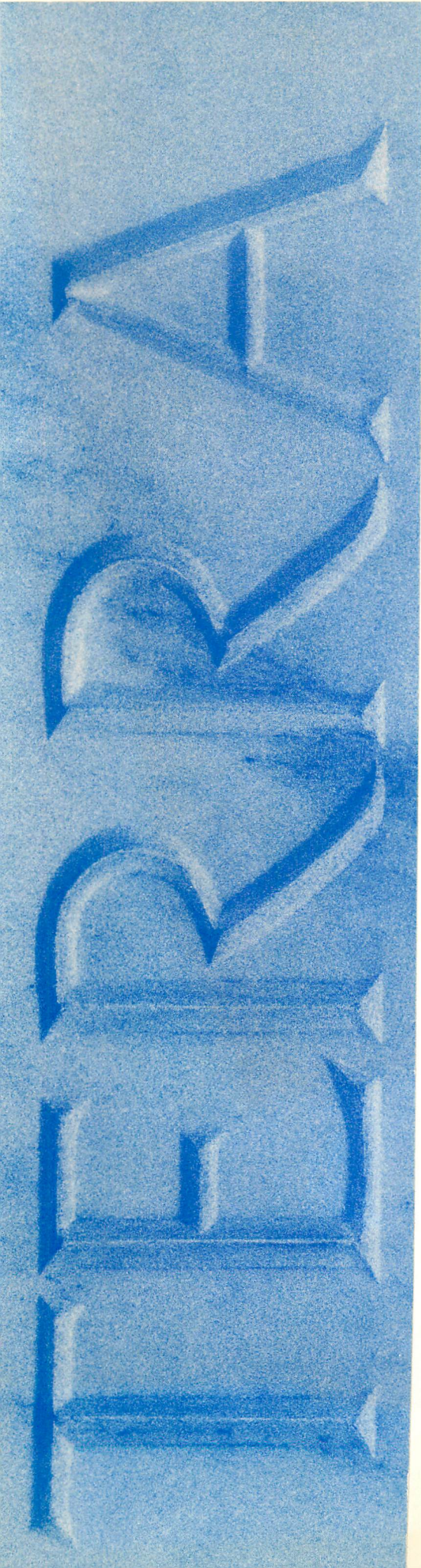


GLENN HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

Major
Rhapsody

Don Williams
416-8393



MAJOR FANTASY IN F-SHARP MINOR

You didn't expect him here
with silk hangings and life-size classic sculpture.
He made no entrance, he suddenly was
onstage, easy as moonlight, fitting with fountains
and topiary as if here was always his place.
Then when he moved and smiled, you knew.
You knew he was a trumpet man. Impromptu improv,
long legato passages, lancet tones in his trick bag.

Son of an uneven lineage inhaling used smoke to blow
from rubber cheeks. Forever paired with the hard-molded
case-followers, those rolled-up bus riders
down the stretched, streaking nights, seeing brass
hanging over them when they closed their painted eyes,
aching between sips of rum and Coke for a chance to snatch
and hide it for a night or two of peace, watching it
turn to an armored snake in their jealous hands,
hearing it tongue out tarnished laughter
on three ribs, belling out morning and a hangover
in some town they mispronounced.

This loose-angled one raised his chin, the instrument
appeared like quick cell division from his lip.
And the sound began-- uncoiling slow, coming for you,
crawling into your head, changing the texture
of your bare arms. You know that sound, mama?
Nothing as simple as ever-popular heartbreak
or phantom train whistles. Nothing as definitive
as a tenor sobbing Eili, Eili,

or wild animals moaning up the moon. His eyes
ignite and lightning arcs from his hair,
striking the conductor zapping it
into your gravity center. The sound, mama,
leaching melody out of the caryatids,
out of your wine goblet, rearranging molecules,
making them glow like neon fog, fulminating
red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

(cont.)

MAJOR RHAPSODY IN F SHARP MINOR

You didn't expect him here
 with silk hangings and life-size classic sculpture.
 He made no entrance, he suddenly was
 onstage, easy as moonlight, fitting with fountains
 and topiary as if here had always been his backdrop.
 But when he moved and smiled-- you knew--
 you knew he was a trumpet man.

Son of a thin ragged line inhaling used smoke
 mixed with applause to blow from rubber cheeks.
 Son of the hard-molded case-followers,
 those rolled-up bus riders
 down the stretched streaking nights,
 closing their painted eyes and seeing brass
 hanging over them-- begging to be snatched
 and hidden for a night or two of peace, watching it
 turn to an armored snake in their jealous hands,

hearing it tongue out tarnished laughter
 on three ribs, belling out morning and a hangover
 in some town they mispronounced.

