

The Eleventh

DIME BAG

Glendon College
Toronto
March 1974

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With this issue **Dime Bag** makes a significant step in its gradual but progressive improvement in physical representation. Four years ago, it consisted of a dozen mimeographed sheets stapled together. This eleventh **Dime Bag**, in addition to being folded, trimmed, and stitched, is also typeset in the manner as any other printed book. At last, the physical nature of the nature of the magazine is approaching the quality of literature submitted to it.

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Barbee Laskin

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Wing Span

1

After a time
the drone fades.

Left,

suspended,

gazing down

wards past the struts,

we watch the dark

green islands on black

lakes pass

in slow revue.

The islands, green tabbies

with furs of pine forest

curled in sleep (smooth &

softlooking like Lawren

Harris knew them).

The lakes: the small oval ponds

hidden by bordering trees til

we're right above, surprised,

seeing a moose splash in

to the bush, a man gaze

up open-mouthed,

his arms the smell of smoke & skins,

his birch lodge behind,

his stout woman watching

his tawny back,

All this in a flash

over the oval pond.

The lakes: the large lakes

spreading into sunblur

with vast islands like

wooded kingdoms, the great

black expanses of water

passing into unsight,

wide white

paths of sun

along them

ever widening.

2

Her
brother
and
I
played
catch
caught
frogs
Her
tanned
arms
smell
of
spice

The fragrance of cabins.
Wood painted green in summer.
The warm aromas of porridge &
brown sugar & clean laundry on-the-line &
new cake, vanilla morning.

Afternoons in August, outer edges of trees turning
orange, the ruined red tennis court, the little boat
on the bay by the lodge, the lookout.
Talking on the pine-needled floor among loose trees.
On the carpet of the forest, talking
or not talking.

In evening the screened porches yield
murmured conversation, the creak of rockers,
& wood smoke smell.

Dave Carpenter

Proposal

Warm juicing jazz loosed in us in slow smoke rotation
iced dubonnet & sweating syrupy beer a spirit of warmth
& juice-coursing youth tumbling us tipsy from Oscar's
musical magic thru colonial gates & into midst & rush
of mid-fuckhunt & joyseek & heat-frustration but weez cool
in organy lilt & dive & thrive on rings in windows which
you teasingly choose & cruise on my discomfiture like
Jesu's chick on His waves or vibes for her but oh
the great loving (well-planned) joke's on you when later we
surrepticiously (& giggling too) climb illicitly into bed
& I produce from underneath the swishing sheets a tiny
box & you give me one real deep eye stare thensuddenly
fire inside & find (gleaming smugly) the golden
rings you so admired.
and now weer living marriedly
but certainly not as harriedly
and it is cool & meet to note
that jazz & beer & dubonnet
still make us float
and feel the way
we did that grand acceptance day.

Dave Carpenter



Matapedia River

The old cabin
with its unpainted porch
warping down to the river.

The fast shallow
wide water rushing
over gold & ivory pebbles.

Warner wades
into the current.
Gordie skips stones.

Harry watches,
nursing his beer.
It is a quiet time.

In the outhouse
I watch the river pass
by the doorway like a film.

There had been stag movies
and much beer at Rimouski
in the Hotel du Boulevard.

And, at the auberge,
tides and guitar, and the rocks
rising from the muck like death heads.

(Once, at Kelowna,
I swam with logs
in shallow Okanagan.)

In the outhouse
I watch the river pass
by the doorway like a film.

Dave Carpenter

Too embarrassed

I once loved a girl
who loved to dance,
but she never danced
all night for me.

Now she's gone and
I don't dare think
about my dreams.

Michael McCabe

On returning home
I found
My mother in the garden
Feeding her birds
and flowers
And loving on her own
And I stood
watching
Through the window
with the flowered sill
Until she noticed me
and slowly turned to
the house
smiling.

Celia Donnelly

Songs of Innocence

1789

The Author & Printer W Blake

Introduction

Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child.
And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb;
So I piped with merry cheer,
Piper pipe that song again—
So I piped, he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe
Sing thy songs of happy cheer,
So I sung the same again
While he wept with joy to hear

Piper sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read—
So he vanish'd from my sight.
And I pluck'd a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear

Introduction to Songs of Innocence

Hamelin

This news vendors a man two-
minded calling: moon-landing!
Man lands on the moon (recalling
after last nights news

with its men lead shoed following
lamb-like over and through bland dunes
how he fell asleep with the runes
high and static of spaces hollowing

tubes in his ear and how he dreamt
astronaut dreams: soft white strangers
leaping stiles toward an endangered
angel propped against newsprint

clouds insomniac singer removed
They vanished in recomposing
symphonic testpatterns rose
to horns and clanking change shoved

from pocket to pocket to the sleep of truth
in the happy pen of facts the legible choices
of columns headlines that reedvoiced
vendor hamelined so innocently mouthed

Ruth Cawker

Doctor

I am the Doctor

hand me the stethoscope
let it swing between
my white coat

Open your chest

I will lay my stethoscope
with its steel
coldness
upon the bareness
of your beat

I feel your beat

pulsating within my chest
But I must play the doctor
I must stifle our unified
rhythm
with my cold
analysis

Marilyn Collins

APPLES

Red and Ripe,
Hard and Polished,
Apples—

The symbol of sin
the temptation
of
Eve and Adam,
Who bit hard
upon the serpent's
request
into the pulpy flesh.

