



# STRIATIONS

GEORGE-THERESE  
DICKENSON

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George-Thérèse Dickenson

THE GOOD GAY POETS

Boston, 1976

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## THE SPACE BETWEEN

i draw my filmy curtain over cleansed glass  
crystalline window for crystalline day my mother  
had a linoleum table it was white  
it had comers at right angles  
it had comers sharpened like a knife  
i draw my curtain it is grey  
to battle the white it is grey  
to hide from the comers it sags  
in hollow lumps or caves it hangs  
lumps or caves of grey  
grey the color of my babysitter's hair  
my mother's hair was black she was long and etched  
with comers and comers and white  
clear sun tennis courts ski slopes  
outside my window the winter  
has placed a white linoleum table  
and begs me to look  
it has set the sun above it  
the lightbulb in her kitchen  
it hangs precisely in the center  
and sprays light

(feb: 73

## COMFORT OF THE SKIN

Once again i let tatters of cold air  
flutter against my cheeks.  
Removing one glove  
i hold my hand out  
and open-palmed  
mid flurries of snow.

It is 11 months since the first lie;  
It is three weeks since the last;  
Most of the time you are forgotten,  
memories abandoned for writing  
and work,  
*Courbet's Le Sommeil* hidden  
under files  
and notes, rarely used.

But there are times  
when dusk gathers the remaining light of day  
or when dawn calls the night  
that i hear your breathing  
quicken  
and see your eyes before me  
behind the next shadow  
opalescing  
or in front of me you are standing  
with a drink in yr hand  
and pelvis open.

Sometimes i drop my valise  
to follow;  
but it only crackles the icy ground  
and i am left  
open-palmed  
and staring  
at the rising night  
or the morning as she enters in your stead.

.It is another lie, Suive.  
It is an empty Lalique vase.  
An etching of breasts touching  
in the dark translucence  
of glass

(dec: 74

marionettes  
poise themselves  
on the lake that shimmers  
with musical instruments      they wait    in the red  
         silhouettes       /black

in the country  
a woman has left her lover and waits  
dreaming of knowledge and exploration  
she remembers kindness  
gentle fingers in lips  
cool of water and soft moss  
hard labor glistening sweat  
daily rituals of body and emotions  
that finally collapse into boredom.

in the city  
a woman dreams of bodies and emotion  
of tattoos and little gold earrings  
of letting and licking the blood  
of those she loves  
yet, instead, she reads Plato  
and curses  
stares at walls and bolts the doors

they make a tape of themselves  
w/saxophones & poetry  
they make love to it  
but outside steam still rises from concrete  
it is still /the city  
and no green exists  
when their mouths separate  
they are once again distant  
almost cruel,  
they can explore but the intellect cannot be kind

in the city/in the country  
a woman has left her lover and waits  
with thoughts of contradictions and synthesis  
with dreams of buying drums to recapture the past  
                rhythms of lust  
to bring the mind back to the body  
       to bring the body back  
to no longer delineate boundaries  
to no longer distinguish one from the other  
to no longer sacrifice

in the country  
when the cover of dusk is torn to reveal the night  
she will see marionettes  
that play to those below the water  
in the corners of the cities  
she will see a shadow  
behind the shadow a door  
behind the door  
a lake  
on the lake three marionettes

(june: 74



## THE SPACE BETWEEN

distances  
the Pacific Ocean  
cars on Grant St.  
bus stop at Castro  
a woman with henna hair descends the steps  
and moves to the park

saxophone notes rise on air

distances  
the Atlantic Ocean  
Charles St.  
lights that never waver  
snow that turns on its side  
gulls that circle out of season

you come to me in distances  
lips on a mouthpiece  
notes travelling  
to break silence of gull's circle  
to break stillness of light's glare

between the welling of the wave  
and its crest

distance  
water wells in the breast

mouth moves to tell  
fingers reach to touch keys  
but the music received  
becomes a terrible song heard in sleep  
a shrieking of cats in the alley  
screeching of gulls  
a long scratch of wind against wall  
light falls

from dreams  
i throw little red foxes over buildings  
i climb stone mountains in the desert  
the subway tunnel has no stairway  
my voice has no sound  
but my body  
sends waves on the ocean screaming backwards  
riptide

rip in the side of yr breast  
rip in my heart  
distances

(feb: 75

## TWILIGHT VEILING

we are lost in the relics  
of what once was  
or seemed  
a way out

floor scattered  
with make-up  
men's silken dresses  
ladies' top-hats

fade in mornings light  
blur with the fix  
in the sink  
memories of satin  
sheets  
and passion's heat  
drug-dulled

we feel that the earth is rising  
without us  
who can no longer even dream  
it is not sleep  
that holds us  
nothing so deep

rather it is  
boredom's veneer  
the uncommitted air of dusk

excitement ebbs  
to lassitude  
you spend all day  
reading science fiction  
and drinking in bed

a political move, desire,  
we had said fleeing into the night  
to wake here

in the trappings of  
the other side  
lost

(feb: 75

FOR DOUGLAS, DRAWING

a love  
his form outlined  
in ice and snow  
Thanatos

we cry for possession  
equality no longer exists  
.the myth is unveiled.

