

PHONE CALL

An acquaintance called me all the way from Boston to tell me I had ruined his life.

"I had?"

I felt awful.

"Is there something I can do to make it right?"

But he wouldn't hear of it.

He was beside himself with rage & disappointment.

"& after all I've done for you," he said.

"I can't believe it!"

"You can't? ... Like what?"

I was genuinely interested.

"Steve, don't think you're gonna get away with this.

I've already sent out letters to your boss,

your next-door neighbors & the Star Gazette.

When this gets out you're gonna be about as popular as a Mormon in Uganda.

& you can forget that kidney operation, too.

I called the doctors. They were disgusted.

Hell, they wouldn't touch you now

with a ten-foot catheter.

Oh yeah, there's a little package coming

with some snapshots that I think your wife & kids

will find particularly interesting."

"There is?"

& just remember it's your own fault, Steve.

You brought it on yourself. It's people

like you who cause all the problems in the world."

& he hung up. I stood there with

my mouth hanging open, the receiver

stapled to my fingers, thinking to myself:

"They do?"

BAD ADVICE

They took one of my poems

for #6

wanting to know where

& when I was born

& whether or not I used

an assumed name.

Mary suggested I tell them the truth:

that altho the name I use

is my own

I write all my poems

wearing a fake nose -- so
that's what I told them.
Sure enough, #6
came out without my poem

-- Steve Kowit

San Diego CA

CLOSING TIME

At two-fifteen
they scatter
from the bar
in all directions.
A whore from Milt's
asks for company
and gets it.

A LOCAL LEGEND

If Tom Parrott drinks
one more black russian
we'll have to drag him
out -- it'll take three
or four of us and he'll
be grabbing ass all the way.

THE SPARROWS

My God, the birds are everywhere,
flying through my windshield,
underneath the dashboard and nesting
in the glove compartment. You would
think they would have flown south
to get away from all this metal,
but no, they've taken to eating
concrete and stale McDonalds buns.

Bedini was hugging Ann
at the Apollo lounge, at
the end of the night. She
was continually unwrapping
him. "Never mind," he said,
giving up, "it's too much
trouble."

"Not," she said, "you're
just too drunk."

They were both right.

-- Robert Spiegel

Albuquerque NM