In Bed

David Shapiro

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.1908

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.
Who's supposed to be me. But if they think
Of me at all, it isn't me.

In Bed / David Shapiro

We would sail away in this big conversation
Take it in our heads to go into the financial purse together
Find only empty islands so our tears would patter on rivers
like tins of kerosene
And when I saw you I would gobble up rivers, matchboxes and all.
When you are asleep I will appear and do that some more
And pass the winter like Caesar in Gaul
So I race after you but you put up the storm windows
I lie in bed like the happy book in the library,
in spite of poverty and pain.

And one day a dry wind blows fractions of a postcard at my feet
The wind that likes to whisk you out of bed
And cover all the space it can reach, swerving
Carefully away, into the black like the balls in the tennis court.

There was no lead in the lead pencil.
There is no bone in whalebone.
In bed your tissue-balloons exploded and Louisa May Alcott
and the long-boarded dimes
And you came to give orders to your devoted subjects,
who shivered into pieces.

This was our game for the old pack of opponents
And it could be played flat on your back.
You twirled the old cards and aimed right for my head
You advised me to draw the lines lightly, so they could be
easily erased.

Now I see your pictures of a goose presence and rabbit identity.
Each of those creatures must be and is threatened with
insanity.
Dropping to your knees, you protected my old mirror
from the lunging air
In it, your own face was white, like candles on the Christmas tree.

When we were tired out we fell among fishermen
You and I swore on sunny seaweed that this penny would be
eternally hidden under the rocks
You enjoyed the quietness of the raindrops falling into the pans.
Each drop has vengeance in it. We sat all night
speculating on the baleful spray.

We floated on the big bed like crystal madness.
You liked the flights of those lost pencils and fluid
and wind between your lips, stinging and drinking it in
Now we will overlap like the ancients with their chains
Shaking them each day, as they are tightened more strongly.

And the fountain ran on, step by step freely falling
And we loved the swath of the evening
You against the balustrade of detested tin
And I leaned against the riddled curtain of your breast.

You hid beneath the grillework roses with a hundred fears.
You suggested to your little patient that I judge the
height of these roses.
You tore and tore and buried your teeth in me, but
I couldn't let go.
Under the rainy rainbow we would lie and struggle like sparks.

The Phone Calls / Joan Swift

I want to sleep a whole night
but your voice comes wearing its hood
and the quick dark shoes of three a.m.
to wake up the sky like lightning
swinging its whips.
Each night you arrive with your black dahlia.

You send hate, you send hate
like a vine up any wire.
Your words race from pole to pole
toward . . . toward . . .
do you know why it is me?

The walls of my room are no solace.
You writhe out of the plastic and into my brain
like smoke through a crevice.
Night is your pond to fish in.
Your bait is a bell tossed overboard.