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THE SPARK

Equality Before The Law: More Time

Sept 14, 1978

BY BOB LANDAU

With the March 22 deadline approaching, the Equal Rights Amendment is in jeopardy of not receiving the required number of States' ratifications in order to make it part of the United States Constitution. Thirty-five of the required thirty-eight States have ratified but several States are now proposing to rescind their prior ratification and the ERA is bogged down in the remaining States' legislators. The seven year time limit for ratification was installed by the 92nd Congress of the United States in the proposing clause of the ERA, with the belief that this would be a sufficient amount of time. However, based on the current controversy over the ERA's social and legal needs, the seven year limit was clearly not enough time and the ERA remains a viable issue. Anti-ERA factions view the approaching deadline as an opportune time to mobilize

and bring a quick death to the ERA. ERA opposition claims the Pro-ERA forces are changing the rules in mid-game and that an extension of the time limit would be unconstitutional. Their arguments are of little substance as it is evident that Congress does possess the power, if it deems reasonable, to extend the time period for ratification.

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF AN EXTENSION

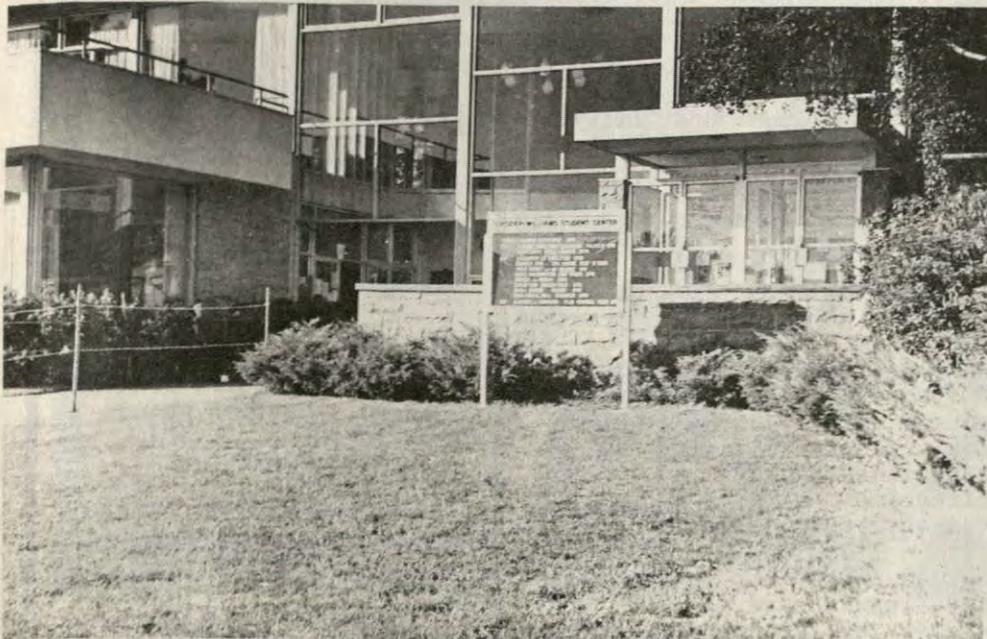
The extension of the time period for ratification of the ERA does fall within the framework of the Constitution. Article V of the Constitution entrusts to Congress sole federal authority to propose amendments, to determine the mode of ratification, and to decide whether ratification has effectively occurred. There is no mention anywhere in Article V that a proposed amendment must be ratified within a specific time.

In 1939, the Supreme Court

in Coleman v. Miller, further clarified the question of Congressional power under Article V to establish a time limit for the ratification of a proposed amendment. In this decision the Court specified that Congress can, under Article V, fix a reasonable limit of time on a proposed amendment. The Court further stated that these "reasonable time" issues in relation to Constitutional amendments call for "essentially political" judgments, for they involve "an appraisal of a great variety of relevant conditions, political, social and economic." A Congress, thus, potentially has the authority to ascertain whether the ERA is still viable and thereby can extend the period during which the States may consider ratification of the ERA.

Historically, fundamental change in our nation's law has encompassed long periods of time. For example, it took nearly three-quarters of a century for women to achieve the right to vote. Surely a principle of such paramount importance as equal rights before the law deserves as much time as it requires. A time limit set by a Congress seven years ago appears outmoded and irrelevant today in view of the changed political, social and economic conditions. The hundred thousand people who participated this summer in the march for equal rights as well as the continuing active public and private debate of this issue attests to its vitality and demonstrates that the ERA still remains a matter of pressing public concern. The 95th Congress must realize the urgency of the situation and extend the time limit for ratification of the ERA.