delicately  
you freeze little parts  
of those men

in the distance  
the howling of the subway  
and the creaking of the stars  
outside your door  
merge into one

.and another myth is unveiled.

as men nonchalantly  
stroll the park  
night  
inside the bushes    mad  
a cock  
two voluptuous and craving  
    lips  
(the creaking of the stars)

he who insists  
competition produces  
the most substantial

Art

(how many in one night can be bowed?)  
in the grasses  
forbids hands above waist  
forces another, willing, to his knees  
    thrusts            (rigid, instant, explosion)  
    straightens his shirt  
and emerges in the dark

Echolalia  
noises from the monastery  
noises from the constitution  
noises from our fathers  
even the bushes utter these noises

until you think purity  
exists  
only in that which cannot speak  
Thanatos

and your vision  
of tranquility becomes  
the integrity of a lover  
preserved in ice

silent pen etches  
    still life relief.

like Sade searching  
for the absolute negation  
as the only truth  
(you say Eros always lies)  
with dispassion  
you try to side step  
the lie.  
slow meticulous calculation  
places those bodies on paper

the house must be kept cold  
but on the doors  
wings are struggling  
against their pinnings  
and another sort of creaking  
is heard

(feb: 74

## BEFORE ASSASSIN, HORSES

Photograph two women nude  
in the covers    cat chasing cellophane  
a sky drinks magnolias under exposed pipes  
finds them under flesh

listen to the ocean lathes beyond hill  
of petrified bone  
    lose yourself  
        in streets      moondrawn to the breast  
no metaphor here  
    only real water  
        beating the cliffs    white  
with sun    light in the tortured air

even shellfish there    lust for seasalt  
in the gloved hands of migratory violins

we take what we can  
in the moment between the welling  
and the crush  
of water  
    on sand

find lateen sail in volcanic ore  
the colorwash amber  
the arsonist of breakwater

outside hooves pound on the street  
geometric forms are drawn with precision  
on doors  
it is the time of the piercing of the feet  
and the stain of snow on tropical floors

again and again the same rings are cast  
sommambulists dulled to submission  
shut their own longing in  
to perfect shapes

knots of hunger growing predatory eating  
themselves eating any  
thing in sight behind backs of  
formula sentences allow entrance  
formal manners

will seat you  
the proper mind & the denial of magic

but what ancient life finds itself again with two women  
in the transcendent sheets of this bed?  
what lost sun trajects light to tongue  
through fernweb  
in the space of your legs  
place of gazelle with harp eyes?  
what song will stay the hooves of the horses?  
what liquid dissolve the iron ring  
when clenched so tightly in fist?  
listen between the sheets  
when women speak quasar tongues  
and men  
find softness in their own image

photograph two women nude  
in the covers cat chasing cellophane  
flesh drinks magnolias  
with the terrible joy of  
mind drinks magnolias  
with the terrible joy of  
the body transmitting  
the hand creating

(jan: 76

## POEM

when will we hear the long calling  
disguised now  
hidden or drowned out  
by whirr of factory belt  
shuffle of paper  
endless procession of image  
from welfare line,  
Max Factor  
to cosmic consciousness  
sold on supermarket shelves

where the ghosts and gods  
of the whirling winds  
and oceans whipping?

where the low moan and soft breathing  
edges of eyes  
and shores never ceasing to amaze?

the human will isolated monadic  
is not enough

where the female form  
and unicorn?  
where the poem  
rising from a darkness  
that is no darkness?

the human will isolated monadic  
is not enough

the human will abstracted  
brought us here to this silence  
created economics based on labor  
not our own  
on sexual impulse  
not our own  
the quick fuck and the quick buck  
endless procession of image

particles  
particulars  
demand correspondence  
not the endless imitation  
of fragments  
called life  
by men  
with bloated bellies  
lips greyed  
wielding what power  
run by what other  
machine  
turns their switches  
on and on?

