

issue 40

streetcake



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excerpt from *spell / checkered*

(roki) traoré

trapdoor
trove
rare
roared
tremor

my favourite work ov hers: *tchamantché* (nonesuch recordings, 2008)

A THOUSAND OF MY OWN TO KEEP ME COMPANY

1.
the air is moist
with screams and dooms

atomized and dispersed
among my dreams and work

2.
The air is moist
It sweats with fear

In the trees the weak
Nests sway meekly still

3.
the air is moist
with disease & death

a thousand of my
own to keep me company

4.
The air is moist
Of births it speaks

So many to be absorbed
By our vast hunger

5.
the air is moist
with my mistakes

i feel them out there
numerous and watchful

6.
The air is moist
Small corruptions

Petty industries
Sleeping together soundly

7.
the air is moist
with loneliness

when my breath fails
call the people i love alone

8.
The air is moist
It is a cloud of time

In and out of cells
It circulates, then dies

Paisley

Word around campus labeled
the bushy side-burned Professor
a communist and hypocrite
to boot as his wife made big
bucks working for NASA.
He taught Romanticism.
A hell of a nice guy, he fell
for the contract grading system.
One could sign up for grades
A through D, or pass / fail.
A set number of quizzes,
exams, papers and readings
requisite for each laurel.
Class attendance was optional
so this method of teaching
students called ideal and often
struck attempting to secure
emptied seats like a fire drill.
One spring day class met
on a hill near Canisius Hall.
Three or four showed up
and that was a crowd.
The lecture was on Keats
and one poem stays with me:
“La Belle Dame Sans Merci.”
A gal kept out of the shade
and the sun shined well on her.
She wore bib overalls,
hair in a red bandana
and dispersed among the paisley
pattern were gears like those
found in a travel alarm.
I wondered if our Professor
imagined her after class hiking
to a farm collective
or did she strike him
as simply out of this world.

Six Word Stories

We visited the combustible genital exhibit.

Number 9, that's the fetus responsible.

Her helicopter wound is healing nicely.

The asshole doesn't need the head.

Preacher launches bible at possessed cripple.

Snack kid swallows dwarf stripper alive.

Claustrophobic astronaut needs to air out.

Blind cartoons never hear onomatopoeia coming.

Lunch lady's hands look like hamburger.

Which racing ambulance has bigger emergency?

nick romeo

Cloud 9.5

Careful

There's dust

In the air

Seeing

And breathing

Is a fight

But I don't care

The taste is sweet

Satisfying

It makes me feel

Complete

Please

Don't light a flame

The dust might ignite

In my face

Again