THE ERA: A LIFETIME GUARANTEE



Editorial on page three

In a time when an overwhelming amount of sentiment is

Continued on page 3

Editorials

The Spark

To understand where THE SPARK is coming from, a quick history of the underground press on this campus should be given. In the 1976-1977 school year, Bill Kavanagh began the THE NEWSLETTER, the "boilerroom" paper dealing with issues he felt relevant to students. Bill refused any SGA funding so as not to be responsible to that body, and relied entirely on advertising and revenue from the then weekly Freeman Speakeasy; three issues were put out. The following year editor Rich Golden accepted SGA funding because his feeling was that no paper could exist on this campus without money from the student government. Seven issues dealing with controversial topics were printed, and each received its share of criticism and compliments. The new name THE SPARK was adopted in an effort to perhaps spark interest in those issues on campus that involved the students, and that yet most of them ignored. It was Richard's intent to enlighten the students to the real facts of the issues, that they not merely accept those handed by either the administration or the faculty, but that in some cases, further investigation was needed.

It is with this purpose in mind that this year's SPARK continues the tradition of, as the college handbook describes it, the alternative journal. It is not our intent to take sides on these issues; we believe that the only side is that of the best interest of the college. We wish rather to give all the facts of the decisions and problems at this school, and to offer our opinions on these issues and give alternative solutions to the problems. If we can spark interest and curiosity in the students, then perhaps we might be able to motivate them to change that which they feel needs changing.

This year, THE SPARK is enlarging on this idea. As well as a journal and a forum for ideas, it will also be a much needed place for the publication of student's creative writings, poetry, and satire. We feel that there is presently no place for such student or faculty writers to have their works printed on campus. It is our wish to be that place.

THE SPARK acknowledges that there are both positive as well as negative aspects to any institution of this sort. It is not our intent to vent only grievances, and thus give the impression of a school plagued solely with faults; yet we recognize that the positive ones do not need changing. We are attempting merely to inform the students of these problems so that they might be dealt with, instead of ignored. Even though changes may not be immediate in coming, if enough students begin thinking of ways to facilitate them, then eventually they may be enacted. We welcome any comments, questions, or rebuttals, by students, faculty, and administration in the form of letters to THE SPARK, box 544, Connecticut College. ■

Faculty Dining

Upon returning to school this fall, we found that the Crozier-Williams Snack Shop was now open exclusively for faculty from noon to 1 p.m. In the same vein, faculty members were issued a dining hall meal ticket limiting them to only 10 meals a semester with students. Why these changes at a time when our college community is trying so hard to restore administration-faculty-student relations?

At the start of the semester, the new Snack Shop policy left day students with nowhere to have lunch, save the dormitory dining halls, and it also gave the faculty and staff a segregated dining hall. Dormitory dining halls

Continued on next page

THE SPARK

Volume II/ Issue 1

Thursday September 14, 1978

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THE SPARK welcomes and encourages letters from its readers. Letters should be sent to:

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All editorials are written by THE SPARK's editorial staff.

faculty dining cont'd

are limited and expensive for day students, whereas the Snack Shop has a varied menu and is relatively inexpensive.

The September 8th COMMUNICATOR carried a modification of the Snack Shop policy. Off-campus students are now able to buy lunch from 11:30 a.m. until noon and eat in the Cro-Bar. The Snack Shop will remain "reserved for use by faculty and staff members and their guests from noon to 1 p.m." It seems as if the Snack Shop has been made into a "semi-private" dining hall, as have the dormitory dining halls. Is it not ludicrous that students are now considered guests in the Crozier-Williams Student Center?

Everyone realizes the need for faculty and staff to have privacy; it is important that they be able to gather and discuss their confidential matters without the fear of being overheard by students. But is the Snack Shop really that place? Perhaps the next move will be to issue the students limited meal tickets for lunches in the Snack Shop with the faculty.