how much do the hand  
and the bolt on the belt  
co-respond?  
how much the rigid cock  
and dry cunt?  
how much the host in the priest's finger  
and the tongue extended?

how much these acts mimic  
the real  
and in mimicry mock

how much the starlet long dead  
and the man mascara'd to match?  
how much Mother Goose Mary  
and the child in city street?  
how much Skinner's empty box  
and any human breathing?

things demand co-  
respondence  
not imitation

how much the elm and poplar  
and dead nature  
/philosophes' triumph?  
how much the black seal  
infant on Alaska's ice  
and the coat on your back  
/Magnin's glory?  
how much the caterpillar in chrysalis  
butterfly spinning to flight  
and Darwin's evolution?

how much longer  
can this abstraction  
false imitation  
sustain itself?

beyond these theories

mocked-up  
laid out on white pages

things demand . . .

real objects  
and real people  
have real needs

call it desire

creative labor  
and creative sex  
the spirit in its wholeness must be sensed  
call it intimacy

call to the earth  
but don't wait for an answer  
familiar to your ear

the human will isolated monadic  
is not enough

(feb: 75

LIBRARY POEM  
BECAUSE I WASN'T ON A SUBWAY

*for Marie-Hélène Gold*

i'm in the library  
i want to write a subway poem  
i look for something to write about  
across from me a student  
is reading *The Church Fathers*  
her legs are spread apart, but  
i can't write about her thighs because  
i can't see them

she's not on a bench  
it's not the subway  
she's behind a table  
it's the library

i look at the card catalogue  
goddamned library doesn't have any books  
i phone my professor  
his wife answers in French  
sexiest voice i've heard in months  
i give her 5 different messages  
so i can listen to her accent  
a little longer  
i put on my sunglasses  
and pretend i'm in Paris  
and have just met a beautiful woman  
and am arranging to meet her  
in a dark flat on the left bank  
i'm on the 8th message  
when a voice breaks in over the loudspeaker:  
"Attention please. Boston Public Library  
will close for an hour. Everyone exit  
through the main entrance as quickly  
as possible."  
florescent lights flash

i'm not in Paris  
even w/sunglasses and glittery fingernails, i'm  
not talking to a French lesbian  
i'm in America and  
she's a professor's wife and  
she's straight  
and some guy bored with the TV show  
he was watching phoned in a bomb threat and  
now i'll probably never get a chance to talk  
to her again

i'm on my way out  
when i see a copy of Tristan Tzara's poems  
and i'm stuffing it in my pants  
when a librarian asks me  
what i'm doing  
and i say,  
"i'm protecting this book from the bomb"

& now  
i'm not even  
in the library anymore  
i'm in a pseudo French restaurant  
eating salty onion soup w/stringy cheese &  
the woman across from me  
won't talk about anything  
except Marx &  
she's from Southie &  
i keep thinking she's saying  
"Max"

& i think of Max's Kansas City  
& then she says something like,  
"The reified consciousness of the commodity fetish" &  
how can i dream of Max's  
w/that kind of bullshit?

& then  
"The Industrial Proletariat"  
& i think of chariot  
a gold chariot filled w/blue fetishes!

but that's  
not what she means &  
i think i'd  
better split  
cause  
no one understands  
me today  
          anyway there's a bookstore  
right around the corner  
w/  
no mirrors  
&  
no cameras  
&  
no librarian       watching  
what i  
put in my pants

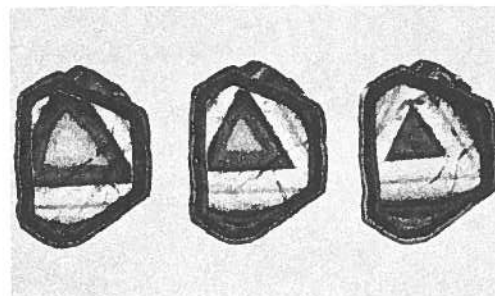
(mar: 75

## STRIATIONS

the corners of the triangles  
must begin at the proper stones  
and they must lay their bodies  
together on silver sheets  
so the place where they meet  
glows red  
in six burning points  
renewing life  
in the consuming flame  
of synthetic fires



*"that the Presence be always with us."*  
The Zohar



LETTER 2/11/74

Before dying  
Charles Olson leans against a pole  
folds a cape, grey /grabs  
lifts his head, mammoth, /and stares  
over his death

Malanga reduces it /everything  
to emptiness  
and silence  
Not finding himself in the mirror  
he turns the camera  
on his body nude and hardening  
in the sunlight  
between Olson dying  
and Weiners shaving

