

Trinkets  
Mashed  
into a  
Blender



**T i m P e t e r s o n**

# Trinkets Mashed into a Blender



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# The Spinal Vocal Animal

Will the right hand and the alien love hand  
still love each other in echo

Fine, you can leave but leaving a part  
of saddlebags, marred places on me

Anything in frozen speech moves this limb  
to muse or refusal, alternate feet  
broken open, as a tune finds fulfillment  
out of a speaker somewhere. The n'ests  
bed down, as the speakers bed down  
philanthropy my right arm gust of wind

As for imitation,  
I see you move in this light which is no light  
But synthesized music

To bear arms, to  
discuss the options over imported beer  
Steeled teeth against that which is hidden from me

A field, its flowers at my feet,  
Here is an illuminating comment  
Were prices rising or falling, your hair dark or  
bleached? My hemline rising or falling?

Only pretending  
The demolished building falls as the man  
breaks his leg, or the undigested syllable  
coughs out a slight indentation. Coat caught.  
Doorways anticipate a thinktank  
within reason. Within reason my torso  
to be seen or is turning to address your figured glance.

# A Commons

1.

The crabs-in-a-barrel model of artistic involvement  
has reached the apex of its use  
as an individual winds her clock or esophagus

Guttering syllables, the bereft machine in hindsight  
a hydroponic failure, or less. Had a short leash  
on that fringe, those friends gathered in surrogate

Plug in! For metal baubles release the hounds' sight  
I'm talking about a real degenerate public park, yes  
trash strewn around. And someone comes to lift you up

2.

How a commons grows, not a calm rows ascending  
influential diadems, nor knocking the heads off  
statues. Nor nor, a self-reported sadness

In whose hands delighted the surrogates, storm-and-drain  
gatekeepers, pretending to be born? I was  
split from the start, warm opposition with

soft hands. The line forms and we join the  
pejorocracy, to destroy waking pilgrims  
Keep looking forward without ever understanding

Ice cream melts in a float? Felt happiness,  
brittle as silk tongs. What was it joined to, what  
presence cast a ghostly tongue over that song?

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But I meant to say that day at the aquarium was a good  
day, the gift of her leaning into the Los  
Angeles future, heads full of minnows, Don  
Rumsfeld cooked up his schemes alongside  
The penguin keepers had found companions that  
tagged wings, the occasional reef  
up to watch the seals get fed

Lunch was tilted  
into a spittoon of making days want to stand for larger  
things, the electric eel (too frightening), room  
full of radioactive jellyfish (the picture  
intimacy activates false tourist figurine  
you took, jellyfish perched on my forehead)

Then we got into  
a room where executives were searching each other for  
valuables, and a shark's jaw was there you could  
touch the teeth, alien to those latitudes

Was that emerging  
closer to myself, but bounded by no  
memory to staple a potpourri wreath up-  
on? The restaurants looked like old wagon wheels, most  
at home as tourist of the wild west set, not fitting  
into that, bad art in this shop 4th generation Remington  
imitators, they have a nicer library here.

Always  
bombs were gathering at the base, or mess in words accruing  
sometimes too much, as when the Atlantic opens on a  
vista, and I catch my first fish but they take it back (too  
small), the appropriate English word for spite, squall  
tingling like an extinct dinosaur. So this is  
what I organize, virtual, out of my virtue!  
Minnows, skull still humming from a gift received.

starting to feel like a real room  
or would you say that's traditional  
almost typed "toom" then corrected it, Enlightenment  
saner and saner, alligator, bars on windows, nut  
Orpheus turned around and saw  
bungled that too. Orpheus was plugged in  
than you. But it seemed that girls were messing things  
than your mouth. I wanted  
"social change" to attach meanings, although fleeting  
ate Popsicles in winter at the pharmacy  
were phrases "second pair of eyes," "proactive,"  
"on top of things," "move forward with"  
"on op of lop top, pings," "funny to be saunas"  
you did? I'm finding it harder to continue this conversation since  
feet! Why even bother, with all that snow  
like technology? Screws up where you get to move  
twist and the other up-to-the-minute dances. Gee,  
gluttons for techno-enhancement, bud  
apotheosis. I'm writing in my pajamas  
the interface that has kept me from reaching you.

