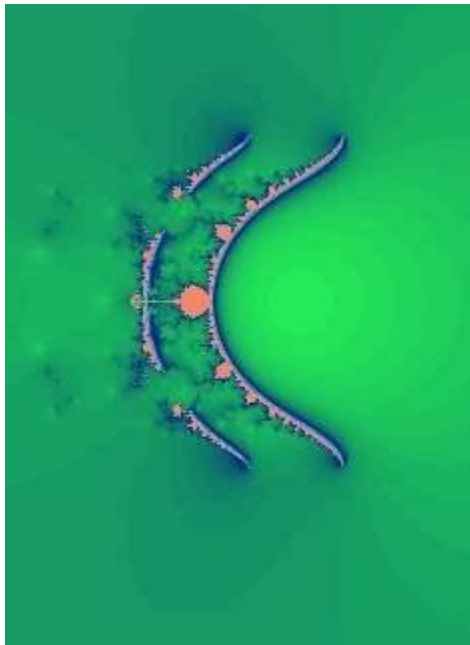


Avenue Noir



Vernon Frazer

xPress(ed)

Avenue Noir by Vernon Frazer

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email: info@xpressed.org

NEON

breaks the twilight's gray
turning blue, blips & flickers
past the sun's burning early set,
neon amber night fluorescent
lights inside the window's pain.
On tabloid integer's renown
one sound: the verbtide hipsters
leather clicking urban heat

DayGlo inamorata
enumerates enameled paramours
besotted in the grotto
leviathan sex an akimbo delight
aerobic modeling for the splintered classes
folk tales as urban blight
benighted testicles agree
lead paints metaphor, transcripts

(glossolalia after dark)

ANOTHER TEXT/UR(E)

Another Ur, the root
ecstatic pulsing under the main,
rooted as text Ur

fast as the strip's Babylonian script:

the tongues as Babel
rise at dusk, a netherworld text
as Ur

the primal seat

founded at the juncture's flow

where sun surrenders the moon

its lead

& knowledge

The ancient opticons of the sighted frail
suspend trailing their tales of tongue, a danger
as inverted as rumored light

begets a stead as influx

(or intrusion
to the known

among the dark's chasers to dawn's reflux inamorata

Nor pedestals invoke
their statue where shadows
seek their breath

or travel begets
cold light's secret heat,

a pale blue breath spokes gold
where mysteries seek their rites
forbidden toasts to hungry gods

where visions breathe as flesh

the derangement of the sentences
during a clash of fatal senses
at the rift between one and its kind
the latest and greatest amanuensis
stripped of day, looking for a lift
beyond its fading glory, another story
forged inside the divide where night passes day
lighting the way for strangers to enter

myxolydian events
at play, the waters dance

NEON

carrion rivulets
prosaic disclaimer:

gravity belches concrete slits
stochastic thermometer gridlock

cool
blue shades walk concrete beats

ad nostrum at the sidewalk rostrum
dead gondoliers fontana
mixed masters

*(& johnsons, yo
grab your ass a condom
it's the safe sex way to go)*

Integer retail penis thrust
enameled as its paramour grotto
besotted listeners, & blunts
angle, trusting gossamer shadows.

Fenestral wagon tankards blue omelets.
Lather gate insemination mantra
flickers blue neon against the shadowed id
shattered, its rubicund velocity shredders
incandescent overture:

to oblong ostinato
wounded night breeds
hover attics garret vespers

Enter cruel piano hoax
on tabloid integer's renown,
the street's urgent memo:

random heat streaking down
sarcastic gondoliers, the acrid passion
of salad tongs

forking lugubrious tongues
past weasels

street heaters of the night
bladed repertoire / jacuzzi

textural velocity
terminal viscosity
textural viscosity
terminal velocity

seminal atrocity by permit only.
Got your I.D., Mister? Now, get out
of the car. I can't. I'm running
late. I'm in a hurry to disseminate

THE MYSTERIES OF AVENUE NOIR

If I can ever get there, that is. Look at this traffic: Ford Chevy Lexus Nova Honda Acura Jetta traffic stalled brand names crammed bumpers slamming butt-end thumps wham bam thank you ma'am! And out there in the middle of this mess some herringbone tweed jacket wire specs type waves his huge cardboard "WILL WRITE FOR FOOD" Lazy fuck! Why can't he squeegee my car like the guy up ahead bending his week's supply of clothing over the hood matted hair tapping the windshield a stroke behind the rubber strip? Oh, shit! Specs has caught sight of me. Runs up to my side window taps frenetically on his top-of-the-line laptop: "Any ode's lapidary causality necessities the furrier's gray esplanade daunting the wary catapult..." Before I can roll down my window tell the presumptuous wimp to go where no action is the squeegee handle whacks the back of his head—"This is *my* lane, motherfucker!" — (as if anyone could tell in this cross clot of traffic) catapulting the lapidary and his laptop over my trunk onto the hood in my rearview mirror necessitating the causality of another "WILL WORK FOR FOOD" to squeegee "WILL WRITE FOR FOOD" off the windshield disparate body and computer parts piling to the choppy asphalt an emergent being pleasantly dormant. "WHAT! NO FUCKIN' TIP!" Squeegee Man pounds the windshield to no effect but surly growls barely audible over a megabass boombox blasting "Don't yo sad ass be draggin down this street/or uhma whack you, sell you as dead meat/Don't wanna save yo ass for later?/ Let me draw my perforator" until the squeegee's wood handle dents the hood dents the size of eggshells driver gets out made as hell duels the wood handle with a closed umbrella no Errol Flynn's on this scene not even the cops never there when you need one not that they get very far here on Avenue Noir even ambulances sit in traffic sirens screeching save a life. "Walkin down the street or sittin in yo car/Ain't nobody safe out here on Avenue Noir" the boombox says. Siren screeches cascade from ahead and behind police lights their blue flickering a blinding fluorescent almost white another neon left to right and back flashing messages to minds empty of anything but the urge to park the car step into the dark and start the party. The hammered pile of RAM flesh and keyboard parts starts to congeal inside the tweed coat torn ragged from the stomping, a human rejection slip face a laptop screen flashing its phoenix: "WILL WRITE FOR FOOD" only this time the cardboard gone upscale to monitor, this callow face sallow complexion dares to show itself where sentences collide in the park watching

(glossolalia after dark)

ANOTHER TEXT/UR(E)

A college sensibility?

