What 68 Years on Planet Earth Have Taught Me

by John Olson

Revolt agrees with me. I cut cotton into wings and fill areas of conversation with humidity and kerosene. I dissolve in amber, culture pearls, light Colorado with my limestone piano. Structure collapses on the moon. My emotions smell of language. I feel extraverted and tangible. Life is not always quixotic. It can be rough. It can incandesce like a spinal cord. I can feel the medication kick in. Most of the carrying is sullen. Redemption will sometimes shake you to your core. Decisions are sharp and hard and riding the rails is full of thrust and steel. It's better to bounce around in the United States like Neal Cassady than it is to arrive in a flying saucer. The mine is haunted but the gold is particular, like the legs of a tarantula. I must do some wash. There is always wash. Dishes, clothes, windows, chairs. The world is full of bananas and numerous subtleties of salt and dogs. The allegories take care of themselves. They reveal themselves in dreams. I'm dry now. People like to sing in church. I begin to think about eating. I think eating is silk. I salute my blood. I wave to my digestion system. Hello down there. How's it going? I'm old now and have developed a wattle, much like the one my dad had, and his dad before him, and his dad before him, and so on. Grandmothers too. They all had wattles. It was Aldous Huxley that introduced me to the idea of a door and what a door is all about. Perception, you know? Like when a clock radio goes off and you hear a Bach cantata on KING FM and words fall through your mind in strings and you open one blood red eye and see a ceiling doing push-ups on your forehead. That's what getting old is about. The brain reflects on its own reflections. And you feel like a rag on a shelf in somebody's garage. And the garage smells of paint and turpentine and car grease. And that's when it hits you: existence is soapier than

death and money is lousy with symbols. But the funniest things in
the world aren't pimples, they're fingernails.