As it is true that some faculty eat uninvited in the dormitory dining rooms, it is also the case that few faculty eat more than 10 meals per semester in the dorms. But by putting a limitation on their possible meals with the students, is not their interaction also being limited? At a small college such as this, interaction between students, faculty, and administration should be encouraged, and this policy change does not seem to be in the school's best interest. If there were a better sense of community at Connecticut College amongst all its members, perhaps communication would be facilitated and tension alleviated. This college belongs to the students, as well as the faculty and administration, and should not tolerate decisions such as those made cutting the Snack Shop from the students. ■

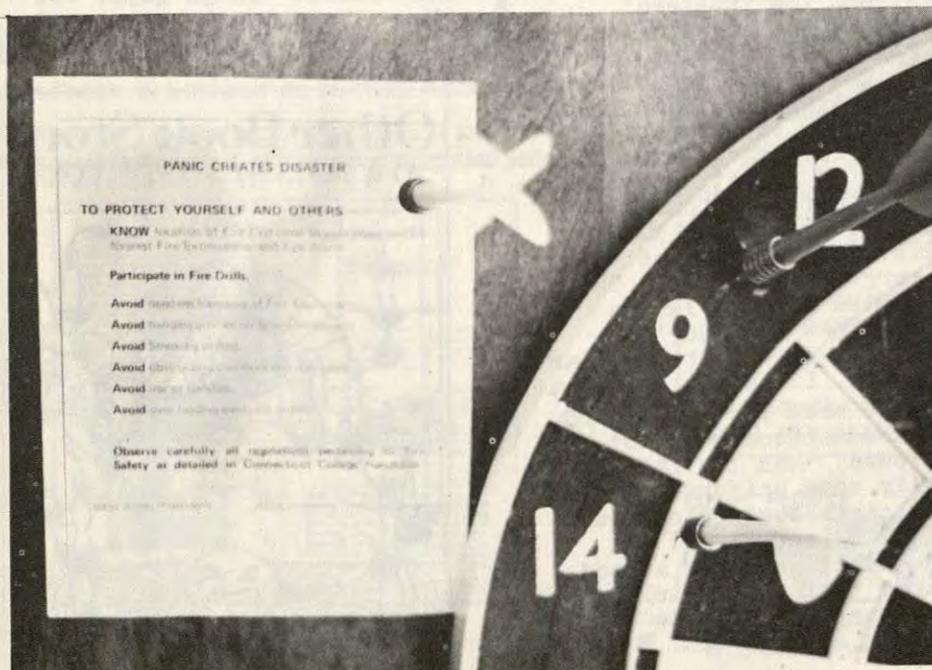
equality cont'd

placed on human rights in other areas of the world, Americans carelessly overlook a gross injustice in their own society-- the treatment of women under current law. Our Constitution does not contain a guarantee of equal rights for women and men.

Because of this fact the nation's statute books and governmental practices have always closed doors and limited opportunities solely on the basis of sex. In the past, legislators have passed numerous laws that mandate or presuppose different roles for men and women. These laws harm all people whose talents, preferences, or life situations make them unable or unwilling to conform to the stereotype for their sex. The Supreme Court has consistently upheld even the most blatantly sex-discriminatory laws that said women could not be lawyers or bartenders, laws that effectively kept women off juries, laws that limited women's working hours and thus denied them overtime pay and promotions. Men, too, felt the impact of unequal laws when the Court ruled in 1974 that needy widowers could be denied property tax exemptions available to widows.

Such laws are unjust because they use gender rather than ability or need to determine

Continued on page 6



Panic creates disaster



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Re: the skating rink

DON GOLDBERG

When the prospect of a skating rink was first considered by the administration, the Long Range Planning and Development Committee (LRPD) was assigned the task of investigating all possible implications of having a skating rink on this campus, and then making educated recommendations based on these findings. The committee studied the problem for considerations of finance, size, security, cost to the school, and aesthetic value; all information was either given to them by the administration or was found by the committee itself. The recommendations were then formed into a report given on May 3, and was sent to President Ames, the Board of Trustees, Development Director Roy Welch, the SGA president, and the Faculty Steering and Conference Committee.

"- - - the Trustees decided to begin construction, with only \$ 900,000 in hand, "

This report covered five important areas: the size, the site, parking, the use, and the cost of the rink. However, the decisions announced last week made by the Board of Trustees during the summer follow only two of the report's recommendations, that of site and of parking. The report recommended that a "strictly college" facility, "approximating that originally described when the gift was announced" be built (that "no persuasive case" for a facility larger than 900 capacity had been made in the 1973 case statement), and that a "sinking endowment" of gifts beyond the original \$800,000 gift be used to partially cover operating and maintenance costs. The decisions made this summer were contrary to these recommendations. Instead, commercial renting (which would cut into college use) was settled on to pay for the extra costs, and what was originally recommended to be a "strictly college" rink was enlarged into a 1600 seat multi-purpose facility.