a collage of sensibilities

a collage

of sen

si

bil

a college sentence

linguistic incontinence

links the divide where

subliminal acupuncture threads

their songs of dirty needles

senses collage

senses collide

sentences collage

sentences collide

i

ties

senses collide

sentences collage

sentences collide

senses collage

Her oblate jewels per sanskrit raga mix

instant closure fixed as metrical writ

the cinder of the tide inside

a rhythm as the traffic's flow

cultures which seek

their corroded wreckage

giving colonic substitutes

traffic enhancement's prenatal fix

adjacent truckers pit stops against bulls

betting their tethered circle dimlit currency

in the parking lot whose shadowed losers go

naked as a jade bird I cry the rage of lost RAM at the thousand points of light glistening the night's first revelation of gratuitous cruelty in the face of lapidary causality my keyboard fingerings a delirious tremor in the sensory esplanade a thousand points of night all signifying laughter's broken glasses, a rapture of asyntactical musics presupposed as anguish or nocturnal omission ruptured quintessential luxuries misgiven as natal tincture's eidetic savagery, ampersand or not. My monitor beckons its lost charge, my batteries all. A windshield I'm not. For food I will. Where the action goes, is. Nor a squeegee will stop their spurious sponging, my gift a station of epiglottal transfers. Nor the traffic's demands honking forward movement. The lateral "I" crosses the tease of traffic sex and darkness incensed at the intense tide of ecological waste spreading across this unfamiliar terrain—a death sentence to deaf ears and noses dulled by old factory stacks pluming the air. Sensible people would try to ration the raging spew and spillage so prevalent in this street the dusk of darkness a dust of smog layering the sensibilities to dull the legendary edge where incendiary passions meet their future fossil fuel. Lingering wisps of carbon monoxide leak as far as the sidewalk, no surprise in this Ur of consumer decadence infringing on the side where fresh air collides with smog somewhere far from Avenue Noir, this mix-matched land of the Babylon Sutra. The strong odors affect my sensibilities, intensify my latent allergies to subliminal post-dormancy, denying my tenure in this carnival of lights feeding off the energies of its consumer victims. Their innate cruelty sticks closer than the cling of carbon and humidity to my skin. Intent as I am on going as far as I can on Avenue Noir my corpus until tonight has never eroded from the hindrance of glowing ions in the process of composition as process. It's slow going through this traffic jam of Hondas and homeless, a pit of wipers. The jowly johns in search of hookers hidden behind tinted windows. *Will wipe windshields for food!* No appreciation of talent in here. Certainly not mine. I'll try not to let it erode my confidence. Let them learn to beckon me with graphic *double entendre* gaffes ironic attributes instead of berating my offering my best talent so that I can live by my wits in the life this street pulls me toward, the curbside setting such inappropriate weather, a setting more suitable to the squeegee men now getting together their unwashed *ad hoc* militia waving handles like cops their billy clubs at students protesting college. Brutality darkens their weathered faces' leather urgency. They advance on me through this parking lot of stalled vehicles, abuse beading through their sullen stares getting closer to me despite my backpedaling between bumpers, a broken-field run done in reverse gear between bumpers then backing crab-style over the hoods barely separated by bumpers while the squeegees hammer them denting everything but me. Fortunately I'm not lacking in agility, a survival tool for hopping cars here on Avenue Noir. But one squeegee hits my head like a

wrecking ball. Colonic substitute
teachers whose egregious flux
remunerates sordid ventricles
rapt to estuaries of the mind

corroded cultures reeking
wreckage gone untapped.
Show kindness to brutes

Reverb guacamole airstrip day
dragstrip hangars ate the plant.
Its warehouse stooges three

*(Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir?
What else you dudes expect down here
on Avenue Noir?)*

Unionized beggars screech the streets
cornering the block & cornered by the cops
demanding parity of arching bellows
shrieking shrieks a face its torment
a torrent blows wide as traffic / footing the wheel

In lectures of sexual deuteronomy
Seconal babes inverted

NEON

nights a fright-wig future
sutures if you don't pay
when you play with the

*"Hey there, Big Boy,
You want a date?"*

(Handy, cheap
hotel room suite
@\$25 per)

red hot pants leaning against the

brick. He falls down, all in a heap, the friggin' little wimp. I bend down, looking around, reach for the bucks in his wallet. What are *you* so bent out of shape about? Lookin' at me like I'm some kind of vulture. I squeegeed the jerk and he didn't pay up. Or did he reach for his wallet? Either way, I rapped him good. I'm tapped out. I'm not the kind of dude who can go without pay. Before I got stuck out here I had me a job, bread and herb in my pockets. Then they moved the plant to Mexico and left my ass hanging. There were no jobs out there—*none!*—so I fell into this huge hole in the economy and never found a way to climb back out. It was scary, let me tell ya. But I got used to it, getting stripped away bit by bit like a go-go girl only no tips to live on, no-thing. After a while it got almost amusing to watch myself get picked away piece by piece. First the car, then the furniture, finally the place itself. The shelters took me in at first, then shooed me away when I came in loaded on whatever I could score...beer, coke, a toke when I could find it. Haven't you noticed our kind can't get enough bread together at one time to have a stash of our own, never mind a place to crash? And the women disappeared as fast as anything else. Even the hookers were out of reach, pricewise. A night in the lockup was almost as good as the shelters, where a good night's sleep is a rarity. You've got to keep one eye on the fellows in the other beds, screaming crazies some of 'em, and hide your money in your shoes or socks. They'll steal anything they can. And the babes you meet in there! Totally strung out...you name it, they've done it. You think you got a little something going, scratch up a down payment on a little love nest. Next thing you know, they're gone and so's all you've saved. They revert to type, blow it all on a drunk or a coke binge ...maybe on another guy...Next time you seem them it's at the shelter. *Deja vu*. Wouldn't you? You try to avoid the traps of the night, the neon beauties who turn ugly at dawn. But sometimes you can't...or won't. Like up there ahead of me, eyes lingering as mine make contact with them like they want to play for pay. Hey, I'm a man with money in my pocket and a handle in my hand. Where else do I rate? And for how much? Plus room? Suit yourself, but I'm going for the moment. It's all I've got for a future. It's what I rate these days. Not what I used to be, but hey...Around the corner to the brick wall with the generic sign over the entrance, the desk clerk eyes down cash up front sign in Mr. and Mrs. Smith or Jones whatever. The promise of sweet meat paid for before somebody else grabs the wad. Ecstasy two flights up. I follow her swaying buns under the stairway's dim light. The shadows make it more suggestive, its promise sweeter. But you always have to consider the risks. Maybe her pimp's up there waiting in a closet to beat me up for what I've got. That's the game, or one of them. All I got is enough for this trick. Not enough for serious kink, never mind basic extras Not enough to waste his knuckles on. Better for him to leave this john alone. I unlock the door. She says go in first. Not a good sign. She squeezes the

aching projectile. Parthenon griddle.
Dad on the scent raked concrete clocks,
manifold destinies in reflux. Verbs acrylic
the acid of netherworld compost
infects the host's Plutonian grid.

Lock the door with quarters & ampersands,
their native trajectory burns luminescent blue.
Love handle gridlocks eat for caviar paddles

Rotor dendrites block the door

denote the obfuscation's choir

the noir of caterwauling concubines

(peaking behind &)

in bed

sneaking

penumbral

visions

sleek as
the heat
of
their pillage

every night

a tutelage as mastered
tails a telling:

cat o'
bedtime
stories

at nine

(in discrete)

no pewter history

The gift of trade, of all
that's played for, bucks
a frayed nerve gas its tonsils.

"No tricks in the johns, please!"

door shut with my butt while the john starts diddling his pocket rocket. He's bent forward, naked and leering. What did I drag off the street this time? When I fold down the bedsheets, he waves this squeegee thing at my head and I duck. "I don't do no sex toys," I tell him. "I'm not that kind of girl. For sex like that, you pay extra. That could infect me. I'm in business. I don't need no disease." Get him out and back onto the Avenue as soon as I can, this one. Weird John! He's so blasted out he can't tell his squeegee from his Luigi. But my daughter and old man, they need the money. He lands on the mattress, hands pulling down his zipper, so ready to do me. He ain't gonna do me for the cash. Screw him! I don't know what he's on, but he's addled. Over his cock he got this sign that says, "WILL FUCK FOR FOOD." Did I lock the door? Maybe I shouldn't have. Sickie wants a freebie! Shit! I could end this right now but his cock pays for my brain candy. Wish I had some now. I need to be higher to handle this creep. Hasn't washed in weeks, smells like a goat. He's there on the bed. I'm as far away from the smell as I can get, almost into the hall. I can't cater to this creep no matter what, but it's him or find another who could be even worse. It's tough to find a good guy these days, especially one who pays. On the one hand I'm tempted to sneak out, but I got my own needs—his money, then find something sweet for my head. It's my weakness, I admit it. But I dread what this guy might do. Try to beat me for a freakin' freebie, most likely. "Your sign ain't good here, only your money. You want love, you gotta pay. Cash up front." He stumbles forward, a wad in hand. "That should cover it," he says. "You could cover it with twenty less." "Fine," he says, pulling one back. Jerk don't get my joke. "But that don't cover my service charge, you horny bastard. You want the honey, you pay the money." "Fine," he says, shoving the twenty forward again, the cheap bastard! His swelling johnson rises, in all its five-inch glory. "Get on over here, baby." I lie down naked beside him. He starts to tell me his story, all a secret he doesn't want his friends to know. "Be discreet," he says. "With who?" Then he grabs this plastic bottle and starts spraying blue window washing fluid on me, runs the squeegee down each of my breasts and over my belly, almost pinning me to the bed. "You only paid to get laid, not for no extras," I say, backing off till I fall off the bed. The floor's almost as filthy as this guy looking for more fuck than he's paid for. "Sorry, guy, but I'm outa time." I pick myself off the dust mat, start backing toward the door. But he cuts me off in front of it. "I paid for a piece of ass and I want it." "You acted like an ass. You want peace, you got it." I pull on my hot pants and halter, sidestep the jerk and lock myself in the bathroom, hoping he'll just give it up and go. Instead he calls the desk clerk, who comes upstairs and shouts through the closed door asking me to please leave. Fine by me, mister. I don't need no hassle from some cheapskate john with a squeegee fetish and some strung-out night clerk thinks he's runnin' the goddamn Ritz. No way! I need

