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The Last Hot Time

You had been putting off knee surgery
like it was an old boyfriend,

I had been staying inside all of the time,
making up all my songs on my computer,

becoming an avatar instead of a person
across ten different websites,

and sometimes I would just want to go home,
but all I had to do was log off,

and when I would get real lonely I would
call up one of the help desks in India,

where Tom or Billy or CJ was always
ready to help *just* me.

The Sin Of Knowledge

Down in the subway we said goodbye to our concubines,
Bobby and I trying to outrun the Aquarians who were being
chased by the evangelicals anyway,

when I got caught I said:

please don't ask me any questions: I don't know anything;

For the next month I hid in my apartment in Minneapolis,
they have great blue lakes in Minnesota, Lake Vermilion
being the most beautiful place for a sunset;

pretty soon my white fingers were waving in retreat,
I had run out of all the best flavors of my ice cream,

I began to run around the country trying to avoid my own
voodoo doll,

At night I would get a room with Leonard Cohen, a bottle
of whiskey, and my fondest memories of you —

the three inseparable deities, tied to the table that was tied
to my back;

after awhile I didn't know what I was running from, because
the danger didn't seem all that dangerous,

don't you remember this? someone said; *never forget*, said
someone else;

when I saw my own reflection in the mirror across from me
right at the bar I knew I had to clean up my head,

but when I tried to go vote they were already packing up the
polls, because I wasn't on either side,

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/2

you might not come back alive, someone else finally said to me,

but I didn't care; and I went out and found Bobby, and we called up our girls and met them back down in the subway.

The Book of Mary

I can't remember waking up in love with you,
because I don't remember falling asleep in love with you.

You and I are a million words that don't exist yet,
startled one hour, starving for each other the next,
both of us underdeveloped in our togetherness,
cutting each other's wrists in the kitchen sink,
blood the color Henry Miller would write it,
in a moment when we both realize *there is no use lingering*,
pain like God's pain, his eyes bulging from the wars,
through the blue room you can feel it in your throat,
you tear your clothes off, hang yourself by your hands with rope,
you are the most secret thing in the world, rain on a dark child's face,
you break me because you want all of me,
you love me because the pain is that enormous,
this is right now, tonight, yesterday, a million years in the future,
I drive in a yellow cab looking for you everywhere,
"Come," I hear you saying; "Come," I hear in darkness;
"People are just things," you keep signing to me in my hand —
as though we can both just edit a lifetime full of mistakes.

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Cuba

We hid amid the swaying fields of sugar cane
when Castro overthrew that fool, Fulgencio,

you in your libidinous red dress that kept
all the men of Plaza Vieja very happy, every day
a procession after the bullfights and the executions;

I think I was dead every morning I was without you,
the statues of the city cold, but I understood them,
at night we drank and danced and then we retired to watch
all the old cars going fast under the trestles,

In the daytime, I worked right near San Cristobal,
trying to write like Hemingway on our old typewriter,
but you cured me for my lack of a reputation,
me, arriving home to find you naked and wet in bed,
leaving me hungry for your soul like a wallet longing
for crisp green bills;

but then change and revolution came!
and we were all happy and afraid as we hid in the fields,
dreaming of the former, hoping for tomorrow,
hiding for a day that turned into the last fifty years;

And now I am old and you have already gone,
nothing to quench my thirst like things used to do,
Jesus! I'm tired of waiting for Cuba to change!

Cuba is both a truth and a fiction, a great story of longing,
but not for those who have had to live through her every day
of their lives.

In Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

Guns and Stars

I took her right hand and pulled her
all the way down the spiral staircase,

this looks like Andromeda, she said
until the twenty-seventh dark lane,

in our age of miracles, I could not tell
the difference between guns and stars,

this made her say: *I think I feel something*;
— we knelt down in front of the dark angel,

I prayed *this*, and she prayed *that*; but God
prayed for something completely different,

outside on the streets, NYC was on fire,
Luna Park lighting up and down the coast,

we planted tulips in the street and she set
all the tigers free,

a voice on the radio tried to read us all into
a deep sleep, tell us which way was up,

we looked out into the evening, looked for the
FBI on every page of the phonebook,

but she told me she had her own desperate lists,
lo-fi in the subway of her veins that could take
us there,

so we climbed every last step all the way up within
the Empire State,

waited on gentle words right there on the observation
deck of the 102nd floor,

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I saw her hips and the carriage of her ribs swimming
in a bath of stars—she held my hand tighter;

please, kill me, I heard her whisper from out of everyone
amid us: a Mexican, a boxer, an Afghan, a Yankee fan;

I didn't say anything, she said; and I changed my mind
and saw the mouths of Iguanas burning in the sky.