

manuscript





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manuscript

Cover: Sylvie by Joe Vojtko

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Snowbound But Springtime Blues

Feelin' so warm here,
 slow and settled and swinging,
 in a chandelier image of happiness.

Ah, but I remember walkin'
cold and locked out down
snow bitten streets with
my mind a billboard for
dead clocks and spiderweb uncertainty.
Yes, and I still can
feel the wind on my hand
like a cyclone spitting sleet
leaving me just sliding towards
warmth but oh so numb
 and fearful.

Yes and I seem to remember
how rain was no longer melody
but rather ice-picks falling upon
my feet from the towers of
revenge and snap-eyed restlessness.
Oh and I still remember all
relationships whispering, and hanging
around me like a low
and homeless fog that seemed
suspended in unspoken hesitation
and constant in pitchfork tension
Oh but I can still seem to
remember your face,

 slow and settled and swinging,
 in a chandelier image of happiness.

—Mike Scholnick

I

The ice flows in the river
and the sun comes out
as church ladies go up the
Streams of water flow
throughout the ice
rolling chunks along the sl
crushing dead reeds and
tearing up tree roots.
The dazzling glare
of the sliding motion
turns the women's eyes
to the warm dark entrance
as they walk through melti

II

Old arms help older women
cross frozen sidewalks
with quick steps between
long periods of breathing,
holding on and blinking eyes
lost in lizard wrinkles.
But they live on and in
the ice they knew
to feel the warm darkness
of colored glass that captur
and smooth worn wood
covered with soft dirty varn



"Adam's Revenge" — J.M.F. Urban





"Adam's Revenge" — J.M.F. Urban

"The Rape" — Jancee Kiwak

"PIG NIGHT"

"Don't mind the bees, they won't bother ya."

"Oh, I know. See, we got lots of 'em back home swarming in the fields with the flies. They seem to prefer the paddies more than the flies do. The flies prefer the stock."

"No, they don't hurt 'em, fact sometimes I think none of 'em animals would move at all unless they had the flies to twitch off or swat with their tails. They used to bother me when I worked around the stock, specially around the hogs."

"What's that? ...Oh yea, the wind never seems to stop blowin'. Use to always blow off the pig sty at home, talk about the sweet smell of spring. The only time it was worse was when I'd have to go and slop them hogs. Got used to that too, that's one of the strong parts of my character, bein' able to adapt. The hogs got to be fun after awhile, used to call 'em all 'pig,' I had a friend that took care of 23 pigs and he called each one of them by name. Not me, I called 'em all 'pig.' It fit 'em better, and I still knew 'em from each other. I got to where I was talkin' to 'em and in awhile they'd answer me, honest, they'd look up and start gruntin'. Mom used to worry about it, she thought I was goin' luny, and stand watchin' me from the kitchen. It didn't bother her for long 'cause she died."

"No, I'm serious, she died."

"Well, maybe it seems cold but, that's the way I am, cold and adaptable. It didn't take me any time at all to get used to her dying and havin' to move in with my brother."

He looked over at her
her lips together into a pucker
very carefully wet them with
and again pulled them together
quicksilver, kissing and squirming
she could smell or taste his
wasn't so fond of mints,
mints which he didn't care for
her, he felt like he'd just gotten
nose. She lost some of her
let his chance slip through his
such an opportunity in a long
do his best at making it into
care if it lasted past the night
hold him for a while. Release
release of all his pent up frustration
release was all that was needed
frustration could be relieved
what he needed and wanted,
this over in his mind the more
for an end to this frustration
squirmed. The anticipation built
each squirm he felt tension burst
thought he'd burst.

Coyly, protectively, seemed
slipped away and smiled from
hugging his arm. How he realized
too quickly. He'd have to talk
his smooth tongue.

"Sorry, I forgot myself. I
me crazy, you're so beautiful.
your glasses so I can see your
worry. They're right over here
nice this tall grass isn't it? Making
ning through it or rolling in and
what I mean?"

"When I was young, me and
to make paths in the tall grass. We
by flattening out areas in the middle
we could find some cardboard
it to slide down paths on a hill. If
we wouldn't even need the cardboard

NIGHT"

bees, they won't bother ya."
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k."

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and start gruntin'. Mom used
thought I was goin' lunny, and
the kitchen. It didn't bother
lied."

she died."
seems cold but, that's the way
le. It didn't take me any time
dying and havin' to move in

He looked over at her and smiled. She pulled her lips together into a pucker, relaxed her lips and very carefully wet them with the tip of her tongue, and again pulled them together. He responded like quicksilver, kissing and squeezing and wondering if she could smell or taste his lunch, and wishing she wasn't so fond of mints. She constantly sucked mints which he didn't care for. Now that he kissed her, he felt like he'd just got a Vick's inhaler up his nose. She lost some of her appeal, but he wouldn't let his chance slip through his fingers. He hadn't had such an opportunity in a long time and he meant to do his best at making it into something. He didn't care if it lasted past the night so long as it would hold him for a while. Release is what was needed, release of all his pent up frustration. One quick release was all that was needed. He'd read that all his frustration could be relieved this way, and that's what he needed and wanted. The more he turned this over in his mind the more anxiously he groped for an end to this frustration, and the more she squirmed. The anticipation was too great and with each squirm he felt tension building up inside 'til he thought he'd burst.

Coyly, protectively, seemingly regretfully, she slipped away and smiled from under her eyelids, hugging his arm. How he realized he'd pushed her too quickly. He'd have to talk her around to it with his smooth tongue.

"Sorry, I forgot myself. It's just that you drive me crazy, you're so beautiful. Here, let me take your glasses so I can see your eyes better. Don't worry. They're right over here on the dry grass. It's nice this tall grass isn't it? Makes me feel like running through it or rolling in and makin' paths. Know what I mean?"

"When I was young, me and some friends use to make paths in the tall grass. We even made forts by flattening out areas in the middle. Sometimes if we could find some cardboard we'd take it and use it to slide down paths on a hill. If the grass was wet, we wouldn't even need the cardboard. Ya ever do

that? No? Well, we'll have ta do it later. We should be able to find some cardboard around and there's a hill over there. It should work good, the grass is still green, we've gotten plenty of rain and it isn't that late in summer that the sun's dried it or turned it color."

The calliope music was coming through the speakers and the red and yellow lights on the black arms of the carnival ride were starting to spin and dip. It was funny to be separated from all the carnival people by all the tall grass, sharing the same field. The carnival people, the he's were spending their time winning their she's by losing at gunshoots, bean bag, and bingo. And here he was in the same field, in his own flattened grass fort, winning without losing, not paying in tickets and embarrassed smiles. She wasn't the prettiest girl he'd tried, but tonight he knew he'd make it, and once he'd made it the first time, the whole of womanhood would be his. He'd finally be released from the humiliation of his impotency.

He made his move and the squirming started again. Again and again he felt her move next to him on the cool grass. Groping through the blue floral print and a nervous wreck that he'd get this constant source of movement bared and he wouldn't be. How could it be done?

He tried moving his body in her hands, and her hands with his elbows. He never realized the complexity of a cotton skirt with its full array of slips when it became tangled around two thin legs.

She was now on her back and at his mercy. He rolled over onto her, feeling his strength, rolling over into a new field, rolling over into a sharply raised knee, rolling over in final defeat. Rolling and moaning, screaming, "You bitch, you whore," as she stood, glasses in hand, going back to the spinning, dipping arms that were laced with embarrassed smiles.

-Dennis Gourley

Light streaks through my night coated window
But this child of morning
in its womb of darkness
brings me no comfort.

I am weary from ear-muffled, wall smashed
conversation.

But I smile now, though strange I
admit on this broken arm of fury to cast
the fisherman's smile.

The waving smile of yes
the soul of sea-serpent magic and yes too the
sleepless red-eye smile that glows through the
face like some sun through a prisom.

I gat
Happy Birthday to

saxophone and thin
with thirsty dog-eye
of joy wine.

I gat
Happy Birthday to

boy energy out too
of 59th St. switch t
Garden insanity. So
Buddha Willie Mays

I gat
Happy Brithday to

Little
laughter out too late
year old political de

Here comes Daddy s
for supper.

I gather my soul tonight.
Happy Birthday soul.

Soul of eyes, out too
late in the park. Soul of salvation army
wing-tipped vagabond balancing on the corners
of his garbage canned morning looking for the
sports section.

