

avant (on)garde/

autumn sway
surprised fog
which took turn
around the horn,
sheets dotted
avant-garde tales
into sharp relief.
barefoot beats
song-to-mouth
tapped hard lines
and thin times:
footnotes
under ground.

alibis riddle enigmas
sun shadows private eye;
patrons like broken tongues
converse only with silence
(kindred spirits are familiar strangers).

big top carnival bark
where birds flew low,
jazzman's riff
clocked time's
handiwork...
foghorn blows
foggy weather
hot house heavy
- unwritten flights
pearl moonstones,
ghosts attend dark.
"scatman voodoo"
... "little Charlie"
classic unknowns
rolled n' smoked.

sat in drug stores
a la Hollywood noir...
bus baby tune up
turned counter girl
built be-bop bombshell:
sugar shag blonde
strawberry swirl
easy shimmy, plenty shake
(new soda jerk application).
had no instrument
but played her anyway,
only discovery was
he couldn't pay for it -
soda fountain dreams
to the last straw.

still out there some say
others, was never here
...nobody's sure.

many argue significance
too small fit for legend,
broader questions
shoulder mystery
whose rosebud myths color
overgrown forget-me-nots
(blindness hides plain sight
when it sports new glasses).
man's only importance was
the time which defined him
- who remembers him well.

tree paths were ageless -
young engraved old faces
dug memory's grave;
grass grew taller
hours slept longer
and space was free.

fate's no ear for music
nor solitary presence
on arrangement of stars.
crowds mimic voices
originals forge copies:
acceptance double edged
swallows another's taste.
visions forward past,
natural phenomena
first arrive late.
fires heat abstinence
too close to earth -
fleeting comets
burn both ends.

roads no longer open
venues to imagine -
celebrations picture
moment's brush,
silently number:
illusions play solo
somewhere behind
rain's tricky smile.

the revolver/

ants, rats, spiders. architects of industry.
skeletons buzz light bulbs, current struggles.
ghosts for nightlights.

clock coughs up music. the piano grinds its teeth. it's past midnight somewhere...

pink sweat slicks patch armpits. cracking walnuts, I knuckle.
curved spine, cramped legs, crooked joint. practical end to hard words.
an insignificant sentence.

straighten finger, my trigger, turn the revolver trick
and present temple's conflict. aimed at no small matter
/dwarfs crouched under stairways.

bubble pops open rose to bleed cracks. victims of sound. slamming doors
in empty rooms. dead sex and old perfumes. smoke flowers stick like wallpaper,
freeze caricature captions I fill myself.

overblown quiet thunder. dip needle and spoon in soup bowls. the stuffing hollowed
nights are written on.

catch lightning through paper clouds. cigarettes stamp burnt out ashtrays between
angels echoes drowned in whiskey bottles.

the room spins this merry-go-round guessing at exits.

shoelaces/

can't see colors like I used to
black & white closing in on me.
thunder radio, static mountain
tie-dye tongues squeegee sides;
fists shake dollar bills
monkeys wear pockets,
while 'folk' powder their noise
slice apple pies – force feed ingredients.

wipers swat residue, vents blow cool again.

rumblin' & tumblin'
past siamese towns
and backseat memories:
squeezed lemons in crow nests
guitar string plucks missing tooth.
my palms like tires, rabid & raw
scrub contributions with tar stains.

skids cut corners round every thrill
gargle sand where language left me,
see god where I shouldn't.
all talk is a proposition
but local alphabet's costly;
people time parking meters
windows open half shut,
sounds become threats
and hangmen deliver mail.

keep having the same dream...Bob Dylan stones me
speaks harmonica, says "money doesn't talk, it swears"
"u-c-k" I mutter, realize I'm short on f's.

road forks red hot ready to brand
sizzle & spit me over seasoned.

take it straight or on the rocks.
ponies ridin' low & easy
till desert feeds horsepower...

right angles only square ya, periphery redline.
hard shifts finger simple clean line, sand-like...
"SH...I & I...cross the T", "IOU's NOTHIN!"
though picked licked, no roof obscures view:
hands yet feel the shake my brain rolls over...
series of delayed coughs...pedestrian speedbumps
so jus' a-floatin' highlands, tumbleweed pitchfork
[credit extended to imagination].

stopped for some rock & gravel, stretch landscape...

an indian gives me a free cigar [mark reason in wood]...
black man taps me a tune, walk a rainbow in his smile...
dark haired woman fills my worth with a pot of beans
...and can feel the first good cry.

then there's them shoes – human odometer:
generation skin species size social standings
sort of mammal with bowties,
align balance always overdue.

as I bend to examine, drop knee
and secret prayer to saint elsewhere.
they just don't serve me well...
tight wrap over too much play;
right place at the ~~wrong~~ time
lean on hours by the 'welcome' sign.
why is it so difficult to be comfortable?

problem facing forward is looking back –
fugitives are city's ghosts
where pleasure's too well dressed.

they're on me now...
t-bones & clawfish
fresh off turnstile,
grease trail to collect
last debt.

grifter chasing that first high...