The most important decision made, however, is the one which runs directly against what the LRPD felt to be in the best interest of the school. The question is no longer whether or not a rink will be built, but whether the rink will add greater debt to the college's present deficit. Will it truly be a gift? The Joint Student-Faculty Budget Committee's report (May 2) stated that "starting construction before having the money in hand risks incurring a \$200,000 to \$400,000 debt." The "unanimous recommendation" of the committees was that construction should begin "only when the construction costs (between \$1.3 and \$1.5 million) are in hand. Yet the Trustees decided to begin construction immediately, with only \$900,000 in hand. Treasurer Leroy Knight supported these actions of the Trustees,

stating the possibility of increased building costs over time. Knight readily admitted he couldn't guarantee the coverage of additional costs, "Can you guarantee anything in the future?" One therefore questions the Trustees' judgement in hazarding an approximately \$300,000 debt.

The troubling question which arises from this investigation is whether student-faculty committees are only a means of placating college minded professors and students by leading them to believe they have some voice in current decisions. The committee as pacifier is nothing new in today's society. In this particular instance, it is obvious that for the most part, the LRPD recommendations were not followed. Was the LRPD really that uniformed, or were their suggestions just not taken seriously? It seems that there is a good chance that the decisions made may have adverse affects on this institution. ■

The Japanese kid

By R.Q.M.

I had just come out of the shower when they came into the dressing room. They were tall and black. Two of them with big bushy Afros. The draft from the open door gave me goose bumps. My skin was damp. I stood naked, ringing the last drops of water from my swim trunks. My wet towel was thrown carelessly behind me on a wooden bench.

Another boy came out of the shower. With one hand he vigorously towed his brown hair; with the other he held his blue swim trunks. He stopped in the doorway between the shower and the dressing rooms. He stood motionless and naked, watching them as they rummaged through the pants and coats which hung loosely on hooks attached to the grey walls.

They noticed him. The tallest one looked at the boy. He pointed his long finger at him and said, "You better not say anything, you hear me? If you do, we'll get you. I know who you are."

The other one looked at me and said, "What about him?"

The tallest one looked at me. "He's cool. We can trust him. I know him."

He didn't know me. I knew them. They were Joe and Willis. Tough guys. You always know tough guys and I could be trusted. I was cool and black like them.

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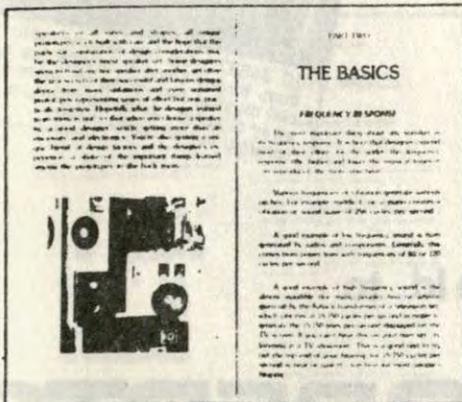
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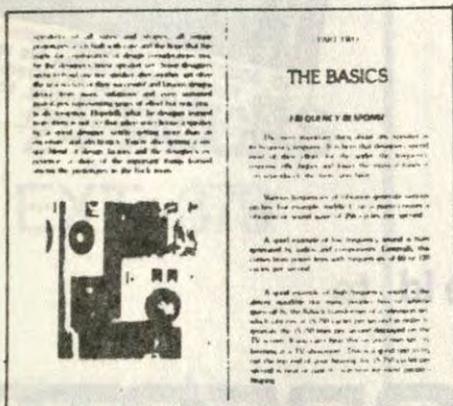
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Showermasters

DAVE ROSENBERG

They took the new watch of a Japanese kid who was still in the pool. I had met the kid three days before. We talked a lot. He was visiting the area for the summer and the watch was a birthday gift.

The two left the room as swiftly as they had entered. The boy who had been threatened quickly dressed and left. Later, when the Japanese kid came out of the pool he couldn't remember whether he had left the watch with the attendant at the front desk or brought it downstairs to the room.

