



John Greiner

Break

Beauty
break
my back
me beneath
it
and
it's
always
you who smile.

Ocean Crossing

Bundled tight
in typewriter ribbon,
she was an anomaly
in the middle of the quick caught,
easily lost lot
in modern
mode.

On Sundays she smelled of charred strip
steak,
the rest of the week she perfumed herself
with gardenias shipped
from South Africa.

I visited her on the Wednesday
when she bit her lower lip
while waiting to open

her grandmother's boxes
brought from Poland
or Portugal,

from which she wasn't sure.

She wept, tormented by sad the truth
that all of the boxes that her grandmother
packed

had been left unopened longer than any row boat
ride
or plane trip

would have taken.

Never having known her grandmother,

I felt no remorse.

I left the room with her father's silver dollar
in my pocket.

in my pocket
and the hope of making it to Webster Avenue
and East 233rd Street
before the wailing women arrived on Thursday
morning, ready to taunt Melville

with their tears of the sea.
She showed little concern when I left
and reminded me
that we were all islands,
or at least noonday fetishes

that would never be fulfilled
until all the paper
ships sunk and their cargo
littered the bottom
of the ocean.

One Thousand and One Nights

Falling through
one thousand and one
 nights not savored
and on the one thousand
 and second day
got lost in the sorrow
that was lost in the night.

Every song comes to the same refrain.
It's the bridge you've got to keep
 your ears open for.

I cover my eyes
 and watch the blind hours,
each and every one of them
 the same.

Slash

Stressed
syllable heavy
 on
the bore
dom mean machine
 sit t in g
 still on the lap

Slash

crater ///////////////
moon

faced
to grave
scarred

I knew from the very beginning
that it would have been better
to just lay back and mutter
without worry of

con-

dom
nation

never
getting ahead

Nothing to do but fill the pockets
with a million penny ante horrors

I'm the out classed
conscious linguistic hardball
rap

alpha bet ic
 a lawsuit

Judge and jury hungry for my whisper
 to falter
 derided silent sleep

Stressed
syllable heavy
 on

the bore
dom

Slash
 the accent

mark & meander
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Tongue tied and then lost