The world is simply no
roulette wheel of glaring colors that skip thru
mirrors of sadness.

O soul, I am hungry
I know what time supper's to begin.
O soul O soul Happy Birthday soul out too
late in the park. Psst! Here comes
Daddy soul.

I gather myself tonight soul;
The streets of heaven are dipped in grey.

Our
lives are caught in the sigh of an old man's
curving shoulders.

—Michael Scholnick

I gather my soul tonight.
Happy Birthday to you soul!
Soul who hears sweet
saxophone and thinks of wild little boys flipping
with thirsty dog-eyes on the trampoline madness
of joy wine.

I gather my soul tonight.
Happy Birthday to you soul!
Soul of pudgy little
boy energy out too late in the park. Soul
of 59th St. switch train for Madison Sq.
Garden insanity. Soul of Homerun Punchball and
Buddha Willie Mays visions.

I gather my soul tonight.
Happy Brithday to you soul!
Little soul of sidewalk
laughter out too late in the park. Soul of 12
year old political debate.

Soul, it is time for supper.
Here comes Daddy soul. You knew it was time
for supper.

TO THE SIXTIES' PROTESTERS

Love, look to the days of our revolution
when in a churning crowd crusted with city dirt and battle buttons
I found your hand—
the hand that cupped my crying head when up against a tree in D.C.
and cupped a crying flame that danced relentless
in a wind that would forget dead soldiers.
Amulet armbands were magic charms to excite and scare the streetliners;
plastic pins the diamonds of a union sealed in political sentiment.

Now my battle garb evokes not a grunt from pot-bellied streetcorner JOE
shakin' his third and shouting "Pig" at the man in blue
who's high on the joints he plucked like lollipops from dope-dry children's lips.
With his heavy frost-smoked breath the wind designs faces of America
which dare me to question them:
Black boy afraid to dissent not, have we marchers panther-ized you by glorifying criticism
Did we inspire you, workingman, to throw in your hard hat and opt for welfare?
Brother and sister heroin worshippers, have we convinced you that the system sucks?

Love, look to the days of our revolution
and ask your hands if they in wisdom would have surrendered to the wind
a flame which burned not the war but "the people."

—Cynthia Locke

the buttons

tree in D.C.

the streetliners;
sentiment.

streetcorner JOE

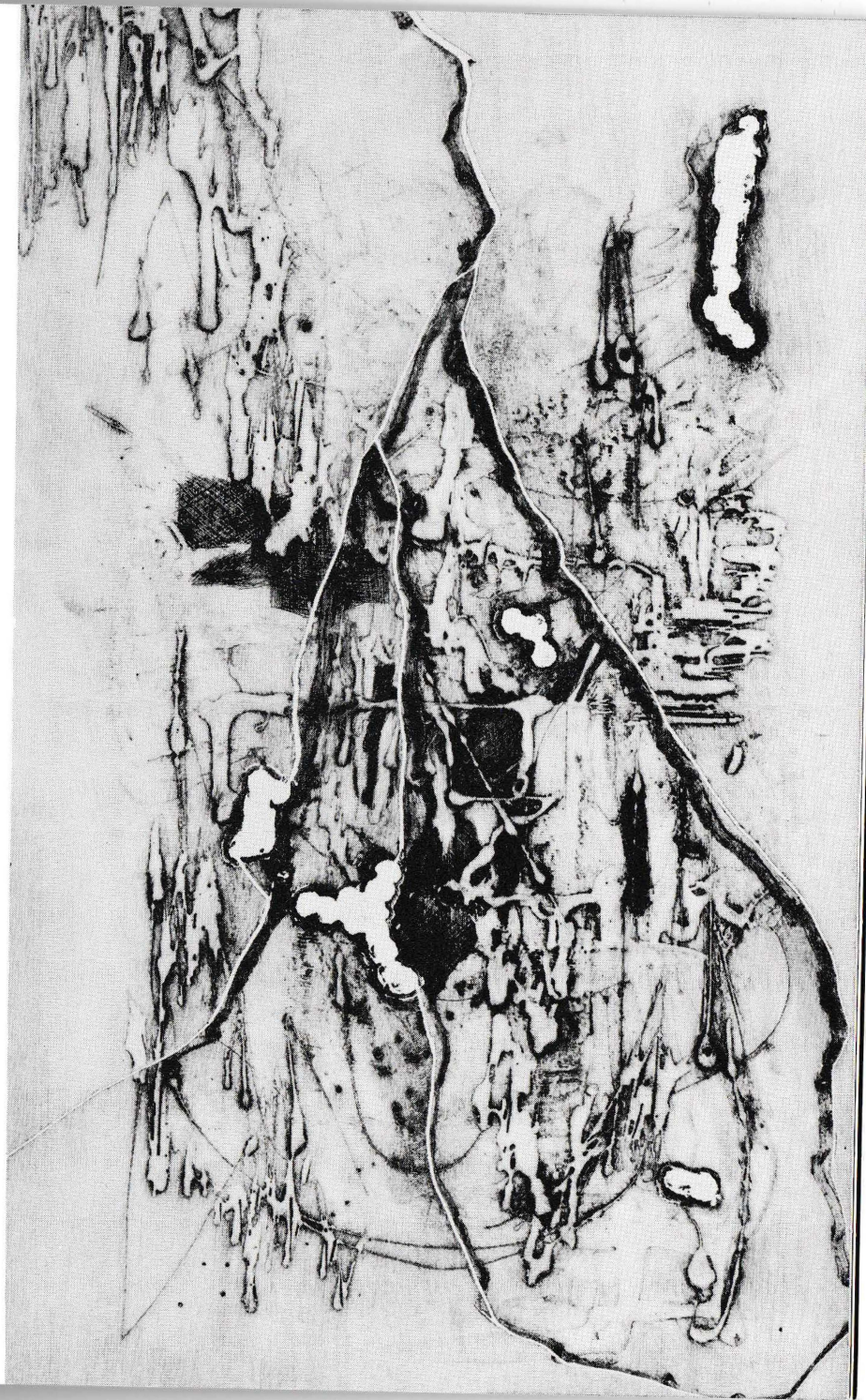
lope-dry children's lips.
ces of America

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ndered to the wind

Cynthia Locke

"Boundary" – Claire Palchanis



For the victims of oppression

Do anything you wish to do,
We'll neither fight nor flee —
Whatever fancy strikes your mind
May bounty harbor thee!
May foolish knaves arise to praise
The glory of thy might,
And nations whole lay down their arms,
Surrender without fight.
May pleasant dreams of gamboling comrades
Brighten up thy night,
And two blunt spikes tear out thine eyes,
Deprive thee of thy sight.
You asses are, we love you so
That in our hearts we cry,
“You sons of pigs, leave us alone
And go back to your sty.”

—*Eduardo Marban*

TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT

Days and nights leapfrog
in their race
each strobing to claim the prize. . .
(A close photo-finish)

Finger-touched pages flit in the wind
one side blank
the other pressed-reed ink . . .
(An unpublished autobiography)

The Jailer of a thousand ivory keys
locks
a whole or quarter note . . .
(Dischords play their tune)

HAWKS PERCH WITH DOVES

—*L.R. Grayson*

INNOCENT

leapfrog

e
the prize. . .
(finish)

flit in the wind
ank
eed ink . . .
(autobiography)

nd ivory keys

r note . . .
their tune)

TH DOVES

—L.R. Grayson

MAIN STREET BLUES

I Peter takes your eyes and you begin home.
Peter takes your eyes and you're on your way home.
(Peter takes your hand, your gloved hand, and you
snake through ice roads of no memory only balladed
reflections of old famous stores that now sing
their own carolling blues.

Their blues of the still life of the million
eggs black pan of heavenly burnt grease.

Their blues of stools, the red top stools, with
universal asses, that spin.

Their spinning blues of mystical cake shaped
danish holder that keeps all it shelters fresh
even after eight months of inhaling fumes of ham &
cheese.

Their red check curtain blues who remember
when no highways intercepted the coffee bellied
truckers that gave constant quarters to the bathroom
druggist.

It is a beautiful song.
An arm in arm in arm snow wish song
whose electric night memory sparks my fire-lined
mind to thoughts of this piano lake octave poem.)

So Peter takes your eyes and you begin home.
Peter takes your eyes and you're on your
way home.