You didn't see this loose-angled one pick it up.
 The instrument came like quick cell division
 from his lip. And the sound began--
 uncoiling slow, coming for you, crawling
 into your head, changing the texture
 of your bare arms. You know that sound, mama?
 Nothing as simple as ever-popular heartbreak
 or phantom train whistles-- nothing
 as definite as a tenor sobbing Eili, Eili
 or wild animals moaning up the moon. His eyes
 ignite and lightning arcs from his hair,
 striking the conductor zapping it
 into your gravity center. The sound, mama,
 leaching tones out of the marble statues,
 out of your wine glass, rearranging molecules,
 making them glow like neon fog, fulminating
 red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

How much is music, key lowered now, half a step,
 gone minor again, flowing that little groove
 where pain runs convex to the surface? How much
 is the glint of crystal hung from mirrored arches,
 moving faintly with audience breath,
 striking flints in his pale eyes?

It's all the magic horn, mama, that golden fetish,
possessed and possessing, that haloed concubine,
caressed, polished, surrounded with plush.
And you-- chapped, smacked,
earning your master's degree in martyrdom,
sewing clothes out of mill ends,
that eternal alloy suspended between you
even in bed-- that icon he hocked once
to buy you an emergency doctor in Dayton.
And you sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard harsh mouth,
dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers
of life telescoped in battered cases
under collapsible stands. Trumpet man.
Pitched all shades and angles like shadows,
worse for women than drifters. Gone too high
too often, a pile of singed feathers
dripping wax on the downers, always patching
to fly one more set too near the sun.

Was there a man at all? Or a composite
of flesh and a funnel? Or only an instrument?
Cold spite to your touch. Hot pipe to all
we know of paradise to his. Was it
just a flared gold phallic image that seduced
you and crammed you in the gears of a music box
on wheels, hurled you across the bad-weather map
into out-of-order-john motels with lint blankets
and the boozy corners of never-quite-level halls
full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?

Tears emptied, this one mounts the god syndrome
like mercury, surpassing sound, no longer
protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy
entering the last panging tunnel you sealed
and secured. Driving deeper, blowing down
your barricades like Joshua,
peeling off new notes like bright blisters,
exorcising the orchestra, resolving
each chord with fire. Nebulizing light.

Brilliance consumes you, turns you immaculate,
unhurting anymore. The trumpet fluoresces
like his phosphorous irises, his alpine range
still honeydrop round. Confetti candescence orbits
his head, the image blazes beyond seeing.

You open your eyes as the waiter pours champagne,
hear something shut like a latch. You focus absently
on an alabaster herald you hadn't noticed before.

He is a prophet-- forecasting ruin, forecasting
 rain, predicting your heartbeat, willing it,
 playing your spine like a keyboard, electrifying
 your long red guitar strings. He compresses
 a grain of hot salt in every pore, starts
 small internal combustions, all pistons at odds,
 then one enormous turbine synched with him,
 generating enough current to throb down
 the marble columns, revving the riderless carriage
 outside the fourth dimension, holding a seance
 with Gabriel and Gershwin, Debussy and Berrigan.

His grin is sudden, mocking. He flats his fifths
 and goes south on a short bridge, tootles
 to the carved unicorn, blows out the chafing dishes
 along with the illusions-- so for a jigger of time
 you can stand it, fill your lungs on the afterbeat,
 see that he's nothing but a live trumpet man,
 not a sorcerer, not a fakir
 pulling the cobra out of your basket.

He is a child-- blowing bubbles of light,
 expanding the spectrum,
 merging with bobbing sixteenth notes. He is
 imperial Rome-- an announcement of gladiators,
 Caesar chariots, a boast of soldiers,
 an ancient fury. He is Africa-- black hunter cry,
 leopard stalking, impala bleeding, eyes looking
 out of water, eyes burning, curling edges of night,
 smoke rising, winding winged scales,
 sucking back into the bell, recycling.

He slams a fist into your throat, turns you
 on a spit and hamstring you with blades of ice.
 He hustles the horn, wrestles it, shares it,
 his mistress, and mentor,
 a panpipe saved by his kiss.

