

**Redemption, 3<sup>rd</sup> and Main Brookings , South Dakota, 1976 I love SD.**

The strawberry blonde Go Go Dancer  
kept Kraft Crackers n Cheese, candy cigarettes  
and sixty four Crayola's behind the bar [This is so outrageous and precise it gives me no pause and I am immediately inside the poem.](#)  
hoping that he would come in  
even though, a five year old had no business  
in a saloon on a Saturday afternoon. [I love how you introduce the 'he' pronoun and then make 'him' the five year old. There is all this tension, pressure, already.](#)  
especially one with those types of entertainment. [I would cut this line. Not necessary because the tension is already embedded.](#)

But daddy always had to discuss détente [The introduction of stuff, of the narrative, is smart. You do this by inserting the world into the poem as the narrative unfolds rather than giving all the information up front.](#)  
with the other coaches of the  
SuperValu Softball league,  
although it was the weekend for him  
to see his son, he had to hit the Lantern Lounge. [Excellent.](#)  
so the kid would always come along; [Cut this line.](#)

and the youngster always made her smile,  
though always she said "he shouldn't be in here" ,  
she guessed it be ok- before seven her  
seduction strictly done by tight sweater, [I love the subtle way in which you tell us that she goes about her business](#)  
and subtle suggestive conversations. [Here, I would suggest you give the reader a snippet, an actually snippet, from the conversation.](#)

Controversies would fly those afternoons-  
ones much worse than worse whether  
Carter had the heart hots for lots of girls, [The tone here changes. You give the reader this alliteration and so it's interesting and fresh. I will say that I am not sure, exactly,](#)  
if Ford forgot the furry Russian hats in Poland,  
or should have issued writs of indulgence ,  
as daddy cursed last night's blown call  
(third week in a row!) from the  
always drunk ump on the third base line,

and in the corner, the go-go dancer and the kid  
held arguments on how to color Ruff , [Cool. Is this Go Go dancer the mother or just the Go Go dancer who likes kids. I love their interaction. It's filled with sweetness. Also, the way the world moves into the space of kids and adults, that intersection, is terrific.](#)

Dennis the Menace and Margaret-

“Her dress must be, periwinkle, plum  
or purple mountains majesty,” she said This is great. I can feel some love heretofore. IT’s  
wonderful and unexpected.

She didn’t want the little boy to take the wrong road,  
paint the wrong shades in between the lines. Like being a Go Go Dancer? If that is the case, it would  
be really interesting if the line read, ‘She didn’t want the little boy to be a Go Go Dancer, lift his  
sweater to sweaty men with bad beer who live spend afternoons in dark rooms with half naked  
women...” Or, something like that. Allow the imagination to take over and use the image to propel  
the conceit.

As the two of them held communion  
over cheese and crackers and Mr Pibb

kind of **transubstantiation**

occurred, redemption flowed

from the soft rhythms of the go go dancer In terms of tightening up this stanza, I would suggest you  
cut these lines in red. They are a bit too wordy and cut back on the moment, the speed of the  
moment.

and brought a sort of salvation , to kid, dad,  
and even some eternally dammed  
drunk ump too.

Matt. Hey. A tremendous poem. So evocative, cinematic, almost, the way you paint the picture of  
this whole situation, the way these two come together, all tenderness. The need of the two  
players,—Go Go Dancer and kid—and the sadness of the father. I was trying to figure out the  
relationship between the dancer and the dad, if any? Are we to understand that the father goes to  
this joint with the other coaches and the only reason he goes there is to spend time with his kid  
because he, the kid, wants to hang out with the dancer? Did I get that straight? If not, make sure  
you be as clear as possible. The whole situation has that flawed beauty to it that makes for the most  
compelling stories. I love your use of language to do two things—paint pictures and do so in a way  
that is ferociously musical. I do think the marriage of the two is something very hard to get but it is  
the key element to creating an authentic and visceral voice. That is going on her in an enormous  
way. Thanks. Matthew