Peter tells you he feels close to you
and somehow you feel close to not caring what
anyone thinks.

Peter!!? Where are you?

 In the ashcan subways of Philadelphia
thinking train racked thoughts of your mother?
 with her chicken soup blanket gloves,
 with her sistine chapel eyes for you,
 with her hollow bedtime punch.

Peter! where are you?

 In the sanded polarized warmth of
your father's diamond eyes?
 His Bertrand Russell diamond eyes.

Peter takes your arm, your no moon arm, and
 you search for owls (there are no owls) on
the drooping branches of the candle trees.

 Peter takes your eyes
 your flinching eyes
 your sheepskin eyes
 your tigh trope eyes
 your bazooka joke eyes.

Peter takes your eyes and you begin home.
Peter takes your eyes and you're on your way home.
Peter tells you how he feels close to you and somehow
You feel close to not caring what you almost
answered.

(Pause)

Peter, where are you?
shuffling through razor memories of a
no homerun childhood?
Smiling back memories of holy Laura lips?

II I will take you one day, Peter
your caramel karma eyes
your yes exit eyes
your eyes of tears from statue street
exhaust
your English muffin with no jelly eyes
your eyes of quenched hell and ain't goin
no where.
your suede yellow eyes
your close brown eyes
your face
your vision dipped face
your eyes of great neck rape
your eyes of glow
your glow of come with me.

III Peter you don't come thru society's bathing
suit rack ready for the sweetness of the moss
rock river flow

Peter? where are you?

In the echoes of my overstuffed ashtrays?

In the sleep walking paint job of my window
that leaves scrapes of fallen starships frozen
on the pane, begging for an answer

a window answer

a paper answer

a cold night answer.

Peter takes your hand

your culture chopped hand.

Peter takes your arm your what's going on here arm.

Peter takes your arm and you begin home

Peter takes your arm and you're on your way home

(Pause)

Peter stumbles and is smacked back on
the lizard road as night owl bandits shine
two fisted leather lights on his (our) still
wet from the rapids back

you take Peter's eyes

Peter's gonna make it eyes

Peter I almost made it

Peter Peter Peter? Where are you Peter

IV So tak

Take n

Take m

beneath the scrap
the clear sky of da

Peter takes your ha
now ungloved hand
feels close to you a
close to not caring
And Peter tells you
And somehow you

And Peter tells you
somehow
the shine of an almo
finally may answer

takes your arm and

this time I give you

V

IV So take my hand Peter
 my hand of ripped rage
 my hand of the tension trap
Take my eyes Peter
 my eyes of the ice warp
 my eyes of the ring
 my eyes of the rotten greasy orange
Take my mind, but my mind Peter,
 my mind so torn between the grass
 and the lawnmower that I just softly
 laugh, at the headless birds in the
 sky witch clouds. And subtly maneuver,

beneath the scrapings of the war red ceilings in
the clear sky of darkening pliers.

(Pause)

So Peter (Pause)

Peter takes your hand, your perhaps cold but
now ungloved hand and Peter tells you he
feels close to you and some how you feel
close to not caring what anyone else thinks.
And Peter tells you he feels close to you
And somehow you feel close to not caring .
 what you almost answered.
And Peter tells you he feels close to you and
 somehow you feel close to not caring what on
the shine of an almost angel winter day you
finally may answer

(Pause)

And Peter takes your eyes
And you're on your way home and Peter
takes your arm and you begin home

 And Peter,
this time I give you only this half-filled poem.

V

—Mike Scholnick

SOUTH READING MOUNTAIN

i watched you
at your wedding
lay that whiskey
in your gut of rock and
roll the roses out
and deck the halls
with pounds of jolly
rolly-polly red nosed
aunts and uncles from New Jersey
and i watched you
kiss the grandmas
and the godsons
and the second cousins once removed
i watched you move on through
the perfume-rhinestone whitehaired women
by the fancy pastry table
and swim the fat cigar smoke
and duck the tissue doves
and i watched you dance
your wedding dance
beneath crepe-paper bells
and i watched you quiver
shiver-throb
hang on tight
and clutch him hard
as you danced into
the last oompa-go-round

turn the time to midni
midnight
midnight of your wedd
and to South Reading M
masochist vision
i stood in a turn-of-the-
of a spidery greystone p
so far from the firehous
the bridesmaids and the
with Reading below
leopard-spot blinking
sinking beneath the mo
and it was almost you
in a green-dark corner
drinking nestle's cocoa
in your goodwill fur
and you turned to me
you told me
that i shouldn't be afraid
in this old stone place
on South Reading Moun
and anyway
you baked a batch
of hunky-colored
Jimmy-sprinkled
peanut-butter cookies
just now and just for me
so i stayed awhile
and talked awhile
i talked awhile
we talked awhile
we talked the night to lig

turn the time to midnight
midnight
midnight of your wedding
and to South Reading Mountain
masochist vision
i stood in a turn-of-the-century ruin
of a spidery greystone picnic pavillion
so far from the firehouse
the bridesmaids and the beer
with Reading below
leopard-spot blinking
sinking beneath the mountain
and it was almost you
in a green-dark corner
drinking nestle's cocoa
in your goodwill fur
and you turned to me
you told me
that i shouldn't be afraid
in this old stone place
on South Reading Mountain
and anyway
you baked a batch
of hunky-colored
jimmy-sprinkled
peanut-butter cookies
just now and just for me
so i stayed awhile
and talked awhile
i talked awhile
we talked awhile
we talked the night to lighter ghosts

and just as i was rising up to leave
i saw your wedding veil
hanging on the overhanging
grassy lip of mud
and it was wiggling
rustle-whispering through
the interlocking trees
cooing calling softly clucking
whimpering lowly slowly
stark dark
nylon-feathered white
ghost-bird of night
and nightmares on South Reading Mountain
and tell me
just who was that old man
Kathy
at your wedding
Kathy Kathy
are you sleeping with him now
or are you maybe somehow lost
in an old stone place
crushed between the magic glens
and squeezed into the shadow worlds
with me on Reading Moutain
while all your aunts and uncles
and your cousins from New Jersey
are in some ribboned firehouse
dancing at your wedding

—Joe Vojtko

Liberation Waltz

She was virgin watching Mary
and wasn't she beautiful, white
and cracked among the weeds
Lady in your dreams
you're such a reignless underground queen
just a holy whore lonesome
at the wholesome dinner table
with aunt mamie's giant ROSES on the wall
turn, to remember the fall

Oh Lady dance, a long, low dance
in your saddest prom dress
Lady you can rest
at the costume ball

Forget what is to come
when the dancing's done
no room for a woman
no voice for a song
an army of lovers, alone with them all
only time to writhe and wait
and fear the call
turn, turn to remember the fall

No hand to weave the tapestry
no child to climb the backyard tree
no dance to dance and dance until you're free

oh Lady dance a long, low dance
in your saddest prom dress
Lady you can rest
at the costume ball

It's only a nervous futile hand
jagged through just-cut hair
over coffee unnoticed and bare
appendectomy hysterectomy
the cold metal stomach tools
awaiting you here

But Lady never finds a voice
to free her song into the air
it stays inside her stomach
and drains dreams away there
the asylum turns her dance to seizure
and leaves her lying there
face to the sidewalk
she once played hopscotch
body broke and buckled
indignant shoppers stop and glare

What was the need
that bore the fatal fall,
blame it on daddy
but that isn't all

—Ella McNamara



"The Oriental" – Mary Kinney

ure

Namara

Affair at Dusk

she sat
in a field where milkweeds grew
the pale yellow sun found her
between black branches of oak
shivering
in tarred piles of gravel and glass
her breath made clouds and
she waited.
the bicycle
bent like a monster
caught in a spiderweb of shadows
lay just where it had fallen
the crippled spokes whistled
when the wind blew.
she had thrown it from the top of the hill
earlier when the silver roof of the
warehouse had mirrored the sun and
stung her eyes
she stared at it now without blinking
the wind ran around the warehouse
making the invalid bicycle cry for her help.

—Cathy McCormick

Black Bark Sweat

Sweat black, down-eyed mama
Waiting, rocking
Watching the same
Never change, shadow-chained hills
They did you twice

So sing whisper, dark and darker
Your low gospel song
You know
Freedom is twice never comin
Over those hills
And you've been watching
Rocking
Down-eyed forever

Oh sweet black mama
Sweat black mama
Flesh-wet, black barkskin sweat
The creases of your thick black neck
Wet from an eternity slave's sweat
They did you twice

—Ella McNamara

ON SYBIL, THE BEAUTIFUL BEGUILER

“Cat-damn!”

