

Grazing at Costco
by Randy Vining
Poems From the Open Road

I flash my card to the kid at the door,
Wheel my cart down the warehouse floor,
Pondering merchandise, behaving quite proper,
Looking like any other middle class shopper.

But my motives are dark; I've a hidden agenda.
Today I'm consuming but I won't be a spenda.
I'm here for the food those ladies prepare
In bite-sized chunks and lay them there

For the public to sample and hopefully buy
A package or carton of the stuff they try.
You never know from day to day
What goodies are out on the sampling tray.

It doesn't matter that much to me;
What's important is that they're free.
My mind is clear, my plans are laid
As I begin my shopping charade.

Looking legit is the freeloaders art,
So I put something pricey into my cart.
Then circle the scene, scoping it out,
Noting the menu, planning my route.

Appetizers, entrees, veggies, then dessert,
The proper sequence for a grazing expert.
So I begin to eat my lunch
Looking thoughtful as I munch.

Sometimes I ask location and price
As I'm sampling once, then sampling twice.
If something is really, really good,
I circle three times that neighborhood.

For those who are curious about the maximum treats

You can just bold-face stand there and eat,
I have run the test; the results are in;
The absolute cutoff point is ten.

So with timing, stealth, speed and gall,
I exploit the Costco food windfall.
And when I've satisfied myself,
I return my pricey item to the shelf.

Abandon my basket, head for the door,
Feeling clever and smug at my freebie score.
But as I'm leaving, they're grinning at me!
Do they see something I don't see?

Grease on my mouth, fingers all crumby?
Could it be my protruding tummy?
I didn't think they had a hunch
'Til the door checker asked, "Enjoy your lunch?"