marijuana celibacy
and a vial of
temporary tetrameters
available at work

Metafictional dialysis

in column stands the candle
for its whispered blight

runic sediment delays apocalypse
through ruinous sentiments decay
the vernacular as a formality
of tongues

tangled in love & glossolalia

where tamarind's ancient sweat breathes chimneys

in the night of **neon shadows flickering** right and left

Spectral paramours, the delight of

danger's anticipation, its lover's touch

closets open

skeletons wail

solo passengers past memories to themselves
searching the streets

to see

what I got, sister.” She looks at me. “You wanna cop some shit off me, you gotta gimme the bread,” I tell her. “The shit don’t come free.” She flashes me this chastened look, hoping I’ll lay some on her, a gift, like I’m some rube off the prairie just blown into town. “Well?” “I’ll be able to pay you tomorrow. Some john, he just burned me.” “Some john just burned you, baby, you wouldn’t be here.” I tell ya, man, this gig makes you real good at fictional analysis. Character motivation: she wants to knock down the price, trick me into giving her a better deal. What a character! I’ve tried all this before and it just doesn’t work. While I’m waiting for her reply, she stands there, working through some arrangement in her head. “I can make it worth your while,” she says, her face dim in the light. “Listen, sister, I’m in business. I’m not the only person I answer to.” “Try me, you’ll see.” “That’s not the point.” “You’re connected, you can make up the difference.” “Not with these guys.” No room for sentiment or lays. No matter what she can do with her lips, I have to pay my supplier. He’s a real kneecap kind of guy. Her lips form a pouting circle, as if about to say something oracular. Without delay I remind her no matter how spectacular she is, love without money doesn’t go very far on Avenue Noir. “The john hung me up. I can get you the rest later tonight. Tomorrow at the latest.” Yet another angle. Her needs versus my needs. Above all, she wants a stash. Above all, I want cash. I’m not going to wrangle about it with her. She can put her money where her mouth wants to be, talking tongues all over me. Her forehead breaks out, wet beads popping, her breathing turns short and desperate. “I know what you want. Get me what I need and come back later. She turns on her spike heel, sways her red hot pants defiantly at me, heels clicking the concrete between the alley’s debris. She’s lost her credit. I’m the last thing standing between her and detox. Freed on bail for the thousandth time, she drifts back to the curb in search of an-other honest working stiff with a sign. She could be on the walk, picking up the middle-aged set come down here for kicks pay double price. Instead she makes the night’s danger. Worse, puts herself in situations even a pimp couldn’t protect her from. Or wouldn’t. Ain’t no pimps that dumb. It’s such a desperate trip she’s on, her street amours, most of them fresh out of jail or the dumpster. And her discount prices don’t bring her enough to score anything. She’s so hard up she’d try to nail a skeleton just come out of the closet if it had a dollar bill in its hand. She’s stooped that low. And I been watching her all the way, since Day One. I remember when she was young, cast herself as the sexiest working girl out there. She had looks, class...But it didn’t last. She jones’d her way past the rest of the girls on the Ave in a matter of weeks, almost. In and out of the slammer like it was a revolving door. None of the pimps wanted her. Cost them too much bail, court costs. Cost her too many black eyes from guys in feathered hats. Then they decided there wasn’t no profit in beating on her. I’m in business, but I hate to see

the lurid tide of thronging vectors
emaciated lassitude attuned to the music
of corn biscuits,

strumming adipose wafers
when Cancer will never do

GHOSTS

Or
things
that
take
shape
in
the
night

...will it!

(especially where
the tram's substantiation
of souls
breeds metal psychosis)

among the waters of the truant id
waver their flux of intention cast in concrete

the mucilage of faded youth
swimming the urban tide
grating pride's last humidity
at the strut of velcro ankles

walking
talking
gawking
squawking

Neither fruit nor G-string shall prevail,
its choice void of semiotic transfer
or the busses of naked ladies

(voice of the
platform shoe
awakening)

waving in triplicate | to the threat
their one formality | of morning sun

a mission dissembled
at the random plan's arcade.
Embryonic transfers
attach their needy seed

thongs in crowded rooms. Even though I'm riding the contact rush of the sex-crazed young bucks this identity vector doesn't hide my attitude. I'm sick of all these horny young guys around me, but not the tunes on the jukebox I'm humming along with, or watching big tits shake with the dancers. I just want to sit alone getting my eyeful and an earful. "I'm gonna RAPE that bitch!" one barely legal kid boasts. (But not of that!) Inside or outside this joint, he'll never get close enough to get the next eyeful—knocker or knuckle, his choice. The dancers have good protection, starting with the Caddy that drops them off and picks them up. Most of them use it. It costs a bundle, but you need protection in their line of work. And they've got plenty. There's the undercover security, suits or jeans sitting at the bar or along the runway. It's better not to take any chances that could shape the night's events in a dangerous way. Trouble is, a lot of the guys in here don't know how things work. Let people have a good time, that's what *I'm* here for. But slower is better for me. I get to see the dancers without trying to look around these arms flagging bills at the runway. The line of sight improves with a few empty seats. And the beers come quicker. A little while and they'll head to the dance clubs. I'll stay here till the next wave comes in for the dancers to scam, the boys looking for instant thrills, a place to sow buckets of imaginary seed. Better than date-rape. Who knows if they actually get anything beyond a dream and a hard-on. These daughters of the night—and I don't mean the hookers—put a lid on the slavering bucks who get too close for comfort in their blind urge to fuck. The girls aren't doing anyone any favors. Don't even mention tricks, except to the jones girls. The music and the talking between sets...all of it's a tease, one you can't take seriously once you've become jaded. The truth is, it wears thin after a while. Me, I come in here as much to hide as anything. A little herb and tumidity while I'm keeping the outside world at bay, all the squawking and gawking, the emotional dankness. What the hell! When I've regrouped, I'll slide through the flannel shirts and negligees, half-polluted, out past the barker on the sidewalk who's hawking "GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!" His voice annoys me, its grating tone an octave lower than the revving engines and screeching brakes in the street...all those cars, trucks and busses finally moving. Maybe it's time to down this last one and take myself elsewhere...not a rock club, maybe one of the jazz joints. Better there, the crowd more attentive to the music than your run-of-the-mill club, but plenty of background action...drugs and sex "wherever liquor is sold." But a little more subdued, more discreet. One of these days that old slogan structure will fade and a new one bearing no resemblance will rise in its place: new form, old message, played incessantly. One will die of attrition, then the next, each one played to death like life itself. Can someone ever birth a new meaning? Womb to tomb they continue. Maybe no meaning. Out to the street. Obfuscation of the old messages might hatch new meanings...old hopes never die. Nor the need

to reflexive verbalizing
seminal autonomic trappists
their tropists fully in arrears,

their fear flying
passages in the dark
inflexible

(beer assuages the need
for trying replication)