Silver-spangled Sybil slits by,
with a deliberate little pop of a perfume-y mint
 into her booze-bitten mouth,
and a deliberate little push of her slender shape
 into a cocktail clique.

14 caliber lead in the fillings beneath her sugar tongue;
scissors-sharp finger-claws deliciously dripped in “Candy Pink”;
soul-stabbing eyes softened by shimmering shadows;
and ever so creamy de menthes curdling in her throat,
 purr-fectly coating her cackle.

All her body machinery lies in wait, pregnant on its haunches,
holding its breath until that glass-smashed, star-shot,
 thundered-lightning time
when
 she
cracks the whip, pulls the trigger, blows her mind and . . .
sings.

“Cat-damn!”

—Cynthia Locke

Through Bach: Suite No. 1

.....silently I moved through
mind and soul
of better years and sweeter days.....

How dare I conceive such are
with melancholy,
and contrive a device
with which I might remember days never known?

it is with the ears tormented
by the screaming sound
of a mother
loathfully breaking her back
on the bed of his six hours' labor,
and the eyes meant to reject
a dog-faced father,
crawling, the beast he is,
to a feast of a maggot-masked plate.

To these I hail my cup of wine,
and toast the reality
to which we are all blind.

By it I move into yesterday,
into Bach,
and between the artist's lithe fingers,
forever lost,
caress each sound
and feel the slime of my own babblings
drip down my body.....
and around to tomorrow—
which can never be
. . . it was yesterday.

Tomorrow Bach—
— Bach tomorrow.....
play the jews-harp for me.....

—Sharon Rogers

That day the sun will run across the sky
And taint the landscape with its jaundiced hue;
Mannequins will laugh and concrete sigh,
And heave itself against the pagan sun.

That day the clouds will drip asphalt rain
And thrash the rigid blossoms to the ground;
The tar-thick air will sound of death and pain
As steel-winged birds of prey descend upon their mark.

—Richard F. Curry

Angel of the Wall

Void
a fraud—
behind the screendoor
that sifts her malice,
 she walks with grace,
 her figure barely granted its own loveliness.
Fleeting through the night
I watch
and try to follow,
 to alternate the white
and dark elements of her tiered grasslands,
 to see her daybreak
 to know her world
 in a niche of abstraction.....

—Sharon Rodgers

The chewing of the lawn mower
And murmur of the sun

Little girls with ice cubes would
Fling them at the wall, last summer
 by the pool.

Such merry little diamond cutters
They were, as the ice shattered
And sparkled in the sun.
Slivers of it melted on the sidewalk,
And small grey kittens licked the
Wetness with sandpaper tongues.
Mothers also melted into the arms
Of faded green lawn chairs.

—Brent Spencer

LAST JOURN

THAT NEW



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cont
to m
coll
of m
and
holic
your
and
in a
mid
rip o
your
and

LAST JOURNEY FROM NEW YORK

halloween
your —holy witch
has judas-kissed
and branded-damned
the stranded red exhausted eyes
to flap about
in scaly pterodactyl wings
tonight to fly
to tear apart
the crazy moony starlessness
tonight to scream
to sweep the howling
rolling river riot sky
of autumn's spending spent too soon
and
halloween
your voice is sacred wild
and wounded
in a wind of knives and iron
maiden mouths of teeth
rip out
your catatonic heart
and hang it on a silhouetted briar

against the moon
and halloween
your highway's long
and cold-shame-naked-lonely
in the only light of headlights
at 4:30 in the poconos
while leaves swing out of dark
and dance and die
along the road again
and somewhere through the maze
of woody criss-cross
wind-bare bones
one mutely darkly sparkling
spectacle of light
strikes out
in someone's country bedroom
and i'm all alone
i'm all alone with halloween
and halloween is singing
like a sad and 'had-it' drag queen
like a wolving mad castrato
an acolyte for services
when all the world's asleep

she lifts her broken body up
and wips it up to heaven
and wounds the ancient skin of night
and cracks back to the ground
and writhes and jumps
in breathy seizures
and mezzosopranic growling
satanic syncopated moaning
mourning failing into chanting
stark enchanted halloween
kneeling in the nightmud
dribbling sometimes spewing
spitting bile and sperm
and fecal matter
swaying
mewing
keening to the pump — heart rhythms
of the rabid universe at prayer

II

and halloween lies silent now
and low against the ground
and looks so long
up at the sky
the sky is tied in rubber wire
attached to crucifixion poles
dark shrines along the roadside
bleak goalposts in the night
she grins and whistles through her teeth
and calls her demon horses down
flamey-maned and leaping steep steep sliding
down down down
sleek saliva cataracts

of foaming mad-dog lips of clouds
down down
down to rape
to scrape
to make the landscape
know the horror
know the weight
and know the will of halloween
oh halloween
halloweenhalloween
she blows in through my gaping mouth
descends into my lungs
and fills my skull
with vapors
smoke
and suffocating fumes from hell
the oxygen of lifelessness
bomb-bursting from my bone
my bone
my skull is filled with halloween
my soul is filled with halloween
my eyes are filled with halloween
my eyes are filled
releasing slowly
little puffs of light-hot steam
ascending in a ceremony
and each one holding halloween
in crushed black velvet chasible
floating up and fanning out
to frankincense the night with pain
and the carbon paper blackness
of her shadow on my face
burns its tattoo in my cheek

and fizzes on my flesh awhile
while halloween
flies fast away
and swings her golden censer chain
like imitation pearls

III

high holy holy halloween
high holy awful holiness
behold her souly onlyness
oh holy holy halloween
holy cruel titanic woman-man
holy holy halloween
who rocks me with her stoneiness
who stones me with the firerock
that vomits from her world
and into mine
and halloween
and halloween
has filtered through
my ears
my eyes
my pores
are stink-hot crater-wide
and halloween has had me
and is long away
is far away
is fast away too soon
but she's left a noose
on some black briar
pasted to the moon.

—Joe Vojtko

NOTES FROM A BLACK LUNG
(Wilkes-Barre, Christmas '72)

Sometimes, when I walk the streets of this town,
the people look like lost Ancient mountains,
Filled once with riches for kings but now stripped
And bare and dumped on the super highway,
in the whipping rain, to hitch-hike home.

And then, staring in subway piss sorrow, I
want to slip from these fog draped
windows and run to the station. Run to
the station cause I wish to go home,
oh I wish to go home but do not
know what train to ride.

And sometimes, when I walk the streets of this town,
the people look like dust walled, empty shacks
strung out upon the ruins of the lifeless river.

And sometimes, when I walk the streets of this town,
I can hear no merry jingled laughter, only
its ghost stained fist, raising abandoned eyes
in hollow buckshot rage, but perfect harmony, as
it rings your struggled sleep with flaming
sadness of knowhere recollections.

..., And then, staring in subway piss sorrow,
I want to slip from these fog draped
windows and run to the station. Yes run
to the station cause I wish to go
home, oh I wish to go home but
do not know what train to ride.

-Mike Scholnik

The poet apologizes for the unfinished
condition of the following poem.
He submits it with the understanding
that, should the Society be interested in
printing it, he will finish it as soon
as humanly possible.

**An Epic Poem of Lilliputian Dimensions
for Mr. Pope**

Sing, ye sweet-tongued Muses, sing
Of broad-shouldered Sorrow
And of his weighty load.
Of tormented Tethys
And Sud the Deceiver.
Sing, sing, clear-throated Calliope,
Of Innocence and Evil
And of all things unholy . . .

Laundry laden ladies linger in the doorways
Watching all the washers,
Eyeing all the dryers.
Boys are blowing bubbles, sitting on the sidewalks,
Waiting for their mamas,
Looking for their papas.
O, alas for stunted seas
Contained in tanks of tin,
And for old Tethys, tethered
To her agitating task
Within the washer walls.

**ALL THESE LADIES LABOR LONG
(CONVINCED THEY'D FOSTER NUDITY
IF NOT FOR THE FRIGIDITY,
and some degree of modesty.)**

But now, the dance develops
and envelopes all the dancers
and the rhythm of their running
is the rushing soapy water.