**Since I Moved In**

# A Convalescence

I'm sleeping on a cot that's a very narrow cot.  
There's a slit nearby in the side of the door  
through which they push through a tray each day  
or two. Or sometimes there's no food at all.  
My rhythms are increasing on the biometer they have  
hooked up to my esophagus, and the tall  
bland sill they have ratcheted to my skull  
bleeps occasionally. I am still happy.  
I watch the shapes my hands make in the sun  
that sills in through the bars. There isn't  
much else inside of the room, a bed,  
and three-hundred milligrams of beauty-spread,  
which they tell me I must rub on my hands  
each day. Sometimes I talk to Tom across  
the way, in his cell. He sticks his anemone-like  
hands out through the bars and waves at me.  
I like it when he waves and waves, but he stops  
for a while when they pick his thorax clean  
on Tuesdays and Thursdays during questioning.  
(Sometimes his thorax drips and drips for days.)  
His beauty-spread, green, is thicker than mine.  
It has a latex sheen. The guard comes sometimes  
to take me out for a walk among  
the rock craters in the garden. I ask him  
can Tom come out with us, but he will  
not speak. He gives me five strong jolts  
from his organ when we have run our run twice  
around the course. I like it here,  
overall, like I said. There's lots of sun, and sun.



# Desert Litany

1

Error tourist: thinking that when I come into the city through its dust which is the absence of formal gates, I judge it. This wall here, this house, clay, adobe or fake fiberglass, this man with a golf club following me out of the convenience store waving it over the trunk of my car, dust in one's eyes, this woman here, flipflops a shoulder bag and cell phone, these dirt-caked men in a pickup shouting threats at the last red light, all of us sliding past each other, past, enables me to slide by without contact in each case, no people but behind walls of sealed-in glass or dust into eyes as head turns: *You must be from the east coast.*

2

There are no towns as such: there is one city rising up dressed in its own lights. To think all around its liminal area a desert stretches stresses the freeways, cars in lines grinding their engines. Building out into the landscape — not up, out. At the bank, a woman in line to her daughter: *Everything goes real fast where he comes from. Then they move out here and get a surprise.* She has no teeth, in the mouth, transitional spaces, to find it: *hang a left at the Staples.* I judge it, the disgust of that, past a few dusty adobe churches, Christian vanishing point. I judge it, the refugees dying for lack of water while crossing, the stretch of strip malls here dismal planning, the traffic jams, homeless man staggering over as I step into the car, presses a face against the window. I judge it, dust, no place to gather or walk, cars, cars, trailers other receptacles. The public structure emblazoned with brand names.

3

Judgment and ferment: back home, people don't conjure up this coast mentally, any of its water or cactuses. Physical world firmly in front of them, no *we know what you're like over there in the west.* Meant nothing by it, of course, bringing out the wine-in-a-box for guests, no one lingering on the subject at parties. At every store I bear the stamp of this inability to eat dust and like it. Secret language, however it may materialize in drive-ins and everything accessible by car, road sprawl — weeds overgrowing these communities. The wheel, govern the road, the will, budge the cargo, spin, over the earth no legs, judge me for this, the inability to be where I am.

# Muse

There was a huge wad of cotton in my face  
and I could not get past the value of entertainment.

You were out somewhere beyond it. The frantic  
gestures got translated into mere mumbles

or blackface dumbshows. The words would make  
their effort at meaning through sound, through sheer

flashiness and razzle-dazzle, setting off sparks  
that people would watch from a distance, those signs

lit by some pipelines of power. I had given up  
on recognizing your voice in some particular

fragment on the dashboard radio, and turned  
instead toward home, where a couch would be waiting.

All the time I knew a sock had been missing  
from the drawer in the morning, or something more.

The weather came in from somewhere else. It rained,  
or didn't rain, or clouded over. My judgment

seemed irrelevant. The pavements dried,  
and harsh looks would fade with the onset of

the next fashion. In this way, a point of view  
could be made, a private life, mine. The official

personas were confessing it all. But it made you  
ask who were they? What was here before

this sunset? What brought traffic lights into the sky,  
winking like tiny, coy gods in their mandorlas?

# My Organelles Monitored as a Single Unit

(after Frederick Goddard Tuckerman and Brenda Iijima)

Under crest or tower, replacing what they speak  
with spoken, turn the lid of a jar. Unlike  
monkey mind, your arm comes toward my peripheral  
field of unfolding, the small of my back  
oriented to the sun going down. As robots  
crested that wave across crossing out the signs  
unfold this way" said Heather, the packages confirming  
as last Sunday the deaf ear rose to meet this  
child coming forward, undulant and plain-spoken, "What is the  
everywhere, glances off of dualist coffee mug or  
concrete (what variety), proprietors fear this spot of rust.

