

I wrote poetry and songs from my teens through my mid-30's. There was a period from about age 29-35 when I was seeing about ten movies a week. The Bay Area was so rich then with places to see the history of film, both American and foreign. My greatest pleasures were when the camera point of view would suddenly shift ... it was rapturous.

A woman I was seeing around this time responded to some poetically-phrased statement I made as we drove to the beach one day by asking me when I was going to make my first movie. I immediately said, "When I learn how to compose a single frame." I had been reading everything I could find about film at this time and was strongly impressed by a specific interview with Cocteau whose *Orpheus*, like Fellini's *8½*, always felt, as the musicians say, "right in the pocket."

This same friend and I spent one afternoon having lunch in a cemetery. She had a camera and took pictures. I wrote a poem about the connectedness between the ants crawling on our sandwich, the sliced meat in that sandwich, the dead all around us, and our eating lunch together. When I saw the pictures, which I assumed would resonate for me and articulate something like what came together in the poem, I was very disappointed by what I saw.

Another girlfriend at the time loaned me her camera, a Minolta, where one could adjust the settings. Suddenly having control of the significant elements of making a photograph

– shooting speed, chosen focus, depth of field – allowed me to shift from the surface picture to the compositional picture.

**RR:** Prior to trying your friend's camera, you had little experience with photography. You shot your first roll of film, you saw the contact sheet – what was it about the experience of these photographic images that drew you to the medium?

**CK:** The first contact sheet was a physical piece of evidence that I was onto something substantial.



As a teenager I played a lot of basketball and was good enough to make junior varsity (a social mark of distinction). As a ballplayer I would mentally go over and over certain shots I had taken over the years. The first contact sheets offered that same kind of availability of those initial photographic shots. I felt richer than rich. I remember in my early 20's when I first read at a poetry reading and this white-haired poet remarked upon hearing my poems, "You sure are a poet." The contact sheets gave me that same assurance. The guys in the