

The Tenderloin

By Paul Pera

In walking these streets
I see old bums shedding their
clothes as a snake sheds
his cellophane back, changing
into angels, whose name
no one remembers

and Jackie the Queen, whose eyes
summon you to the basement
of his heart and the upper room
of his ass, where everyone says
hello for a price

and Margo who came looking for
experience almost fell
in love with my naivete, I
almost kissed her with tenderness
she cried once and then forgot

since she's been filled with fucks
by anyone who had enough life
to own a name.
she still remembers to laugh
beautifully, though, when we meet

still, I can't touch the shadows
of her eyes or walk near the tree
where she weeps.

Visiting My Grave After Death

By Paul Pera

I

Sunday, as I stepped from a train and
found the town in church listening
to bells an incantations
a little girl greeted me ans showed
the flowers on her panties
she left tattling to the streets
not even that dog of bones
lifted his head dripping with eyes
glass shivered in the wind
a tiny bell talked to itself
as I entered the cemetary,
an arena of marble sticks
seared with a history of arithmetics

II

I took stones from the intimacy
of my pockets to place
like fruit that resist
growth and death
I came to spit
words in the wind
and let them flake
issue to issue
I, who never wished
to be touched by life
am dead, the privacy
of my blood opened
for death to spawn
a stranger in my body

III

Black scarved women with their heads
on the graves of daughters
and unstitch tear by tear
trying to talk the dead's lanuage

and lisp into their dreams
I remember the nights in bars
watching the fire consume itself
drinking impatiently till
my eyes became one and flames
spread a fabric on my skin
As I came into the ballet of tongues
sashay into the salty burn
and in the restless morning
the sun would eat my window
like a cat bringing the dismembered
remains from the evening's hunt

IV

A dog barked at my genitals of stone
as I left the gate, he wanted my return
but I boarded a train like entering
the intestine of a giant and filed
into a seat, waiting for the whistle
to brush me off into
a tunnel's collapsing mouth
with rhythmic rushing, popping flashes
a requiem of photos with serrated edging
sibilant litany: requiescant in pace et eterna
requiescant in pace et eterna
requiescant in pace. Amencollapsing mouth