

America

by Jim Webb

America,
you are my teeth,
rotting even as I live.

My tongue
searches out the pain—
one tooth rotted to near nothing

hurts even now.
All of them are filled
or capped.

Some have gone, gone forever—
Coke bottle-Dairy Queen-Popsickle-
Chewing gum-Milky Way-Forever Yours
Rot.

Some I lost head first
on a concrete street.
Your fire department
hosed away the blood and
tooth-pieces of my mouth.

You capped the shards
with plastic and assured me
the gaps would close with time.

They did.
But others cropped up, America,
and holes remained.

My plastic teeth
look real, America,
except for the black line
of real tooth stub, dead
black bone: no blood,
no nerve, no sun bleach
like bones in your desert
West, America.

Others have the look of
Death.

Most work, though none are
Good. They still crush

Hot dogs & apple pie

But Sugar Daddies
devour them,
America.

No, I won't stand in your line, America,
but I will chew & chew & chew, gnash & gnarl
till they all fall out, every last
lead-silver-gold-plastic-bone
tooth.

I'll watch them fly in my spit
and never never take your
set of plastic perties,

But I will
Gum you
till I die.

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