Feel the sound, mama? He's concentrating
 on all your edges now, honing sharp sharper,
 quivering on a sill to somewhere, retiring
 to a glistening waver pulsing between turquoise
 and green, hanging on like dying gills.
 A trumpet man, mama, more lives than a cat,
 more wind than a Texas twister.

It's all the magic horn, mama, that golden fetish,
 possessed and possessing, that haloed concubine,
 caressed and polished, surrounded with plush.
 And you-- chapped, smacked,
 earning your master's degree in martyrdom,
 sewing clothes out of mill ends,
 that eternal alloy suspended between you
 even in bed, that icon he hocked once
 to buy you an emergency doctor in Dayton.
 And you sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard harsh mouth,
 dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers
 of life telescoped in battered cases
 and collapsible stands. Trumpet man.
 Pitched all shades and angles like shadows,
 worse for women than drifters. Gone too high
 too often, a pile of singed feathers
 dripping wax on the downers, always patching
 to fly one more set too near the sun.

Was there a man at all?
 Or just a flared gold phallus that seduced you
 and crammed you in the gears of a music box
 on wheels, hurled you across the bad-weather map
 into broken-john motels with lint bedspreads
 and the boozy corners of never-quite-level halls
 full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?
 Trumpet man. Composite of flesh and reed--
 and if you separated the instrument,
 cold spite to your touch,
 hot pipe to all we know of paradise to his.

Tears emptied, he mounts the god syndrome
 like mercury, surpassing sound, no longer
 protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy
 entering the last panging tunnel you sealed
 and secured. Driving deeper, blowing down
 your barricades like Joshua, playing
 what no mortal ever played. Peeling off new notes
 like bright blisters, exorcising the orchestra,
 resolving each chord with light, nebulizing fire.
 White consumes you, turns you immaculate,
 unhurting anymore.

The trumpet fluoresces with his phosphorous eyes,
 confetti light orbits his head.
 His image blazes beyond seeing.

You open your eyes as the waiter pours champagne,
 hear something shut like a latch, focus absently
 on an alabaster herald you hadn't noticed before.

GLENN HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565

MAJOR RHAPSODY IN C-SHARP MINOR

You didn't expect him here
with silk hangings and life-size classic sculpture.
He made no entrance, he suddenly was
onstage, easy as moonlight, fitting with fountains
and topiary as if here was always his place.
But when he moved and smiled, you knew.
You knew he was a trumpet man.

Son of a thin ragged line inhaling used smoke
mixed with applause to blow from rubber cheeks.
Son of the hard-molded case-followers,
those rolled-up bus riders
down the stretched, streaking nights, closing
their painted eyes, seeing brass hanging over them.
Thinking how to snatch and hide it

for a night or two of peace, watching it
turn to an armored snake in their jealous hands,
hearing it tongue out tarnished laughter
on three ribs, belling out morning and a hangover
in some town they mispronounced.

You didn't see this loose-angled one pick it up.
The instrument came like quick cell division
from his lip. And the sound began:
uncoiling slow, coming for you, crawling
into your head, changing the texture
of your bare arms. You know that sound, mama?
Nothing as simple as ever-popular heartbreak
or phantom train whistles. Nothing
as definite as a tenor sobbing Eili, Eili

or wild animals moaning up the moon. His eyes
ignite and lightning arcs from his hair,
striking the conductor zapping it
into your gravity center. The sound, mama,
leaching tones out of the caryatids,
out of your wine glass, rearranging molecules,
making them glow like neon fog, fulminating
red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

How much is music, key lowered now,
gone minor again, flowing that little groove
where pain runs convex to the surface? How much
is the glint of crystal hung from mirrored arches,
barely moving with audience breath,
striking flints in his pale blue eyes?

He is a prophet. Forecasting ruin, forecasting
rain, predicting your heartbeat, willing it,
playing your spine like a keyboard, electrifying
your long red guitar strings. He compresses
a grain of hot salt in every pore, starts
small internal combustions, all pistons at odds,
then one enormous turbine synched with him,
generating enough current to throb down
the marble columns, revving the riderless carriage
outside the fourth dimension, holding a seance
with Gabriel and Gershwin, Debussy and Berrigan.

His grin is sudden, mocking. He flats his fifths
and goes south on a short bridge, tootles
to the carved unicorn, blows out the chafing dishes
along with the illusions. And for a jigger of time
you can stand it, fill your lungs on the afterbeat,
see that he's nothing but a trumpet man,
not a sorcerer, not a fakir
pulling the cobra out of your basket.

