

BEYOND THE BLACK RIVER

Beyond the Black River there's a white playa of cracked mud over which blue lightning pulses

Beyond the Black River packs of wild children race through tall grass

Beyond the Black River one can tune in pirate radio stations that discuss the activities of unknown civilizations

Beyond the Black River you can buy cigarettes for cheap

Beyond the Black River you can wander through snaking canyons at dusk and glimpse a horizon not strangled by power lines

Beyond the Black River there is a stream so blue it flows purple at midday in summer

Beyond the Black River you can bushwhack through growth and arrive in a festive border-town where Spanish-shouting cowboys applaud the impromptu song you belt out from behind chicken wire

Beyond the Black River you come upon a uniformed platoon attempting to build a pyramid with their bodies, a large glass globe on the dirt beside them

Beyond the Black River there is a pink concrete igloo—inside it resides a first rate collection of Esoteric literature

Beyond the Black River and down the snaking path at the end of the leafy cul-de-sac you emerge into the backyard of a former schoolmate, the year is 1978, he has the eight year old you in a choke-hold, strangely you cheer *him* on, he rallies to your chant, until you crack his head on the pool-lip and he runs crying & bleeding to his mother who years later you dreamed of fucking

Beyond the Black River you feel strangely free of doubt

Beyond the Black River they use a barter system, paper money is laughed at, with it they light the fat cigars they smoke, ashes sprinkling their round tan bellies

Beyond the Black River the women don't care what you *do*, they want to know who you *are*, "Read me a poem," they say

Beyond the Black River there is an amphitheater sculpted in sand, actors struggle to memorize lines before the arrival of the rains that will erase the venue the way time will steal ours

Beyond the Black River the government consists of a loose conglomeration of poets and theorists who brainstorm fantastical blueprints including a City Center designed by schoolchildren also uniformed "troops" of dancers are deployed to diffuse tense international situations—they rhumba down the Gaza Strip

Beyond the Black River an archeologist sifts red soil unearths the murder weapon buried hastily by one of Poe's manic villains

Beyond the Black River the sunsets are notorious

Beyond the Black River gossip has been outlawed

Beyond the Black River people laugh at the concept of "a billboard"

Beyond the Black River the meals are delicious, corn tortillas proliferate, everyone is invited, the conversation flows until the violet sky is smeared with stars & we swivel to glimpse the strange formation of lights

Beyond the Black River they show *Chinatown* at the abandoned drive-in

Beyond the Black River you encounter amazing bands at the night-club in the forest, one features twin sisters who braid haunting melodies with twin violas as a tall black man thwaps stuttering poly-rhythms to a blue-sparkled trap set, the spare bass-line is fingered on a Moog by a blonde albino boy in a black rubber t-shirt

Beyond the Black River there is free Health Care

Beyond the Black River you glimpse species thought extinct wandering the meadow behind the schoolhouse

Beyond the Black River the black President reads Nietzsche with his feet kicked up on his desk

Beyond the Black River newspapers lead with stories of people acting with integrity, editorials encourage the government to aid the oppressed, funny pages depict buffoons who act out of greed or hubris and reap their just reward, the papers are then recycled without exception

Beyond the Black River some imbibe a concoction that induces visions, the brew is legal but is taxed, the revenues help build schools where poetry is read aloud

Beyond the Black River a dream is discussed like any other event, its significance is debated on Sunday morning by pundits, the President holds a news conference to weigh in

Beyond the Black River Nikolai Gogol's birthday is a national holiday: Martober the 86th is 25 hours long

Beyond the Black River the Space Program has been replaced by the Mind Program

Beyond the Black River Town Hall Meetings are now Group Therapy Sessions

Beyond the Black River no one is deserving of Fame

Beyond the Black River everyone is famous

Beyond the Black River one is required to sit in silence for 17 minutes each day

Beyond the Black River no one forgets to thank the sun