O, what flag is now unfurled before my farflung eye?
"A SHEET!" scream Tethys' gloomy brood, "JUST A SHEET!"
But no, much more was meant for this linen's gentle weave
Than to be a T-shirt for a bed!
T'is sure to have adorned the bed of lovers
Before the rude warrior, morning, threw her yellow
Lance and scattered their fond kisses.
And now, O cruel embarrassment, held up before
These fabrics born of cruder stuff so all may see!
(And perhaps envy)
There, there we see the signs of their sweet sin—
A wrinkle here, that doubtless held her blushing cheek,
A length of golden hair shaken loose at the peak of passion,
A shadow where they clung together tighter than the dwellers
of Hephaistos' clever net.

The fair maid touches cloth to tender cheek in fond
remembrance of the evening past,

uncertain which gives greater joy
sweet sin,
or cleanliness

“Enough!” cry Tethys’ loathsome crowd, “Enough!”

The disembodied draperies now
Stumble from their bubbling vats.
They slosh across the empty space
And gaze at Grace.

On flannel haunch
and denim knee,
the tide-tossed rabble
gather ’round. Pale of skin
and pure of thought,

the maid now ventures a hello!

“Halloo! Halloo!” they slobber their reply.

And, girdled widely round the guiltless pair,

With sleeve to sleeve
And leg to leg
Entwined and tied,

They danced about and chanted fierce oaths and incantations.

And up, up from the churning depths

Of Tethys’ turbid tank, there came

Sud, the Deceiver, terror of all she surveyed.

Up she rose among the murky mists
Trailing dark vapors from her
steaming mantle

Torrents of water stained red,
From her awesome figure fled.
So much like the rains of Hell,
Still the bloody water fell.
Round she cast her subtle eye
Until at last she did espy

The blushing sheet!
Whose cherry cheeks, the frightened maid made bold to hide.
Too late!

The black-browed sorceress with rage unpent from
a hidden pocket drew the tools that
would undo the youthful pair!

Bright bleaches, pellets, potions, and powders
Of colors and of quantities unnumbered!

Down she cast them into
Tethys' tear-filled tank!
Around she stirred them
As she dragged her hateful bulk
Through the waters now impure.
And up the gushing mass did
Belch about the body of the demon

(as when an animal, fallen ill,
does foam with tongue protruding
in his misery, so too did this boiling mass
flow forth from its abuséd caldron.
And Sud! the Tongue of Evil!
juttet from this most vile of mouths
in her imperfect majesty).

WHO DARES TO BLIGHT MY VISAGE WITH SUCH UGLY INNOCENCE?
THERE IS THE STENCH OF BEAUTY HERE! WHO DARES?

“She does!” screamed the unkempt horde, “She does!”

The misused maid now holds
her tender charge more tightly
to her wildly beating breast.

Up the walls, the slithering swarm
Of soaking miscreants ascend.
All throw their hollow, dripping
Arms in her direction. “She does!”
The headless cry goes up.

Their hollow skins now shook
the very walls with throatless laughter.
And from them fell the clouded
Rain, upon the Innocents.

Still they shook with anger
And with glee!

Now from its stormy cradle came
The Deceiver’s newborn flood of foam.
Across the floor it swept and foul-smelling smoke smote the air
Where e’re it touched.

Down from their slippery
Perches flew the rabble
And danced among the
Waves of stinking foam.

The maiden, fair, gathered up
the hanging ends of her brave
banner and held them tighter
to her trembling breast.

(as though, by this, they could avoid their ordained fate!)

WHERE BE YE GUARDIANS OF GOODNESS?

See her pale and careworn brow
Woven into a city of wrinkles, undesired!

Yet, beyond compare is the
Web of worried creases
That stalks across the linen's
doleful face.

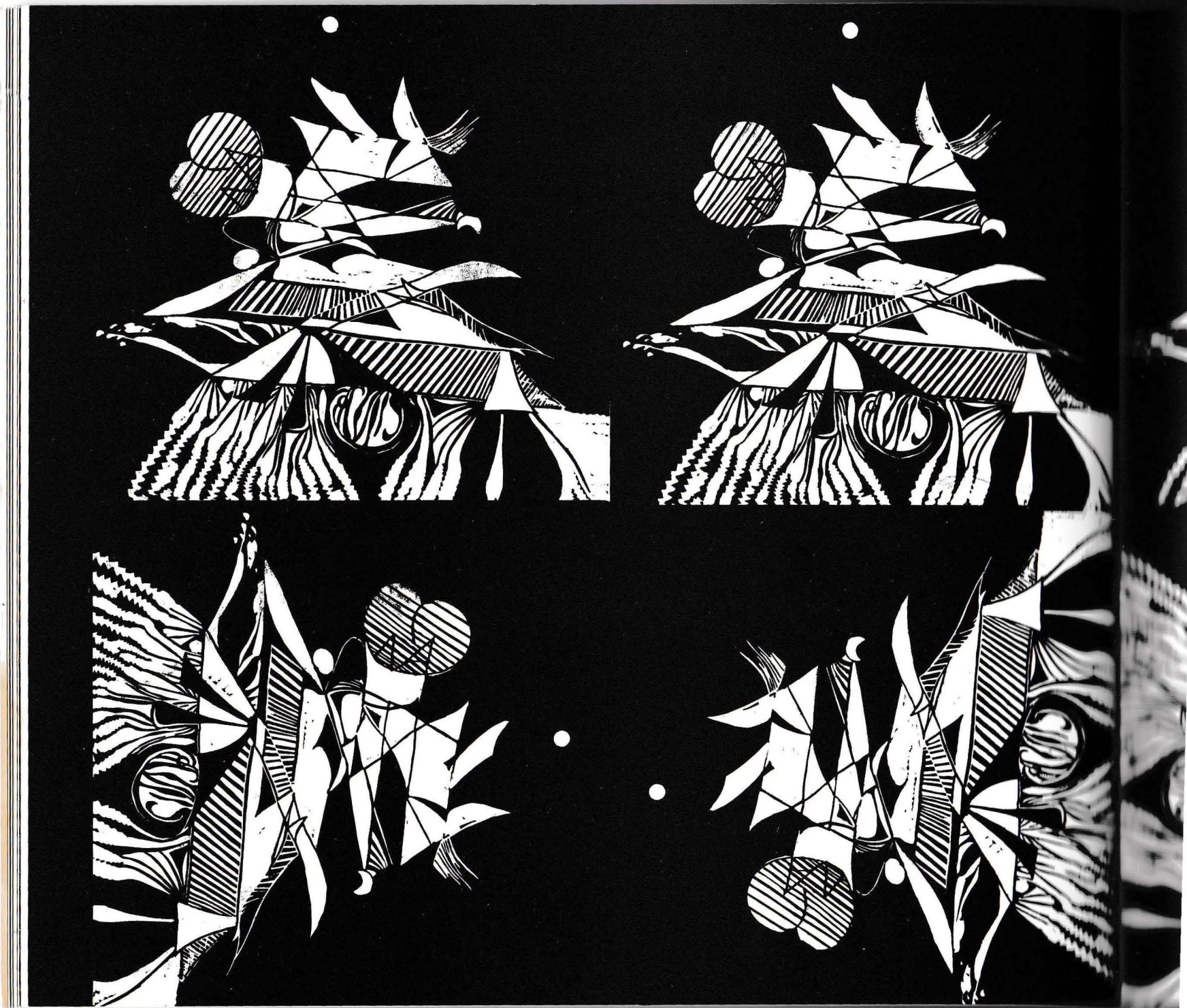
No longer can we see
the signs of grandeur that
were hers. No gentle ridge.
No golden hair. Sud's
shadow, only, waves above
the baleful mob that rolls
among the filth.