*from*

WE HAD STORIES FOR OUR CHILDREN

I

*for Bud Lawrence*

driving in a red car

Tolstoy told stories  
of simplicity  
of single objects  
and the children

the story was only the effort  
to make real again  
the object  
the word has meanings  
attached to it as the doll  
defined by circumstance  
defined by use

in play  
apple becomes apple  
as opposed to that on the shelf  
consumed with no thought  
while pacing the aisles

III

in the cities glut of appearance  
image in lieu of object  
so we go back to the rural again

.yet the scene's the same  
as yesterday  
only with a new face.

death in the rock  
or death in the television  
we have fixed our gaze  
refusing to see

the snake losing its tail  
screams in pain  
as rock is wrenched  
from its breast

rock is egg  
(stone which causes the moon to turn  
face to face with the sun  
yielding

gold

when we also are willing  
are each sun and moon  
are each what have been called  
"male" and "female"  
together  
causing all things to turn

stone which is not a stone  
as nothing is only as we define it  
or bind it to the page

rock is egg.  
yet in urban or rural it  
no longer matters;  
we call it only rock,  
and in the calling,  
attempt to keep it there.

#### IV

*"Everything is a portion of everything."*  
Anaxagoras

beyond circumstance  
and beyond use  
apple is still apple

but in the seed  
carried in wind  
or burrowing into ground  
the play of children  
and doll to be carved  
already exist

the story

in determining the limits  
we approach desire

VIII

place the foot in the blue shadow  
 where something has left the snow  
 place the ear and hear  
 the hard singing  
     in the depths of the stone  
 bound  
 as it is not to deny love  
 but here, in *this* bar,  
 my words in your breast  
 are not yet notes  
 of lovers  
     in the stone  
 singing

(feb: 71

VII

*for Chico*

(the table is no more real  
     than poetry  
 and should not be listened to  
     longer)  
 when we hear the rock sing  
  
 self becoming conscious of song  
 is no cheap shot  
     of a weaker mind  
  
 we make the skin speak

MICHAEL

early cold morning  
gathering sticks for the firepit  
breaking sticks  
redwood bark  
crackling under booted foot

early cold morning  
you play with the fire  
nursing twigs  
tenderly  
till crisp air flows

and giant logs ignite

(feb: 71

ANYA

when you leave  
i look to the ocean tells me nothing  
the word itself barren  
lost in loins under a red blanket  
in another city

what largesse  
moved us once to lift our legs  
heavy from such deep burial  
to another's lips?  
what smallness left them there  
to bind us, even now?

voice of the sea  
pine still on the dark corner  
where you turned into the bar

.a common gesture.  
mannered movement meaning  
nothing as i lay  
in bed  
this hunger

(jan: 76

POEM

*for will*

I

birds with iron wings  
hover in my breasts  
the room fills with sand  
a maze of grey dunes  
there is no map to the door  
no map of my body to give you

only gulf of colorless rock

fills with blank voices  
tin laughter rings  
in riverbeds of stone  
barren cliffs  
watch torn hips  
that cannot speak  
and will not bleed

my body is on the edge  
of a sea with no water  
spirit on another side

i carve runes on my walls  
try to cross this desert  
on their backs

i give you glyphs  
would touch of thighs  
destroy them,  
binding forever  
to arid landscapes  
of body?

a wave sticks to the page  
a vehicle for salty water  
but can poems themselves  
bring water from air  
and be the sheets  
from which you and i rise?

or do they too wait  
for the knock on the real door  
the real beach  
on which two lovers  
lay  
listening to blue tides  
silver waters  
in the heart  
in the mind  
finding  
itself  
in the body?

II

from flesh  
some aching won't be ignored  
blossoming inside hands  
/makes them shake  
rushing of water in breasts  
/makes them swell  
the body wants something  
knows . . .