Now—

(in the age of sin)
The apple:
no longer
crunched and munched
is
mushed and squashed
into the
sloose and slaush
of
apple sauce

Marilyn Collins

wow man, it's alright

Well man, what's the plan?
Like, what is a happening?
Where is the happening?
Do we have to make it?

Take it easy man, sit down,
Settle into the radio vibes
And dig the ree-lax-ation,
No sweat man, its groovy.

Far out man, weird book,
I think I dig parts of it,
Reminded me of something,
Maybe I'll read another.

Out of sight, like I mean,
Was it ever cool,
Like all that action,
Wow, was it ever neat!

Well, what do you want, man?
Just gonna sit there,
Or go out and goof around,
Or take a hot bath?

No man, I wanna buy a car,
Put a T.V. in the trunk,
Park it in a garage
And turn on the radio.
I'LL have me a dog to fetch the morning news.
I'll live in a brick house surrounded by frost fences.
I'll have hedges on both sides of the driveway.
I'll use ever-ready batteries and goodyear tires.
I'll drink Heidelberg on Sundays,
C.C. on Mondays,
And water in my Scotch the rest of the week.
Well, what can you do?

Mike Wilson

Pleasure in a can

Can't afford it
but
"What d'you want
when you gotta have something"
For a few coins
I get
a can,
filled with
cool, sparkling,
bubbling liquid.
It goes

down
slowly, sweetly,
serenely
not really quenching
thirst
but a treat
for the tongue
that playfully swishes
the effervescence around,
the bubbles hiding and seeking
between my teeth,
tagging,
tingling
the insides of my cheeks
and fizzing my throat.
The can tilts . . .
Lips strain to suck
and receive
the last drops
of the canned nectar.
Gone! — realization with a loud burp.
Just goes to show
Nothing good
Lasts forever.

Paul

Falsehoods

There is in every memory a lie.
Time is a mystic metamorphosis
Which causes all remembered truths to die.

A hammock sways as recollection sighs
And sees the phantoms of her synthesis,
For memory delights in telling lies.

The dreaming girl who in the hammock lies
Invents her ghost; the ghost's exquisite kiss,
Like all remembered truths, must quickly die.

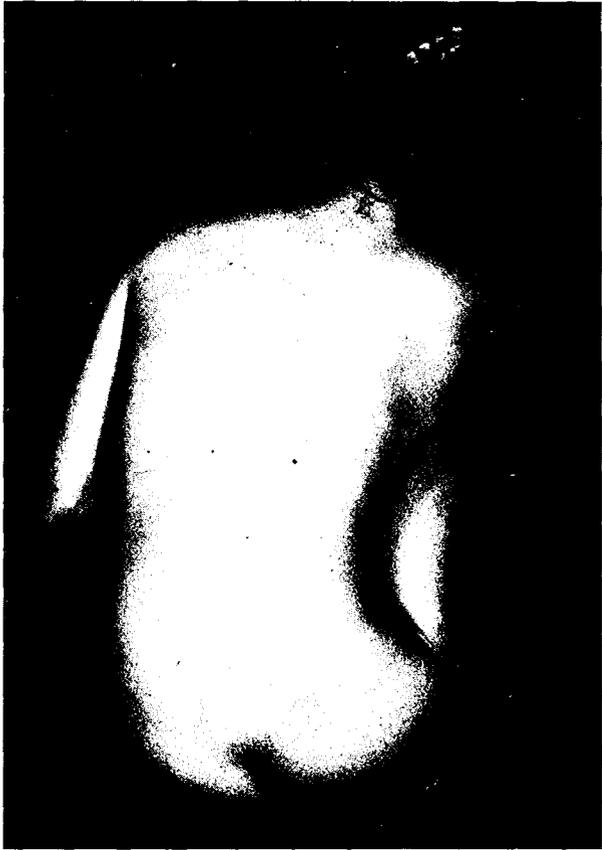
A hand born in her mind now strokes her thigh,
Now glides along her back now holds her breast,
As memory invents delightful lies.

In every dream a different lover she tries.
Her lost lover, whom she so seems to miss,
Becomes in each new memory a lie,
And causes all remembered truths to die.

Eva Lamden

Outside, the winds caress the trees into
motion; moths bounce softly at the window,
seeking out some bright flame to travel through.
Midnight. I am eclipsed by your shadow—
no other voices fall upon my ear;
no face exists more haunting than your face.
These thoughts that buzz like flies are all I hear
amid the silences of boundless space.
Becalmed, your ghost rides the swells of my mind;
the eerie phosphorescence of your form
transfigures golden lengths of chain which bind
us in our past, face to face, form to form.
The force which drives the moth towards the light
guides you into the circle of my sight.