*one hand on the wheel
the other on loveroot...
eyes roll eggs in my head
lampposts blur beaten rain
[wonder how to get off].*

whole lotta walters & back door nellies on scent:
barnyard bumper dogs sniff blood out of smoke.

but I still have the shoelaces – a decoy –
pull strings, then the slip
tie together & hang `em
on rear view mirror...
accelerate machinery
jam guitar where wood meets medal
hardens process,
wild chords perform the requiem –
as behind me,
I watch a mannequin in the sunset
go barefoot.

greenleaves/

pull switch on old black & white, reject bloodless plasma transfusion.
resist modern temptation's bitten apples:
dangle carrots
to narrow vision.

plug into new order of living.

views widen when they exceed reach, ripest fruit tastes better than words.
warble delicate chord, melody without harmony –
strung the lightest thread
where I hang my song.

blind expectations lean against a promise always there;
while sticky fingers skin common branch,
frame portraits with paper flowers.
only the sap oozes over leaves
who can't see forests for the green.

persona/

chapter one

words dance alphabet – lines blur movement; ideas as cathedrals built monuments to stained glass, peep into...

~~words dance alphabet – lines blur movement; ideas as cathedrals built monuments to stained glass, peep into...~~

[*crushed crumpled paper*]

chapter one

alpha-bet gamble -- the word dance. like all beginnings, you clutch at roots... leaner branch hardens pulp ...de-formed, de-composed...blood orange risks

[*sliced paper shrieks*]. carbons blurb bottom basket: scent-waste...saves no perfumed letter.

pick up bottle, empty Jack...& *the last of Jills*.

look thru glass, see slanted room -- walls cornered antiquity...furnished absence; traditional angles slide toward familiarity.

chapter two

walk streets to shadows discomfort -- neatly divided avenues even odds, draw line through tiny points safely numbered; windows blink dotted lives. *back to crossroad imagination's runaway, back alleys as side remarks...crack birthstones... separate space...suck air into chance, ignorance braves hiccup.*

opposing arms hand wrestle carnival mirrors (hide n' seek): stray animals pick same locks from different cage -- get out by breaking in.

squares box corners, round footsteps -- *geometry's fate.*

chapter three

graveyard. bone forests -- the art of death. entitled "*engravings*": velvet jacket sticks & stones tailor made, 4 lines or less. final embarrassment interrupted mid-sentence. elbow masked ghosts disguised as guests...grab bag mad-lib tricks *and only the headstones are real.*

"• *you are here*"

illusions turn nursery rhyme survival, cardboard cut-outs... youth's timber carved outline: *splinters & sawdust.*

...jack-o'-lanterns grin and wink

[synopsis pending]

chapter four

nocturnal narcotic, I'm where the fires burn...slender angels squeeze doorways for a place to put the music [Bobby D. plays for me..."*She walked up to me so gracefully and took my crown of thorns, 'Come in,' she said, 'I'll give you shelter from the storm.'*"] stilettos fishnets razors nest...soil the brutal, bare bulb...untied noose loosens packet. jagged puzzles rip edges missing pieces.

desire's entanglements deconstruct photographs. time slips off naked curves suddenly undressed...tilts floor, sand in my mouth.

-- howl into nothing
hundred miles nowhere --

blind alleys lit doorways...invention's casualties sleep madmen's gutters.

pendulum's sharp swing
narrows passage...

drag last foot off sidewalk.

chapter five

and like a B-film you catch late...sink drips, clatter of rusty fan, yellowing shades... never reach above semi-light. street lamp shocks horizontals half-blind, exposed window flash; close-up spotlight zoom -- vacant bottles headline neon nicotine nights smoke out genies, curl outside frame.

mini-minor-moe bent elbows, hammered toe. Lincolns peeled and spent...music stepped out sometime ago. all things neutral, room temperature -- half-chances half-guesses...yellow yield, shadow box walls.

only fade out is me...the sum of five thousand words. hands behind head, stretched full length like so many questions...looking up & out for something else.

I'm there now.

summer hour's slight coolness wisps thru easy window, pages briefly rustle - profile thins empty bed's impression.

*erased chalk from presence
and tore letters in my name:*

I left no anatomy of escape...