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THE **ORANGE** **TELEPHONE**

THE SAN FRANCISCO EXPERIENCE



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1975

ATORE FARINELLA

THE ORANGE TELEPHONE

The San Francisco Experience

By Salvatore Farinella

Sal Farinella

Good Gay Poets Books

Boston, 1975

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Previously written by the author: Hunger, First Poems

**Poems have previously appeared in:
Fag Rag, Mouth of the Dragon, and
Gay Sunshine**

This book is dedicated to Paul Mariah

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LAGUNA BEACH SURF BOY

Waves combing their fingers
through sand still left behind
man of war medusas
sign posts to walk carefully
bare foot on this crashing beach
of crushing breakers. Some say
a storm at sea no swimming
last resort to lay in sun.
Earlier the surfer boy in wet suit
glistening in damp shadow dark
hair tangled and burnt by sun and salt
walked me hand in hand through
gardens tiered one upon the other
on this cliff side peopled with prairie dogs
undermining its rainbow stability. He
only considers long haired men to love
under sun or stars no matter where
as long as length of hair
tangles over and covers his face
as lover, lover, lover sinks upon him.

FLIGHT 153

On the eve of night I always see myself
flying above the thick trees
and now above that seething mess
(cloud layer astir diswrought
earth out of sight below)
I have stopped talking
my mind a jumble.
The sun has thrown his paint pots out
over the cotton lumps dripping.
This ride is lumpy
potatoes mattress car ride
over the city streets pot holes;
before I came to this flying
I thought all-the-way
about kissing him goodbye
and I must not cry then there here.

in flight

COME GLEAM WITH ME

Come gleam with me
beckons the store front bar
with its windex spray the come on clean
bar glass clear clamor within
invites to those without
on windy street corners standing
hip thrown out. I am this
light pole run into by traffic
regularly at 3. And the men gay
packed agitated behind glass
but who's that? blue eyes
sun washing through them
as off a mackerel's back.
I pass plan to cross but turn
to buy this sale puppy
behind a beer. Score to you a flash
I can not believe my luck
resting at your sister's place we laugh and laugh
stoned on grass under hanging plants.
She has left us in charge
and we do that through the afternoon
into the deep night to meet again on waking
to find our crystal kiss and
roll it round our mouths all day.

TURNING ON

Lee passes the joint
burning limbs of elk
recently eaten at dinner
unfamiliar guest - meat stranger
the joint now resting
as falcon pressing into my fingers.
There is the dirigible to the landing strip;
burning inhale the sirocco wringing
the wet rag Sicily (that's me) into arid droplets.
Again the drag flare pulling
the locomotive of the long penis
freaks that army of dragging queens,
erotogenic progeny of Sisyphus.

Lee refuses the joint
his flat palm red light pass on
to his woman of the man's hair
androgeny of the moon skin. She
takes the burning stick from him to me.
His lips, my lips introduce ourselves
only to her: the woman's lips on the man.
The joint around our lips trace
never touches man to man.

San Francisco

MY PRIEST

I expected a ride home my priest;
slipping over cloister walls is your job
and running through the night dark
the palms high up; the grey park
stretching its arms two blocks;
the steep hill I could roll down all do not
reassure me all's right. You turning away
as I pass out the door; your arm shoots out
your hand to touch my hair
its length slipping through your fingers.

San Francisco

OPENING INTO NIGHT

There is the waiting
and the many lookers
promise flickering through drowsiness
Of course it's late
only hookers
and passer-bys with cash.
What of the warm dry bed
and the push into soft reassurance?

The clanking bus heaves to a stop
step up tall and harsh light.
Head jabs back
that's start up
on my way to you -Eureka 35- I fully clothed
no gold to rave about on this
rolling metal shell carrying me well lit
through sex streets over lascivious hills
into valleys asleep. I'm coming to your dream;
you watch my shoes cross and recross
they are whispering to the door, the rubber step
the damp wind's jealousy at my knuckles' tap on wood.
Your moon blonde legs
stilt the dream drugged body
and the opening into the night.
Enter this stranger
fragrant from gardens of fog
together we slip into sleep
that well of night that cool water.

San Francisco

EUREKA

i

Last night out of that calcium sky o moon
in you death grinned full.
Miss Jumping cow has done her job
providing to the end bovine nourishment.
Horn picks clean that smile.
Last night o moon you almost had me.

ii

Tonight I bathe in milk
plaster my hair with mica
press a clean white shirt of wool.
Earlier there was the nap of sheer cliffs;
in sleep the rest in falling.
The fear on waking into another night
walking through the name
knowing the bank's naming will be there
knowing the playground peopled with the name will be there
knowing the valley will cup me in the name.

iii

The baker of the name waters the name in cement.
His naming brings smiles of moon birds
this early morning of the name.
I notice his union pin: a crescent set with rhinestones
his high school ring: a beaten silver crescent
graven with the name; we shake hands on the name.
Morning's birds have started talking about the end
from your valley; I do not understand your silence.

San Francisco

HANDLE IT ALONE

Tonight I handle it alone
that firm loneliness
speaking of palm trees on the street
Dolores of the old mission.
Voices on the street below
halt me one story above
their walking on concrete;
my laying on mattress
recalls desire that they creep
up creaking stairs
turn the knob and enter
into blindness. My in and exhale
acts as introduction.
Our handshake of the mouths
will fail as the many calls earlier
irritated wire 3,000 miles
to my lover who out
all night may be hurt
or hunting some stranger.