P.G. Shaw



Like lovers captured in an ageless song
a winsome lady used to smile for me.
(The wind sighed like a phantom all night long,
among the trees it brushed so breathlessly.)
Her eyes held all I yearned to find, but more
than longing ended all my wanderings,
the moment that I wandered through her door
to learn the supple lessons passion brings.
So long ago, it seems, that simple time—
so hard, the intervening days and years
which stand like mountains one must learn to climb
to understand the love behind the fears.
Like flowers on the table at a fast,
this fragile woman decorates my past.

P.G. Shaw

Correspondence

I peruse this old pile of letters,
following their slow windings through the years—
so the wandering past breaks the fetters
time has wound around friends, or love, or fears.
On paper, life seems more like a novel—
characters come and go, events appear
or vanish. But life, unlike a novel,
requires death to make things disappear.
Now I am left these correspondences
with other lives and times, with other minds
whose words were gropings at the entrances
of all untrodden paths which life unwinds,
and all the words which bound that kindred band
lie sleeping on the pages in my hand.

P.G. Shaw

Freedom, once we said, above all we crave,
ephemeral as summer butterflies
perched midway between the earth and sky, slave
to no man's will, untouched by pain or lies.
We sought it as explorers ply the seas,
to test the edge of space, or even time;
we sought it in the metamorphoses
we found in love, and wrought in splendid rhyme.
But what we sought, we never thought to find
before deep winters stilled our youthful wings,
and bore us into light and out of mind,
beyond the thousand cares such freedom brings.
Yet I became the fragile butterfly—
a flash of gold reflected in your eye.

P.G. Shaw

Vol à tire d'ailes
à tire d'âme
à tire d'espoir

Que l'on tire à bout de rêve
en partance d'ombres et de lumières

Vol à tire de mots
que l'on chasse avec le tir impromptu
de la parole
en bandoulière

Lyse Guay

Ici et là
sur le rivage déserté
de la mer en allée
les étoiles meurtries
tendrement s'étiolent
et leur souffle psalmodié
murmure la souffrance
d'une terre silencieuse

Ici et là

le vent passe et se meut
allègrement sans une pose
vers les débris obscurs
qui sillonnent les grèves

Ici et là

dans ma vie et la vôtre
les écumes se pressent
vers la houle impatiente
et l'angoisse
se colle aux lèvres de l'espoir

Lyse Guay



Une mélancolique et douceuse quiétude
berce l'aurore fiévreuse
Les vents alizés promènent leur ennui
par-delà les cimes ombragées

Le soleil a baigné dans une ultime caresse
l'horizon du monde
Le ciel repose dans un linceul de clarté
. . . et de sang

Tout se confond maintenant
à ces marécages brumeux
qu'ont transformé haine et désespoir

Le silence pèse lourdement sur la ville nue
il étouffe et aliène l'homme chiffre . . .
l'homme chiffre
Désespéré il se débat dans sa cangue de chair
et lutte contre les murs de sa prison mordorée

(Lucidité)

Lyse Guay

when
everyone expects
you to do beautifully
dutifully
they await your assurance
not expecting that perchance
you've loosened your stance
up there
where
the air is so thin
where
you've got to breathe
in and out slowly

if
you're not clever
if
you don't do your duty
beautifully
you'll slowly sink
down to where the lowlies are

sinking slowly
into the lowlies
who
will never respect
the clever ever
again.

Andrea Narvey

Ranks of Sorrow

Big city doors closed behind you
Locked you out of quiet joys
No returning to the Legion House
For a draft and memories
Where a self-sung hero
Could relive his prime
Spent saving the world
only to walk its streets
in rags and
wear his forgotten courage
once a year.
Saviours soon become
tired old men
and no one dances any more

David

And she dreams
Silently in the sand
And gets
Sunburnt.
And I cream
Noxzema over her skin
That's too sensitive
To touch.

And I read
Stories of the soul
And get
Sentimental.
And she pleads
For a conversation
That's too sensitive
To reach.

And she listens
To the stereo's subtleties:
The sounds
Slowly shifting between speakers.
And I take-in
The soft, drifting smoke
And get assaulted by the
Lyrics.

And I start
Singing with the song
And sensing
Something in silence.
And she senses
Her sunburnt shoulders
And puts on the headphones
Like always.

M. Foley

If I can tell you
where I would like
to be most of all

you should be able
to tell me where
it all is waiting

John Lemaire

La pitance

Je suis né pour un p'tit pain,
Comme la majorité des humains,
Mon père et mes amis,
Ma nation et mon pays.
Nous sommes tous nés pour un p'tit pain
Auquel on nous a tous si bien conditionnés.
Pain, pas plus grand que la grandeur d'une hostie,
Pas plus cher que le coût d'un taudis.
On a toujours accepté ce p'tit pain
Qu'on nous donne sourire en coin.
Qui, on l'a toujours accepté
Et avalé les dents serrées,
Mais maudit,
Qu'aujourd'hui . . . on a faim.

