

# SMORE SIGNALS

NEW 'n' SELECTED POEMS

by JOHN DORSEY

2003 CHAPBOOK

SCARS PUBLICATIONS





and i sit thinking  
about the coat you were married in  
hanging in my closet

and i sit thinking  
about what i can say  
but all i can say is nothing

there are no words after this  
no words  
only invisible whispers

# The Woodpeckers

have pecked themselves out  
committing suicide  
against southern trees  
bearing strange fruit

and i'm a sane man  
listening to billie holiday  
on a cd player it's almost criminal  
the tears start flowing  
evenly

for this you cry?  
the current girlfriend starts screaming  
her version of crazy  
easily defined by merriam webster

mine is slow, uneasy  
hiding under the bed  
like a dirty magazine  
i never cry during the tearjerkers  
that's what they would have you believe



# i can smell the rain

from the window  
it's coming on  
better more real than  
the chinese food  
i've been craving lately

but i can't think about that  
or anything but you  
sitting by the jewish cemetery

when i die  
i may walk  
on water  
or trip gently over my own words

not being jewish  
i'm not sure  
i've always been a little unsteady  
when it comes to tradition

but staring at the back  
of that bench sitting on the grass  
i've never wanted to kiss someone anyone this much  
just wanting to hold your hand  
instead i say nothing  
bowing to  
my own tradition

you  
called  
for  
silence

it called for silence  
this moment

the you, who was never home  
she smiled

but was never broken  
never placed on a cross

your thoughts  
never nailed down

the you, who i held  
in washington square park

under the fog's  
close personal supervision

i remembered a blackeye  
the you, who sent your love

to punch me  
in the stomach

silence liked to watch  
love squirm

and you liked to watch  
the you, who's tears

having ran off  
with words

our silence  
never met





which was silly because i know we're not  
in kansas anymore  
we never were all that was around that corner  
was the bar so i stopped  
in for a drink  
red faced joy is the best  
i've ever known but can never  
seem to remember  
home is no place has no street address  
only a gentle touch

i hustled these streets

12th & spruce  
i carried you on my back  
in my step  
from the cradle to the grave  
thinking i'd found love  
but it was a con  
never hustle a hustler  
the heart was beating before i got here

i hustled these streets

wanting to scream  
but i held my tongue  
knowing that you can  
catch more dreams  
with honey our reflection  
like the pavement a cement blanket  
strewn from an echo's  
sleep  
built to last  
not fade away

these streets  
hustled me

# The lightning in my heart

i keep the lightning in my heart  
in your tattered corduroy pockets  
as my words ignite at the strings

the pope is lumbering through rome tonight  
wearing the sistine chapel t-shirt  
you gave me for my sweet sixteen

i could read rossetti in the rain  
to our son, little pinocio  
but it would still



be love at first sight  
under the broken moonlight  
and besides, i'd still feel  
like a puppet  
or a whore  
made to  
serenade layered  
cobblestone SEAGULLS  
screaming i am a real BOY!  
the OCEAN'S siren  
held  
her through  
third eye needle's  
foam your cradled  
mute  
pitter  
patter  
extinguisher



# BURNT OFFERINGS

twice  
a red shoe  
lightly in your hand

broken bottles  
against the breasts of venus

striped suits  
along the bed at midnight

ovals eyes  
searching the halls above us

like paul revere  
searching for a torch



# i FEEL THE SUN

going down  
setting down  
the dawn

eyes stealing      pixels  
like a gypsy      autumn

ghosts fill  
this      road with  
rain

so we      dance  
but once                      we  
met, as spirits      pupils clouded  
with      dew



# HEROS

# LOOK OUT WINDOWS

it's late

john wayne      running through  
                          my head on the tv  
 stealing            your heart  
                          slapping            my wrist

but your head is pounding      with  
                          these      thoughts

d.a. levyall

                         heart      in            some cleveland  
 basement            riding      a  
                          pony      too  
 heros look            out            windows  
                          smiling into  
    rifles

knowing

                         the end            feeling  
 that it's time      to be gettin' ghost  
                          their forever beating      still  
    gone

however long

   he screams

magic

                         it's all  
    ambience



# CHERRY ON THE PAVEMENT

your eyes  
    seemed bruised  
like a cherry  
    on the pavement

a wounded dove struggling  
to form a definition

and i just sat there  
legs crossed                      salty  
beer can                      warming  
up to  
    the sun  
burning into      your  
   stare

# BEARSKIN RUG



snuck in  
 with your  
 hips  
 perfumed june  
 fingers having  
 known  
 substance jungles of  
 sidewalks  
 i touch  
 twin tears  
 holding  
 brass rings  
 your eyes  
 gleam broken  
 halo messages  
 smells like  
 honey

we touch  
 your hair  
 frayed  
 standing beside  
 yourself with  
 blues  
 tributes to  
 otis redding  
 on  
 the dock  
 of some  
 distant  
 ghost eyed-  
 underwater city  
 held at  
 bay...

# blues No.3 poem

waiting by the side of the road  
thumb out to an american tragedy called homicide  
with venus like discretion

ice shaped into a two faced christ  
call it temptation throwing caution to the wind  
just don't dream



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