

before he strikes the cushions, before we
tuck the quilt around him, laughing, drunk
with his drunkenness. Tired of trying
to understand ourselves in him, those of us
who have a home, go home.

In the morning, while we are still
crossing each other with arms and legs in bed,
he will fly over us, for an instant,
in a jet, in a fog, in a dream that is moving away
toward a city of drunken angels.

ONE NIGHT STAND

Arntson worships the holy cross
of his body, and gives off
a strange light on his way to the barn.
Only the vacant space
where his body has been
follows him.
He knocks three times on the barn door.
No one lets him in. No
body is home. He bangs.
He kicks, claws at the wood with his nails.
And then he slides the latch himself.

Pigs and chickens, goats and cows
amble out, looking up
at his moon-blanced placid face
as though expecting
gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Arntson grows starry-eyed when he thinks
they might remember him
to their peaceable kingdoms.
He hurries to find the axe.

THE TURKISH HOTEL, THE BEDROOM IN DENVER

I know you are asleep, but
from the way you've lain your legs,
you might be dancing:
one foot raised
higher than its partner -- as if
you were about to leap somewhere
while a band of nomads clapped
their hands to keep the beat.

You seem about to snap
the red and yellow tassles of the blanket
from your back, to lead me

wheeling through the circle
and the steps that do not matter,
your bare legs
itching to escape
the weight of your body.

But, like a tourist's snapshot, you don't move.
If you're even dreaming,
you dream of static pyramids
or locks by the Red Sea. I dream
enough for two: both of us
will wake tomorrow dancing.

-- Jack W. Thomas

San Diego, CA

roger corbin

is co-owner of the 49ers tavern,
ex-marine, swing-shift probation
officer. he sports a trademark gut
now, but he'll still put out a quite

respectable half-game of half-court
basketball. all the eligible divorcees
would like to wed him, but he only beds
them and continues waiting for miss right.

meanwhile miss right is casually being
deflowered in the next room on the waterbed
by roger's roommate rick. but rick's another poem
entirely, one that he ought to write himself.

roger is the premier pool-shot of
the bar, and lately he's extended his
domination to pin-ball. he will, however,
generously share his strategies with anyone,

and i am sure his systems work,
it's just you also need his eye,
and steady hand, and confidence.
ah, confidence! yes, i should think it takes

a lot of confidence to sign a partnership with karl,
who is as lovable as snoopy, and just as
reliable. karl is another poem also,
something of a combination huck finn,

mr. chips, and william burroughs.
confidence is what keeps roger going.
the stuff that lets you take tarawa beach-head,
i think that he still dreams america