

before a gravestone  
a matchstick lady  
mumbled and squeezed her cane  
as a child clutches a turtle.  
dropping flowers  
one by one  
she told me  
that she came each week  
to the cemetery;  
there was no one now  
except the man at her feet.  
then she came closer  
to poke a wrinkled rosebud  
in my lapel.  
it seemed like hours  
before the bus came  
to take me home.

-- M. Shael Herman

New Orleans, La.

C O D E X    M M (11)

So dreams come  
but from where do they come,  
and why so unfrequently,  
and why?

One eats one too many fat morsels  
and the stomach grumbles,  
makes gas,  
some slight malaise

But one sleeps,  
one dreams,  
and from some locked  
room inside

People emerge  
and act upon  
their temporary stage  
and go more quickly  
than they come ...

And why?  
What hint have  
they left  
of past  
or things to come?

How have they meddled  
with history?  
Whose history?  
Mine?  
Or how many others?

And where is this stuff stored?  
What makes a dream?  
Not memory ...  
the forgotten things  
crying somewhere for recall?

Yes, maybe so --  
Yes, Yes,  
but who last night  
plucked that resounding  
chord on dream's lyre  
which awakened  
me early,  
not fearful  
but curious  
yearning for some insight.

and in what code?

I listen to the motors  
on the street  
and in the air,  
straining for what word  
they are making,  
straining to decode their say

and then one winter bird  
answers me with lonely song  
telling me NOW is but  
one empty street  
in an empty city  
which when I find it  
will be mine.

### XIX

And there is always the matter  
of the reluctant guru and the  
ardent neophyte, or the ardent guru  
and the reluctant neophyte.

Rimbaud, Verlaine; Gaugin, Van Gogh;  
and how many others in the folds  
of record to testify the painful stubbornness  
of secrets locked in the blood and brain.

-- Kenneth L. Beaudoin

Memphis, Tenn.