

36. Always Say Never

I never ever want

to read *Foucault's Pendulum* by Umberto Eco.
How dare he spend 50 pages trying to figure out
a computer password
so pointless
so distracting
let's try all the names of God
let's try 50 pages of clever word after clever word
no sentences of course
just password attempt after password attempt

"Do you know the password?"
And the answer is "No."

Throwing the book across the room,
I refused to read another word.

I never ever want

to visit Perryton, Texas, again
80 miles of the Panhandle
stretching interminably
so flatly
without landmarks
or towns
or even passing traffic
to arrive at a town
not even worth a stop in the road
to use the restroom.

I never ever want

to eat six Snickers in an afternoon
to ask for a seat extender when I fly
to be the fat one trailing behind the group
to be sliced and stitched during 8 hours of surgery
to grade Autobiographies for 189 kids
even if they are amazing and enlightening
and the highlight of my year.