

To Thoreau Rimbaud

Their eyes
Forlorn, unfeeling, futureless,
Watch,
From crowded stoops,
Dismal looking doors,
And shattered window frames,
The dirt,
The several abandoned cars,
The choking clouds of dust,
The garbage in the gutter,
Piling on to the pavement.

All infinitely better,
Infinitely more beautiful.
Then behind them...
Rat-infested walls,
Falling plaster,
Stinking sinks.

A screaming baby,
With belly bloated like a basketball,
Nipped by lice, cockroaches, rats,
Crawling around.
Un-cared for
The prodigy of its mother's sin.
Men,

Reduced to sitting,
Inheeding, uncaring,
Unpaid for beer,
Black,

which you say is
sickness of heart,
the smallest, most harmful luxury
the beginning of all evil
where starvation's sting shows into your stomach,
your life becomes a empty shell,
the smallest, most harmless
comes the beginning of all good

By DENNIS SHERMAN

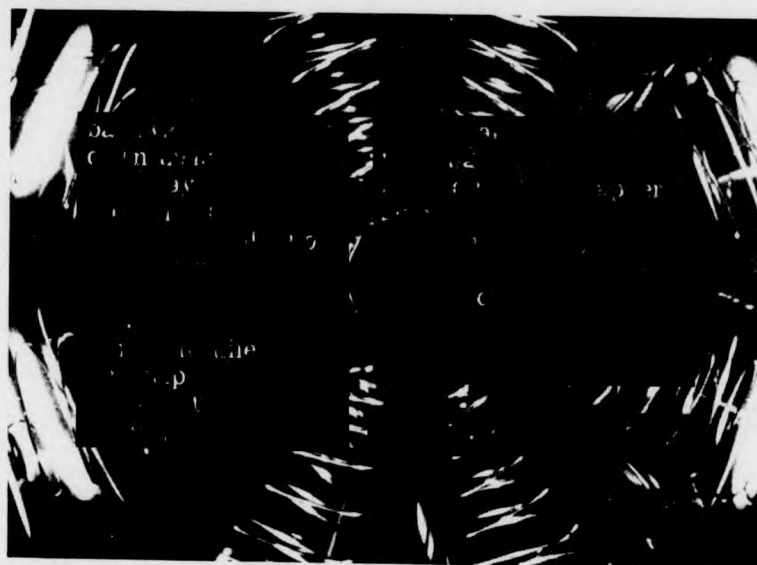
I cannot sleep tonight, Rimbaud,
expecting your gangrenous leg
to tumble out of my closet
and tap a broken poet's rhythm
on the floor
or kick back the door
where a blue eyed Satan
sits in his flames.

In the torpid tower
I endure my shame of tidy shelves
and comfortable hours growing dust,
awaiting your verse to conjure up
those demons delighting in hot sticks and blood.

And only splinters of light,
vanishing night, convince me
your leg is in the grave,
that your words are no more
the evening's pricking instruments
fastened to a page.

O rest
another day, Rimbaud;
you have drawn every
black drop of pain.

By DENNIS SHERMAN



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