San Francisco

THE END AGAIN

i

It's over.

Those tomb blocks sliding into place
sealed your turning back
and I cold and burning
(the tongue laid against the ice tray)
look straight into the wall.

ii

Into the press of the bed your suitcase
closing you said

I said it

I did

and let you pick it up and
watched it swing in your hand
goodbye goodbye

and then I stopped you.

You never could swim through tears.

San Francisco

HALF DIGESTED MEN

He smelled of earth and closing
my eyes in doorways we
squashed our bodies to kiss
out of sunlight hot and dusty.
Passers just thought us queer
and we are that. I thought
I could belong here. Now
his hand reassures the metal dashboard.
His car is made to last
three years; hope in my back pocket
balls in lint. *Listen*
yes I do listen
to the metallic engine purr
this is a pet of sorts
but we sit in its belly
half digested men
processing their parting.

NO FAULT

Dipping the drums interpret palms
as hands thrown out from heart
- punishment for goat skin; language
of bleating never heard from randy throats
I breathe in chunks
after the long walk back.

We did not say goodbye
to this accompaniment but the spanking
new car deodorized fresh from Detroit
enclosed us: glass greening
in sun we tan with chlorophyll.
There is this chugging of chloroplasts
doing their number through my veins.

Everything about the automobile is wrong.
We can never grow under glass.
The I Ching mentions: No Fault
you tell me. In Massachusetts this mention
names insurance.

There is the shadow of mirror
across your face. Your eyes blue
as the turquoise on your ring
watch me through thick glass
trapped in wire. I watch your living green hand
hold mine. My free hand
swings the wide door and I roll out
to meet the smile of the fat nun
in membership to the Brotherhood of Man.

San Francisco

RICH STREET

Not hot
a cool breeze blowing
over my lusts this night
garden park an empty groove
on my way past boredom
bar let out; I am caught
in midst of royal flotsam
push way past crowns of gold plate
there is the ebb of night
swirling round my ankles
sequins wink as night fish
phosphorescent: beacons to the baths.
Friday night why work to score
to win is partly to lose.
Feet memorize the way with
felt tip; we are the cows clanging
home thoughtless wearing throughfares
into muddy furrows: familiar sticky
as masturbation's result. Rich Street
you are the magnet the glittering idea
of sex on the rocks, glistening over
glazed eyes; well scrubbed
clean cut zombies zonked out
on ups, downs, poppers.
Everywhere there is perfume
of dirty feet. Glamorous as green
eye shadow from Maybelline
mirrors tell you where it's at.
Rest, reprieve is allowed
for the poor on pillows
this room set aside
under a faceted motorized moon
spitting diamonds in your eyes
where you on the floor are the show.

San Francisco

ISOLATE AND UNDERSTANDING

Who can tell the straight
from queer behind Brooks Brothers
button down? In here clothes gone
skin glistening we are all
pigskin footballs. They dangle
at their limits so much chicken skin

isolate
and dew on orange peel
isolate
and moon at harvest

brushing away clouds from her eyes:

Scrotums to the plain eyed realist.
Romance is the view over shoulders
of perfect youths caught turning the corner.
We are searchlights in the labyrinth
belly to belly lighting up brief moments
of understanding so much when
(stranger that you are) your fingers
hesitate before lift off and you leave
in this dim corner me and dawn
coming on with a passion.

EPITHALAMIUM

Undressing (you in the locker room)
between metal doors I noticed
(as I passed) out the corner of my eye
but instantly forgot in a flurry of bodies
then in that darkness
spinning mirror scales all the light
you sat near timid at the edge
of the forest meadow. You do not know
me hunted and yet hunter but we
touch toe, ankle, calf, knee, thigh
fold and know together talk won't get us there.
How my fright alerted me you
were he growing up a few steps behind ;
the child I loved and continue to love
afar even now your wedding taking place.
The bride how beautiful! fawning guests
fanning themselves with starched silk fans.
No one talks about the groom
his beautiful wrists, the hairs which ornament
that miniature forest of tree tops bending
slightly with wind sluggish in summer.
You are the July groom beauty
no rose named for you.
That room of dizzy lights
could be anywhere yet in San Francisco
both of us men making love
didn't dare talk for fear recognition
in this city of fantasy comes true.

San Francisco

WITH DECOR DESIRE DISAPPEARS

Exhaustion the trolley grooving up the hill
- Duboce Hill near the park -
reminds my eyes they are open
this morning after the full night baths
balling the many yawning stiffs.
I am not yawning will not yawn
as I wait for my turn to sleep
the bed to empty its mouth
of Paul its owner its occupant.
Fur collars my eyelids this morning
hang limp, mouths open, limbs boneless.
The black cat has weathered the night's
domesticity. We men cherish the bath's routine:
sex far from frenzy: bacchanal blown out.

Another night the park suctioned me into
its cranies its nooks. Two leathermen
doing the Big Suck and sound of plungers.
Slipping past us watchers three strangers
straight silverfish sliding under the toilet
... crash, glass and hollow running:
bottle of beer over the head: Black leather dripping
blood. We are not exempt
from creature slaughter.

San Francisco