*O let them be left, wildness and wet*  
pitched forth onto a layer of thin green blades  
as operational the romantic self splitting  
a little afraid of him" but more a salad shooter for  
situations elsewhere, at other times, in paint  
or intaglio. That's how in the future rust will  
bloom, your words coalesce like gnats obscuring streetlamp  
strains against plastic cable running down the length of  
ambient noise. Those same puritans  
pounding hamfisted on the doors again, after the game.

The house I retire to has lyric but no private words  
as an oxygen molecule breathed by George Washington moves through  
figure of desire replaced by hierarchical  
minibike or weed-wacker. What then, box hedge, what  
then, new car smell? Funeral attendants  
move homeward, in looking toward this overturning. People  
who can trust the state and digest euphemism?  
Blood rushing through vesicles, they apprehend the rust,  
which is part of me. The fir on the corner, the curl  
of the crest in bone, or sound of the uncut  
grass. Who refuses to mow that.

The line forms here; show us your badge, we need to check  
these things before we let you into the galvanized  
observatory of culture. Shapes of ancient women on the  
ceiling; the goddess over there reminds you of  
someone's mother. She used to have dinner on the table every  
night, but shatter her into atomic components and  
she didn't mean to do it, wedged into aprons and kitchens, her

will, long standing, collapses into nothing;

the constellations are really just a collection of dots you  
whisper to me across the aisle, they have no body but  
someone made them. I'm taking off my hat my hair  
tousles in the breeze blowing from a vent somewhere a  
figure bending into a posture of labor, a  
figure who chooses and thinks and breathes. What  
it says could be insight, what it says could be wrong, but in  
speaking the perimeter — "chalk outline," you whisper

In the Observatory, All Stars Will be Labeled and Shelved

# Linda Prepares to Shop for a New Xbox

The face, when turned at the right angle, becomes credit  
drenching up a system out of clouds. The barometer  
in my throat sinks I dilate the noon begonias.  
No pansies in the pansies, but I had that other joke

Who will collect your lover from the floor of his cheesy  
compartments in which we all hunker?  
There was no system, really. There were philistines  
gumming up the impulse for miles

No tower, no all-seeing eye, no structure  
starting from the absence, of which we should rebel against  
hides itself beneath multicolored floral drapes  
and the more I talk the more I contradict this vision-thing

Ordinary people, not ordinary, but hiking manuals  
as the liberal literary east missed out on new

money grassroots liberation army — the sun keeps  
rising, it has to. Your postmodern hat

passing by she said “what’s that?”) is over the  
mortgage due upon ground of induced pampered gloss  
My fury is to be stapled inside your sleeve  
donning ochre clothing well after sunset

Lichens are arriving the prospects dimming  
I am influenced by this concrete bench  
I will create the new world. Digest premiums,  
reversal of jewelers’ lingo with unprecedented fervor

If the lyric is in the plural  
Cashmere sweaters grow enormous hands catching breath  
Old containers sweat their mold in large blooms  
Anchors sigh as the sea floor hits them, rising.

## Popular Fronts

You're the top, you're a pillar of the community, you're the top, you're faking it along the way, throwing it together. You're inching forward on a plank two inches wide over a pit of snarling gators, slightly perturbed but shot through with spotlights from the big top you're the gators in the pit, tough hide hid scars, you are many and the spines on your back your long stubby tail you're the top, you're the Louvre Museum you're the Tower of London you're Nelson on the top of Trafalgar square Trajan's column you're the painted woman, Roman, on the wall of a villa, you're the mother who brings her kids lemonade and a little plate of chocolate-chip cookies, you're the top, you're diet cola you're the magazine racks at the store, multiple but unified in a general drone, highly-colored, containing unusual advertisements and distracting me from what I was saying multiple, changeable top you're the child spinning in the yard, plaintively living out the hours in a reddening day you're Garbo's salary you're a stingray you're diagonally



stretched by the power grid, now in focus, now distorted I like you that way the tap-dancing monkey on the street, the angel-hair pasta on my dinner plate.