"it is all an illusion  
there are no birds in the body to wing beyond skin  
no welling waters  
no plants to shoot tendrils to stars  
or texts of lunar truths

holding tailfeathers  
you will end speechless  
end mindless

forgetting

glyphs  
symbols  
dreams

spiraling downward  
a hollow form  
to dunes''

this cannot be a map of the body  
but a journal of desert  
fears  
that ascend from shadows of stone  
to guard the gulf

the body itself speaks  
over this

its own language  
its own laws  
tell  
that in separation  
birds die in flesh  
thoughts die in mind

III

with glyphs we attempt  
with runes  
and thighs that won't be denied  
across the ravine  
tongues spin dreams  
opening ocean legs  
to spill aerial blood  
formless tyrian colors  
dissolving  
with the peacock's scream  
tail unfurling

in the flaming vase  
all colors  
spring

mad ancient women lick celestial bloods  
children speak in tongues wildly  
travertine rivers  
explode in caverns  
angels let loose their hair  
in streams of silver song  
of nightingale  
cups flare to ruby eggs  
break to soaring feathers

i am coming to you  
destroyer of the desert  
in a holocaust i am coming  
with hair burning moon's fire  
i am coming

i am crossing the formless    aerial    bridge

(feb/mar: 75  
sept: 76



## SIMULTANEITY

*for Bud Lawrence  
Tinker Greene  
Erica Hunt*

### I

in that we see it all  
    bread rising on the sill  
    your conversation in twilight

no accident  
    that the moon was rising  
    at just that moment  
accidents? incidents

    fall  
    into place  
infinite points of intersection  
the space

flow  
and subtle twist  
    line of sunset becomes  
the line of your thoughts  
and the Chinese coat on your back  
    finds itself  
    draped  
on the armchair of the poem

### II

the poet leaves you  
with a few pennies on the table  
you must find your own  
    patterns movement of the hands  
    on the keys  
    notes of the tongue  
    the mind

take this keyboard right in front of your eyes  
    the crab on the front cover  
suspends itself  
    in the lazy motion of stars

at times it's frightening - "inanimate" objects  
scattering in the periphery of vision  
    glasses of liquor left on the table  
    book  
    pen & yr rhinestone bracelet  
seem to shift of their own will  
mirror the movement of land

    flow  
cortex loom

so we choose not to see  
what has not been seen before

III

CENTRAL HEATING

single flame in the room frozen black  
single candle or corposant in the sea's glacier winds  
there is only one point  
    where you can strip off your shirt

Lashley says he's too straightfaced  
    can't find the heat  
    with that tension  
    that holds the lips  
    here  
in constant focus  
    blind at the flame's center  
cold in the belly

where is the heat?  
and who seeds the ice?  
    narrowing vision

scared to transgress the flame's limits  
and lose the little  
    we have  
we close our bodies tighter  
    eyelids pulled taut

in constant control  
blind

we fear the sea's thousand voices  
    languages  
    incomprehensible  
    (splinters of rain gather in a dark room  
    taboo colors form in a naked child's  
    pocket a stranger  
draws diagrams on moss  
    and reads them to the stars

there is only one point  
and a million rules to keep us  
    in weakness and shame  
        we search  
    with borrowed eyes  
for point of rest

name the seed  
    the sky the wind  
name the savage the pagan  
when they do not answer  
    raise arms  
the sword that severs the ties  
    tightens  
the cloth that blinds

searching for safety  
    describe a circle of ice  
call it a flame but it cannot  
    stop the seed  
    grows  
waves  
    burnish the shores  
    cracking the lips

#### IV

we don't use a woodstove  
 Lawrence says - unsafe to burn wood  
 if you've oil in the house  
   a downdraft  
     sends flames  
       to the oil of the lamp  
 that lights the page  
 sparking a vortex from a bed of hidden triangles  
   and shadow play on tin roofs

in the proper heat  
 even the basest of metals  
 fuses with some wish in our eye  
 that we cannot see  
 but bring to the page  
   bearing torches  
   and kindling  
     torn  
   from the mast

unconsciously  
   we wrench rusty nails  
   from cordage stakes  
 and  
   terrified  
 fall from the deck

\*\*\*

but the screaming  
   as the fire  
     draws us  
 down

becomes  
   the sight  
   of the world  
   balanced

neither drowning  
   nor destroyed  
 by faces at the bottom  
   a new center whirls outward  
   holding its form  
     fluid  
   hearing the voices  
 child sound   bear sound  
   wind sound  
 song of all things  
   echoing  
 your scream echoes in the wings of the vortex  
   transformed

unbound  
   see the fears  
     in your own body  
     tensing the lips  
 see the destruction of the earth  
   in your own  
   breath  
 comes harder now  
 hold your lover  
   as you hold your land  
 you cannot hear her words  
   where

          the tender touch on the neck?  
 you have tossed the ball  
   in the rebound  
   strikes  
 you  
     in the kidneys

separate only in your mind

you still affect  
   all things  
     come back      on you  
 rings radiate from a stone thrown  
 seatide foams

in separation  
the cliff falls  
away  
and you grab for the branch  
that you cannot see

it is there in the downdraft  
right before your eyes but the song  
dissolves  
in the hand  
that binds

