour
Or change the sound
New York voice to match
The fake setting
Where only the singer

Spoke in twang
The inhabitants didn't know
Texas swing, but danced
Like fools in a ring
I wanted Dallas, Ft. Worth,
Or Houston and ladies whose
Eyes sparkled brighter

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Than their sequins and souls.
Could slip off their boots
And slid with ease
A smoothness and rhythm
From the wide open spaces
That was not even a dream
In this crowded of places.

Michael Feil

Saturday's Child

Microprocessors of a mindless
society, plugged in until
adolescence on Saturday morning's
high, the tube.
High on the tube.
From then till when?
On society's auction bloc,
they arrive, puberty ridden
we dress and clothe,
make-up and disguise
the whores of our times.

Oklahoma City, 4/8/83

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Fast Food Joint

Late night arrivals
in a small town lost
mom popism to
franchises on every third
corner. Behind a corner
post, heart beat pumping
red
yellow
green
through smoked glass windows
at the smiling robots'
rotting teeth, stained with
consumer blight, handing
back a lump of social
change in machine counted
coins, though it doesn't
make sense whatever
did happen to be-bop,
sock hop, hot rods
horseless carriage Sunday
socials, roving minstrels?
Court jesters, all alike
thank you, smile, thank
you exiting through
the swinging door.

January 23, 1983
Jeffersontown, Ky.

Michael Feil

Masquer's Ball

They hid behind their masks
curious to peek and tell,
if gossips were sinners
all would burn, I'm afraid
in hell, it's gates would have
lines longer than the old Bijou matinees.
It's fun to watch on Saturday
the jackpots they reap with coupons,
ten cents off a harvest from the grocer's
shelves.

The starting gate bell rings shrill
rain, fog, snow and sunshine
they cantor and gallop to hold position
set to the inaudible preprogrammed
symphony of changing traffic lights.
Everybody's a winner in printed paper
to take the place of cash,
this work ethnic classic
to run home in a second heat
the horny, hoofed, breadwinner
takes a second prize
of robot regularity fucking
wives.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Plugged in with all the gaiety
of a neon beer sign
as long as true purpose
is hidden behind the mask
of unknown crime
they slip and slither
paying taxes, and buying on time
someday autonomy shall overcome
identity.

Michael Feil

Diminishing Returns

The reflections in the cup,
 my Monday morning stare,
bring dancing memories
across my mind, without commercial
 interruption.
When a more supreme baby-sitter
 stole us from our mother's arms,
bound us, gagged us, took us down
a lonely road. Young bucks born
 from bomb shelter wombs
stomping through jungles, many
dug their own tombs.
Returned home to greatness,
and glory, sit watching now
as the neon light reflects
 return of the nightmares blight.
Crashing on the mind a rifle's resound
the charge of a fighter squadron
invading the O.K. Corral
from the carrier's flat deck,
 while the planes are aloft,
sailors bask in the sun of the Tonkin Gulf
and from the jungle ashore,
 like the morning before,
I listen to the snap, crackle, pop,
a Kellogg's generation given the best,
 we have grown up and hope
 for a little bit less.

The Tao for Tiananmen

O' be not trodden upon so lightly,
Those marching boots may bring fear.
Freedom is not so easily won.
Your battle that was lost is only one.

O' Tiananmen your sorrow will remain
The soldiers that shot and brought the pain
Are but implements in a dictator's fight,
A struggle, continue freedom must win.

O' plight to begin, put down the past.
Inaugurate a new commerce, begin a new class.
Wrestle fascism you revolutionary peasant opponent
The bourgeois awaits those who condone it.

O' Black Sun wither and die
So young imperialists may brighten the sky.
New vitality whispers in the winds
A storm will brew as workers unite.

O' be mindful of bourgeoisie past,
Your campaign warrior must be mixed:
Your social traditions and family tree
Socialist covenants, landlords and tenants agree.

Michael Feil

O' great adversary in the fight you see,
It is greed, corruption, waste the scourge of the free.
Let democracy rule and share the call
Bring as your harvest an honest freedom for all.

O' sleeping colossus waiting to be reborn
Shed your fear and flail the scorn
Come join the global village in commerce and freedom
Spread the Tao, spiritual peace, everlasting kingdom.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Desert Storm

The Cabinet collided
a Secretary afoul
backed by officers
the nation stared on
hour by hour.

Secrets are said,
and sold afar
from intelligence
to chips that
lead to despair.

A nation in a region
being plundered by a bully,
commerce and prosperity
and a clash of religions
not understood fully.

