1970

The Truth Is Concrete

David Salner

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He puts the metal sculpture
on a newspaper vending machine
outside an early morning bar
on 3rd st
where the air is a whipped dispensation of grease
where the light finds its source thru a hole in cement.

He handles his heavy metal sculpture
like the throwaway note of a bitchy soprano
although it’s only the 2nd in a series
which he calls, “figments of my frustration,
the manpower development and training act
No. 2 . . . No. 3’s in a vise on my workbench
and No. 1 was in my old lady’s car
when she threw me out . . .”

(You can smell eggs being put on to fry,
coffee is poured into one or two cups,
the policeman eyes the sculptor’s quart of beer.)

He says it’s a bull,
a bull made from the bumper of a car.
You notice how the horns
 twist out from the chassis connection
and how the writhing body, in his words,
explodes from a seemingly virginal base.

The suggestion is very complete,
you respond. You wander off in a semi-circle
in order to find the most conclusive perspective
from which to observe the multiple steel tongues.

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emerging from these loosely related mouths, 
these caverns that open as you walk about.

Then suddenly he removes the object. 
He snatches it off of the vending machine 
and plunges it into a brown paper bag.

Then silence, in this case ungolden: 
a silence broken only by your eagerness 
to bullshit about childhood, the environment, 
and various ways of curing a stutter.

SEASONAL POEM

Everyone looks gray from a bus 
but sometimes we can remember our beauty. 
It's not a bouquet under neon lights. 
Our feet strike the pavement. Our overcoats 
billow irrelevantly in the wake of our passions. 
The flowers circulate around the bus 
and wash down the street as separate petals.

The Jehovah's Witness 
still stands in front of the Emporium 
distributing leaflets for god in the rain 
which soaks his moustache into drooping strings. 
His thin eyes cut thru the line of janitors 
who picket outside the Star movie theatre. 
They are old, like him, but clean shaven. 
They are out of his world.

Sometimes we can remember our beauty 
but it's so astonishing: the petals drop off 
revealing the nakedness of a real life body. 
She loves me. All night long 
she loves me in order to forget.