

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
English 30B

## **Earth**

*(one of four)*

by Thomas Hunt

"Land, my son. Land. That's all that's important in this life." His father had always said that. He was a young child. He always nodded. But now he was an adult and it seemed more like bullshit cribbed from *The Grapes of Wrath* than a reasonable way to live one's life.

He ignored his father's advice. He became a man of the road. Many would call him a bum, a wanderer, a drifter, but he thought he was much more than that. He thought he had a purpose. He had patterned himself after his heroes from the beat movement, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Bukowski. He was a "man without a home". As Simon and Garfunkel said, a man who "carried a piece of real estate in his bag". That was all the land he owned. Maybe he failed his father. Maybe he failed himself. The key was, he was trying to live the way he wanted to, not the way that anybody else wanted him to.

He stuck his thumb in Wyoming. He ended up in DC. Hitchhiking was supposed to be hard. People were being

trained to fear their neighbor, to hate the other. Hitching was supposed to be a "thing of the past", but it didn't seem so hard. Of course he was a clean shaven white man with an English degree. He wasn't a beat drunk bohemian with mutton chops and a chip on his shoulder.

On the road, the truckers were his best friends. Long hauls and no troubles. Cheap biscuits and gravy at truck stops. Simple conversations. "Whadda ya think of the Royals?" "They suck." That took care of politics for the rest of the ride. They didn't really give a fuck where you were going and they didn't really give a fuck where you'd been. They were just flying over America in their rigs. They saw only the truck stops and roared through all the places in between on coke and reds. It didn't matter that they missed it all, because they weren't looking for it anyway.

He, on the other hand was looking for something. Purpose. Meaning. Maybe it was the adolescent search for belonging that drove his quest. He didn't want a job. He didn't want a fucking career. He liked women fine, but he didn't want a wife. He liked being "footloose and fancy free" as the saying goes.

"So this is DC", he thought to himself. As good a place as any to start. He lit a cigarette and started

walking down one of the spokes that led to the center of the wheel. He didn't bother to look behind him. There wasn't anything there anyway.