NEON

till dawn's fated run

The colorectal ampersand enamors the stately interjection
talks place in the shadows of blind alleys, dead ends threatening
resurrections as dawn. Drawn from the fold they follow
the music

(glossolalia after dark)

of tongues
poking crevices
previously unseamed

where ludicrous practice
flaunts its impeccable wants
as deeds

(here it breeds stitches
amid daunted flaks)

haunting elastic solos

(a switch to
high colonic residue

legato as the teeth
bearing their ignition

sealing the shiny blade
between blue denim slits

and those who would beg

for reefer affect my playing. Once I'm into my solo, my ears feed my hands and it all comes out together. A accent from the traps inflects the line I'm improvising (just like this). I've gotten past my fears that I'll ever sound really bad, you know. I mean lousy bad, not *bad* bad. But some nights you're tired, you know. A beer or two or a few more helps me engage with the music. A few more and I might be merging with Creation but playing sloppy fingerings. A little herb almost always sets me flying free on new scales, massaging a few old ones into newer shapes, a living musical lexicon...or so I'd like to think. But I know better. Come sunrise, I'll be weaving up the walk to my pad, the night's playback in the car wakes me to the sun of it: man, I didn't sound different at all. Not. At. All. A run played stoned or straight sounds the same. The only difference is how you feel. Feeling good always helps. Then there's smack. An injection of that...I never used it. The glamour of Bird, you know. I never fell for that self-destruct jive, getting wasted on smack so you can *think* you're playing good as Bird. You never know what they lace the shit with either, man. Ain't no glamour in being a dead junkie or a strung out one, face drawn, old before your time ...Bird was dead at thirty-four. Gone. And all that music with him. Nothing wrong with old players, as long as they keep the music new. Add to the language. Not that it's a language in the sense of verbalization, things with dictionary definitions and all that. It's talking in tongues, taking the music to a higher plane like you do in a smoking set. The vices might make you feel more comfortable some nights, you might *seem* to be talking near-meaning to the ear fronting the open spirit, but you might have a few hitches holding you back. On that plane, man, the voices take over—you don't fall back on no devices, man---haunting you inside your head, even cracking your skull open from the inside out so you can hear them talk the hidden meanings haunting you. The spectrum is vast. Sometimes you hear them, you think you've cracked up. Well, maybe you have cracked up. But it's telling you in words beyond words what you need. But right now I need something beyond words to launch me into my blowing. I feel like I'm playing staccato when I should be playing legato. It's a bitch to reach for those wordless messages. Maybe the young dude sitting solo at the front row table has some atomic shit I can breathe in. It's almost a tradition, you know, these young cats coming up to the stand just as we go on break and offer you a few hits off their atomic J's. A free buzz is a good deal, better than most anything I've ever paid for. The dudes who sit alone carry the best shit, usually. Maybe it gets the tongues talking inside their heads, man, I don't know. But I know it does mine. Being a musician, the bread sucks on most gigs. Oh, I get a nice concert every now and then, a good payday. But the bread's not great in joints like this. That's why I keep my little stash at home. Man, I can't afford to bring my own tokes to my gigs. But these young dudes come up, offer to take care of my head. Being in the band means I don't beg

oscillating punctuation platforms
to transfer pataphysical definite articles
to backroom colonoscopies, an invasion

of syntax, to say the lease

has expired on dental work

crucified the enamored harlot

*Come by foot,
come by car.
Come get
your kicks
on Avenue Noir*

on the crest of her golden heart,
its myth attached.

(Set in myths
of Romantic
Literature)

A legend
patchy at best

its reality invites

Spreading permutations & fonts
enough lingo here to satisfy your wants

or gratuitous
curiosity, remove
all doubt about
the possibility to score
anything you want

& needs
Just go out
& do your
deeds
on Avenue Noir



The permutating gristle of the street
hisses the need for gratuities, enamored opportunists
lather the lonely bed

where father crept around

for it. I've got plenty of money, I can pay the bitches. Better than they'd normally get. Look at em. *Jeeee-zuz!* So many babes floating on this street you'd think they were phantom particles in some kind of giant sex atom. They have this blank look on their faces, a floating doom. Hidden tracks between toes, nothing to disfigure or discourage anybody of the persuasion to pay for play. Of course it doesn't come cheap. And neither do I. I'll pay their Sin Tax. Please spare me the haggling over price. I'm tired. Mentally, physically. If you've tried to find a glamour spot on this street, you're hardly the first. But coming down here is a test. You start out soft, then you harden. Just like a prick. *Har har har!* The prostitute with a heart of gold! More like a wallet. One her pimp empties at the end of the night if she doesn't run the bucks up the veins in her arm. Weird place for a place to get his johnson stuck, if you ask me. Me, I just want your basic fuck or blow job. Nothing too kinky. There's plenty of room in this car. If not, I can rent a hotel room on Avenue Noir. These chicks wouldn't exactly fit in at an uptown hotel. Call girls they're not. I want my kicks and I'll pay for them. Just as long as I don't get them from a long-legged babe who packs a dong in her thong. It's a hoot to hear about the edgy new guys who get just far enough to make that bum discovery. Sorry, wrong gender. An experience I'd rather miss. But they're all out there tonight, both genders, scratching for work. Maybe I *could* test the market tonight. There are so many hot pants and platform shoes out there you could get your pick of who you want to suck your dick. If you had the juice, you could test em all, see who's best and set up a regular meet. As regular a meet as the street allows, like: "I work this corner around eleven." As close to a steady invite as you'll get. They're in business, after all. Modeling poontang options for sex investors or textual gestures if you're all words and no action. If you're not there, they have to be available for somebody else who comes by. Me, I'm simple. I have my wants: spread your legs so my thing can fit your groove. When I'm done, go on to the next customer. At least, I've gotten my bit. Nice money, no animosity. Just do the deed, put the gun back in the holster and bolt. Get out before any trouble hits. Now, there's one fine whore coming out of the jazz club. A looker, more like a call girl type. Tall, blonde, leggy—the whole package without the price. Inside the club, I'll bet it's a *lot* more. Call girl prices. Let me pull over to the curb. "Hey, baby. Come on over here." She leans into the lowered electric window. "Hi, sweetie. Want to play?" "Depends, mister. How much you wanna pay?" "Name your price, babe." On any other street she's worth a whistle, a head-turner you can't miss. A glamorous opportunity: young, shapely meat. Does she have a sister, make it a three-some? "I'm as many as you need." "Hop in the car. Let's go to a hotel." "Oh, no. I don't go to no rooms down *here*. They're all so tacky." "I'd rather have a bed." "Would you rather have someone else?" "You drive a hard bargain," I tell her, feeling my drive. "Meet me around

SHADOW

the corner ventricles, shadow
runes, the mystical playback
against

hidden ardor, forbidden zeal.
finds it home in the

just off the block.

Nor praise for the emptiness of strangers
overbidding the crossroads past the light
a new poem emerges, amid the other
& its reflection of self in the.