\*\*\*

blind to trails  
left by fingers on metal or air  
paths carved by breath even to the sky's  
night bed  
linking lip to lip

rivers etch imprints in stone  
in the human bone  
the map identical

and water wends its way home  
from Calcutta or Tangiers  
eroding the earth under our American feet

see the shift in the soil  
see your own words igniting  
air to fire  
melting to earth  
feeding  
the phoenix  
in the mindgroin  
fusing

## VI

from your hand a tiny spark  
caught in a draft  
frightens the basement  
a jar cracks under flameweight  
a small caught in a downdraft  
finds itself looking down  
at the children  
around the stove kneading  
bread  
finds itself climbing the rungs upward

the secret to every story  
the twist

in the poolcue strikes the ball  
in the heart  
in the "Cozy Nook" threads come back  
the ball finds the edge of the table  
a year later the dead geraniums are still  
there  
in the rebound  
move  
to where we are now

VII

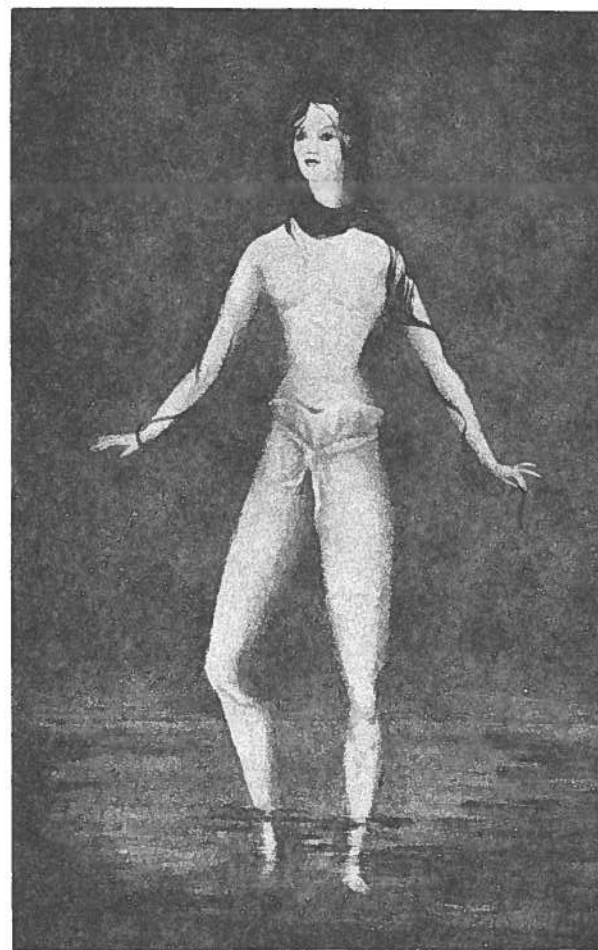
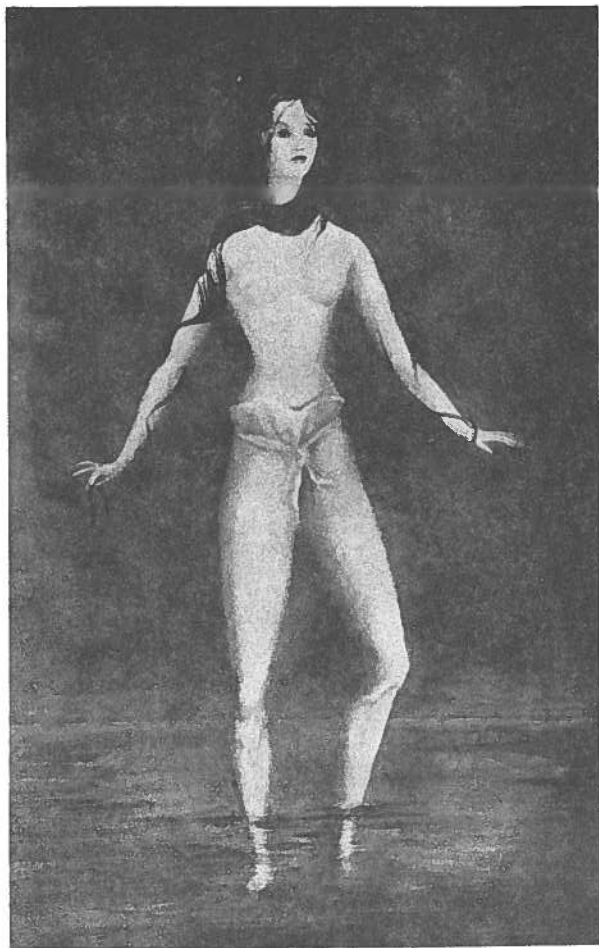
not fearing the fire  
follow the tracks of a downdraft  
the rhythm of veins beating  
eye opening  
becomes the eye of the wind  
the bear  
ear of the harp singing  
seeds flight  
this table sings  
when you strike the right keys

even when you're not looking  
the ball finds the heart  
threads come back  
and waves  
burnish shores  
cracking the lips