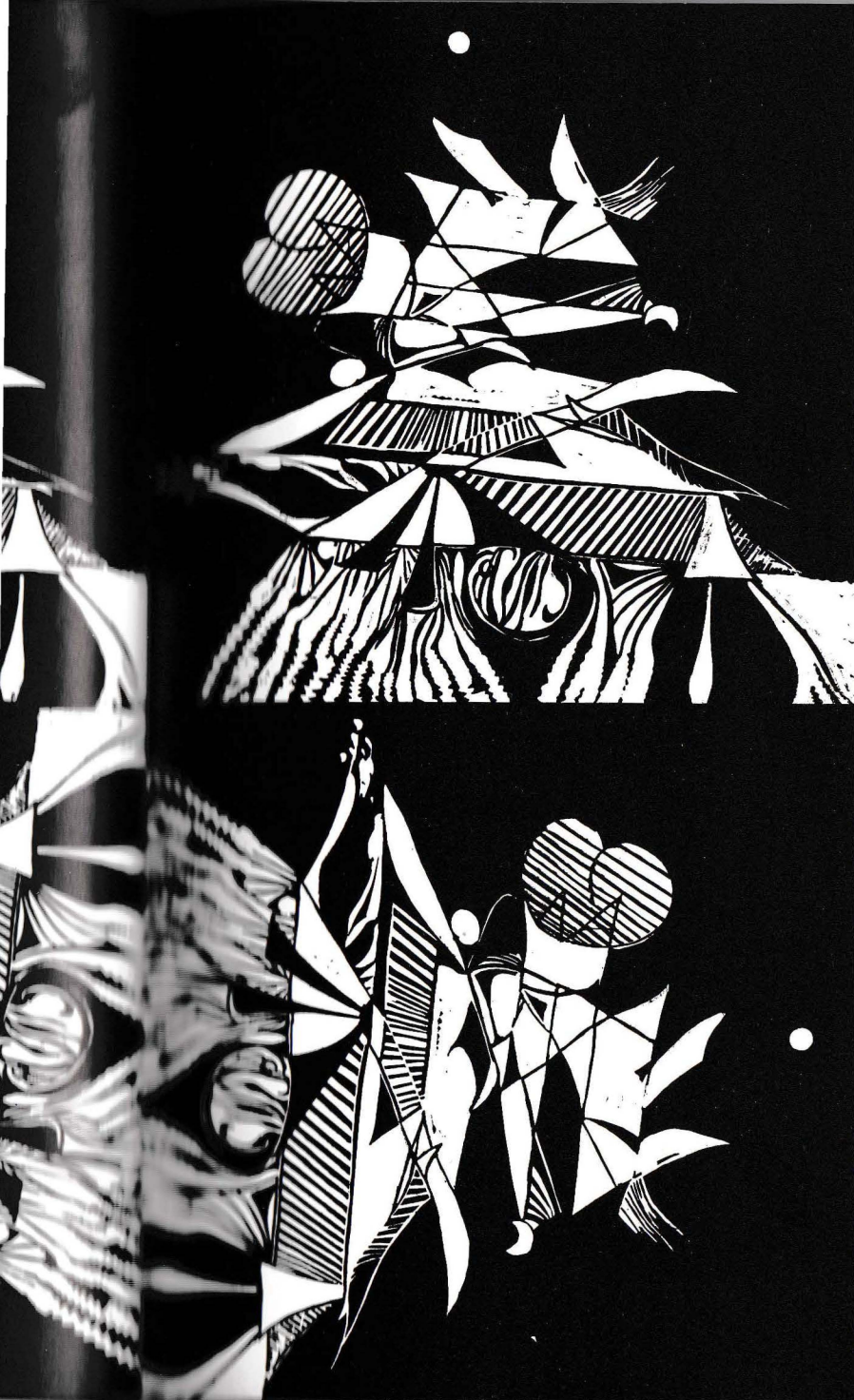
But still she stands, as if in silent prayer,
Unshaken by this blast of infamy,
And still, before the barbs of Sud's unquiet stare.

Now up from her sweet bed of Thought,
She lifts her gaze.

O Muse! Relieve me of this painful task
And lead my idle thoughts on brighter paths.
Yet, t'is Truth! and Truth must carve her
Bloody groove.

That Florentine with his compassionate stone
Has known my grief,
And shed hot tears
Upon the Mother with her Child,
While still his chisel kissed
The ripening pair.





poem for F

at dusk
i heard your weeping
on the heat of pale june
and it drifted
through the screendoor
and settled on my arms
which clung
or vined around the rocking chair
in almost fast asleep
and molding
ectoplasmic statues
of a lover
once i knew
who whitely ghosted
blackly
through two winters
to the now
and i
was quick to catch a moment
of your face
within the smokey glass
of windows in the evening heat
and dreams in pale june

—Joe Vojtko

Notes from a Traveling Salesman
(Incomplete of Course)

Oh Crazy Hank

Sweet Crazy Hank

I'm sorry for what I might have done
I'm sorry for what I almost let others
make me think.

You Know of something crazy Hank
Crazy Hank I think you know.

Hey Crazy Hank, I thought I saw

lonesome pirate ships darting in night
thru your veins.

It had men with scared angel faces
And wings of swords looking towards
rough but distant storms and floating
on ancient waves of perhaps someday.

Ole Crazy Hank, sitting on a park bench,
80 years old, telling all the pigeons
and little girls about your old buddies
Tennessee and Groucho.

Oh Crazy Hank

Sweet Crazy Hank

I'm sorry for what I might have done
I'm sorry for what I might have let
others make me think.

You know of something Crazy Hank
Crazy Hank I think you know.

Oh Crazy Hank, I thought I saw

something in your face today.

It was a foreceful wind, an ocean at
twilight wind, that seared thru your hair
and left me still by the dirty river

Hey Crazy Hank

melt those bastards with your
standstill romantic eyes of
jeez-I-can-hardly breathe intensity.

(Oh Crazy Hank, scorned in love.

Someone's lonesome, Crazy Hank.
Crazy Hank, I think you know.)

Ole Crazy Hank

Bopping down all the streets. The
side streets of hopeful hellos, yes,
how's it goin yes,

did you see that movie yes,
yes my love writes poetry yes
yes it's hard yes

yes Crazy Hank it's hard yes
Crazy Hank you're further up
the goddam road yes, than
anyone else, yes with your
bebop, what's happenin' sneaks, yes.

O yea Crazy Hank, from the

window he comes runnin. Yes, to say
just hello.

Oh Yeah! Crazy Hank

Sweet Ole Crazy Hank.

I'm sorry for what I might have done.
I'm sorry for what I almost let others

make me think.
You know of something Crazy Hank
O Crazy Hank, I think you know.
“Hey Crazy Hank, tell us how you
walk so loose.” Hey
man you’re the Wilkes-Barre
Pillsbury Dough-boy of smile,
real found smile.
(Hey Hank, Crazy Hank, I read this book once
where the author dedicated it to some
people who he said “knew something of the
truth.”
Ah’ shit, Crazy Hank
his dedication was so obviously
incomplete.
Oh Crazy Hank, you’ve been gone for awhile
Haven’t seen you for awhile Crazy Hank.
But O Crazy man Hank, something you left
those Haunted House eyes, those
snowcapped cavern eyes.
Yea like lightening rods. like
twilight zone zapgun rays punchin’
cracks thru the ocean.
Yea Ole Hank, Gone, Crazy, Hank
you’re the stuff that
confusion entwines in.
Yea Crazy Hank, storm stranded Hank
you are the stuff that danger
sighs collide with
O yea Crazy Hank, Bop-Bop Hank

you are the stuff that
intangibles creep up upon.
Yeah Crazy Hank, Pillsbury Hank,
you are the man
that needles and park bench fears
drop from.
O Crazy Hank, what’s happenin’ Hank,
you must a just hopped on a
train right on outta here
just after dinner and before
sundown.
O Crazy Hank, Angel wing Hank
You are the myth that wandering
hobos and westward trains are
made of.
O Crazy Hank, Sweet Crazy Hank,
Tomahawk Hank, Gone, Crazy Hank.
You know something Crazy Hank
Crazy Hank you make me think
O yes Crazy Hank I think you know.

– Mike Scholnick

OLIVIA:

Olivia: Your name I never
could quite remember

“Ours our wind swept lives”
Israel, August 1971

Where were you dear J.S. Bach
(on that fateful night of
that fateful day)

And why were you resurrected
into a stubby-handed
Piano-player
who kept missing the highest “C”

(Though the nervous blast
and electronic beep
never sounded better to THIS
untrained ear)

& why was the pre-natal Poet
sitting sideways
on a straight edged chair
sucking on a bitter-sweet fag
end of a troubled life
and why did he snort out
a smoke screen
for an answer

How did we ever manage
to cut through the tobacco haze
of cloudy thinking
which parents
have always placed in our path
did we somehow manage
to transmit
a pre-literate message
under the music -store
electric-light bulb
weren't we
just a mad pair
of Gemini Rockets
launched beneath the virgin sky
(which had been waiting
all these years for a rendez vous)

& had we not half-swum
to the sea
& had not the ever restless-restful
waves
taken us to a different age.

