

1992

## YHWH

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“And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”

—Exod. 33:20

The old woman sitting in the third row  
of the presbyterian church where she  
always sits her hands trembling from old age  
and fear of God wondering if that time so long  
ago she was thirty if it really mattered.

Her husband was away for a time too long  
and the other was young and the way he touched her  
running his hand up her back hesitantly asking  
with his fingertips if this was all right and she  
not really knowing if it was but such a change  
and she letting it happen and when the lovemaking  
came his lips so gentle on her lips on her breasts  
in the place her husband would never place his own  
feeling so good for the moment at least—her husband  
died thirty years later never knowing  
her so called moment of weakness that she forever  
ached for yet never let happen ever again  
because of fear of damnation and love for a man  
that was developed from years spent sharing dinner  
and walks together in a park on wednesday afternoons.

Now her hands tremble harder as the memories  
flood in and she worries wanders if she is damned  
or if that sin and her years of silent guilt  
were really enough to cancel her promise of heaven.

Or a man he lives next to the old woman  
though he's never been to church sitting in a building  
three stories above the world scribbling equations  
rough drawings the like figuring stresses and strains.

In a fit of frustration he slams his pen down  
and walks to the window his key to the world and looks  
out at a man a person with ratted clothing asking  
people out on lunch for a cigarette for a light  
and he is filled with a abrupt quickening like the moment  
before an orgasm or before the cars collide  
and the glass tears into the skin dangerous territory  
where there is more then the plan for a new plant.

he pulls quickly away experienced in these matters  
and grabbing his pen his calculator his handles on the world  
at his desk again he sits and works the page.

Or a boy his son sits with friends in a circle  
together in a park somewhere deep in the city  
and they look up to heaven feeling the communion of love  
but feeling that beyond their tight sphere is hatred.

Later that night he and the friends abandon  
trees and soft grass for the inner sanctum of a club  
filled with guitar riffs skinheads and girls with plum hair  
and he looks to his friends and looks to the stage and looks  
to the bar where he can't order a drink so he spends  
five bucks of the money he earned watching  
meat cook at a fast food joint and tries to find god  
in a slamdance pit and the end of an acid tab  
(on being tough they call it though it will bring him  
to his knees possessed by the moment his father so fears).

Only he has no pen and no calculator and no desk  
and no so called wisdom to block it out and the drug  
makes it seem so much more than it really is that he cries  
to the sky because like Moses he was given  
a glimpse but not allowed to see the face.

– Grant M. Potts '96



– Kate Tomaro '93