

Gene Vincent Races the Devil

A Fiction

Elvis at the Jamboree was savior but
I was a cripple who cast off an affliction.

Ezekiah run a country store in Munden Point.
Once a buddy give me that guitar I was gone.

When my star faded in America,
This mick buckled me in biker gear

And a silver medallion
The pink Thunderbird

And a dream now
Bobbysoxers grewed,

Pushing strollers in a dull suburb.
On leave in Norfolk I rode my Triumph.

The Chrysler come out of nowhere.
Ma, don't let them cut off my leg.

Elvis shook it like a bowl of Jell-o but
My metal brace was as hard as the mike stand.

I made it my trademark. The echoey sound
Bradley and me and Gallup rolling around like a dog

Beat anything Sam done at Sun,
My *huh huh huh* the grunt I made

When I come. The road weren't the only
Country ways I seen them days.

I was quaffed and pretty. Still
I knew what Bo was signifying 'bout

The ice-wagon flew in a graveyard mind.
Something's a-shine in my alleycat eyes like

I seen that deadman's curve the moonless night
In Chippenham before the cab smashed the post.

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Eddie dove to cover Shari
While I dozed. I carried him to the ambulance

Broke and all. Cochran died Easter.
I ended up blind at a Folsom bar at 3 am

And seen a dude in chaps
Walking a slave in a black hood

A ball-gag in his pie-hole
A master and his bitch,

Penises dangling like lemurs.
If this was Frisco why do

I see a hooded Negro manacled to
The trestle in Harlem

Along the oil fires by the river?
The musician's the loneliest life but

It's my fate to be lonely. The Euro crowd
Was Exi girls with Seberg's pixie look

The automatic Japanese
Wild boys with Reich paraphernalia

And glistening machines. But when I
Hit that stage, threw off them crutches

And wailed, my raccoon eyes looking to
Where troubles melt like lemon drops

Soft ringlets hiding a face pale
And doughy in the Reeperbahn spot

When I screamed, blocking the shock
In my phantom leg, the crowd throbbed

Like a vein looping bloody hearts in one
And I'm a cat up on Paradise Avenue.

The Wind Across

For the Art Ensemble of Chicago

Invent an alt-myth of Sun-People.

Listen to substrata of Yoruban soil.

Invoke Gothic Americana's clanks & iron creaks.

Conjure dada.

Play bells harmonica kalimbas sirens whistles logdrums.

Be lion baby horse. Smear trumpet.

Drum the array.

Paint yr face & declaim in labcoat.

Drug dismembered corpses from aboveground tombs.

Root out bush ghosts.

Shake & rattle.

Realize the *Actuel*, the Ancient-Modern.

Light out for Paris.

Compose heroic elegy *People in Sorrow*.

Go bright lights big city sweet home Chicago.

Reference Sun Ra Monteverdi reddirt blues polytonality serialism rock n roll bop & free.

Foray into open field

inward prairie & veld. The wind across.

Practice juju telepathy.

Rhythm four directions.

Miscegenate genres.

Decolonize the hemisphere.

NOTE:

The Art Ensemble of Chicago--reed players Joseph Jarman and Roscoe Mitchell, trumpeter Lester Bowie, bassist Malachi Favors and drummer Famodou Don Moye--were one of the key groups to emerge from the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a musicians collective. They were known for the use of little instruments, theatricality and extended improvisation.

Snouthfish Dreams Red

For Mark Rossiter

Entering his third year of redundancy
Oliver molders in front of the telly
In the rust-brick of a council tenancy.
Maggy spooks him like Macbeth's witches.
He wants to give the old PM a right good
Shag, he would, the Tory bitch.

He brains a big rat with a cricket paddle
And swills Guinness in a sleeveless tee.
When the doorbell chimes like Westminster
Snouthfish's droopy shoulders bunch like
medicine balls. *Ollie, you there?* Hers Maggy
too, can you feature it? She cranks like a jerry tank.

In the kitchen her toadlike back is turned
Dicing turnips on a wood block.
The terlet looks like a Third World shithole.
She dumps a handful of cubed carrots in a pot, waddles.
The telly squawks. *Giddowdadaway would ye?*
Knives glitter in the open drawer.

Probers

For Aretha

The old label envisioned another Dinah Washington
And you did your best to oblige. But Wexler knew
The sound could be found in Alabama shoals.
When your voice swooped and rumbled across the airwaves
What I heard was a soul and body entire.
The piano accented your heart's celestial diameter.
Bethel Baptist was in there—you never *did* leave—but
Dr Feelgood's medicine in the morning was solidly secular.
If you demanded your probers, you insisted we *think* too.
That love and liberty means no compromise. Wexler coined
A saint's name: Our Lady of Mysterious Sorrows.
I took habitation in your indestructible voice.
 You sang a song that brooks no quarter,
 The north star of us all.

How I want to be Al Green but

James Brown and Wilson Pickett were
Not in the cards. I was willowy and
Japanese. They were paragons of

The black masculine. Green was Smokey with
Bodacious—his falsetto, a prickly rose.
The sisters came to *him*. The spirit
Shook him like a ghost of electricity till he

Forgot himself, Willie Mitchell
Cloaked him in brass. America is a
Tragic, upstart narrative. It involves
Grits, gunshot and holy rolls. I want

To be loved by everybody. But I'm
More a scrofulous, auburn-colored *soi* dog
Lean and unseen, slinking away from
The traffic that kills.

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