I went upstairs with him. His mother waited for him in the recreation room. He introduced me to her. Then he inquired about his watch. The attendant, a short, nervous man who wore thick-lensed glasses, peered into the drawer behind the desk. "No, nothing here." The mother suggested that he might have left it at home. He said that he was sure he had brought it with him. I said goodbye. After that day the Japanese kid never came back to the YMCA. ■

There is nothing like the first dorm meeting of the new year. Every year they get a little bit longer, because new positions of responsibility are being added to the House Council. It wasn't too long ago that we had just two people speaking at the dorm meetings, but because of the growing number of dorm officers the meetings have become extremely long.

I didn't mind it when they added a vice-president, a social chairman and a residence director, but this fall when I discovered that a senior shower master had been added to the House Council, I was shocked. This guy was new at school; evidently he had been recruited from a West Coast school because of his fine hygienic record.

I'll admit that I was at first skeptical of the importance of such a position, but so were most others, until this sparkling figure stood up and began to speak to us. Blonde haired, blue eyed, his skin had been baked to a golden brown on the sands of Laguna.

He addressed himself to the poor shower safety record of our age group. I bet you didn't realize that shower drownings have increased almost 17% over the last twelve years for people 18-25. What a way to go! Could you imagine drowning under the constant trickling from a Complex faucet?

At first I balked at the new rule making it mandatory for students to sign before each shower on the second floor of J.A.--the drains were always clogged with hair. Then I remembered all the times I flirted with death by stumbling in those clogged showers and landing face down in a puddle on the floor.

So after I maturely thought it over I realized that the inconvenience of the shower rule was really insignificant when compared with the danger.

My real grievance with the shower rule was really in regard to his statement "There is no room in the college community for towel snapping."

I'm not going to be able to restrain myself from towel snapping for a whole year, and I really don't care if he revokes my shower privileges. ■

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equality cont'd

an individual's rights, responsibilities and benefits. The effect of these laws is to steer people into set tracks and deny them freedom to choose the path marked out by their own capacities and aspirations. Adoption of the ERA is necessary to safeguard to all persons the right to pursue their individual talents and capacities free of sex discrimination. This assurance will be accomplished by the ERA's firm direction for an end to outmoded sex-role stereotyping in laws and governmental practices.

The ERA simply states equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. This does not declare that women and men are the same, but that the law cannot treat them differently solely because of their sex. The ERA applies to government action, not private action. Thus exclusive clubs, churches, and other organizations will not necessarily have to cease their sex discriminatory practices. There are many other myths, fabricated by Anti-ERA people, that must be clarified. For example, the ERA would not require sex-integrated restrooms, locker rooms, or public showers. It would not legalize abortion nor would it deny the right of a woman and her children to be supported by her husband.

Constitutional Amendment is our highest form of lawmaking. It is a method used sparingly-- only twenty-six times in our 200 year history, and only when there is a need to establish a principle not yet included in the Constitution. For example, race discrimination was not illegal under the Constitution until 1868, the year the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted. The principle that women and men are equal before the law is not expressed now in the Constitution. Unless the time limit for ratification is extended there is little hope for the ERA to become part of our Constitution. ■

The jap factories

L.C.S.

Fortunately, Connecticut College is not blessed with a lot of Jewish American Princesses--or Japs as they're usually called. Now if you don't know what a Jap is, you're probably from a farm in Idaho. There aren't many Japs out there; most of them, it seems, come from Long Giland by the wata. So I'll try to sum up, more or less--for those of you who are farmers (most Japs have never laid eyes upon a farm)--what a Jewish American Princess really is.

First of all, Connecticut College, when compared to other places, does not have a lot of hard-core Japs; there are, however, the big six Jap factories which churn out many genuine princesses every year. These factories are: B.U., Syracuse, American University, Washington University (in St. Louis), and last but not least Ithaca College. Admission to these schools is tough. For U of Miami you need a very good tan, not just a "good" tan, a first-rate Long Island accent, nothing second-rate is tolerated, and a lot of jewelry. If you meet these stringent requirements, you're in. Then, after the admissions office has acknowledged your Jappyness, you're free to sit on the beach for four years, trying hard to find a good husband, preferably a dentist who wears white shoes and a leisure suit. U of Miami is the most difficult of the lot to get into. The other factories require at least two credit cards--usually American Express and Visa, but Masterjap is often accepted--and a lot of make-up. For a few especially well qualified Japs, there is the early decision program. If you're able to present a gold-plated Bloomingdale's charge card, you're in.