He is a child. Blowing bubbles of light,
expanding the spectrum,
merging with bobbing sixteenth notes. He is
imperial Rome, an announcement of gladiators,
Caesar chariots, a boast of soldiers,
an ancient fury. He is Africa. Black hunter cry,
leopard stalking, impala bleeding, eyes looking
out of water, eyes burning, curling edges of night,
smoke rising, winding winged scales,
sucking back into his bell, recycling.

He slams a fist in your throat, turns you
on a spit and hamstrings you with blades of ice.
He hustles the horn, wrestles it,
mistress and mentor, a panpipe saved by his kiss.

Feel the sound, mama? He's concentrating
on all your edges now, honing sharp sharper,
quivering on a sill to somewhere, retiring
to a glistening waver pulsing between turquoise
and green, hanging on like dying gills.
A trumpet man, mama, more lives than a cat,
more wind than a Texas twister.

It's all the magic horn, mama, that golden fetish,
possessed and possessing, that haloed concubine,
caressed and polished, surrounded with plush.
And you-- chapped, smacked,
earning your master's degree in martyrdom,
sewing clothes out of mill ends,
that eternal alloy suspended between you
even in bed, that icon he hocked once
to buy you an emergency doctor in Dayton.
And you sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard mouth,
dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers
of life telescoped in battered cases
under collapsible stands. Trumpet man.
Pitched all shades and angles like shadows,
worse for women than drifters. Gone too high
too often, a pile of singed feathers
dripping wax on the downers, always patching
to fly one more set too near the sun.

Was there a man at all?
Or just a flared gold phallus that seduced you
and crammed you in the gears of a music box
on wheels, hurled you across the bad-weather map
into broken-john motels with lint bedspreads
and the boozy corners of never-quite-level halls
full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?
Trumpet man. Composite of flesh and reed,
brass-cold spite to your touch,
hot pipe to all we know of paradise to his.

Tears emptied, he mounts the god syndrome
like mercury, surpassing sound, no longer
protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy
entering the last panging tunnel you sealed
and secured. Driving deeper, blowing down
your barricades like Joshua,
peeling off new notes like bright blisters,
exorcising the orchestra, resolving
each chord with light, nebulizing fire.

White consumes you, turns you immaculate,
unhurting anymore. The trumpet
fluoresces like his phosphorous eyes,
confetti light orbits his head.
His image blazes beyond seeing.

You open your eyes as the waiter pours champagne,
hear something shut like a latch, focus absently
on an alabaster herald you hadn't noticed before.

CHIMERA CONNECTIONS, 1985

MAJOR RHAPSODY IN F SHARP MINOR

You didn't expect him here
with silk hangings and life-size classic sculpture.
He made no entrance, he suddenly was
onstage, easy as moonlight, fitting with fountains
and topiary as if here had always been his backdrop.
But when he moved and smiled-- you knew--
you knew he was a trumpet man.

Son of a thin ragged line inhaling used smoke
mixed with applause to blow from balloon cheeks.
Son of those hard-molded case-followers,
those rolled-up bus riders
down the stretched streaking nights,
closing their painted eyes and seeing brass
hanging over them, begging to be snatched
and hidden for a night or two of peace, watching it
turn to an armored snake in their jealous hands,

hearing it tongue out tarnished laughter
on three ribs, belling out morning and a hangover
in some town they mispronounced.

You didn't see this loose-angled one pick it up.
The instrument came like quick cell division
from his lip. And the sound began--
uncoiling slow, coming for you, crawling
into your head, changing the texture
of your bare arms. You know that sound, mama?
Nothing as simple as ever-popular heartbreak
or phantom train whistles-- nothing
as definite as a tenor sobbing Eili, Eili
or wild animals moaning up the moon. His eyes
ignite and lightning arcs from his hair,
striking the conductor zapping it
into your gravity center. The sound, mama,
leaching tones out of the marble statues,
out of your wine glass, rearranging molecules,
making them glow like neon fog, fulminating
red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

How much is music, key lowered now, half a step,
gone minor again, flowing that little groove
where pain runs convex to the surface? How much
is the glint of crystal hung from mirrored arches,
moving faintly with audience breath,
striking flints in his pale eyes?

(cont.)

He is a prophet-- forecasting ruin, forecasting
 rain, predicting your heartbeat, willing it,
 playing your spine like a keyboard, electrifying
 your long red guitar strings. He compresses
 a grain of hot salt in every pore, starts
 small internal combustions, all pistons at odds,
 then one enormous turbine synched with him,
 generating enough current to throb down
 the marble columns, revving the riderless carriage
 outside the fourth dimension, holding a seance
 with Gabriel and Gershwin, Debussy and Berrigan.