## Window Dressing

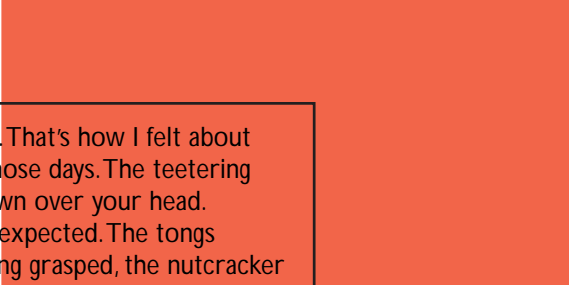
I'm sorry some morning you  
know that I was watching  
but your drowsy eyes opened  
on a field of jupiter's beard there  
lay a boy with wrinkled cap pulled  
over his head and he won't forget  
the shadows of mournful birds  
turned  
the flies bit and we'll fight off these  
scavengers forever the spilled  
contents  
of the house across the lawn  
was getting too high and on the  
weekends

I wonder if we should have stopped  
the parking garage that's going up  
towers over the block & we enter  
them  
just to see what will become of us let's  
think about the future several moves  
ahead when the flush is suddenly  
revealed  
in the face we spent the entire night

copying the picture but it was getting dark  
and all the museum guards wanted to go home  
to take a load off don't you  
want to lie down sometimes or lie  
all the time in a single spot in time there  
was a moment to which I could look  
back we had a terrific  
thing going a house of our own  
was the bottom line and a big yard  
sale would be nice too we held the bags  
of fruit on the scales we watched  
the shopping cart that carried a roll  
of curtains for the living room living



# The Pleasure of Arriving



Familiar yet strange. That's how I felt about so many things in those days. The teetering grapevines hung down over your head. Everything went as expected. The tongs bit down on the thing grasped, the nutcracker dug into the nut's flesh, the thinktank people hit the nail on the head. Even then.

Call me ridiculous, but I know that wherever  
vellum can be found, one also finds magnesium.  
Rolling along on backstreets, the pirates  
were sighing with so much work to be done,  
gallantly, in true pirate-style. The pages were  
cut in just the right places to be charming, a scrap  
juttet picturesquely out of the sideboard like  
effervescent music overflowing its boundaries,  
yearning for its big break.

The clock says  
the idea of sleep will cause a revolution  
right at the turn of the second hand into night.  
Everyone will be stoical about it. Clocks,  
never appreciated, will hang limply over  
any objects nearby. It will be a feat  
just to remember what you did this morning.

Yes. I'm sorry. Is that correct? My hands  
will grow to the size of cubicles and then  
badly critical of what you had to say, I shall rise  
with kinetic vigor I shall leave the table where  
uncovered innards of the last knowledge could  
be found largely inadequate. I wonder about.

I wonder. That's a fine hat, the one with the mounted  
effigy of our own mayor, that outlandish  
effervescent behavior of the dials and groves,  
grasping the light and being just a little too forward.

---

Regulation has its purpose. I hate the clock,  
dragging up these old injuries, as in a skating rink  
unfortunately, where teetering couples whoosh by  
completely engrossed in the act itself. And may  
usurpation be the only stoical selection  
in the vending machine? Say no more,  
for when we see the innards you shall know a  
great deal more than you do now. One hates  
showing pirates how this process works, yet  
how else can we form these alliances? A scrap  
gets things going for a while, but doesn't last.

Even the boundaries were drawn up temporarily.

Good news: the one who bathed you as a child  
tells me that the Nutcracker plays in the theater  
just now, and then again, and then  
unendingly like a vending machine that spits  
volumes of garbled tickertape out. And so  
very good as our synopsis may be, the grooves  
on the record may be different the next spin round.