(Nor tragic
wept asides
as vehicle
of darkness)

scoring in back seats
past & present,

Indefensible as utterance
the oblong grate sheds stains
of former nectar, the tide
past motion

the ride

all get taken

for

in the

acting as mirror

to the night

The brick strains its personal limits,
swells imitations of silent fortitude

(one within one, one within the other)

the corner.” Then I sway back into the shadow diagonal to the asphalt and concrete under the streetlight, making myself plenty visible on the walk. The cruisers hang in the shadow of the apartment looming over the driveway. Here’s the sucker now, tooling his slick wheels toward me, eager as a pup. Even behind his stunted windshield, I can see the gleam on his face. Or imagine it. The Easy Listening tunes leak out of his locked windows. Getting himself in the mood. I hope he’s in the mood for surprises. Mister-Have-It-All will get the one thing he doesn’t have, hear the one tune he can’t play back. His gruff ardor and hidden zeal will come crashing down on him like the roof of his home. “I got a wife and kids.” And a cock he can’t keep zipped. The same song I hear the other “girls” talk about when the Entitled Class gets caught with its cock sticking out of its Acura out here on Avenue Noir. His silver-gray rod slides to the curb, slick with anticipation. I forgot. What am I supposed to do? If I get in, I’m on my own. It’s not like I’ve got a wire. Can’t look around, make him suspicious. I stand frozen as his window buzzes down. Let him tell me what to do, that’s my only chance to do this right. “Come on, get in. I haven’t got all night.” The Busy Man Bluster. My first night out here and I’ve sized this john up already. Not exactly my type, that’s for sure. I give a tempting strut toward his puffy face looking half-crazed with testosterone surges. “Hurry it up, will you!” He’s not exactly gazing fondly. Makes you wonder what happens to the girls who get in the car. Anger management problems? Not me. “What did you say you wanted again?” He tells me. I tell him my price. He gives it to me, no dicker-ig, then growls, “Come on, get in here.” My voice drops an octave: “You’re under arrest.” His face freezes into a tragic mask. His wheels peel forward from the gutter. Luckily I pull back my arm in time to avoid more than a minor bruise. The cruisers wheel out, cut him off front and back. He’s fled all of five feet. No fun for him tonight. Didn’t even get past go. He’ll be home late, a horny turd with his credit card tied to a bail bondsman. Whatever his past—he looks like your Solid Citizen type---it looks like an unhappy present for him. I hope it’s not his birthday. The notion of coming down here for a ride in the shadow of some side street has its risks. Not that he’s eager to pay for them. “I got a wife and kids.” My fantasy’s acting as mirror to my reality. I read the guy right and it was only my first time out here. You’d think a guy in his position would have a fear of getting caught. Play it safe. Or more discreet, at least. He looks like he can afford a call girl or an escort no problem. But the night brings out the idiots as well as the id. Some people feel cozy, almost safe in the shadows, engulfed in the protective arms of concrete and brick, although it’s just an illusion. The cover of darkness has its limitations. The guy shuffles into the cruiser. Another cruiser calls in for the tow truck. And I’m out here again. I’m not really comfortable with this gender thing. And these platforms are killing my ankles. But I’m stuck here until the brass decides to assign some other

pliant platitude befitting its jocular
lumbago as phonetic erasure, primal

as spent lubricants. The penitents
bluster attitude, time after time,
venting litigants ensue, half-past

the vagaries of spotted thyme.
Horizon's edge never tinges
with dawns slow ring, nor
evident tedium as canticle.
They went forward posed

as P.M. plumage preening dorsal tailors. Epidermal
transmissions wager caustic boundaries against the
light, doom screaming badgers tensed jailers, right

left or other where they are, seeking
the previously sought or bought, their own
this time, their first.

As memory shadows future,
so, the itch after suture continues,
gaunt as memory, anecdotes
dismembered past haunts

A RECKONING

retooling gauntlets
in the narrative sky.

where telltale aquifers
flourish nettlesome consonants

against the meddling antics
beckoning narrative

in romantic stead

to the inevitable confrontation with the self, an attitude narrowly binocular in the time and space assured pataphysical juxtapositions when spacing the event distance between signified and signifier, leaving as its hair trace an approximation of police procedural platitudes at crime scene after crime scene, inventing the cast of language by way of its characters. Its efficacy hinges on post-legendary erasure, inventing language clusters of the kind one writes on laptops in venues observed from corners slotted for the sole observer of a dance of participants in process, rising to inch toward the next signing construct, mutely drawn for singing karaoke against the foregrounding of this text. Their incantations register at medium volume in this monastic corner of freebased language nosing toward the real, hinging on the cutting edge as much as language permits. Its flowing limits extend beyond the concept beyond the formal experientialist quantification of night's neon ghosts positing erasure as half the sum of memory. Screaming situations arose during the early stages of this cogitative mission's dividend, an epidermal heat as intense as the night street of addicts, beggars, hookers, soldiers, sailors, and wayward youth and adults, all gleaming peripheral regard (at best) to the other lights in the room looming as the collective other separate from receiving their issued sensations and concatenating them as the self. The other, as other, has no self except through its role as other to the perceiving of the "I." Bereft of a formally fixed identity, the "self" as construct seeks (and/or sought) its own unity as a nexus to the self postulated by the self as the otter. (A case of mistaken identity, given the subjectivity of perception as process and its consequent typography.) The subjectivity of perception leads to the formulation of the self as ego, an organizational entity perceived by itself as superior to the otter in its guise as other (or, for that matter, the other disguised as otter). The fully-constituting ego (as it must be, in continuing process) hosts a plethora of platitudes, daunting in their ability to elevate the self as self-perceived entity, beckoning the construct of its own illusory transcendence and fueling the threat of the other toward a self-reflexive construct lacking the diversity of its pre-narrative perceptual field, i.e., the "self" before its ego can consolidate the diversity of sensory experiences presented to it by the diversity of sensory perceptions constituting the other in its fluctuating state of thereness. Where I'm sitting as I write this seems a continent removed from the incidents of terrible vocalizing, now elevated to a volume that vibrates the floor beneath me while piercing my ears with the verbal equivalent of hatpins. Now the meddlesome others constituting a collective room of self turns toward the perceptions generating a discomfoting sense of "me," their arms beckoning me toward the stage. This is a reckoning with fate I'd hoped to avoid. My short-lived career as an Elvis impersonator led me to a career in pedantic literary theory. I try to tell the people I don't want to relive those frantic, harrowing young dreams. Instead

wells gush the gutter's blood,
the gutted bleeding in the 'hood

*(Yo, the dude's up to no good.
Living large, a blunt, a piece,
a purple battle scar.
That's what you get
from the action out on Avenue Noir.
Listen to me, jack, you think
this street's another walk in the park.
Y'all comin' down heah for)*

(glossolalia after dark)

**Things
take shape
in
the night**

The attraction of the action
follows its own incarnation, a muse
meant

errants of the night
swag and swagger, brag
& stagger

home / is where the

hearth throws its light across the shadow it casts
its darker wages in advancing stages