His grin is sudden, mocking. He flats his fifths
 and goes south on a short bridge, tootles
 to the carved unicorn, blows out the chafing dishes
 along with the illusions-- so for a jigger of time
 you can stand it, fill your lungs on the afterbeat,
 see that he's nothing but a live trumpet man,
 not a sorcerer, not a fakir
 pulling the cobra out of your basket.

He is a child-- blowing bubbles of light,
 expanding the spectrum,
 merging with bobbing sixteenth notes. He is
 imperial Rome-- an announcement of gladiators,
 Caesar chariots, a boast of soldiers,
 an ancient fury. He is Africa-- black hunter cry,
 leopard stalking, impala bleeding, eyes looking
 out of water, eyes burning, curling edges of night,
 smoke rising, winding winged scales,
 sucking back into the bell, recycling.

He slams a fist into your throat, turns you
 on a spit and hamstrings you with blades of ice.
 He hustles the horn, wrestles it, shares it,
 his mistresss and mentor,
 a panpipe saved by his kiss.

Feel the sound, mama? He's concentrating
 on all your edges now, honing sharp sharper,
 quivering on a sill to somewhere, retiring
 to a glistening waver pulsing between turquoise
 and green, hanging on like dying gills.
 A trumpet man, mama, more lives than a cat,
 more wind than a Texas twister.

It's all the magic horn, mama, that golden fetish,
 possessed and possessing, that haloed concubine,
 caressed and polished, surrounded with plush.
 And you-- chapped, smacked,
 earning your master's degree in martyrdom,
 sewing clothes out of mill ends,
 that eternal alloy suspended between you
 even in bed, that icon he hocked once
 to buy you an emergency doctor in Dayton.
 And you sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard harsh mouth,
 dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers
 of life telescoped into battered cases
 and collapsible stands. Trumpet man.
 Pitched all shades and angles like shadows,
 worse for women than drifters. Gone too high
 too often, a pile of singed feathers
 dripping wax on the downers, always patching
 to fly one more set too near the sun.

Was there a man at all?
 Or just a flared gold phallus that seduced you
 and crammed you in the gears of a music box
 on wheels, hurled you across the bad-weather map
 into broken-john motels with lint bedspreads
 and the boozy corners of never-quite-level halls
 full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?
 Trumpet man. Composite of flesh and reed,
 the sometimes-separate instrument
 cold spite for your touching,
 hot pipe to all we know of paradise for his.

Tears emptied, he mounts the god syndrome
 like mercury, surpassing sound, no longer
 protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy
 entering the last panging tunnel you sealed
 and secured. Driving deeper, blowing down
 your barricades like Joshua, playing
 what no mortal ever played. Peeling off new notes
 like bright blisters, exorcising the orchestra,
 resolving each chord with light, nebulizing fire.
 White consumes you, turns you immaculate,
 unhurting anymore.

The trumpet fluoresces with his phosphorous eyes,
 confetti light orbits his head.
 His image blazes beyond seeing.

You open your eyes as the waiter pours champagne,
 hear something shut like a latch, focus absently
 on an alabaster herald you hadn't noticed before.

MAJOR RHAPSODY IN F SHARP MINOR

You didn't expect him here
with silk hangings and life-size classic sculpture.
He made no entrance, he suddenly was
onstage, easy as moonlight, fitting with fountains
and topiary as if here had always been his backdrop.
But when he moved and smiled-- you knew--
you knew he was a trumpet man.

Son of a thin ragged line inhaling used smoke
mixed with applause to blow from rubber cheeks.
Son of the hard-molded case-followers,
those rolled-up bus riders
down the stretched streaking nights,
closing their painted eyes and seeing brass
hanging over them-- begging to be snatched
and hidden for a night or two of peace, watching it
turn to an armored snake in their jealous hands,

hearing it tongue out tarnished laughter
on three ribs, belling out morning and a hangover
in some town they mispronounced.

You didn't see this loose-angled one pick it up.
The instrument came like quick cell division
from his lip. And the sound began--
uncoiling slow, coming for you, crawling
into your head, changing the texture
of your bare arms. You know that sound, mama?
Nothing as simple as ever-popular heartbreak
or phantom train whistles-- nothing
as definite as a tenor sobbing Eili, Eili
or wild animals moaning up the moon. His eyes
ignite and lightning arcs from his hair,
striking the conductor zapping it
into your gravity center. The sound, mama,
leaching tones out of the marble statues,
out of your wine glass, rearranging molecules,
making them glow like neon fog, fulminating
red and purple, alive like magnified ocean drops.