Yves Gauthier

Tout seul, un somnambule un jour,
sur la terre de fleurs,
courait vers les épines pour
y chercher l'éveil.

Il ne laissa que des sentiers
de tiges et de corolles abattues.

Tombant de tout son long
son corps moit et lourd
écrasa les lilas
Et voulant se lever d'une main,
pressa le sang d'une paquerette
et de ses doigts déchiqueta une rose

Michel Liddle

The Ice Man

the ice man comes to this place
and sits naked in the snow.
he comes here to die.
he will freeze and his body crack
and clear like ice will glisten
in the winter suns.

smiling blue lips and opaque eyes
he is the ice man.

Andrew Nikiforuk

Christmas '73

Trees naked in the wind's north
Sway, slowly waving onward
Over the bleak land the passing shadows:
Ageless choirs lament our ancient curse.

Allen Perun

I find it hard to believe
that a little child of Japan
has different dreams
stirred by no Oedipal urges
in the dead of night
never dreams of tearing the wheel
from Father's dying hands
keeping the car on the road
possible flooring it
faster than Father ever dreamed
I find it hard to believe
that we conform
to the place where we were born
both day and night

Elizabeth Hemsworth

Here they come
brightly at the door
I try to focus on their faces
my eyes slide off
everywhere
into corners
the room behind beside them draws me
I fear their mood will shift
abandon them naked
right now it is impossible to look

Elizabeth Hemsworth



In the middle of the library
I see a white gazebo
with a green roof
behind are cedar trees
and a glimpse of deep sky
this promise projected on the glass partition
with the verisimilitude of reality
turns me inside out
over the work that is not done
through the windows that are not barred
to the real gazebo
sparkling in the sun

Elizabeth Hemsworth

Remember Isaac
although your father lost no concubines because of you
still he wanted to destroy you
pure and simple
rip you out of your sweet confusion
you profaned his bride
stole her love
lay interminably inside her
union of her ecstasy
subject of her love
more your sensuous birth brought him
face-to-face with his own live reality
like a painful death
he knew instantly the sum of you
was greater than the part he played
knowing milked his thirst dry
good you took on his guilt
innocently wondering why
a sacrifice was necessary

Elizabeth Hemsworth



Sylvia Plath

You forced my mind up out of the
morass where it had sloshed about
doing nothing but eat sick omens

you tore my eyes away from the
dead living so I could see through
the dark wall clearly

you stung my heart so that my blood
no longer ran oozing through an
unchartered course towards the grave

you turned me away from myself
towards another self where search and
seek are new blooms in an old garden

to be loved and loved and understood

Eric R. Moore

an evening with paul

aryan thoughts run through his hair
while hesitant hands
grope the woods for meanings
inside smiles form a hazy connection
we are close along the street
no special walkers amongst all the others
but the night is white
thrusting inhibitions
into deserved isolation
we enter a dark place
and into fingerprinted glasses order california wine
my eyes line his hands
as Silence weeps nearby

city faces squeeze into booths beside us
and under gruelling lights
their sickly features
look like hockey pucks

eye upon eye
we rape each other
slowly dying of wordlessness
music cleanses the stodgy glass
until emptiness settles its bottom

he pays the check
leaves no tip
and again,
we are on the street
where blatant windows
wind their way into our limbs
the buses have stopped running
though people still need them

paul hails a cab & ever so swiftly
i'm flying homeward with the whimsical memory
of a hurried kiss
and a promise to call

barbee laskin

you said you would call
or look me up.
but that was one year ago.

don't you think there's a
limit to diplomacy? maybe
you feel a guy should wait a
while before seeing a new face?

but any more time, and i'll be
out of recognition.
i mean. . . we all change thru years.

you said you would call.
you promised.
twice.

why did you promise?
(. . .you gave me hope)

maybe i'll call you. . .
or maybe i, too, will be diplomatic
and wait a year. or two.

of course, you want to see me.

you wrote me a letter.
you spent time on syllables.
you punctuated your thoughts.

barbee laskin

a tune vomits in my mouth:
over-churning
lava burning
cutting into my fingernails

here i rest
languid and darkened
a constant stabbing
overturning of blood
veins jarring together
 in rhythmic fanaticism

as i ask
why you left me waiting

our talk was interrupted
as important talk
always is
. . .but then you said
what about Saturday?
and i agreed

the final face
of evening
looks on—
disdainfully becoming morning

a pale blue
climbs inside my brain
casually
carrying day
and a new pain
 palpitating

the day must be lived out

wind swallows my coat,
my pants, my hair
a barely-lit sun
squeaks through my nostrils
as i decide
in the shadowy socket
of a one-way lane
not to see you again

barbee laskin

he chain smokes
as earnestly
as an old-movie buff
haunts
the catalogues.

in between
the puffs
he stuffs the silence
with Fast talk.

he looks wisely at his pupils,
and grazes their ideas
with Long interpretations
of his own.

