

*Robbie Gamble*

**Manny**

There must be some cable channel  
that pumps Jerry Springer 24/7  
into these motel rooms. Right now  
it's a paternity show again:  
dour teenage mom parked stage left,  
presumptive dad and surprise new lover  
squirming in chairs to the right.  
Below, Manny sits framed in his PortaCrib  
dressed only in Pampers and Dorito crumbs.  
He pops up to check out the stranger  
interviewing his mom, then returns  
to something more interesting on the vinyl floor.  
Onscreen, the test results flash up  
and it's Loverboy!, now tied genetically  
to the infant cooing backstage.  
Half the audience cheers. Jerry  
arches an eyebrow to the camera.  
A SpongeBob squeakytoy comes flying  
out of the playpen, and Manny hauls up  
to follow its trajectory, only half-hoping  
someone will throw it back.  
Now TeenMom, NotDad and LoverBoy  
erupt in the predictably violent pas-de-trois.  
Jerry's bouncers move in, while he arches  
the other eyebrow, and the TV lets off  
a stream of those beeps and boops  
the FCC allows in place of F-bombs,  
but Manny is unmoved. Apparently  
he's heard it all before.