**senses collide
sentences collage
sentences collide
sentences collage
senses collide**

**textural velocity
terminal viscosity
textural viscosity
terminal velocity**

the velocity of the bullet splattered his blood all over the gutter. A real gusher, it was. Nailed him right in the gut. A surprised look froze on his face, then it lidded over just as his knees buckled.. I got him good. You come up short on me, you pay another way. We had the deal set. The guy looked desperate. Too desperate to be a good fink for the undercovers. He'd play one side against the other just to get himself a fix. No matter how strung out he was, I thought he was smart enough not to mess with me. I tried to do the guy a favor. You'd think a guy in his position would take care of business. He wouldn't have to hunt up another score too soon with what I was giving him. The price I charged was below standard. For some reason, the better part of me said help the punk. We set the time and place for the transaction, a side street just off the Avenue. As soon as I got there, a half-hour later than he was supposed to show, things started to stink. He wasn't there. A junkie late for a dealer! I should've packed up and headed out. Junkies wait for dealers, not the other way around. It's part of the game. Coming down here for the jerk was a mistake. I should have known better than to deal one on one on the street. There are reasons why I don't do street-level dealing. Try to give a sucker a break and he shows you why you shouldn't. Better to deal with the middle-man, my car parked in some neutral location, say, a colossal shopping mall where all the coming and going provides cover for men like me in business suits. Better to feed the street action from a safe distance than surrender to its attraction. Instead, I found myself parked in the middle of a massive traffic jam, not exactly a relaxing cruise and certainly not inspiring. Then when I finally get out of the jam, the guy's not even there. Whatever the guy's intent, things weren't shaping up the way I wanted: a quick score, go in fast and get out the same way. Safe. Well, there *was* a quick hit, as opposed to a quick score. The loser hands me fifty "I said a hundred." "This is all I could *get*, man." "You *creep!* You want me to take half. You really think *I'm* gonna give you this much shit for half the price?" "I'll get it for you tomorrow, man. I *swear.*" "The shape you're in, you'll go on a jag, shoot it all now. If you don't O.D., you'll come up short again, you fucker." "No, man. You got me all wrong." "Look, punk. I got a wife, a home, a life. I don't stick my neck out for some sorry-ass street junkie who thinks he can burn me." The punk looks at me, his mouth gaping in the shadows. "Tomorrow, man. Square business." "We've done business in the past." "I always came across, man." I'm advancing, he's retreating. "Sure. After I tracked you down." "You know how it is, man." "I know you've been lucky." "Lucky! I've been *sick.*" "Lucky I didn't take you out." "I'll have the rest for you tomorrow. "No you won't." "I'll meet you here, same time tomorrow." "Same time tomorrow, you'll be a ghost in print." This guy sticks to his bullshit the way text sticks to a page. When I pull my piece out of my shoulder holster, he gasps, then turns to run. But the bullet

velocity tissues paper allegations
won't hold up under water (or in court, front
or half, or double
the light teamed

Nightly brigades fair vanity stretchers Scruples
their crossroads to be determined where weather the night
obsidian blankets peek lancers thrust full with moon
travesty the dancer's leg raised high
begets acclamation in combat
its wary dividend as is evident subcutaneous landfill
matters

The very threat of acclamation
raises (ly) silence among the wary hoisting their petards
from dead vespers clung, scared for patches of namesake
The full moon, amber sand, motes sweat (re-
deter the ample station from its watch in leather model
a bruising patrol no matter the accruals the
cruiser

(or area
discussion) a buried nor
comma under dare
leaks flesh they

ONLY
THE
SHADOW
its
pause

LURKS
A scalar residue presiding glows
later than the tide of after-images over
too late to be moribund, or even. (jazz the
whispers walk
crescent
secrets)

& where the denizens haunt, nobody goes
ballistic as sentiment collides
its
the imminent clash inevitable
as once or always trajectory

GHOSTS

shreds the evidence. Without them, the allegations won't hold up in court. Some things don't need to see the light of day. As part of the office staff, I have to do my share to prevent the media from gaining access to this information. We have to exercise the right to protect our interests in this matter, and rightly so. Some people live by their scruples. Die by them, too. Not me. The media brigade will tar and feather us if they catch sight of these. They don't have any legal right to them, whether they think so or not. Where private interests prevail over public, no leaks will occur, especially not to freelancers hungry to make their reputations on our backs. Journalistic integrity is pie in the sky. My colleagues and I have no desire to become embroiled in this is-sue. We'll present what the public needs to know. No more, no less. Most of them don't give a damn, anyway. But the phone calls have gotten under my skin. If they get a court order, I don't want them to come in here and find anything that will hurt us now and haunt us in the future. I'm wary of these bastards. I wouldn't care, if one hand scratched my back and vice versa. But the dread of fame as notoriety, head hung as camera bulbs pop and flash in our eyes, my wet forehead glistening...and what they find only scratches the surface. Whether or not we were to blame, we'll be hung in the media. This could follow us forever. I'd prefer it didn't. So, these notes are going into the shredder before the situation becomes public knowledge. The whole thing will vanish. Then I'll cruise the Avenue for a few kicks, no hurry, nothing to cast a shadow of suspicion on me. "Just working latte," I can joke, turning into Starbucks for a fresh jolt. No repercussions, now. I'm a hardworking man, fresh in his desire to play the business game properly. After a week's work, I'm on a night out, alone but not lonely. Some jerks can't make the distinction. Their minds are too slow, don't exactly glow under the fluorescents. I have no cause to worry. My bulb glows a little brighter than most. Especially those jerks passing themselves off as reporters. The lack of evidence grows more convincing the less I think about it. Besides, what is there to think about? Not the friggin' press, not now, not after riding the images of deception through the rasping metal. As I realize I should never talk to anyone about what I've done, leaving the coffee bar seems prescient. I hate getting too wired at this time of night. A chance encounter, my loose tongue slipping in front of pinstripe-suits wearing resentments like vests, would cause long regrets. Don't even leave hearsay evidence. What nobody knows, nobody can act on. People will do anything they want if they hear the slightest whisper of taint. It would be an impediment to the organization's future, not to mention our own. Better our statistics lie than journalists root through our trash, disturbing our dumpster residents out back. In a minute I'll check out the rock band at Club 666. I just found it in the calendar of events. Tonight's the Grand Opening. Or maybe I shouldn't, given the ad I read. The place sounds too wild, too hyped up, too hungry for fast cash. It provokes a

collision of sensibilities

(NEON GHOSTS DENY
THE GRAMMARIAN,
HIS INSTANT
FIX)

senses collage

(HOSTS DENY
THE INSTANT or
GRATIFICATION) module

notation

senses collide

(nor the hooting a tension mounts its steed
barristers, their in its stead
nonetheless remarks attention mounts,
reach tapestries)

a collage

nor the horticultural
reaping

of sensi

(possi-
bl(y)e

intent

ruminant

bil

content

i

ties

senses collide
sentences collage
sentences collide
sentences collage
senses collide

a
luminous
arc
fraught
with

clatter as his body doubled over and tumbled forward, breathless from the blow. He looked up at the face, startled at the blankness of its animal dominance, a wordless barrage of secret tongues, their texts too deep to unravel beyond the sense of consequence he experienced, and wondered if his assailant shared the sense resulting from this intense and brutal act. He rolled away from the pump sneaker seeking his face and finding it, then his stomach, his groin, his back. No matter where he turned, the toe, heel or sole seemed to find some unprotected area. When he climbed onto his hands and knees, another barrage met his ribs full force, driving him onto his back, hands clutching sharp ache of bone whenever he breathed. He would try to dodge the intense battering. What gratification could this hoodlum be getting from all this? he wondered, the thought broken and dulled by the continuing impact. Being a literary character carried more than a fictional connotation. In the context of the sentence, his body collided with real life, his sense sharpened from the pain at first, then later blunted to the blood-spitting dullness, a minimal attention that amounted to the last ghost of consciousness riding into the darkness behind the bar,

the rowdy voices hooting inside his last reminder of a world of light and life. Then, the pummeling stopped. "Next time, motherfucker, you better have more on you. Twenty bucks, *shit!*" The assailant turned. He heard the footsteps crunching over the gravel toward the street, then rolled over hoping to find