How much is music, key lowered now, half a step,
gone minor again, flowing that little groove
where pain runs convex to the surface? How much
is the glint of crystal hung from mirrored arches,
moving faintly with audience breath,
striking flints in his pale eyes?

STANZA BREAK

(Cont.)

He is a prophet-- forecasting ruin, forecasting
rain, predicting your heartbeat, willing it,
playing your spine like a keyboard, electrifying
your long red guitar strings. He compresses
a grain of hot salt in every pore, starts
small internal combustions, all pistons at odds,
then one enormous turbine synched with him,
generating enough current to throb down
the marble columns, revving the riderless carriage
outside the fourth dimension, holding a seance
with Gabriel and Gershwin, Debussy and Berrigan.

His grin is sudden, mocking. He flats his fifths
and goes south on a short bridge, tootles
to the carved unicorn, blows out the chafing dishes
along with the illusions-- so for a jigger of time
you can stand it, fill your lungs on the afterbeat,
see that he's nothing but a live trumpet man,
not a sorcerer, not a fakir
pulling the cobra out of your basket.

He is a child-- blowing bubbles of light,
expanding the spectrum,
merging with bobbing sixteenth notes. He is
imperial Rome-- an announcement of gladiators,
Caesar chariots, a boast of soldiers,
an ancient fury. He is Africa-- black hunter cry,
leopard stalking, impala bleeding, eyes looking
out of water, eyes burning, curling edges of night,
smoke rising, winding winged scales,
sucking back into the bell, recycling.

He slams a fist into your throat, turns you
on a spit and hamstrings you with blades of ice.
He hustles the horn, wrestles it, shares it,
his mistresss and mentor,
a panpipe saved by his kiss.

Feel the sound, mama? He's concentrating
on all your edges now, honing sharp sharper,
quivering on a sill to somewhere, retiring
to a glistening waver pulsing between turquoise
and green, hanging on like dying gills.
A trumpet man, mama, more lives than a cat,
more wind than a Texas twister.

(Cont.)

GLENNA HOLLOWAY
913 E. Bailey Road
Naperville, IL 60565
708-983-5499

RHAPSODY 3.

It's all the magic horn, mama, that golden fetish,
possessed and possessing, that haloed concubine,
caressed and polished, surrounded with plush.
And you-- chapped, smacked,
earning your master's degree in martyrdom,
sewing clothes out of mill ends,
that eternal alloy suspended between you
even in bed, that icon he hocked once
to buy you an emergency doctor in Dayton.
And you sold your mother's ring to get it back.

And the man, mama, with the hard harsh mouth,
dead weight in the bus seat, little slivers
of life telescoped in battered cases
and collapsible stands. Trumpet man.
Pitched all shades and angles like shadows,
worse for women than drifters. Gone too high
too often, a pile of singed feathers
dripping wax on the downers, always patching
to fly one more set too near the sun.

Was there a man at all?
Or just a flared gold phallus that seduced you
and crammed you in the gears of a music box
on wheels, hurled you across the bad-weather map
into broken-john motels with lint bedspreads
and the boozy corners of never-quite-level halls
full of lurching bodies and bad acoustics?
Trumpet man. Composite of flesh and ~~reed~~ ^{tunnel}
~~and if you separated the instrument,~~
cold spite to your touch,
hot pipe to all we know of paradise to his.

Tears emptied, he mounts the god syndrome
like mercury, surpassing sound, no longer
protoplasm and metal but some new alchemy
entering the last panging tunnel you sealed
and secured. Driving deeper, blowing down
your barricades like Joshua, playing
what no mortal ever played. Peeling off new notes
like bright blisters, exorcising the orchestra,
resolving each chord with light, nebulizing fire.
White consumes you, turns you immaculate,
unhurting anymore.

candescence The trumpet fluoresces with his phosphorous eyes,
confetti ~~light~~ orbits his head.
His image blazes beyond seeing.

You open your eyes as the waiter pours champagne,
hear something shut like a latch, focus absently
on an alabaster herald you hadn't noticed before.

Philip Dacey

FORM REJECTION LETTER

FROM :
VITAL SIGNS
U. OF WIS PRESS
1987

We are sorry we cannot use the enclosed.