(oct: 75  
july/aug: 76

*from*  
COMBAT ZONE POEMS

for  
leonore fini  
max ernst  
and  
especially  
for  
all the women who dance



LEONORE FINI, "Argonaute," 1936

POEM FOR WOMEN DANCERS

i see them here on the snow  
red ostrich feathers and high  
heels in the ice

i see them in the bar dreaming  
red dreams  
of a land of ivory

their heels would click on glass  
and they would strip to the pigeons  
lost in the drifts

## BOSTON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

but eyes veiled      not quite focused  
as i bend and spin on stage  
looking through or beyond      hungry  
looking  
for the live explosion

the dark bar  
the hollow in the throat      something  
holds on



## FOR MADÉ, DANCING

she is a eucalyptus tree  
red necklace of starving jewels  
she never said - come -  
old man of midnight diners

watch as the dancer  
raises her arms her smile  
burns a brand no further  
than her own palms

on stage she turns  
see how the flesh withers in the lights  
how the mirror scores  
as she spreads her legs

## RUDY

even in this bar  
positioning newspaper on lap  
you are still  
in yr small grey rooms photographs  
in jars

alone  
dressing the image to the size of  
the bed the throat  
alone  
yr voice cracks in the middle of  
sleep  
in the middle of no moon longing  
for the image  
made real in yr hands

screen interrupts score 3/3  
but i never understood baseball any-  
way you look at it Mickey Mantle  
or Marilyn Monroe  
replaces Empress on the front of the card

cadillac/Chariot creating myths!  
no, an old film running  
backwards foxes hot on its tail

Lou nods "tally-ho" jabbing  
at the flanks  
i crack the whip  
in the forest of dead  
trees

and you, asleep, strapped  
to an old stallion,  
follow

## MIRROR VALENCY

Mirror prevents coupling  
while some more delicate possession  
is not revealed

the angel at the garden  
positions hands on hips  
denying entrance  
years later she remembers  
what it was like inside and wishes  
to go there  
forgetting it is her own hand  
that holds her back  
against the wall

abt this stripping job:  
i sd - it's better than office sitting  
twisting mind for the publisher or professor  
better than the bank or a two-bit hustle  
w/a computer in a backroom  
here i really move

African drums Mayan winds  
hair in the hot sun  
whips the body wide arms  
glisten sweat beads  
i could no longer stop dancing  
i could not sit still no  
matter what the offer  
crack whip drive  
hard pain compassing veins  
now slow  
but tight  
muscles tense.  
in the heat hard.

tendons shimmering in light of  
mirrors  
reflecting bottles  
and dancers back  
to  
tunnels of  
silver  
water body  
arching to  
Gustav Klimt's foil kiss  
glass-bred perspective shifts the room amber  
anemones highstepping backwards down the mirror  
tunnel  
down  
the long  
hall skin flesh  
the body  
moves  
the body  
leaps bows dips

behind the bar  
behind the bottles  
and the darkly lit floor  
following its image in the dance

the mirror will deny entrance to the uninvited

the eye prevents  
(in bright light the pupil contracts  
into itself  
to a point no bigger  
than a fleck of salt on the lips  
where mirror and dancer stand poised  
as perfect poles  
the agent of transmission: the eye  
.a closed system.

enclosed in his dreaming world  
he paces the small grey and the bare corridors  
where only my form finds entrance

enclosed in my dreaming i dance nocturnal dances  
in glass where only his image finds entrance  
and i would deny even that  
the image: man wanting photograph  
through his own lenses fashioned

## DRIVING POEM

in the glass egg  
a whole world  
opens red caves in the mouth

of calligraphy on the wall  
men on the stairs at the balustrades  
car in the corner of the room

driving  
women in negligees  
in the back room  
the bidding goes

when we were kids  
we wanted to drive tunnels  
through mounds of snow  
in the shopping centers  
tunnels  
through the whole world

we wanted to drive  
to the ends of  
(but in the background Duke Ellington  
(in the foreground

her white gloves

a silk scarf

and a limosine as big as yr thumb

ECLIPSE

*for Iudv*

tin doll in a stadium of brass  
French infant  
hands poised as though  
to offer  
what  
with robot motion?