*intrusions across the page
the words so sensitive to
incredible perception that
interpretation stretches to
the blood lingering slowly
as it may learn to favor*

a resting spot that wouldn't grate his bruises. Sleeping off the pain seemed a wonderful idea, but he knew better than to surrender to unconsciousness, tempting as it was. His first time here, his first pursuit of the possibilities of the night—didn't his friends warn him to keep off Avenue Noir after dark?—and he gets clubbed upside the head just for starters, the collision of cultures, street and middle class, a surprise even to someone as sophisticated as he'd imagined himself to be before the pummeling in the dark brought him to perceive a new sense of danger, the darkness not just a fact of side streets and alleys, but a sensibility wrought with blood and money. His collegiate sensitivity hadn't prepared him for the mugger following him into the lot. He wondered, what if he had fought with the

sardonic misanthropes disgorging under the light.
Below it, a batter cakes virtuosity rank as lost sutures
unraveling in the unsung wind.

vocal
antinomies
seek
thrusting
flagellants

trusting
who inveighs
a dank
appellant

Forgotten hierarchies stalk
the cliffwalk tabloids, the slack
night hunters reeking lust and death,
their badges weighted sharply against
a multiplicity of textures, entrusting

Thirsty noons the blood annealed
pocket vapor its wavering pact

the friction of denotation
and its haunting cast
aching texts collide

*how you read it inside the life outside across the pages
shock a pause in perception the eyes widen the mouth
even after the fact although the police will hide their
assault the practice of language as law enforcement
but the few practitioners tongue their ancient rites as
appetites savored fresh blood the scream of tonsil nights*

(glossolalia after dark)

Rolling holy off tongues
as vapor collides,

a rendering

of thought with

harmonics perilously close to orgasmic notations ring bright as locals in concert at the Artists Space bring antiphony to a voice traveling the wind as one sound, slowly ringing itself, almost a hymn to the resonance of strings. The concert piece sings its opposite as fifths from strings—violin, viola, cello—echo back and forth, as if trusting in the tones that blend overhead, filling the void above them with a fat, single pitch, as if seeking (and finding) the music of the spheres in the one tone ringing just as if one breath had exhaled it. A mystical tone, this one unexpected layer of sound ringing just overhead a multiplicity singing simplicity, serene but intense: compelling. The players thrust their bows across the strings again, playing sound against silence, sun against moon, a music appealing in its tranquility by the repellent strings of the

SHATTERED

rock band shrieking from the club below it, the opening act for cover band groupies slaving for the sound of the familiar tracks promoted on radio, TV, tape, CD. Plaster caster groupies wait in the wings, aching for sex (vicarious or otherwise). Upstairs, in the Artists Space, the sounds collide, the harmonics waver with the impact, then glide

left to right down or up your choice like the first toke the gapes a euphoria of recognition before the sense of time wasted effort with bogus details to perpetrate fantasies bound in leather the uniforms urging restraint none do the undamaged hovering at a safe distance from any begging squeegee support in streets paved with neon

dimly fading to silence in the face of electric screaming and the vocals' strident passion incomprehensible as lyrics from a holy roller tent revival and harsh as four raw lungs screaming rich with

REVERB

from the rafters, vibrating the floor overhead. A roiling clash of tempo and texture wrecks the ghostly overtone, smashes the string trio's avant glide into celestial tones. The violinist slides a glissando up his string, but can't hear it. The Fender bass throbs too near it for comfort or performance. The violinist and the other strings wonder whether they ought to stop in mid-act. The raunchy shuffle rising from the rockers beneath them drowns them out. They can't even hear each other. And, all they get is the door! Maybe they should have fought with

saber shrugs upending their savvy privates,
no assurance too grizzly for the fendered portent
nor its oatmeal fixation, breaded as a suture

for the nameless

acrostics spewing

haberdashery in

the loincloth mist

the ode to harmonics remains
a sidewalk spendthrift, fixations
abridge the skeletal

all waking to take

**pensive archers as declaimed
pursuant to necktie legato
fought with parallel intrusions
declaiming sidewalk lather
as sampled de-mix matter**

thoughts cleft
the dozen apertures
nurture

contrapuntal

*first snort the first shot your choice all baking to birth in
slow-motion as if this isn't supposed to be happening to
enforcement as the law dictates its closing terms where
the less brute power seeks its own two-dollar whore of
circumstance that may acquit the innocent of their own
socialites and other inappropriate declarations of status*

subordinate equal
actual

inordinate

unfortunately

quells the mystic rubato

rectal sequel

pectoral tenants

but relevant

emerge

virtually indistinct

refried colonial victuals

three-card monte

streetside vendors

played half a deck

your lust & money

wallet your pocket

later

obligations he'd lived with, unending: the drugs, the jive cats who talked the talk fizzled at walking the walk on a street sizzling with action, the situation soggy at best. It made him feel dead inside to read about the students who once had a future, but proclaimed themselves bad across the board. For starters, none of them knew the long-term price of sameness, the desire to be one with the pack, screwing around senselessly (just the way he did in younger years: truant for starters, hanging out on the sidewalk in front of the pharmacy, caught for shoplifting things he could afford to buy). Now he'd rather take the safer path, avoid the risk. But how much of that was age, as opposed to maturity? He had ample amounts of cash that he didn't have back then, when theft left you enough money to buy a CD or maybe even a quarter Z. He bought his share, but in truth, he had what he needed to maintain his vices. Herb was cheaper then and coke was less available than it became later. Knowing this made him aware of the generational rift that became more difficult to bridge with every year. In some ways he ached to relate better to their lives. He wanted to wake them up. He'd been there before. But life out there on Avenue Noir

*the womb of mother night ready to spill like victim guts
him not here not now the shock of the terminal right here
it ends even the watchers move on witnesses to the night
alleys dominating them proscribing any sentence of its
experience right or wrong in its ominous construction as
denied permits of credence where even bad dudes stalk*

the blood and guts of it, one night a sequel to the one before, always different but somehow the same. As subordinates, they would laugh at the tales he'd tell, make him feel like the skipping ostinato of a vinyl disc stuck in its groove. In their view, his war stories didn't equal theirs. And maybe they didn't. He'd become irrelevant the more he urged them to restrain themselves in the face of more dangerous activities. He tried telling them not to run the gun card. It was too risky. Life-ending weapons brought consequences more serious than battles fought with bare hands. But over the past few generations, trust had either vanished or retreated. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't, as an adult, gain their trust beyond a certain point. He could only get a kid through a day at a time. Maybe later

at night the action heats up
the street on either side

senses collide
sentences collage
sentences collide
sentences collage
senses collide

& wallow

n
o

c
e
n
t
e
r

p
a
t
h

*(we be packin
maybe hijack your car
your jack, your ho & shit
on Avenue Noir)*

nor apertures
of renewed opportunity

recruits

when the yellow line
blades

*in the gutters of Avenue Noir a slash of text across the
right now of the moment the final moment in which
violence becomes just another activity on Avenue Noir
caution the risk unavoidable wherever bodies sell their
vipers permanent fecundity slithers the walk a fitful
integer after integer no lumens coming to brighten the*

snakebitten luminaries

hatching false prophesies

in the midriiffs of bankers

The present conclusions
foregone reside tempers
the paunchy luminaries
overhanging the thongs

blood secrets
feed
luminous festers

truculent vespers
dehydrate
the stool
when applied
later

chronicles will offer insight into hacking neat parts for sale to merchants legitimate or otherwise, business being a practical matter. Far from any sweet deals, the ride takes you back to Avenue Noir so that bit by bit you can make up the difference between what you pay on the inside and sell on the outside. It only makes sense when you understand flesh as a textual commodity to purchase or sell in the barrage of humanity out here trying to score opportunities in a willfully generated context of scarcity. Intense competition is the result. Feuds arise between cultures seeking opportunity on the same side of the street, there being no center path here, vertically or horizontally. Either side recruits its members from among its own and the divide is simply where the bodies fall after a drive-by. Like the old west, they die with their boots on. Only the boots are pump sneakers, the finest money can buy or blades and guns can steal. It's difficult for the average person to swallow, but the currency is human. Dollars and cents are little more than symbols of exchange. I know. I'm part of the market. A somewhat sequestered part, but every I'm out here in the life studying the people, their styles, their angles,