We are returning it to you.

We do not mean to imply anything by this.

We would prefer not to be pinned down about this matter.

But we are not keeping—cannot, will not keep—
what you sent us.

We did receive it, though, and our returning it to you
is a sign of that.

It was not that we minded your sending it to us
unasked.

That is happening all the time, they
come when we least expect them,
when we forget we have needed or might yet need them,
and we send them back.

We send this back.

It is not that we minded.

At another time, there is no telling . . .

But this time, it does not suit our present needs.

We wish to make it clear it was not easy receiving it.

It came so encumbered.

And we are busy here.

We did not feel
we could take it on.

We know it would not have ended there.

It would have led to this, and that.

We know about these things.

It is why we are here.

We wait for it. We recognize it when it comes.

Regretfully, this form letter does not allow us to elaborate
why we send it back.

It is not that we minded.

We hope this does not discourage you. But we would not
want to encourage you falsely.

It requires delicate handling, at this end.

If we had offered it to you,
perhaps you would understand.

But, of course, we did not.

You cannot know what your offering it
meant to us,

And we cannot tell you:

There is a form we must adhere to.

It is better for everyone that we use this form.

As to what you do in future,
we hope we have given you signs,
that you have read them,
that you have not mis-read them.

We wish we could be more helpful.

But we are busy.

We are busy returning so much.

We cannot keep it.

It all comes so encumbered.

And there is no one here to help.

Our enterprise is a small one.

We are thinking of expanding.

We hope you will send something.

October 10, 2001

Ronald Spatz, Executive Editor
ALASKA QUARTERLY REVIEW
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Dr.
Anchorage AK 99508

Dear Mr. Spatz:

In March you said my work was seriously considered and you invited me to try again.

Six poems submitted, including a rewrite of "Banquet," a humorous sestina and a serious sonnet.

My work has appeared in THE HOLLINS CRITIC, NOTRE DAME REVIEW, MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, SOUTHERN POETRY REVIEW, THE FORMALIST, etc., and The Pushcart Prize anthology, 25th anniversary issue, 2001.

Thank you for considering my work for ALASKA QUARTERLY REVIEW.
SASE for returns.

Sincerely,

Glenna Holloway
913 E. Bailey Rd.
Naperville IL 60565
630/983-5499

November 3, 2001

Mr. Richard Burgin, Editor
BOULEVARD
7545 Cromwell Dr. Apt. 2N
St. Louis MO 63105

Dear Mr. Burgin:

I appreciate your offering to look at these 4 poems and get back to me in two weeks.

My work has appeared in WESTERN HUMANITIES REVIEW, MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, NOTRE DAME REVIEW, THE FORMALIST, etc. & the Pushcart Prize anthology, 2001. Congratulations on your story in #26.

SASE for returns. Thank you for considering my poems for BOULEVARD. Comments are always welcome.

Sincerely,

Glenna Holloway
913 E Bailey Rd.
Naperville IL 60565
630/983-5499

Back in the 60s before I moved to Illinois & before I wrote any poetry, I was writing humor for the Atlanta Constitution. And I met Flannery O'Connor at a program of the Georgia Writer's Association. She was fond of saying "I write to learn what I know." And altho she wasn't a poet, I think that's even more true for poets. Because poetry is always exploration. None of us really knows where a poem is going when we begin it. That's as it should be. We should give the poem its head like a horse and see where it wants to go. It often surprises us.

But when it seems to have run its course, that's when you want to step in and guide it, polish it and maybe reshape it. Often tailor it for one or more particular markets.

I recommended POET'S MARKET, not just for the listings but for the subject index, and the regional index. Most of the listings give samples of what the editors like-- and some of it is going to make you groan. Pretty awful. So the info can also tell you you really don't want to be in that magazine. Don't waste your time & postage. Not many of those.

All magazines want you to subscribe or at least order a sample copy. Which may or may not be useful. Try to find it in library.

The most honest editor I ever worked with admitted he didn't know what he wanted until he saw it. The truth is, I never made a sale because I read the magazine. But POET'S MARKET is a broad guide for what you submit and it can at least keep you in the right ball park. It can keep you from sending formal verse to a magazine that only wants avant garde free verse or prose poems or animal poems, etc.

Beware of magazines that require you to be a subscriber. Or to buy copies of the issue you're in. That's like asking the actors in a play to buy all the tickets.

