



Maybe Once
In A While

volume three

2003 Chapbook
Scars Publications

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Meander

1.

To be
trivial

concise is
not nice

like wishing
thought exists.

2.

There can be
many verbs

but little
movement

since verbs
are created
to be forced
specifically.

3.

The dispersion
of the
ABC's is a
knowledge of
consequence:

let's have
profound respect
for the materials.



Chicago

1.

The falling
snow

is fastly
falling

as we (on the
“L”)

go wetly
around

the graveyard
near

the Wilson Ave.
stop.



2.

The snow is
so slight like
an aged athlete
but the trees
defy description:

squirrels run
around them.



There was

1.

nobody to tell
no way to tell it

she lay across
the bed and looked
stared at the molding
on the ceiling
cut off by the new
wall

many separations had
occurred but there was
no way to say it.

2.

So much of the daily
movement of her life
contained a stillness

her life was in a stillness
containing love all the kinds
of it all the learning nothing
in that place forgotten or past

she let the wall between herself
today and that place fall and
herself be there again there
is pure sun pure sand pure
sea that place of brain mind
soul.

3.

It is always present
you are there when
you let yourself in as
into a room it always
waits for you and you
can always be there live
a life there the same never
changing often nothing very
important except to oneself
even the bad parts and there
are bad parts there because in
love there can not be any evasions.

It was, really, about love.

The Scholar

1.

There
but for
an accident
of geography
stands an
orphaned corpse
abruptly pallid
and shrunken

but
one is obliged
to choose
a side

this is
utilitarianism
although one
can be appropriately
laconic about it.

2.

History
does not cry
over spilled milk

although
history is
an experience
as delicate
and delicious
as protracted
sexual trifling:

defending
the indefensible
believing
the unbelievable
less delightful
more protracted

history
is inexorable
even irony
outlasts dialectic.

3.

She
soldiered on
until the
end

otherwise
she said
nothing of
interest.

The Love

The days were
calm and subdued
we dined at a small
table which didn't
really fit it was always
the same: white sheep's
cheese, cucumbers,
olives we had earnest
civilized conversation
without much noise
I took very little on
my plate like her
everything proceeded
in gentle movements
as much as I recall the
motions of my fingers
I don't recall what we
said except the one
frequently related
sentence, "I love you."

But once she explained
something about olives
to me.

The Lawyer

As an associate
he'd been cherished
praised for the
immense tally of
billable hours he'd
racked up each
year for the
burning churning
focus he gave the
most incidental
problem he led
the most blameless
life a Sunday-school
teacher at church
never behaved
inappropriately
dressed well
conservatively
colorless even
his opinions
predictable he did
no harm not a
charming glad-
hander but safe
secure to demanding
clients' thoughts and
emotions in concentric
boxes nestled smoothly
firmly on the floor of
his mind communication
among them was strictly
forbidden he was one the
firm could not afford to lose.

The Friends

As a child
I usually played
alone: I spoke
to the wallpaper
as the many dark
circles in it seemed
like people I knew

either I told them
stories I made up or
they played with me
I never got tired of the
wallpaper people I
tried to persuade them
to do sexual things but
they refused I let them
feel my scorn I railed
at them called them
cowards

but they did do other
things and uttered
their own lines even
when I was forced to
play with other people
I articulated my stories
to the wallpaper people
quietly I am never
never without them.

The City



was set to
catch the oblique
and seldom sun
that arches always
away from it where the
white stones the vistas
the statues the green
parks the red buses and
flowers wait below the sky-
veiled reaches of every
day to be touched caught
and remembered

on such days
the people lift
their heads and
look at one another
say good morning
to strangers and make
love in the parks sharing
a light as bright as
under water.



The Confusion

Brown-and-
white goatskin
tents were
pitched in the
shade of a
limestone cliff
at the edge
of a stark
exquisite extreme
expanse of desert
the mud-
colored hills
were off
to the north
and the sea
to the east
shimmered like a
vast reflective
mirror or pool
a line of
camels braying
viciously were
protesting as the
sinuous Bedouins
slung crates
over their flanks.

Over

1.

On the other side
of the porch she
stood the spring
fragrance of flowers
flooded and filtered
into the moist air

the fragrance came
from the fields to
wrap her feet
in sweet stoles

all this alerted her
to her sharply
considered lightly
carried burden of
loving love as she
walked the tractored
roads that set
boarders to the field-
fragrance of the flowers.

2.

