

Ken Meisel

THE NIGHT MY BROTHER & I WERE BATS

We're a group of bones made of afterthoughts,
my twin brother and I,

two men out on the town like fruit fly bats,
our small blinking eyes, fervid, alive,

the colors of desire, being: roast pepper,
lady Baltimore cake, strawberry meringue

and Nina Simone bending over a microphone
boiling the song into a chilaca chile –

her voice breaking the song's words apart
with smoky lust and a sizzling anger –

while we danced

to the moon rising over the David Stott building
in Detroit,

while we walked under it, noticing the lights.

~

Someone in a back alley, lighting a joint,
three women in pumps, hustling away

to a waiting Uber cab, the one of them
dropping her pump behind her, losing it

down along Library Street
outside of Vincente's,

then bending back over herself to retrieve it,
slip it back on over her roaming heel

~

POETRY

while you watched, then later noticed
how a man's small bat nose tastes perfume
when it approaches the mescal,
blue agave, smoked-pepper aroma
of a woman dancing exalted and alone
on a dance floor like a restless
sapodilla tree, lost in a Caribbean wind
among a group of others – young hipster boys
in big glasses, slim kids in tight jeans
and embroidered hoodies,
and dancing women hurtling their hair
down over their pale faces and shoulders
in a charcoal-roasted starlight;
their mini skirts and mojito mouths
checkered by the pulsing polka-dot of lights;
and the music, throbbing through spirals
of amber yellow and grenadine red –
while her mouth, awash in a mulled wine,
tasted of cinnamon, cloves, allspice
as you danced together, pulled each other tightly
to each others' ribs
at a club where the DJ played 45s –
King Coleman, Edwin Starr, Hector Rivera –

and her young hips rose up
to your hands and she wiggled

into a tangle of bones made mostly
of afterthought and reverie –

the color of stardust being a mixture

of Ceylon tea and amethyst sugar,
something you can't ever really grab –

while the pungent smell of marijuana,
wafting over the heads of dancers,

spun us into hallucination and laughter

until we left there,
walked back home under a chestnut

roasted moon rising over
the David Stott building in Detroit –

and we followed it, the merry moon,

as it skipped away from us,

down, along the cobblestone streets
of Corktown – that night, long ago,

when my brother and I were bats.