So! we doffed our cares
& threw our bodies
into a heap!

—Avram Ben-Barak

Smiling through wrinkled face
in crinkled patent boots,
Midst the melody of washers,
vanilla cream colored coat
and strawberry pink tint hair,
the spinning covers drying up,
distinguished graying husband man
in coat and tie, it's Wednesday night.
Coke can tops pop just like beer
six machines apart,
a most romantic space,
they read instructions on the wall
and watch themselves go spinning 'round
and watch themselves go spinning 'round
thru glassy glarey portholes.

—Dennis Gourley

NASA SUMMER

Summer nights
when the temperature's
less than the day's,
but the heat's much worse.
(The moon's been touched)
The eight hour days
become more when supper's
done 'cause the paint's
peeled and disappears.
(Lunatic bodies begin to bog and walk)
The Sun went down red,
but the sky was grey,
it delights the sailors
only at sea.
(Now the moon has a halo
that says it will snow)

—Dennis Gourley



"Summer: The Dream Tree" – Joe Vojtko

KUTZT
tonight'
a salty p
corridor
and wet
the thin
in cobal
of gets
and gar
garlic fle
and rock
inhabit o
in the da
to creak
and kiss
sleepless
the illum
of some
sitting u
in oh to

the prett
that gigg
and inte
cemetery

will tick
to thoug
lovely fl
nights o
that plu

KUTZTOWN STOREFRONT BEDROOM BREAKDOWN

tonight's
a salty perfume-blooded
corridor of evil
and wet reptilic slitherings
the things that wait on windowsills
in cobalt-blue and stale pools
of gethsemanic-stained-glass-altered moonglow
and gargoyles
garlic flower strewn
and rock hewn purple lenten saints
inhabit chapels
in the dark
to creak the weathered boards of fear
and kiss the dusty manuscripted
sleepless apparations
the illuminated prayer
of someone
sitting up in bed
in oh tonight tonight tonight

the pretty porny picturehooks
that giggle in your other ear
and interrupt the slavic-gothic-
cemetery-ceremony

(marching on your bed
like sorrowful-mystery-rosary
whispering-oh-so-blue-paisley
babushka'd babas
bowing low and swaying low)

will tickle your embarrassed brain
to thoughts of
lovely fleshy wondered-flowered
nights of lips and tongues
that plunger

to your fruited slime-glazed
lovely limey
rasberry jelly squirmy skin
of a hot slowing auto-manipulation
celebration of your own eyes
in a snow-white-magic-mirror
mirror on the wall
you smile and fall fantastic
and asleep in oh tonight
tonight
tonight's
a terror time
to resurrect again
again
with heavy sweat
around your neck
or beads of dreams
that strangle you awake against your will
and fill the bed
with wet reptilic slitherings
and all the hells and thunderstorms
of oh-so-old babushka'd babas
bowing low
and lower
like too late for mad imaginings
too late to fall asleep
"baby wontcha,
dontcha wanna wake
and have a cigarette
with me awhile"
you bite your lips and hold yourself
the walls you know won't leave you
they won't heave you to the street
so please goodnight
goodnight goodnight

—Joe Vojtko

3:30 A.M. EXPLOSION (PREREQUISITE)

you are there,
 at the spit night pit of silk discovery.
you are there,
 hurling monsters that crawl crawl
crawl down comic book streets
you are there,
you are there,
 sketching huge worm eyes that wink
breath thick slime-smoke.
you are there, where witches of satisfaction cough
all night.
you are there,
you are there,
 where glass blows itself and yearns
for the ocean like all children with sand burnt feet.
you are there,

sky writing kaddish revelations of
thousands thousands thousands of oldest europe ladies
who raised thousands thousands thousands of buried
mind scholars going crazy now with super bowl
constipation and ccny rosters of jumpshots and
these depression babies, aborted into wisdom
and rx moses visions, flowering flower park
folkies and all of 'em junkies now and the
thousands thousands thousands and their fire escape
scarred schoolyard children, all of 'em, all of'em
bursting in subway explosion, all of 'em crazy
with latent ginsburg demonic angel power and all of 'em
really really comic funny men, very funny, really
with lenny bruce volcano eyes and long long
slow walks. alone.

you are there,
you are there,

 where caterpillars laugh and walls
twitch behind the corners of your teacher eyes
you are there,

 where paper doll lizards snap and turn
like carousel warriors
you are there,
you are there,

 by the clear light of magic moss rainbows
and little dinosaur mountains and oh the sun so
smooth on your wine chilled back.
you are there,

 where faces glow red and roses are magnets
you are there,
you are there,

 where the sun sets between the blend
of swaying mountains like a big bowl of orange
soup.

you are there,
 where roadside riffs are the
choruses of a hundred picnicking cars.
you are there,
you are there,
 where tree painted mountains are
our eyes' marionettes.
you are there,
 where darkness slips on watermelon
fiesta pits.
you are there,
you are there,
 where summer beer bums dive into log
stuck whirlpool smoothrock waterfalls like
a circus aquarium of uncle tom dolphins.
you are there,
 in endless bicycle rides down cushioned mountains
with your hair spread eagled for the wind and
their fuck spinning poems of city light stars.
you are there,
you are there,
 where heads tread by themselves and
hurl eight ball snake rock laughs in sky
threaded moments of snap second eternity.
you are there,
you are there,
you are there, like I am here and stars are
there and you are here,
 in the spit night pit of silk discovery.

The Cynic's Genesis
(A Monologue)

Forgive me, but I must disclose
Some bits of ill, perhaps;
The girl forgot her daily Pill, perhaps;
Or maybe as she spooned some coke into her nose
The upstairs maid deprived her of her clothes —
Who knows?

But witness this,
A miniature in our own image,
An offspring of her Godly lineage
Whose small proportions are amiss,
And scarcely will afford us bliss.
And thus

we'll take a rib and river mud
To build this man an earthly mate
So he won't have to hibernate
And thus become a living dud —
Agreed?

We'll put them on the planet Earth
(Remember back when MR. FATE
created light to celebrate
the anniversary of his birth?)
We'll leave them there, for all they're worth,
And watch

Them for a while.
We'll let the fools look out this way
While munching apples 'midst the hay,
And if our product is worthwhile
At least we're bound to get a smile.
And as

a final touch of humor
We'll give them a destructive urge
To kill, to hate, to rape, to purge
And murder one another.

—Eduardo Marban

SOME AFTER DINNER MINTS TO YOU

I The staircase bends and twists and
through the ceased snow of a thousand winkless
moments, . . . Enough! Enough! I shall
shut my eyes to the groans of
churches that ring all night. Enough! Enough!
Our lives are melting flowers. Come on,
Let's go! Lace your boots to the witch
of passions. Skim like little boys rocks
on waters costume of green or blue. Let's
go! Let's go! Enough, do not depend
on the passing of a cloud. Let's go!!

II Had I known that you
knew nothing but the introduction and
one weekend's verse,
I never would have
run to git my guitar.
I feel pretty silly
Ya know, singing so alone and being just the
bass fiddle for anyone's lively jazz riff.
Had I known, boom ba ba boom, had I known.

III I cry to touch through and run on free
but I am strapped to the mist of wind and sea.

IV The wind bites my hand like a winter cramp
escaped from summer's vacation
ocean.

—Scorpion clouds take my only smile.
my warm smile
my out of tune guitar smile
my jazz sax, electric piano vision smile.

—Scorpion clouds take your only smile
And as if the world was someone else's dream
sequence, I lay in a clouded arena and watch
your body curve like graceful nighttime
goddess hallucinations.

And the wind plays again but now like an old
man who walks and sighs in children drained
streets on church packed Sunday mornings.

He
looks so alone and touches flowers with only
his wrinkled eyes.

He is so alone and sometimes
on bleak streaked happy days he will look like
a friendless shcoolboy begging with his scarfed
eyes just to be your buddy.

Watch out! He will take your hat.

And the trees seem to stretch and in early
evening yoga they burn to touch
the frozen ground and rest like
seeds in their faded memory . . .

And they would make it save for
space for dogs to bark and wind to pass.

And Images trip thru my mind and there are
laughs cascading towards my Chrstitmas wreath silence
they are like old Buster Keaton pictures or
visions of strawberry mornings in the
springtime meadow and 100 yard super slow
motion frisbee tosses.
they are like the folk lore circus through
a mountain range town.