Always
he answers
with a better question.
often,
he leans languidly
on one hand and
ever so caustically,
agrees.

he wears a well trimmed beard
of blues and blacks,
enclothing his chiselled face
like a suit of armour.

i notice his hands are large
and negative.

the pants he chooses are always tarnished
corduroy; with a greyish hue
forming intricate dust patterns on one lone knee.

his tie is short
and ugly.

when he looks at me
i feel dumb and motionless
the words plung through my gut
like falling rocks while

his strong blue eyes make them Hard
and Brutal inside;
and every thursday, i know,
there's no place to hide.

still—
i wonder if his wife
is really
an artist.

barbee laskin

Forest Fire, July 1911

Cordury road.
Knots and branches scrape our feet,
Grind and scrape.
Tumble, wet on my knees and back
Cold and wet.
Brittle rock, hands on edge of crack
Crack – or precipice.
Pain. Where? On my thighs.
Where? On my back.
Why am I naked?

I was digging in the unsurveyed
North of Whitney.
I tasted wood between my teeth
Branches cold, cold pine in my nose
Its cool perfume in my throat,
Smoke filled my nostrils
Dryness, and I coughed;
Wind waves of heat and I shivered.
Don't look up. Just keep on working
Men lose their claims
When they stop to look up
Don't look up
Where's the sky?
Smoke a black door slammed
Against the sky
A gate to the lake of fire.
Where's the fire?
(A small boy
Chases a howling engine
And the faces ask him
As he passes):
Where's the fire?

Keep working.
Where's the fire?
On my back!
A howl of shock from the hole in my mouth
Blood and fire licking my back
Searing my thighs as I run, as I run
The bush is a-blazing, where is the lake?
The bush is a-blazing, where is the lake?

Water on my cheek.
It isn't hot, it isn't cold.
Ghastly trees stand on the burnt-out shore
As if for a better look.
I close my eyes.

Cordury road.
Cinders beneath my running heel.
Pain a blanket over me.

Andrew Donaldson

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DIME BAG

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FROST



DIME BAG

Number Twelve, November 1974
Glendon College, Toronto

No 8

The most obscene picture I can conjure up
Is a dying river
Encrusted with raw sewage and factory filth
Or slag heaps from mine excavations
Which leave the surface pockmarked
Like blistered sausages

Eric R. Moore

No 11

Extract

The you in you is undecaying
Uncopied unlabelled
It is all things from time
Which touch you uniquely
From the beginning
From gas and fire
When air
And earth
And water
And sun
Commingled with the essence
Delicately and laboriously
Like a seed
Dropped by the wind
In the wake of a passing ship
Carried on restless waves
To some distant place
Nurtured by the enthralling sun
In the promiscuous earth
Fed by summer rain and
Sheltered by winter's snow
Itself a oneness with nature

Eric R. Moore

(The Water)

It was an unexplainable force which
urged me to fling myself into the icy water.
Funneling downward, the sudden shock piercing my body.
Then, deeper, deeper, the water rushing and swirling with the pressure on it,
Curved me upward.
My head surfaced and the bitter gust of
Wind chilled my brain.

Sheila Jones

For Sunshine

The wheels turned, the dry leaves on the path crackling as they met with the tires. Snick – snick – snick – snick. Another place where the wind had blown the fallen leaves onto the path.

Cold. Crisp. The autumn day brilliant. Mist still present.

The feeling of blood pumping, muscles stretching, working in harmony, was exhilarating. No one was in the park, a single person.

A gray squirrel darted across the path, its cheeks filled with nuts.

The miles unfolded, the sun warmed things imperceptibly, it warmed the mind. Snick – snick – snick – snick. More leaves. The trees were brilliant, multi-coloured, almost unreal.

Ahead there was a movement. Suddenly, another single rider. They approached one another, the separating distance diminishing rapidly. A flicker of irritation as he realized he was not solitary. They drew near, a slight smile, a nod of the head and again, they were alone. An empathy, an understanding of feeling without a word spoken. The irritation was gone, he knew no world was his to possess. He felt good that the feeling was shared.

Stephen Barrick

Pour vous, mes amis

La voix d'un mystère vous fait signe, silencieuse, apaisante,
A vous mes amis, dont les bras enlacent la route
L'un de l'autre dans une brume luisante,
Où des heures affamées sèment, récoltent, et sèment encore
La moisson du printemps, de l'été, de l'automne,
— Rayonnante marée sur la mer grise et froide,
Le flot de la moisson illumine l'hiver.
O ce contact éternel! qui flotte, ondoie,
Doucement, calmement,
Comme une vague de vent intime,
Vers cette supplication qui sourd en un épanchement,
Au coeur-même de votre essence.
Il vous appelle avec ferveur,
Vous verdure au plus profond de la semence,
Unité issue de deux,
Comme la tendre violence du soleil et de la pluie,
Faisant route avec vous vers l'ouest,
Chuchote des promesses de fleurs, promesses de fruits,
Aux racines de votre commencement.