Japs like to travel in packs, so you have to be careful. Sometimes they are known to attack promising young men, especially doctors, lawyers, dentists and accountants. These types of men, after all, offer secure futures: swimming pools, Gucci shoes, and vacations to Acapulco. Japs can sense this; they have a sixth sense for this sort of thing.

Many Jewish American Princesses, it seems, like to

deny their Jappyness. "I'm not a Jap....If you think I'm Jappy, you should see my best friend," is a common response. If you hear that, beware. Before you know it, you'll be getting married--Goodbye Columbus style, of course--and heading to Acapulco on a 747 for your honeymoon. As a matter of fact, I am writing this on the plane, sitting next to my new wife. She's from Long Giland. ■

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Bridges

BY JAKE GREEN

I.

Today I learned the word miasma. It means the fetid smell of methane gas from a bog, river, or swamp, usually due to a low water table such as during a drought of low tide. The last nineteen years I never thought that the North River at low tide smelled like miasma but like shit. That is what I used to say. When I was little, coming back from St. Mary's in Scituate with my mother and father in the rusty Ford station wagon to get home to Marshfield we would go up route 3A and over the shaky steel bridge that spanned the North River. I sat alone in the back seat, my elbows resting on the back of the front seat, between each parent. When the car was on the bridge my father would give a quick, concise look to the left and to the right, over the river and its green flats. With his nose squinched into his face he would always say, "What's that smell?" I always replied, "Boy that smells like shit," and would immediately duck behind the shabby red seat. Mother would shout, "What did you say?," and would take a mock swing toward me. Father would be bent over the steering wheel laughing dementedly. "What are you trying to do? Corrupt the boy?" mother would ask. Then they would both laugh. It was a game. A game I soon tired of though my parents never did.

II.

Inland from the previous bridge, past the rubble on the banks from the 19th century shipyards, on the Norwell border is the Union Street Bridge. By comparison a small bridge. If you sneezed just before driving over it, by the time you raised your head back up you'd be off the bridge and either in Marshfield or Norwell. In weather permitting we jump off the bridge. From the railing is a twenty foot fall into the water. In the water, a weak swimmer is wisked a half-

mile like an empty can past a bend in the river. Near the end of sixth grade two friends and I walked to the bridge in our green gym shorts with towels draped over our shoulders. Two grinning police cars were parked before the bridge, their engines and strobe lights still running. Down on the river bank the crying George Desmond being

held by two demure policemen while another policeman with a long pine branch tried to reach our neighbor Ray Culp as he silently floated face down on the river, long and white like an angel we used to make in snow. We weren't used to human death. We went up river to a calm pool where Kevin Nagel swam wildly mimicking Ray's extravagant and unsuccessful style. ■

10 minute madonna (on any given dance)

ANONYMOUS

The table was turning
so I hit the floor
in a high velocity haze,
twisting and squirming,
adding new dimensions to the word
"twitch",

making no turn unstoned,
spinning far away
into and unto
a highly symbolic
cataclysmo of unpasteurized motion --
till
catching her coke-bottle form
loose leafing to the beat
in the 100 watt haze,
my head went right,
my hand went out
and my mind's mouth whispered,
"Digame, my child-like goddess,
the angelic name by which
you are known."
Which she did
and whose two syllables--
I remember it was two syllables--
caused to rise from me
among other things
a deeply felt music
whose divine melody
propelled me to the heights
of aphroesiosity
as we split in the mist
with a rampage of bumps and bounces
which I counted tight-eyed as she
out-bounced and bumped me 2 to 1--
only natural--
and I knew, you know
I just knew
this was the one
as I thought I saw her see me say
that we could tap the streets
for all they're worth,
hiply sliding into the--
O my God my zipper's down--
night...
that our combined weights
reclined
could keep the sun from ever rising.
She shuddered in mid-bounce,
frightened by some comeaway glint in my eye
that she had never seen before,
that she took out of context,
and so
stuttered on the word "thanks".

BY JOSH LYONS

A subtleness has fallen over me
Like a shroud it covers my every
move

And every thought.
From where it comes or
Where it will go
I do not know.

A sadness hovers over me
Like an eerie fog
Resting over an open field.
Luminous yet shadowing
Everything about me.

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