It stops awhile and
just when you round up the baseball
bombed crowd, it will leave
it will leave. It stops
awhile and leaves before the snow.

And now my eyes feast on dreams so real
that I can almost run my fingers through
your ballet hair.

And the lightening strikes so fast on your easy
sleep and the anarchist skies look to me
like an angry Harpo Marx trying to tell
us something with an electric horn.

And the garbage lies like some master plan
by your mother to prove to you that
you can't live without her.

And the music comes down and thru our holy souls
off beat, on time and ready to take us, ready
to take us, ready to go on time piano show
ready for some good ole slow rock 'n' roll . . .

the wood; the
wood is the
drum beat of
the wooden limbed soldier . . .
(tin cans travel
on winter streets
and they sermon

to us like the amazingly graceful
sorrowed eyes of old Black women
on N.Y. subways and yes they
know how sorry you are and yes
they know how
absorbed you are
in this land
is my land this
land is your land
yes they know
50 vacationless
years of your
subway smile) . . .
ready to die and
sorry he lived.

Silence screams
in jailbird butterflies that

blow the mind into
unspeakable confusion

Happy feet / stomp the ground /
And howl into
the stoned harmonicas of
the chilly evening.

Poems fill my head like
endless rows of waving wheat,
tickling my feet, and dipping in
orange the darkening distance.

Music plays / like a once popular child /
who has left his home and
looks for new friends.

And the culture slips away into the top secret
zone from where it came.

It is like a once good
joke, told and retold so many times that no one
knows the punchline or why it was funny
any way.

And we are left hanging by our rainstorm
lost winter beads and a woven patch on a once
itchy crotched dungarees and everyone who
hears Pete Seeger loves him and his concert
hope and the way he does freedom songs with
his neck pop-veined towards the sky and
rocketing his visions of the broken promise
land upon everyone's babylon surrender.

V Everyone passes you on the road
Hitchiking days are the days of old

La la la la la la la la
La la la la la la la la

Everything twinges in a honey gold hum
Concert bell days are the days to come.

-Michael Scholnick

All For You

For your senses,

The taste of wine and cheese
to a starving beggar tongue,

The feel of a velvet robe
against the skin of naked savage,

The aroma of just baked bread
to children playing in a field,

Prism eyes that expose the day
to swirling shimmering color,

The sound of a thousand cathedral organs
bouncing off canyon walls,

Do none of these interest you,
Tell you what I'm gonna do,

Take

Heavens fan of slumbering stars
high on lonely hill,

A cavernous crystal world
studded with diamond eyes,

Rumbling oceans slipping off a jagged edge
in an endless stream of thunder,

Aphrodite on silver chain
tied to your beckoning finger tip,

A new born scarlet sun
with energy to burn for eons to come,

A happiness and peace of mind
that none in the universe
has yet been able to find,

Jesus Christ! you can take them all,
if you'll just bow down to me.

-Angelo Volpe

that good night

A crimson sky becomes pale gray
As with the last traces of day
Comes night, and following
A burdened path
The dove finally comes to rest—
Alighting on my outstretched hand.

Expressing its unfrightened love,
The white serene majestic dove
Seeks comfort in my open hand.
The virgin land of Joy takes flight
And turns the darkness into light
By which I take my stand.

The years pass by
Oblivious of man and his pursuits;
The lullaby
Which sent the babe to sleep
Survives the rotting of its fruits.
The dove is gone, and buried deep.

Stars, light, time, death:
For death must come,
Life is but a breath —
Sublime emotions are short-lived,
And even as we start to writhe
The shadow's lurking at our side.

—Eduardo Marban



Photograph — Richard Finkelstein

Dog Days

I have seen that dog before
out walking the streets at night
alone
with each step his shoulder joints moved
like an old time locomotive almost at the top
of a very big hill
every winter he disappears
in the summer he sleeps in the four o'clock sun
in front of an empty building in an alley
at night
he roams

Dog Days are these days:

children wear rose-petaled fingernails
and green leafed neck lace
leave footprints in the soft scum on the bottom of a cool
swimming pool

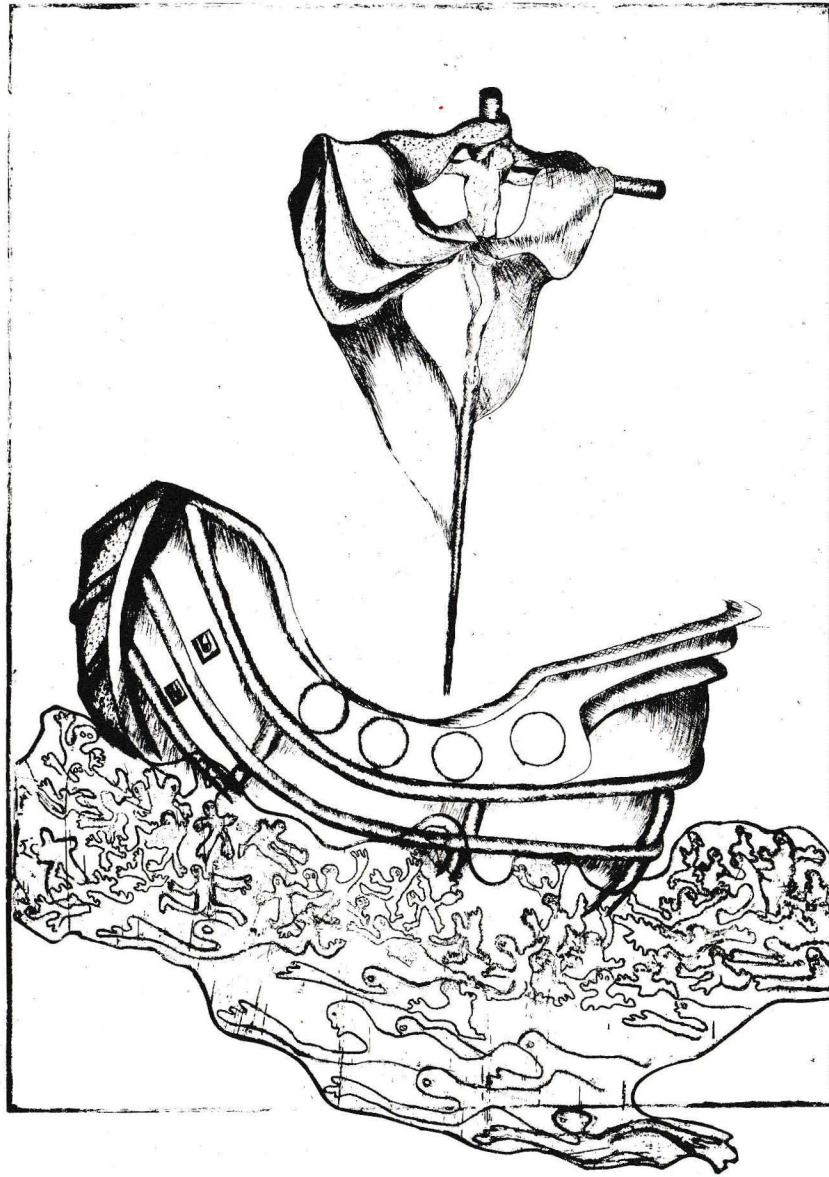
**DON'T TOUCH STRAY DOGS!
YOU'LL GET IMPETAGO!!**

children chase lightning bugs
(like moths after the streetlight in the alley)
and run to Gertrude's (the old maid's) fence around her
backyard
where thousands of fireflies protect her flowers
from prowlers
her crickets keep time with her clock
her morning glories twist up her rusted fence
moving like the minute hand

DON'T GO NEAR HER HOUSE!
SHE'LL CATCH YOU AND PUT YOU IN HER CELLAR!!

Gertrude sits at her window, a great one
for time and space, and thinks
about last month when she sat there and
about two days from tomorrow when she will sit there

One afternoon she found her baby breath
in the alley pulled out by the roots
and Gertrude felt the loss in her scalp
with long piano playing fingers she rubbed
the pain deeper in to her head
she swayed in the sun and her cotton dress
clung under her arms
And down the road by the dying pear tree
hollow inside
bearing fruit
that old dog raised his head from the gravel
and watched her



"The Crucifixion" – J.M.F. Urban

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