Glass of Beer

“Hey hey, Johnnie, what do you say? Let’s go for a beer. Hey Pierre, put your music away. I’m thirsty and the river is tired of listening.”

I open my eyes at the call for a beer. I need something to wash down all this heavy red vin ordinaire. Alain slaps Pierre on his back, huddled over a guitar, then picks up a green crooked-labelled bottle. I watch while with exaggerated cartoon motions he launches the bottle at a passing barge. It arcs, spinning and sparkling in the summer sun, and falls short, splashing slightly in the Seine.

“Bande de salopards! ”, shouts the captain and floats by. Alain retorts with a French obscenity I miss. Something about a pig and someone’s mother. There are words I’ve heard under this Paris bridge I never heard while working in that stinking Dunkirk refinery.

I wonder while waking and collecting my scattered thoughts. How long have I been here? Weeks maybe. I forget. Concrete beds make me forget a lot of things, except my stiff neck and the smell of piss.

“I’m Popeye the sailor man, toot toot! ” Alain croaks in my ear and steps out of a television behind me. That makes the lady with the camera laugh and take our picture. It makes me want to get drunk. “Alain, you buffoon, help me up,” I say and wish I did not have to move from under my tree in the middle of this island. I glance at the Louvre, half expecting someone to fly out a window with the Mona Lisa.

The sun is falling behind the city. Hitch-hikers and backpacks circle together like mushrooms clustering in the damp greenness of the park behind us. Foreign melodies and wisps of hashish smoke drift carressingly through my mind.

We glide up the steps as in a bubble, spinning giddily out of a backwater, and into the frothing city. On Pont Neuf I hesitate before the blackened spires of Notre Dame. People and cars flow constantly across the river. I feel as though I have stood up too quickly. Above us, his most lecherous majesty, Henri IV, rides forever motionlessly.

We could go to either bank, but Alain wants his friends. He knows where to find a curious audience and a wall to lean on. His gaunt face and nervous black eyes are those of a cornered animal. He told me once that he was sent from Israel because he would not be a soldier. We turn to the student’s quarter. On the way Pierre stops a sad American girl.

“Where are you going? ” She does not answer. “Come with me. We will see some people, drink some beer.” She simply takes his hand and follows without a word.

Once across, Alain tells us to take a sidewalk table at a corner cafe, where he says, grinning as wide as a spunky but homeless sailor can, “They all love me here.”

From inside there is laughter. The girl sulks and Alain opens his guitar case. I tilt backwards and push my battered scout’s hat forward. No one will know I am watching. A tall bald negro in sequinned tights passes by. “You are brilliant,” I remark. He nods.

18th Birthday Poem
(for Heather)

On the wind
you are as
I am, laughing,
whirling as
we are blown
laughing,
whirling
in the same motion
as we are
laughing
in the same breath

David R. Hayes

Mr. Facing-Both-Ways

Before
we turn
the light
inside us
down, burn
in effigy
he who we
once were

Think, then
how much is
there to learn
from him, before
he came
to be
bad company

David R. Hayes

There was all the thoughts
Of the motorcycle freaks
Who were working there
To get the bucks
To get the time
To ride across the country
Like poets.
They work until they can go
With unemployable assurance.
They don't mind
Fucking up that system,
In fact,
They jump onto the opportunity.
Without that one thought;
That hope at the front,
They would die in those conditions
Which force a man
To give his hand
At the command of a rooted machine.
But with that thought
They ba like hating sheep
And wait like Christians
For that time
When they mount their Commandoes
And take control
And go.

M. Foley

I have been made sick.
The useless, self-gratifying,
 and false confessions
Put into long-winded
 beautiful words,
The lonely, righteous beings
 examining hungers,
So aware and sure of
 inadequacies,
Have filled me up
And made me vomit.

M. Foley

Down the black steep fire escape,
Along the dog shit dirt alley,
With brown paper lunch bag,
Mr. Freeman walks to the bus.
A cigarette hangs from the old athlete.

And in the Mint he cleans his nose
Of the black soot
And wipes the same
Out of the corners of his eyes.

And in the Mint no one talks of failure
And no one looks.

For awhile we shall rest.
We shall be animals.

Out of twenty-four,
Eight are given,
Three more to be able to give the eight,
Seven go to sleep,
While the rest are divided
Into life.

At day's end
The once dreaming mind
Has no more energy.
At week's end
The drink, cars, and whores.

So short the time.
So short the breath.

And when Mr. Freeman laughs
The ten pin thunder,
The drink is strong
And cascades from his wordless mouth,
And the equal women
Pull his penis.

And Mr. Freeman,
Mr. Freeman never cries
About or for anything
Anymore.

M. Foley

Great words
Cannot even
Clap.

M. Foley

Lonely by a firelight sadness
That soft, longing upstream voice
Whispers the plaintive sermon of your absence,
Caresses the tender living of an arching wave,
Like the waking warm-scented breath
So alive in the rustling green shoots
— the new northland marshgrass.

