

1977

The Drunk

Ray Ronci

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The cab the wet lights floating above asphalt
The balcony and leaning
Staring at the 3 AM traffic
Still dressed the same and no less
Remembering
How one walks away and beyond the door
Becomes glass so often in the hand
And up to the lips
Imagining her to be somehow
As perfect as the taste of cold
As unforgettable as

Cyclists! yes the hills much greener
The sun much higher much like a helmet
Tires passing black quickly
Like the eyes of those in the passing
The wrong flags waving in the distance
The finish
And the smiles dropping from the faces
Of those standing
Now turning away

The Drunk / Ray Ronci

His hands and feet are sleeping on waves
His limbs are tunnels reaching out like a starfish
His head is barely visible like a rock in the ocean

Meanwhile the truth is he is laying on the outfield
In the rain
And there are blackbirds all around him
And all around the baseball park
Noonday traffic like crowds of people
Standing in the rain saying: Shhhhhhhh

And he
Is face down and spread out
Reaching so to speak like a hand

Like a starfish like many tunnels
Which go on infinitely
In these several directions
Embracing the damp
The drunk
Holding on
To the waves
To the earth

Turning Back / Michael Sheridan

for my brother

We were born in a town no one famous came from.
The planet just dragged us around.

Often there was a deadness in the air—
the stench of mayflies rising

from the Mississippi, smoke from the paper mill
riding any wind that strayed near shore.

Children grew older, married & multiplied.
No one said anything new.

We've left that town a hundred times for good.
Anywhere we go the sun comes up the same

and in the same old place,
like a woman used for years unfairly; the wind

still runs from leaf to leaf; we've seen other rivers
turning in their beds & other lives going on routinely.

Sometimes we stop & touch each other, then reflect.