

epitaph

and when the long long party with jones finally reached its inevitable conclusion
I was left with nothing but the lonely walk home
and walk home I did
through the dying dark of night
through the sleeping city of man
through the growing archive of my own brief history
and when I reached my place in this world and opened my door
I heard the needle of the old record player I'd forgotten to turn off
as it rode the inner groove of Louis Armstrong's "Wonderful World"
and when I reached my place in this world and opened my door
I smelled the sharp sweetness of Christmas cloves
filling the air like prayers to The Almighty
and when I reached my place in this world and opened my door
I saw that every thing I had was exactly where I left it
I saw that even though people had come and gone
none of them had taken a thing they weren't intended to take
I saw what I had left behind when I walked out the door
no more, no less, no secrets, no clues
no reason to look underneath the clatter and the clutter of the surface
and I saw that it was time to claim what was mine to claim
in the murmur voice of dis-ease
with a once-in-a-lifetime kiss
saying "yes," saying "no." saying whatever it would take to begin putting my mark on what
was mine to mark before pouring everything else into the insomnia night with its deafening
hubbub of promising dream voices laying claim to all there should have been, and all there
could have been, and all there would
have been
and when the long long party with jones finally reached its inevitable conclusion
I was left by myself with whatever was left of myself after all that time spent chasing the
dragon
following the aching smoke
as it laid it's meaningless film on my fingerprints before I jammed my fists deep in my
pockets
and as it laid it's meaningless film in the corners of my eyes before I took a look
and as it laid it's meaningless film at the corners of my mouth before I said a word
pretending to care, or not pretending to care, or pretending to know the difference
before I fell for the siren scam of the morning shift
before I skinned up with my fists jammed deep in my pockets
before I saw that I had lost sight of where I was going
pretending to care, or pretending not to care, or pretending to know the difference
thinking of myself tasting the flavor of the day
moving without going anywhere
and making good time while I was at it
pregnant with dreams, barren of hope
looking to get a rise out of this and a rise out of that and a rise out of the other
a pale ghost on the endless make following the aching smoke
pretending to care, or pretending to not care, or pretending to know the difference
between the bird in my hand
and my undercover fantasies undermined under cover of night
drowned with coffee, smothered with cigarettes, buried in paperwork
like Christmas gifts run up on some cosmic charge card come due
bill collecting repo bastards at the door
and me on the floor behind the couch
until it's home again, home again, jiggy jig
and when the long long party with jones finally reached its inevitable conclusion
there was nothing to say there was nothing to see there was nothing
exit: stage left