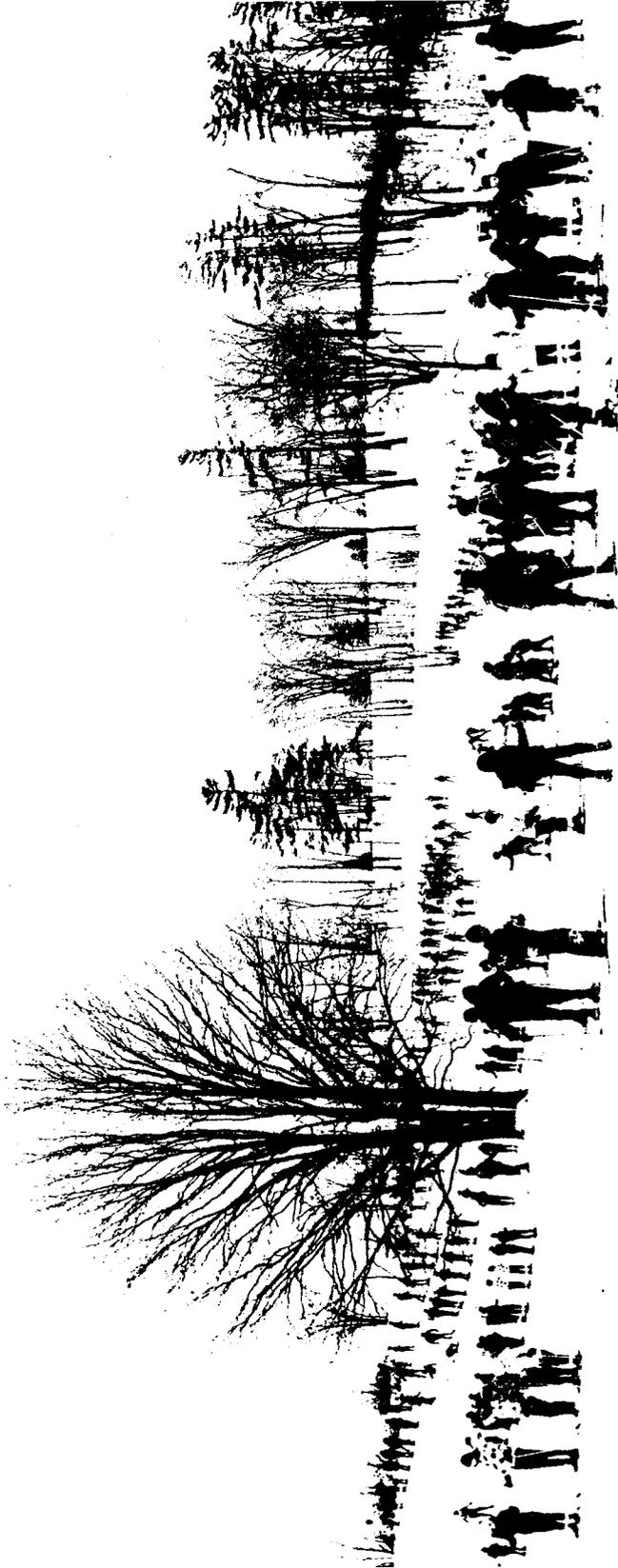
J.W. Anderson

BIRTH OF A SKETCH

tall
stiff as the trunk from which it came
this immobile tool of communication
spreads
lead residue
as it discovers the white emptiness
under a sharp
inquiring point.

tight
nervous scratches inch across
around, under each other
until the lead and paper both
become softened to one another
and from this mutual relationship
movement is conceived;
mobile forms protect
a shaded background.

Andrea Narvey



NUITANCE

La nuit me regarde
De son froid regard d'automne.

Je détourne les yeux
Mais n'aperçois qu'elle
Qui me harcèle de sa noirceur,
De son néant,
Et de son désespoir.

Ainsi, je me fais l'impression
de me rebâtir en moi-même
Pour fuir,
. . . m'éloigner,
M'échapper des faibles lumières;
Si faibles en réalité
Qu'elles ne contribuent
Qu'à mieux alourdir
La nuit déjà trop lourde.

Et pourtant,
Le temps m'affirme
Qu'à la bonne heure
Viendra le jour.

Mais ne sera-t-il brumeux?
Ou même orageux?
. . . comme les secousses de mon âme.

Aussi, je sais que la nuit
Fera demi tour.
Mais si elle décidait de revenir . . .

MARCEL BEAULIEU

SOMMEILLANCE

J'ai un poème sans encre
Qui erre au détour de mon être.
Là, les mots sont givrés
Car j'y vais mourir,
J'y vais dormir sous mes rimes
Sans ne jamais murmurer;
J'y vais rêver au lointain
Dans le grand désert de la pensée.

Lentement je m'efface de tout,
Je ferme mes yeux à la vie
Je n'attends rien,
Je n'espère rien,
J'y vais mourir et je le sais.