## Toy

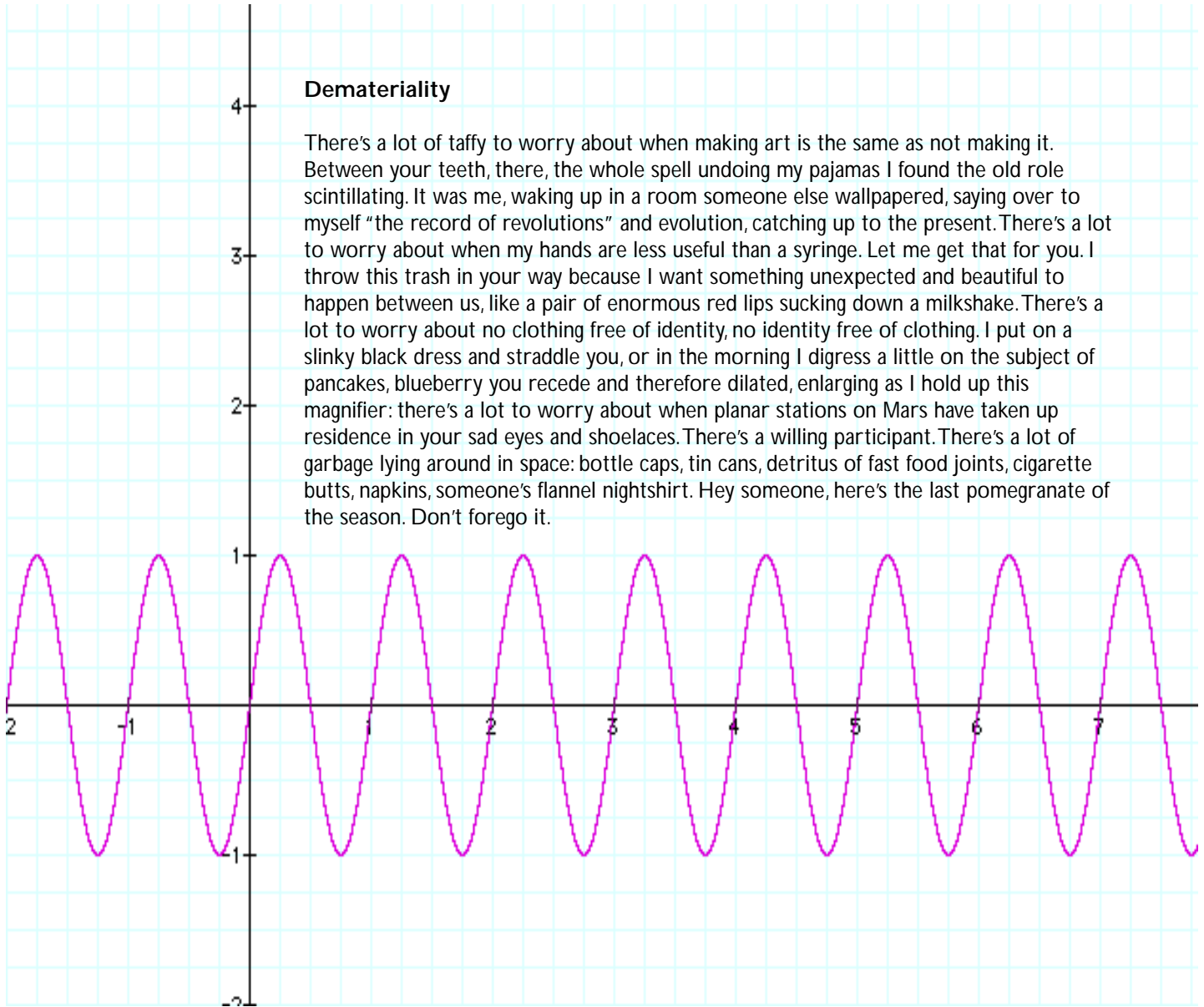
Darling, come here. I need to show you some  
new gadget that will change your life, and give  
you hours of enjoyment. Press that button there,  
turning the pattern inside-out before  
you get too bored to give a damn about  
what will happen next. Trust me here,  
if you are titillated by the sight  
of prison bars, then I am too. I guess  
we're stuck together, me and you. Doesn't  
it look like we could not be torn apart  
unless someone took a saw and lopped off  
my reasons for waiting in this corridor,  
shifting from foot to foot, like a windup  
gadget that dances grotesquely when you turn  
on the jukebox? People stampede just  
to be the first in line to press your buttons.  
Me, I would rather take it in my hand,  
the pattern, before something disastrous  
happens. You & friends will come home from bars,  
exclaiming just a little too roughly, how  
cold it is, and how it made your day  
just to see a woman smile across  
the room at you, before she brought her hand  
up with the pert middle finger extended.

