

1972

Liberation Manual

Paul Zweig

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LIBERATION MANUAL

I

When I landed on earth
I saw the moon-bones blood and flesh
Of the dumbest women in America.
The graves in my skin sprang open,
Instead of bones there were flowers.
The tyranny of the face was over now.
It was the revolution I had been waiting for,
The true communism.

II

Exposed in a root like William Blake
I met the recording angel.
"What have you got in that book of yours," I asked.
"I've got a man killing his spirit face
Under the peaceful face he wears,
And the ceremony of hate performed by air.
I've got a man talking with the perfect pitch
Of the death instinct."
When I looked again, the recording angel
Had shrunk into a fist,
A heart-print of smoke,
Had shrunk
Into a head of pure screaming.

III

I arrived in a valise packed with nails,
Talking with poets,
Strolling in their poems.
As far back as I can remember I am no fish
In this life or the last.
My longing for freedom is a mystery to me.
Asleep on a lightbulb,
I dream of personal dawns.
I am so private I cast no shadow,
Grass does not bend where I walk.
The machinery of my smile is beautiful
As the footwork of the malarial fly
On still water,
Beautiful as the laughter of politicians.

IV

Armed with a mirror,
Opinions to hide my hunger,
I inhabit the stones of the road.

If I keep on going I will reach the end,
My skin falling off,
My bones individually laughing,
On vacation forever
In the long summer of death,
Like an aging clown,
Cured of personality.

Paul Zweig

THE FISHERMAN'S LADY

I am quiet, so quiet
that the buzzing of fly wings
disturbs me and the shifting of clouds
and mouths of pearl-eyed fish
open me with pain.
I am like the seller in town
who sits all night on a pier
his line tossed out for perch.
By morning the only thing caught
is himself, so he sleeps
and in a dream peels back
his blood-shot skin to a hook
curled on his ribs.
I am the eye of his pain
and the needle that has sewn
a net inside his heart.
I am his sadness
even as a kingfisher's feather.
I offer this dream to the sea
where nothing is green
but the darkness.