

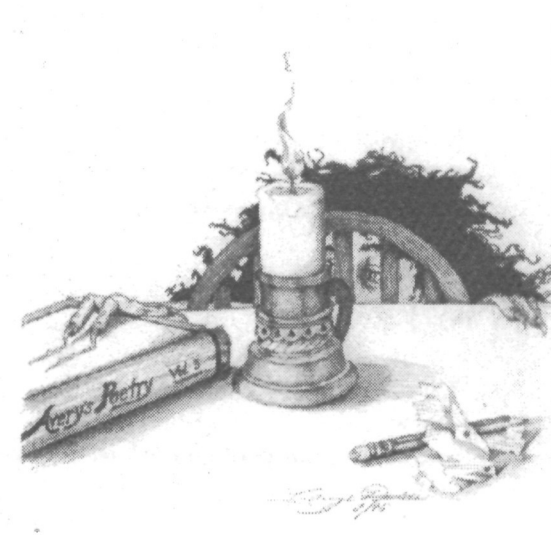
Of August Descent

Summer days, hell, long after nightfall,
The sun, white as Michigan sand, passionate
As good Mexican food, and sure as a dozen
Clergyman, warms a palm tree beyond
An unnatural singular wall.

Everything is cool, he mutters to the
Beautiful people downtown, the ones
You hide your smiles from, long after
The last child leaves, and then hope
No one cares.

A crow, detestable yet familiar, stops
Her daily search for sun cracked
Snails, to watch the man's eyes of
Faded-jeans blue cultivate their
Traffic-light-red streaks.

True, he once walked, as all men
Do on occasion, head up, eyes focused,
Even his hair was arranged. His
Mind fixed on twelve things at once,
Never surrendering.



Everything is cool, he says, voice
 Bucking the heated pacific breeze
 As it climbs the Eastern foothills
 That comb the desert back into
 Arizona's private hell.

Summer comes too often now
 That he can't change the way
 The boss thinks about coincidence
 Outweighing common sense or
 Good mental health.

He stays inside, among the
 Cigarette smudged plastic ferns,
 To chew on an unclaimed lip
 That remembers more. He listens
 To the nothing.

Everything is cool his fists pound out,
 Sending tiny splinters from a pine desk
 That used to be such a friend to the ink
 That took his handful of hatred, and
 Spread it around.

The last good pen vanished long before
 The crow was born, or the front lawn died,
 Tossing his religion in the neighbor's trash can
 Beside the ant kingdom on it's way
 To a foreign tomorrow.

Heat, leftover from summer, and youth,
 Collect over the bottle of Wild Turkey
 He bought to replace the ink, and
 Praise each other for remembering
 His day.

Everything is cool, the woman he used
 To balance atop his regulated mind, with
 It's twelve individual, and prioritized tasks,
 Calls to remind him, but the answering machine
 Cuts her off.

On the last morning he is to spend
 At this age, somewhere between
 Seductive and annoying, interested and
 Returned for factory defects, he rises,
 And kills the crow.