

David Allen

From EIGHT FRAGMENTS

(2)

FARM FALL

--for Robert Allen

Season-turned leaves
wove disguises on the frost-stilled furrows
curled around the stocks of once-was corn
rattled against the coat collar
turned against the bending wind
and were gone.

(6)

DERRIDA-ESQUE MOMENT WITH A FRIEND WHO READ "ANTIGUA, 1975"

(What second fit the structured minute
before you said "words are worthless to capture feelings")?
"Some of these lines read
like an invasion of privacy,"
she said, tapping the page for emphasis...
(Yes, a little too personal even for me...)
"Something has been held back
in this naked moment.
What did you conceal?"
(A little more than I revealed—
the obvious answer...)

Editor's note: "Antigua 1975," by the same author, was published in Janus Head, Vol. 1, No. 2.

LOVE SONG OF AN ORDINARY LIFE

The most holy, once the most depraved,
found Christ at Starbuck's and was saved.
The rest confessed to mere inadequacy
when sincerity scratched at dormant memories
then turned and held truth at bay
long enough to see the truth close up
or read tea leaves drowned at the bottom of dirty tea cups
when tarot cards told them more than they wanted to know

while I, standing motionless in heavy snow,
paused to say that I was sorry
but I didn't think of Dean Moriarty all that often anymore.
It's not that I outgrew all that
I simply became tired, somewhat fat, bought a warm coat
to keep the cold an inch away and moved north of Denver,
the thin air thick with pine, mesquite, and sage.

Where are the women we have loved
when there was time or time enough?
They are lost in Australia, or Erie, Pennsylvania,
traveling mountain communities in search of unity with God or Macy's,
trapped in endless marathon races,
at home with children scrubbing faces
or caught in dances, mystic trances, everyone.
What change arranged my life or theirs as we wondered
whether either cared for instances of misspent passion
which began and outlasted the too long or short time spent together?

We have seen beautiful women turn ugly with lies
but lack the evidence to assert the process works in reverse
turning plain women beautiful when the truth is told.
We felt ourselves turn old when we fathomed that distinction.
We have tasted women who were sweet and salty
yet never met the one true daughter of the pagan dance,
took that chance, were left curiously unsatisfied and cold
while I alone sailed the clear mystery of the Caribbean
in the company of a young girl, then my wife,
became lost in the hidden life
wrapped tight in a bikini that concealed
more than she wanted to reveal
as she felt her anger, sealed by a kiss,
turn to sex on a secluded beach.

Could we walk again then, you and I, the beaches of time
leaving footprints for the moment at the tide line?

Could we search the sea smells and bay bells that swirled around us
yet never told us why we waited for the peeling evening bell
that summoned us to silence or to prayer?

And if we climbed those worm-worn stairs
beyond the shadows, the substance,
the candle lit cares that shrouded this mistake or that,
our footsteps louder than our thoughts,
what regrets would we set down...

that our logic was inherently unsound....?

that while watching reeds bend the sea edge
to drown in undercurrents of desire
we found ourselves truth sayers-liars
lacking anything constructive to say...?

or

would we simply admit
that we missed the crucial difference
between the possible, the probable,
and the utterly insignificant...?