An alliance is agreed,
forces gather on the field,
from allies who bond
on one common goal
behind Desert Shield.

As the broadcasts roll
on hour by hour
the viewers are informed
and propagandized
as how to aspire.

Michael Feil

Camouflage is set
in the theater of war.
While at home
Americans are polled
for support as a core.

The nay sayers are there,
in this nation that bled
from a sore unpopular
on an Asian shore.
Beware, an ego needs fed.

Some say pitch a tent,
invite the Arabs to debate
the issue at hand
and the course to take,
before we loose a life let's wait.

Others say doomsday, unite,
trounce the adversary
a devil in disguise.
Bring all nations together
under one banner to carry.

Hidden in his hills
an arsenal so strong
his madness may run
amok and destruction
to many to last too long.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

With that common fear
and the scent still warm
of rape, plunder, pillage,
the President did
commence Desert Storm.

Michael Feil

Greenhouse Effect

Dawn lights the distant
hill, another
another
another.

The mountains glow
above shallow valleys
their aged precipices
rounded.
Hunch backed to the burden
of this modern state.

Then to the bread basket
of this land there should be
silky shucks of
golden corn,
bursting crusts of
podded beans,
burnt goldenrod, the
wheat out west,

but the sharp tipped prods
of stallion mountains
hold hunkered clouds
hostage from the land.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Dark western lakes
and streams yearn
the passing of nature's
 revolt,
to soothe the thirst
of fast lane famine.

Michael Feil

autumn suburban leaves
curbside, higher the piles
a neighborhood pride.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Pedestrians, NYC

bustle along the streets
draped, in black, charcoal,
grays. Unimaginatively filling
arteries of pop culture.

Waiting to be robbed:
 their youth, bubbling
 personalities stolen,
 sometimes shared,
 wither, die.

New flowers will
grow each spring
in window box gardens.

Michael Feil

Jogger in the Rain

Jogger, in
the rain
eleven days straight.
Dreary depression
crosses the intersection
nearly hit
running
against the light.
Passes a crosswalk
four trots, whoops!
About face,
rethinks there,
on the right
path. He missed
his turn.
the weather
a state of mind.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Traffic Jam

At our corner
 forsythia
yellow the traffic light
stops mid-cycle.
Low flying geese
honk homeward,
 a traffic jam.

Michael Feil

Late Night Trill

Late night traffic light
 red-yellow-green
flashes in the raised pane.
Cicadas trill. Curtains
waft, a warm breeze.
Heavy truck labors
up the hill. Revelers
going home trip sensors
to wait then squeal away.

An occasional drunk
misses the mark
 honks, cusses, no
shame. Officer Halliday
writes a ticket;
 disturbing the peace,
 drunken driving,
 and a fool.
The Cicadas trill.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Hearty mums brighten
fallen leaves, crunching
under step in crisp autumn air.

Michael Feil

New Flame

Forsaking the land
at a time of despair
our grandfathers forced
mother and father
into cyclical commerce,
mercantile madness.

It was after the war,
duty bound to bring
a better life to all
around. Forget the garden
of their youth to pluck
green dollars from a tree.

They forgot to save
for a rainy day
caught the virus
of the industrial age
to spawn youth
aimed at technology.

Daddies gone in gray
flannel suits, trekking
highways alone. Honey
at home to cook and sow,
upstarts they
harvest for a new show.

Camping in a Middle Class Pasture

Yielding a crop
nurtured on new math,
bomb shelter madness,
and cold war rhetoric,
the laddies and lasses
looked at the world

from glass houses.
Called to wage war
for a camouflaged cause
they marched for peace
or served obscurely
destined to a flailing failure.

A vision of conquest
a last capitalist dynasty
smolders to smoke.
A Third World ignites
and spreads a new flame,
a global village teeming with change.

Michael Feil

Epilogue

.....happy to be
alive and well
sharing my love,
and care, right here
I found this life camping
in a middleclass pasture.

The End

About the Author

Michael Feil hails from small town Iowa. Faced with alternatives of going to vocational school, college, or military conscription during the Vietnam Conflict, his desire to study art was not a priority on his parent's hit parade of vocations. They sent him to Chicago to study electronics. Taken in by a band of discharged soldiers and sailors, he then joined the Navy. The G.I. Bill enabled art school, a painting mentor inspired him to get a life, make art. He has supported himself as a corporate sales manager, new/used auto salesman and dealership owner, a salesperson in advertising, publications, shirts, truck driver, truck owner/operator, factory worker, bartender, cook, machinist, airplane mechanic. Painting, writing poetry and fiction, he lives in suburbia.