he brings her paper moths and Chinese plums  
crowded market craving  
with shelves and saltbrine

she turns talcumed body  
but her eyes are  
absent

on stage  
or at the table  
curled  
by the pillar

absent  
sewing madrigals on highland llamas  
in the citadel of exile  
above

oil  
running rivulets in ocean water  
(two mariners toast the demise of loveseats  
(politicians draw plans for mandatory sunday school

she searches the wall  
for mouths and gardenia  
auras

to carry  
to coral reefs  
and  
body dancing

wanting to believe here in the bar  
to see him clearly  
lonely clapping  
tired stamping his feet  
insisting "she's a real artist"  
he begs to save her

she wants  
but knows  
never to trust

no matter what he . . .  
scars open the flesh to prove the point  
yet she cries for his pain  
in the half-shadow of the strippers' room  
or silently in the cab  
on heat-soaked summer night

he accelerates  
bands of light cross her brow  
where is the hand?  
giving potency to what dream?  
to fulfill not losing  
self  
in the bed or tables  
punctuating reefs buried not deep enough  
in the tides

he turns  
bands of sound cross her palms  
she will do really very little for you  
though she . . .

# IT'S HER VOICE FROM THE DRESSING ROOM

in the heat  
in marquee  
glow  
the moon wears a plaster mask  
and hides behind counters of chrome

gasoline alley anklets  
want water like a ballet  
washing ice buckets  
hands covered  
green sleeves rolled  
eyes closing

to catch frames from a forgotten cinema  
children carving idols in the lake  
a young girl found the black rock  
when it touched her skin  
women danced round the fire

wooden  
bracelets spinning  
silver  
lightning  
curving breasts  
carving hips wide  
into bellies full

through  
trachae rings cabling  
arc of moon  
over water

sunlines  
exciting lunar ore  
to seeds  
red with her blood  
gold with the arched thread  
of generation

fading almost as soon as  
it is disclosed

another metal paints the modern screen al-  
most the same color veils  
the ancient ritual  
giving us just enough to calm  
but not enough to remember the end of the dance  
or the beginning

heat of water  
may free vision for a moment  
or amber light strikes an old key  
rusted  
but still able to sing  
at least a shadow of its former song

soon drowned by the sounds in the bar  
the colors that first sparked the memory  
take it back again

and give us back to  
today  
children carve emblems of battle  
on elevator walls  
in city streets  
women teach their daughters  
the art of the body

today  
the dancer's stone  
traffics light over tables  
energy torqued into  
anklets  
bracelets  
form of the glass  
and the clinking  
blade of ice

## MARBLE VEILS

but i have stripped my clothes to railroads growing north  
wires of ice grasping heartnet steel lace  
eyes of soul bound by songsilence  
mute in grey clothes dancing tiptoes to click clack of nickel  
only 10% shows on the surface oils my flesh  
glides off my bones

lover of iron,  
i see,  
you dress my hair in  
seaweed  
is the promised corolla  
it is as anti-Juno  
i stand before you  
yet knowing

why am i still drawn,  
assassin of white moths,  
to hands that bring stalactites to veined waters  
sealing frescoes of sky in umbra pits  
pulling dolls along cavernwalls  
on rope of corset promising Venus?  
camels are trains on path of lampblack  
in the sitting room where the Marquis tempts  
Victoria with a lead goblèt

why is the pasteboard portico the only place (we can dance?  
the only color in daybound city of stone?

i thirst  
(following watermirage in desert crosstree  
i thirst  
for the real  
trees in the garden  
the two with their roots entangled

i search  
but my flesh has learned well  
responds only to  
red crystal in waxen night

listen  
she cries in the long hall  
(a sandplain whistle playing waterchimes)  
he can sell that sound in the marketplace

## SOLSTICE

they laughed hysterically  
the deer that winter  
deer in the windswept mountains  
laugh in the windswept still  
our father cut roads in the woods  
driving trails through pinestands or  
in the valleys scrubbrush

the forest went crazy that winter  
and from our beds we heard  
strange songs in the frostbound night  
and in the morning blood on the snow

he too must have lain awake listening  
to frightened voices echoing in the still  
in the silent snow in the nightice on the crags  
for soon we saw him, between the buzzing saw  
and the clamber of logging chains,  
carrying meat and salt to the clearing

see how the deer smile  
as he approaches now  
see them bow their heads

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