

F A T H E R

I sat on my stool
in the dark
a plane of light
from the cracked door
fell across my face
like a burn
in the next room
my father was beating
my mother to death
he kicked her until
she cried blood
and then he kicked her
until she came down
with a coma
and then he kicked her until
he just couldn't
kick her no more
he came in to see me
and put his hand on
my shoulder listen
I want you to kill
a man for me
I stood up he shoved me
back sit down I'll
give you a hundred
dollars what do you
say I said well
who is it
here's a piece of paper
with the man's name
kill him I'll give you
a hundred dollars
I opened the paper my name
was on it I turned
it over to see if
there was an alternate
what is this I said
some kind of goddam
joke I never joke
about money
he said