Quelques lettres encore
Et je serai prêt à quitter,
A ne plus revoir.
Quelques larmes encore
Et je serai mort à jamais.
Encore un instant volé
Mais mon sang s'obscurci,
Mes mains jettent un dernier regard,
Et ma voix tremble de ne plus pouvoir.
Un tout dernier moment
Avant que mon encre ne se sèche;
Un tout dernier regard
Avant que ne s'éveille la mort.

Déjà, les voiles de la nuit
Etendent sur moi la noirceur;
Je pars. Je marche vers l'infini.

Je suis mort et je dors . . .

MARCEL BEAULIEU

Cosmic Eclair

It was a celebrant evening that we
sat in a mood by a toffeling sea . . .
Foam and wind and the ashes of fire
Circling light in a blackening gyre.

Miles of sand in a billowy white
Chocolate stars on a turkish delight,
Cosmic Eclair as we took to the air
melting, caressing the bright.

Kath Slemin

“Marat, there is nothing outside the body”
crunch crunch crunch

Munch your oreos
at the end of the line
and tell me of your physical dreams
I can hear them sliding down your ego
like the oreo creams

Kath Slemin

I am here.
my body limits.
you are there.
miles in mere inches.
close enough to touch
and yet I don't.
I know
I won't.
Only the night
soothes me
when I know that
darkness
does not reward
the searching hand
and I know
you are
completely
unreachable.

Kath Slemin

TOBERMORY TO OWEN SOUND

Aboard the twenty passenger Blue Bird coach, safety yellow moving nest, "Protecting America's Future" above two caricatures of overfed cherubs commuting where? To their all white school? Driver, semi-sweet-chocolate-brown shirt, sunglasses with chrome frames, limburger holes like a spaceman's Swiss watchband, whiting gray hair Elvis combed with the widest apart teeth, two wallets in his rear pockets, chained to belt loops. He is cheerful with the elderly lady who has lost her ticket: "One thing for sure, I know you had it." Minutes after, journey begun, she lurches forward of the prohibited white line, proffers a pink paper. "Knew I had it somewhere." "It's like anything else, eh," with one hand holding, opening a green metal box, filing ticket, "if you look long enough, you'll find it." He warms to his work in the morning sun, rolls his sleeves to above the elbows, eyes dramatically (safely) fixed on the road, back straight. He leans to adjust the fresh air vent. Dust lifts from the floor into sunlight. Rattling comes from under the bus; he fiddles with a switch: the choke. "Something I can't figure," turning to the passenger in the front seat, implicit audience, to his right, "you take this morning": we leave twenty minutes behind schedule; you watch, now, we'll be in Owen Sound terminal ten minutes early. Happens no matter when you leave, you get there with time to spare." Returns to the road, pondering. Flashes a loose peace sign (V) combined with a wave to a passing dumptruck. Another to a coveralled farmer on a green tractor; a blue bus's driver. "We were going to throw a Christmas party. For all the guys pushing truck and bus up and down this strip. Highway 6. At least a hundred of us, regular, anyways. Some party that would turn out to be, eh? Wild times. Yes, sir." Late greeting to the passing ad on a bread truck. "No crown to the road here. Below Lion's Head? Beautiful. You don't have to touch the wheel all the way to Wiarton." We wait. Off six onto the road for Lion's Head. Five light planes tethered in a field. "See the blue and white one? It's just like mine, except for the colour. Loaded. Automatic pilot, the works. See the silver one? The twin, there. A guy from London owns her. A hundred and ten grand. Plus change. He's a neurosurgeon. What does he use it for? Fishing." Lion's Head main street. Sand-blasted red brick buildings. Blond girl, seventeen, long blue jeans, turquoise jersey, sitting on the curb with a suitcase. "Hop on, doll. Did you think we'd forgot you? Not on your life. There's lots of time." She smiles, eyes shy, big and sky blue. He can't reach her. Door shut, we again pass the planes. "Fishing trips. Plenty of room for a charter business around here. Up to the Soo in no time flat." We turn south, Highway six. He checks his watch. Pulls up his trouser legs. Folds down the sun visor. "Pretty soon we pass a lake I just discovered the other day. After all these years I find a lake. Right where I never looked, I guess. That's why I never get sick of this run, eh? Nothing stops changing. The trees have just come out full. Now they turn colour. And the cattle? Skinny and weak after the winter. Look at them now, eh? Always something different."

Evil waves
Sluggishly flaxen
On a concrete beach

But sometimes — light walks wild upon those waters
Spreading circled colours
Through infinity
Like living in a flash of sun
On polished steel!

Sally

I have torn great rivers of time
that dripped, bled and bleed with life.
and stabbed red-tinsled fork lines
into laughing children as they leered.

And now I rest reading my Bible
mouthing words that taking flight
drip-droppings on baby's heads
turn to acid and erode their skulls.

Tonight I'll dig up mouldy bodies
Bled dry, once beautiful
seduce them and inject into their blind mouths
my life fluid mingled with tears.

Mark Parent



Slithering sliding hands
ejaculate pennies into
the sky

Falling bubblegum
coats your hair
and things rest

don kazansakis