



# THE DREAMS HAVE VACANCIES:

SELECTED POEMS  
JOHN DORSEY/2003

SCARS PUBLICATIONS



THIS COLLECTION  
IS DEDICATED TO  
WILLIAM TAYLOR JR.  
AND CAROLINE GAUGER



# CAROLINE BRINGS ME ORANGES

and i always forget say thank you  
too drunk always too drunk

and too chicken shit to say  
i think i love you

so instead of using them for baseballs  
i swallow their meat  
and pour the juice into old wounds

this is the closest thing  
to graditude  
i can think of before 3pm.



# COTTON CANDY

i hold no dreams  
but the ghosts  
are close to my heart

wrapped in cotton candy  
souls caught in fog  
wandering without a cigarette

in need of a flashlight  
they ask doves for favors  
and drive out fractions of wanting

i am a tourist here  
reading palms  
in the world of the dead

they know the date of my birth  
when i'm going to die  
& it's calming to read a smile

a mile away  
men search for  
their own redeeming qualities

i need a ticket to touch ground  
i am a tourist here  
in the world of the living

in between  
with no place  
home

my face changes in sunlight  
you will not know me  
touching the skin along your shadow

you will not notice  
when i change my name  
to fit your stare

& that's exactly what  
you'll be thinking about  
when your own time comes

which  
seems  
only fitting

# GEORGE LIFTS ANOTHER CASE OF GUINNESS

as you watch him board the city bus  
bicycle under one arm  
cast covering his grin  
& fallen leg

you wonder if he'll  
ever get the message  
watching "sawdust sally"  
under crumpled crates  
    listening to iggy pop  
    in the rain  
answering your question

# I LIKE HOTELS

because you can read hamlet  
under a jesus nitelight  
screaming about betrayal  
while eating powdered donuts  
sipping black coffee  
listening to phantom sounds of miles davis  
on a busted turntable

or dream about mermaids  
dishing out soup  
in 1930's oklahoma  
smoldering under the very sun  
that would do in john steinbeck

or fanciful thoughts of ruby slippers  
that never seem to fit  
on a honeymoon  
in modesto  
touring the boone's farm winery  
forgetting all about wanting  
to stomp grapes with mae west  
in boneyard alleys

you can forget about that

i like hotels because the dreams have vacancies

the kind that don't ask questions

# SUIT OF ICE SICKLES

in dreams i am sober  
that's the real life  
spent wearing a suit made from ice sickles

&  
it's a clear night  
of you pronouncing love in broken english  
cause these things are never clear

we touch snowflakes  
to our tongues  
halving our resources  
the ghosts of fallen snow  
angels

# KUNG FU FIGHTING

## (FOR JASON)

i watch my brother  
he is wandering the earth  
like that cat on kung fu  
except without the physical activity

he is fighting something  
most people can't understand  
or even see  
and get it

most ghosts can't be seen  
and that can be confusing  
for the so called "living"  
who haven't had any spirit for a while now

i know my mother misses him  
but she doesn't really know what he looks like  
just the chalk outline placed around our centers  
in the birth canal

maybe he isn't my brother at all  
just simply the voice  
that talks back to me when i talk to myself  
more solid, sweeter than that tune by carl douglas...



# PLAYING WITH FIRE

we're sitting in a diner  
when tim tells me to never sell out

meet an older woman  
move to europe  
you knew ginsberg

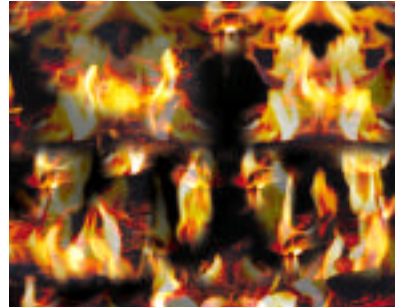
he's afraid i'll find a job  
a house  
a pattern set behind some long picket fence  
which all sounds pretty good

he wasn't there when i rolled quarters for condoms  
in some little room in south philly  
so as not to hear the pitter patter of tiny feet

he wasn't there when nobody told me i was beautiful  
and that room closed in  
old and silly like the bloom of some aient tulip

and i'd like to tell him that nobody knows anyone anymore  
except ghosts ringing bells on posts  
who know my voice  
and hear it still

but i can't because there's another girl  
who's neck i'd like to kiss  
younger than the last  
who doesn't live in the spirit world.



# THE RELIGION OF THE LONELY

these lines are sacred  
    yet broken down  
sold off to shadows  
who've yearned for sunlight

you touch my arm  
craving poetry  
    the first and only  
religion of the lonely

    looking into my eyes  
like a virgin  
willing to pop  
madonna's stolen cherry

still i'm not a zen pebble  
    strewn across some childhood lake  
or even that cross poetry  
that d.a. levy died for

i am a man  
the version roy orbison cried for  
only the lonely  
    know the way i feel tonight

and they are building my love poem's reply  
broke and tired  
ice fishing in sunlight  
    borrowing nights to neglect dreams for

# I WANT TO EAT MARSHMALLOWS

with you looking  
                                  into my eyes  
like i'm crazy  
                                  for practicing kabuki theatre  
in my underwear

instead i am sitting  
                                  in some crap bar  
as the radio plays  
                                  secret agent man  
which keeps coming out  
                                  like secret asian man  
just right  
                                  in this song

i am       the wandering maiden

# THAT SONG HAS RUINED MY LIFE

she says that  
every time i mention  
                    my affection for  
neil diamond

sweet caroline playing  
in the background  
                    of my skull

she frowns to see  
                    me smiling

it's almost like a tidal wave  
swallowing the joy  
                    out of the room  
a faded paper monster

surrounding villagers  
                    in a smoldering  
japanese ghetto  
                    whose screams could  
never  
                    squeal as  
                                    sweet

# THE NEIGHBORS

are screaming  
like lobsters  
in a pot

they form an  
interesting union

just once  
i forgot  
to smile

so they  
internalized everything

# THAT'S WHY I DON'T DATE MORMONS

i heard myself saying  
in small moans coming  
from the dark corner of the ring  
i think of myself as a young jake lamotta

if you're such i great fighter she said  
why are you taking the bus?  
any dog can chase cars i replied  
i fight words

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