As the flowers swayed
around her she had
a heavy sense of
ritual as her hair
became the focus
of all the moonlight
in the world

why
here
with a budding angel
among the fragrant
fragrance everything
she had ever done
seemed a trifle non-
turbulent
distance away anyway

but there was one constant:

the putting together
of all things as
they came together
into a combination
that extends this
world into the next.

Fairy Tales

All the fairy tales
are true

we live a whole life
the whole thing
that is haunted by this:
innocence wishes and
love become threatened
by hate and witches and
darkness

we forget that all the fairy
tales are true if you ignore
the happy-ever-after sequence
that adults add to make themselves
feel better

it is the darkness
the haunted woods
the whispers the
curses that children
recognize as true

the rest of us
are like the dawn
without color or
warmth when we
cannot distinguish
the red thread
from the brown.

Blue

1.

Coming
over a rise
they saw it:
in the middle of pale-
gold hills more than
merely blue: the
thunderbolt of blue
breaking leaping over
everything everybody
rocking the sky
cracking their vision
for entry of a
color

the lake was the
custodian of blue
where the blue
from all over
the earth went
for refreshment

it was the history
of blue calling
the beauties of
the past to the
shining of the
present.

2.

The lake moved
turning into itself
coming for them
clamorous
quiet.

Mt . Athnos

The dunes
ended
and we
came to
a flat space
a place
of darkness
where the
sandy grass
crackled and
there were so
many pink-tipped
daisies and
cerlandines that
blossom when the
swallows come

the ground
was pitted
with rabbit-
burrows each
one had a
little pile of
diggings at
the door

here
and there
a tender
violet trembled
in the breeze.

The Immigrants

1.

They came from
the black back
reaches of
the empire

they came from
Holland Ireland
Italy

they even came from
the West Virginia
hills with promises
of lots of money instead
of the trinkets someone
had once given them

the hiring-
agents lured
the poverty-
stricken into
Akron which was
mispronounced in
most languages
of the world

but the words
“money”
and “boom”
were understood
as men steamed
streamed into
factories the stench
ignored by the fortune-

seekers enraptured by
the sweet smell of
four dollars a week.

2.

Bars and boarding-
houses created
from nothing
to service the
muscles of back-
breaking work hard-
drinking men who
drowned the soapstone
stench of the factory
in the beer-and-
whiskey aroma
of the bar

“Hunyaks”
“Hunkies”
“Red Necks”
“Wops”

All the racial
epithets flew
as did fists
of iron

no one seemed to care
everyone thought he was
getting rich.

The Plantation

1.

On a small tributary
of a larger tributary
of the Amazon
he built his house
on stilts

the loneliness was
crushing
the work
exhausting
the jungle
alive with all kinds
of terror

he rose early
because the trees
gave the most latex
before dawn

each day
he cut
the same
path
through the
dense crawling
jungle

each
day
the lush
jungle
would grow
back

with his
empty kerosene
can or calabash
he would collect
the latex usually a
small collection
because of trees
not bleeding at all

he sucked
the rubber
trees

while the leeches
worms
maggots
humidity
disease
rot
from the alive
jungle
sucked him

rat droppings
with beans
and hot coffee
were his staple

sometimes he wondered
how he could go on.

2.

Returning from his
estrada the real work
the smoking of the
barracha
began

he built a fire
of kindling and
urucuri nuts
and placed
gently a funneled
clay pot over the flames

he would dip a paddle
in the latex
and turn it slowly in
the smoke until one
layer hardened
he would dip it again
to form the next layer

this was the way
he built up the biscuits
of rubber and several
months later he had a
twenty kilos biscuit
which he could sell
which was the symbol
of his freedom

but
weighing the rubber
cost money
returning
to the jungle
cost money
less freedom

more of the same:

more fever
more dysentery
more leeches
more of the endless
tracking
from tree to
gashed tree
more rotted food
more stinking nights
more sweating days
much more
cachaca
to blot out
the nightmare world
he had stumbled into

but somewhere
in his mind
deeply recessed
yet available
he thought of home:

knowing that he
would return there
soon.

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scarsuopreagqnd

published in conjunction with

children
churches
& daddies

the unreligious, nonfamily-oriented literary and art magazine

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ISSN 1068-5154

Editor@scars.tv

<http://scars.tv>

829 Brian Court, Gurnee, IL 60031-3155, USA, Northern Hemisphere,

Planet Earth, Solar System Milky Way Galaxy, the Universe

Freedom & Strength Press



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