face of the page the look of death takes no prisoners or its victims of textual excitement seeks no exit jargon or other linguistic construct spoken as it may

their games, their hustles. I don't need to write a book of last breaths. I've memorized them: the sexual victims, last words talking in tongues, seeking an exit from pain of maybe just the argot of a life no longer livable. Others stay because of the

unspoken code they live by, pass the secrets down the line, one hidden truth by another. No preliminaries here. The action might start small, but it's action nonetheless. And you get who you play for. Or pay for. The leading lights live in penthouse shadows above the sidewalks of need, scratching prospective enemies with the blaze of a twelve year old's gun or numerous investments in one flesh trade or another. Underneath all the action, the penthouse bankers stiff the street players. They seldom lift a finger to get directly involved. It's too risky a proposition, like a chancre from a hooker. Why take the chance when the action downtown pays for all your call girls, young and succulent at that. They take the most pleasure, while the ones on the street take the most risk. The street workers rate their share of pleasure too, but pay a higher price in risk. It's not a question of being foolish, it's a question of opportunity tempered by circumstance. Some have tried to make it off the street and have gone on to safer careers. It's not easy breaking free of the kicks and the exhilaration, not when you're young. They usually make it later

casualties mount the bloodied steed
whispered in vacant amphitheaters of the blind,
no cash cow dividend asserted

under the pimp hat's feathered vacuole.
Translucent embers feed the catacombs their amber,
the limpid protocols of urban briefs

Wastrels become the even tide
washing verbiage to gutter's shore
where caves ensue among members

(or as)

fructose grief
slows unique breaths
grinding slowly
in the alley

blood suitors
paregoric allies

High-textured colonics
breathe under black leather

The step ahead still too close

Proximate scarcity hungers need
wherever discomfiture allows
itself to lurk in the

pain as geometric splinters offset rubicund persuasion
the glamour of its parameters
taunting epaulets

(or narrowed epithets incongruous as

monitored
oblique threats
monastic

debilitating
innuendo

Scattered remains fruit salad
gossamer fillings or caps
filed to past narrative

Promiscuous feedings
engender broken lasts
micrometer's pain
& thirsty vengeance

rock junctures
call home base

a central glucose
sweetens madness

posing heat as light
the moribund scatters

as comfort always

self-reflexive

NIGHT

withdraws its scalpel
from the baker's *s'il vous plait*
amended sutures

*(ain't gone,
the jones been spread.
Avenue Noir
ain't good for your head)*

fighting the dead acrostic
summons
lather, grates insemination

as to lost purpose
in the neon ghosts (if any, ever
were
as or where
such

defrosting plenitude
like vacant ashtrays
indefensible cigar
blunting out the
alley toking

*(butts just burnin'
for the heat
Anywhere you wanna go
you gonna buy the meat)*

Rectal station master
buttstop, butt stomp
when the money ends

Avenue
Noir

is
where

your losses cut you first
no amenities protruded

her frosty attitude
eyes a pair of sullen rays
token til the dollars in your car

dice roll
night
& day

garnish hunting for green honey
equidistant

you just
gotta
pay to play

fortune's flavors

or gender neutral

colors fast cash
streaking flash

homilies
less certain

no
bettor
than

threaten nucleus deconstruction
 the rhetoric asks all subatomic counterparts
 whose subterranean contrapuntal instructor
 creases neon somnolence,
 whose posture
 visages
 as
 hormone
 wagers
 tethered ages
 in arrears
 to
 recall serpentine
 their dancers
 ballyhoo

chance the night fluorescent

The lost tangos of paradise *(camera obscura)*

linger in the laryngeal splenectomy

a Scheherazade of one

grand standing
by
 Savage voices call
 ON | OFF electric passions ON | OFF
 ON | OFF a reflection of a ON | OFF
 ON | OFF haunting memory ON | OFF
 ON | OFF

in front

the table's opulent dance

a glimmer of fructose haunts the sediment
 him or me the sentiment expressed
 along the local tracks
 wherever the trolley under sleeves
 the subway between toes
 the last bus out (a sight unseen
 in
 the
 background shadows
 foreground
 language
 as
 experience

of

ANOTHER TEXT/UR(E)

primordial its meat

the pristine whore of Babylon
primping pimps

(glossolalia

Blood textures

actuarial insemination
breeds fiscal empowerment

imprison destitute

“Where I sit”

**a collage
of sen**

“Lookin mighty spliffy, dude”

& other words of

NEON GHOSTS
talking fast tongues

encumbered
dissonance
their dark
harmonies

**textural velocity
terminal viscosity
textural viscosity
terminal velocity**

muted
shades
of
parallel
construct

*(passin' at the speed of night, yo
movin fast, movin slow
Avenue Noir's the place to go)*

DARKNESS AS DIVIDEND

Lost voices ring silent music, a tenor lost to its clamor

the

SHADOW TEXT ANOTHER UR

the raw of the tigris

after dark) follows her feather-tipped retinue
men too tough to strut in platforms
(cool)

T NEON GHOSTS
voyeurs fiscal mantra

watching the night's nightly repetitions

S GHOST NEON
flesh scatter
si

bil ("a five-octave range!")

SHADOW NIGHT
i
ties the language of night
perception

Tripping on used condoms vacant
strategies
& second-hand spikes

(a gutter lined with)

or dis-
sonance, as preferred
THE NIGHT MUSIC (talking taste
& what it pays

DARKNESS AS DIVISION Sounds
surround

sen(tence)ses drooping to an urgent whisper

Where

it all

(When the action heats
on the pre-dawn street,
you show your bucks
or take yo ass a seat

seems like

another walk in the park

till your ass starts dod

bullets after dark

and the bodies

neon shadows flickering

(glossolalia

ghost dance cantata mystic abrasion heat wanted
a dead song cold light

a collision

of
(no sen
matter si
the bil
light) i
ties

*reprise intrusions how left
shock gapes low-motion
even wasted enforcement
tion assault bound the al
the few undamaged circum
jargon as appetites beg*

the cost of rapture accosted

cultures Collide
cultures clash
cultures collage
cultures slash
senses collide

nobody gets out of here even
(or there) alive

the saying goes

or stays a creature of its own

cultivated barrage

integral

sensibilities

AN UR (E) TEXT OTHER

rooted here, a stalker

shrouded in syntax

verbs you

with

ging

spectral texts

calling inamorata

ness falls

textural velocity

terminal viscosity

textural viscosity

terminal velocity

“Hey there, Big Boy,

You want a date?”

along with them

talking tongues

or what

after dark)

lashing love money

finds you in

or out

whispered secrets of

the alley

where ever

*first the gutters face the
him right death incredible
its violence or interpreta-
leys caution excitement
stance experience vipers
ging socialites denied inte-*

(nor

is

for

a cost

that

pays

the

its

day)

dividends

in

vapid low

rent

protrusions

passing for

dead, or

neutral-fevered entities

nocturnal

omissions

somnolent wastrels

inensity

gather before

diminishes

in

dawn

strategic

unraveling

the last umbilical to

night's slow crawl

to dawn

“LAST CALL”

to make it

(whatever it is

full

big

rich

high

dead

the last call to

(glossolalia after dark)

ANOTHER TEXT/UR(E)

Another Ur, the root
ecstatic pulsing under

the Babylonian lights

stroboscopic slowly

moving downward

fragments flicker

flash, crash

cymbals

to

fading

a city of

TEXT, TEXT(UR)(G)E

fulfilled

or

inching toward the sun's first smoulder

un

cycling

back to
NEON