

Maybe Once
In A While

volume two

2003 Chapbook
Scars Publications

R. Paul Craig

She inhabited

1.

her body with
unreserved transcendent
satisfaction because
she had a body
one of her own
because from her
body its growth
softness extravagant
skybound hopefulness
she had excluded
everything else

it's no small thing
she ruminated to
have gotten the world to
stop.

2.

She did not see
herself from outside
she did not have in
her head voices
of those who looking
at her would have
her recite to
herself what they thought
about what they saw

she did not linger
before mirrors
she had that is
a body formed of a
solemnly pledged
easy bemused
ecstatic marriage
of earth and soul
and not a cosmetic
tinsel body of
contamination breeding
like bacteria

she
stood with a recondite
delicious innocence
with all the velocities
of love losed in
her flesh:

she stood.

The True Lovers

1.

His palms were
clammy and his
innards did a
nauseous heave
he had a teetering
sensation as if
he had grown
immensely tall
looming over
the room like a
great wallowing
presence or a
moving puffball
stuffed with
spores.

2.

How brittle she
seemed how break-
able what is most
precious to her
is her fragility and
the way they crack
so tenderly between
each other offering
up their little cries
to one another in
the extremity of
passion.

The Cemetery

The air
here
is different

somehow
purer

the light
here
is clearer

the edges of
leaves
and the lines
of buildings

sharper
detailed
like a memory

recollection
invades
through the
unchanged
uncharted
brightness
of this place

cool and
sweetly washed
by a late
afternoon rain

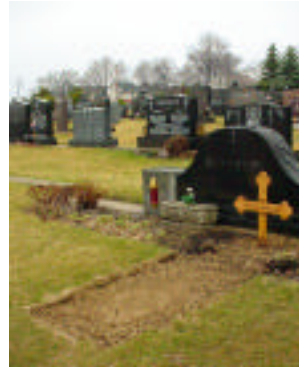
I watch
a rabbit
hop away
into the trees

the direction
of its leisurly
retreat draws
attention
further down
downward
to the bush-
lined path
of St. Mary's

the white dots
I finally see
could be sheep
in a field
but for the
constant
regularity
of their spacing:

sheep
safely grazing

rather
than the head-
stones
of the graves
of the
dead.



The Highway

A white-
hot sun
baked
blazed out
of a cerulean
sky and
creamy puffs
of cumulus
clouds embroidered
the distant mountains
a dark ribbon of
asphalt sliced spliced
through trackless
sands while
shimmering slimy
heat waves
danced above
the freeway
as if bonfires
raged beneath
the black tar.

Evolution

Ignorant of human foibles
follies the yard was enhanced
enchanted by the glowing dusk
bathed in a luminescent butter-
yellow light everything had a
magnified importance like a
museum piece precious beautiful
unique love for landscape colors
smells momentarily lapsed stopped
illusion like a transfusion a king-
fisher rat-a-tatted by peepers and
crickets commenced their evening
song sweet puppy clouds and the
darkening mauve sky shown tiny
mosquitoes floated through the
last light tree leaves were paralyzed
by an airless crescendo of mood the
earth captured for a moment its
heart revealed.

Absolute silence governed the earth as
if somewhere somehow sometime the
first oxygen-breathing fish was emerging
from the sea to crawl about clumsily it
gulped in an initial breath of air and filled
out fledgling lungs like that.

The Past

is always viewed
pejoratively like
it's inferior to
the future

nobody's ever condemned for
looking forward we're told to

it's only back
that's back-
there never
to arrive at
again it's
done accomplished
just happened

but our lives
are in the
past this is
where life
takes shape
like a
transparency

somewhere ahead
near or far
is the end

but behind
shrouded in
clouds of
forgetting lies
the beginning.

The Perfectionist

An enormous woodpile
enough pineon to last
all winter cast its
shadow against the house
fragrant fragile smoke
burst issued forth from
the chimney dissolving
against a glittering
glistening iron-
blue sky yellow leaves
a sign of the time that
comes brilliantly zigzagged
off cottonwoods by the
irrigation ditch which was
close to the quarter-acre
garden which was so rich
in vegetables you could
hear the vitamins cracking
crackling tomatoes tied
tenuously properly to careful
sticks glowed provocatively
squashes neatly mulched grew
plainly plumper pumpkins turned
regularly ripened even evenly
hummingbirds nourished at
plastic feeders with bee-
guards and ant-guards that really
actually functioned everything
was packed stacked neatly
everyone was under control.

The Shadow

1.

It's been long
and quietly
often sincere
like a book of
collected poetry
which usually
makes a useful
focus despite
what prose-notes
like the physical
eye as opposed to
the erring brain:
think of the
historical implications.

descent little mild
funeral under the oak

puppy-lovers at the

latest show.

3.

For years
it was two

o'clock
the same

2.

Guess there

hasn't been

anyone around

as plump-mellow

nor as straight-

thinking either

as bloom
from one

o'clock
both in

character
and in

conviction:
until the next morning.

The Shoulder

1.

Last time we danced
I was trying to I don't
adjust easily like I
can't deal with human
hardness meanness without
a song what other ground
do we have to stand on I
laugh because it seems to
me to be of use the rest
of life I feel like tossing
out like stuff in the attic.

2.

Our brilliance
is our grace
a part of recognition
like to move articulately
or to consider the
variables of life regarding
this I make no selection
but as one moment this
stands as a token for all.

3.

What we gain
particularly is
the point we share
the particularly shy
fact that our gods have
been men and women.

The Country

On the uterus
of some world's
depression every-
thing was banned
the gates of the
city locked the
camels sleep-driven
with cargo heavy
smoking meant death
or worse lashes the name
of all names the king of all
gods frowned.

On the era of some war
most countries were not
useful like a sister-
state building bones
through the desert sand
pale something like through
a jewel kissed what occurred
like a sand-coil oil.

The Conservatory

was halfway
territory
between her
horticultural
punctiliousness
and domestic
squalor

a prickly
forest of
healthy plump
cacti

flourishing among
the rusting bird-
cages and rotting deck-
chairs

the mildewed
roof of the
Conservatory added
a subtle surface to
the gloom

the Conservatory
was furnished
after a fashion
but the chairs and
tables were over-
whelmed by card-
board boxes which
contained canned
soups ham baked
beans salt and sugar

hoarded as a
hedge against
some arcane
calamity

nobody's perfect

the words
"I am inclined"
written every-
where in a
Conservatory are
sufficient to establish
her balanced judgment.

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