



THE BALTIMORE POEMS



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A beak. the riveted steel flanks of it the hooked point. It hovers, hovers in the air above the rooftops. Nothing holds it there.

In the air above
things trapped. Passing
Poe's grave, opening
floors show the
fear, snarled telephone wires, wishes thick as mud.
The wreckers have leveled whole city blocks, scraped
to the bare street grid. I walk the old streets.
Imagine buildings on all sides around me. An ibis
beak searching tidal flats for lizards and fish.
Arbiter of now, in an open space, exposed. Time
changer.

It's dawn. The first edge red there, Changes flower. Seemings dangle by Nothings. I.
Suppose. Words as if they were food.

Tinsel hobbles up and down and

that's that. Let's bring her on! That's not that.

MC's watch
the show from the end of the bar near the dressing room
sneak feels fake names. Not even
hieroglyphics, a simplification
like a picture book. He's master
of the Land of Re Re
and then present the bait
the beak looks for.

... the skin it triggers ostrich dancing in the head quivery tits stretch marks shape something smooth.

In order to finish this be naked. MC's are the loneliest men in town.

3.

Time changer! at search, the shrieking beak, dismembered of its naked head and neck, floating over the night city, tidal flat changing place.

"Dissonance (if you are interested) leads to discovery"

Williams writes, but that's no gift. In the open hole telephone wires hopelessly tangled. Intended calls. Busy signals. Clanging turn to turn, from one turn to another — Angel Face, Angel Face

the thought of the feel of your round thighs is driving me mad.

Letters are different. The time changes more slowly its changes, the pattern opens a little at a time, hand to hand (by hand). A good cat can flatten a whole city block of cracker-boxes in notime. A letter sometimes takes months or even years to arrive. Or parts of a poem take months, years, whole times of slow coming into place.

It was a letter for somebody else. Nobody remembers mailing it. Letters have been known to take months even years to arrive. Have they a life all their own?

There's a mixup over the date, or seems to be, it says I'll meet you at five or maybe six or seven. Why have they replaced people with vugs and splotches? I love you anyway.

signed,

Miss Lover

vug, splotch.
A name can be anybody's.

The buildings fill a need, the empty lots filling the mind. Filling in tolerable hollow spaces. Empty lots

... 1 April. No sleep. Nerve fiber ends shredded, polyps, stretched, twisted out. Exoskeleton of them. Every touch pain no sleep. High tension wires outside window hummm, hum, hummm. Telephone ring punctures 15 times, maybe 20. Unable to move. Stops. Dawn...

cavities in rock stuffed with pages torn from last months last years telephone book.

Every name is attached to some body either there or not there. You can't tell until you actually dial the number (... what are the legs like, the hair, the teeth?). The book has a question mark in it. A time difference. A hole. Changes underground out of control.

Stuff the holes with paper. Wrong numbers. Busy signals.

I've tracked you so long now I couldn't tell your hands

if you were to slap me with them.

I put the buildings where I have to (Sun, unborn in the head, pressing.
Out. Word wanting.
Out of the mouth can't break through locked teeth.
Shut mouth.), hear sounds sighs
Turn here!
sense
a silent no
a relict smell.
Supper in the flats is cold. Is wet. A circling bird circles.

All the wires are taut with voices Hello Hello Come in Come in, please Please come in

Broadcast into the night the voice scratching from inside the radio, squirms out, speaks! Please come drifts, is lost. Yes I'm

sure I dialed the right number. No that name does not exist. Voices miss in the dark. Blind fish eyes white vugs squirm past each other in the dark. Wriggle patterns in mud. Untouching.

Names are meaning less real touch. A letter.
Words empty as a city the mind encircles the thing, the lost of it.

...4, 5, 6 April. Walked all night saw no one to talk to. Fall through all the holes, sag into all the soft spots...

I was going to buy you a beer. Tell you how silence can be filled with a circle game and houses sprout up over night, in the blink of an eye, and doors open wide in this game

where there are no buildings no doors.

but when I got back to the bar you were gone

... 7 April. weeds growing. Flowers blooming.

This morning was hell, today is hell. Blocks the line, stops the breathing place, sprawlings between a word You, and I can't feel you. Distance an empty place this place says words are not enough. Hell's a word. Miss Lover is a pronoun.

You can imagine a cliff somewhere in every poem, opens down. Pronouns confuse everything. Twigs. Handholds that give out.

A man can live a whole life in the time it takes for a twig to give out.

Oceans swallow imaginings.

without even trying, swallow the whole city, all the houses.

This makes it possible to walk through an ocean through the streets. The poem's beauty. But

the ocean's here the city's there, and all that's there is the swale of un kissable things.

10. SONNET

Making the lonely passages. Lips stitched shut. A hollow ocean. Destroyer. Stretches past

meat and bone. Fire in the poem does not consume anything but paper. The shores

night shores vanish into it like something wished for. Real fire burns, water chokes a waning man.

But I've been thankful for the rain to cool my face and help me home.

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