When you start submitting your general index style poems--start with the ones that pay-- bearing in mind you're never going to get rich on poetry. But why not start at the top? When you've exhausted those that pay, start on the well-known, so-called prestigious literary journals. You can be turned down just as quickly by a mediocre publication. It's a very subjective business. Editors range from the brilliant to seriously incompetent. I suspect all are a little weird--but then, so are poets.

Marketing. Submitting to an editor who never heard of you is called going over the transom. I once met a poet who had never submitted anything anywhere because she believed she had to know somebody to get published. I told her that everything I've ever published was over the transom. I didn't know anybody. I still only know a few. And just because you make a sale to an editor, it doesn't mean you'll score again. Early on, I sold to the GEORGIA REVIEW. Haven't scored there since.

Besides editors come and go. It's almost always a brand new day. Get your work in flawless format--3 to 5 poems--depending on how many PM says a submission should consist of-- then write a flawless cover letter. And this is the hardest part. Drudgery. Goes against the creative grain. This is what the editor sees first. Your introduction. Must be brief. If you have credits, list a few of the best ones in the second paragraph. If you don't have credits he will recognize, simply say your work has appeared in several small literary mags. If you have no credits, either say that or say nothing. Some mags pride themselves on discovering new talent.

Another PM plus is the symbol for being receptive to new poets. Go through your

book carefully and mark it. Use it for recording when you submitted. How long they kept it, comments if any. If they write a note, file it on that page and send something else when you have something comparable to what drew the comment. You also have the perfect way to begin your next cover letter--thanking editor for the encouragement.

You can write a general letter on your computer and change it for each submission. But always tailor it as much as possible. If a poem in a previous issue of a mag caught your eye and you truly liked it, you can mention something pertinent about it in your cover letter. But don't try flattery unless it's sincere. Don't say "I really like your mag."

Good idea to say this is NOT a disposable ms. SASE for returns.

IF you are unpublished--submit the same ms to 4 or 5 places at once--AFTER you check PM to make sure they do accept simultaneous submissions. If they state that they don't--don't risk it. The odds are you'll be safe--but why jeopardize yourself with a possible publisher?

Once you've sold a piece, start looking for places that take second rights. Wait 6 months or so and send it out again.

For the places that say "no unsolicited Ms."--write and ask if you may send something. They may say yes.

It's a maddening business. You'll see stuff published that isn't as good as what you sent. Sometimes you'll get your stuff back after months of waiting without even the courtesy of a rejection slip. After 2 months it's fine to write a follow-up and say you're sending it elsewhere or inquire if it's still under consideration or lost. I've had things kept over a year despite follow-up. Usually I call. Sometimes you simply never hear anything.

In defense of editors, most are underpaid if at all. Many are volunteers. Most mags are underfunded. Contests help defray their expenses and are a good way to break in but the competition is fierce. Check the caveat in Poets & Writers. You wonder sometimes if the winners have been decided beforehand. But some are legit. Probably most. I can vouch for a few of them.

LOSING THE FARM

This shaggy hump of land
Comes down to settle at the shallow pond
Like our old dog, paws in his water dish.
The man I married was my father's only hand.
His first job was to stock the pond with fish.
Young Phil was smart. Why he would work for us
Was hard to understand.

He built a barn without
Much help that March my father hurt his hip.
Spring's greening nap resembled sheared chenille,
Our fields embroidered by the tractor's seeding route
Like Mama's bedspread pattern, wheel-in-wheel.
She died that June, then Phil was hired full time.
Sometimes he cleaned my trout.

I asked him how he knew
So much, and why he didn't take a job
With more to offer. Phil said he loved farming.
Before the corn grew ears he said he loved me too.
At first, my father found the thought alarming,
But soon he recognized his stroke of luck--
What blessings could accrue.

And so they did. The years
Were mostly kind, the rains and Phil were faithful.
He turned the scrub to terraces of grapes
Where domes of purpling autumn almost vanquish tears.
Now neighbors' spreads are gone, the city rapes
Its way toward us, my parents' hilltop graves,
And all our gravest fears.

Besides the pond, our lane--
The graveled last-ditch lifeline left to drive
The truck to market, movies, church and vet--
Was just condemned--last ploy to make us sell. The pain
Of isolation's grip, our drought-grown debt
And kneeling crops conspire to push us out
Of our homemade domain.

With arteries now closed,
The heartbeat stops in this uneven Eden.
No mall, no high-tech electronics plant
Compares with tasseled corn, or beaded arbors posed
Against a moire quilt in day's last slant.
Bulldozers quickly level secret places
Where the dog once dozed.