# D ickey's D ocument

Dickey opened a new document.  
He was unsure, afraid of his crannies falling open.  
The document was worn and showed snares of moldy twigs in the basin.  
Any twigs are Godly. We apply morals,  
we remove them. Dickey wanted to smile at paint.  
Footstool is just high enough for the lowest self-help straniere  
hoops in her ears. She wondered  
so many lariats were piled on it it looked wan or fair, not  
placated yet. She thought to write he spoke that  
gummy scientists were whores to politico  
She said he (who was she) was said and not beaten  
fed to the teeth. Dickey wanted a New Deal.  
She banged around in bushes for a while with a stick, kids  
Running by outside. She tucked in the thicket  
Gummy roses, gummy urns, protesting the scientists  
has evolved from a new world order  
"Separateness is danger  
especially if you want to get matching rugs, or kids"

## Demateriality

There's a lot of taffy to worry about when making art is the same as not making it. Between your teeth, there, the whole spell undoing my pajamas I found the old role scintillating. It was me, waking up in a room someone else wallpapered, saying over to myself "the record of revolutions" and evolution, catching up to the present. There's a lot to worry about when my hands are less useful than a syringe. Let me get that for you. I throw this trash in your way because I want something unexpected and beautiful to happen between us, like a pair of enormous red lips sucking down a milkshake. There's a lot to worry about no clothing free of identity, no identity free of clothing. I put on a slinky black dress and straddle you, or in the morning I digress a little on the subject of pancakes, blueberry you recede and therefore dilated, enlarging as I hold up this magnifier: there's a lot to worry about when planar stations on Mars have taken up residence in your sad eyes and shoelaces. There's a willing participant. There's a lot of garbage lying around in space: bottle caps, tin cans, detritus of fast food joints, cigarette butts, napkins, someone's flannel nightshirt. Hey someone, here's the last pomegranate of the season. Don't forego it.



# The Gastropod Diaries

This is the day I woke up & realized I was a dull wind.  
A small shell sinking slowly in sand, shrill cry of a gull, no sails.

Bucks, they had all them pants with rayon and sweated trim  
Sides of the craft were painted blue with illustrated

Bargains at the flea market. The crabs implored me to sign their  
"no carbs diet" petition. Who else couldn't sell their enervation

in artichoke reports, I slithered along with the juicy bourgeois  
acclimated to anything silent and pristine, demigod-like men who spoke in tongue

The appropriate noise was "squelch."  
The softies engineered a small gulag in the tropic hills.

A pound for each shell I shed the obnoxious buyer couldn't  
Oh so attractive! As the calm eyed the weak for their tender sternums.

The cars had all scattered, but one could find a meter  
jutting out into the street. Or a jury  
benching more than was advisable, or even

trinkets mashed into a blender. These things  
were all I could grab onto in the imperfect  
world that I saw. Resonances strutted

their stuff downtown among boardwalks and the concrete,  
showing off the newest and least gaudy  
revolutions in taste or of the record,

which, for the record, became a tickertape  
that analogically disintegrated into  
a million dots like stars, spread out

as far as I could see. Close calls  
unfolded, particularly on the busier thoroughfares  
where things whooshed by on the way to becoming other

things, via the Doppler effect, the raising  
and lowering of stock in a varying current  
in which there was always exchange across

this distance. Do you see what I'm getting at  
in the trees? Pardon my presumptuous gesture,  
but this is how it was. The clothespins held

up the clothes on the line, but this indicated  
also the occupant's lack of money, the panties  
out in the air flaunted the diminutive body,

the urge to be some body. Felicity,  
while sort of exciting, was not my cup of anything.  
Surely you can take me where I want to go.

I don't know, surprise me. I figures, hardly  
had I begun to speak when you hailed a cab and got in,  
disappearing into the concrete once again —

The dregs of the coffee, surely.



**The Obsolete**



I could see you sitting in a library somewhere  
laid back like this, one hand up on a statue.  
Why would your mouth be that shape, I'd wonder.  
Why would the ceiling show cracks, your dusty albums  
piled in a corner? Admiring looks  
will come, the splashing of mercurial designs  
in through the skylight. I would be there too,  
in time. Your portrait shines at the end of a hall.  
I'd think of this time as razors skim  
across a skin of barbasol, leaving all  
spotless. I would tip the scales till they flashed  
their signal. Then, one hopes, the snapshots  
of shaky hands would come into focus, or dimes  
would finally get picked up from the road  
and put in protective coverings. Everyone  
would stand in the entrance hall, waiting to hang  
umbrellas in any closet they could find.  
Everyone would hear you for miles around  
like I do. That the boat might plow through water,  
and we, anonymous passengers, feel the spray.

## Impetus



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