

himself, began to laugh. Soon his laugh was so loud he kept the neighborhood awake. His laugh was so loud and hard his fingers began to sweat and slip apart. The neighbors worried.

If the man's hands should come apart, won't he become a threat to everyone around him? Shouldn't they see to it that this man, grown mad under the weight of his deep itch, be restrained from harming others?

So they secured the man's fingers together with tiny ropes and threw him in his basement where he could laugh as loud as he wanted and still keep a hold on himself.

## THE PAST

A mud worm enters my ear and finds an empty cave. He goes to work on the walls, leaving long mud lines. He drags his body in circles, leaving a print of an antelope, a shovel, and a wheel. He works his way across the cave, rubbing his chin until he invents light and places some at intervals along the wall.

Later the same day, after the mud worm has crawled through a rear door, a crew of anthropologists enters my ear. They find the cave. They find an antelope, a shovel, a wheel, and ashes on the floor. They pull out their picks and dig just beneath the surface of the wall, putting parts of my brain in sacks.

Flashbulbs pop in my ears ....

## A SHADOW'S LOVE

-- for Susan

My shadow is missing. I've tried walking through noon sunshine or standing between a spotlight and white wall, or strapping metal reflectors to my waist. But I haven't received even a collect phone call from my shadow.

I think of foul play. One morning someone digging a long narrow hole on the west side of the sidewalk and kidnapping shadows as they drop by.

I can picture a night train with one dark room, filled by shadows. And my shadow, taught a love of the good life, taken to a city where it waits on some back street under, maybe, a streetlight, to sell itself.

And now I walk through the sunshine, shoulders beaten red,  
into the shade of a shadow not my own, a shadow whose  
love I can never have.

-- Patrick Bizzaro

Manassas VA

KING

when she takes a nap  
when I'm around  
I get offended,  
because when I'm around  
the world's lucky, right?

KAREN

went to a movie  
with Kevin,  
a guy she's known for  
ten years,  
they probably  
made out all over the place,  
but when she asked  
me if I was jealous  
I said no.

CHARLIE

best friend  
even though  
in seventh grade I  
hated him for making  
a sanding block  
that was perfect,  
even the nail-holed  
initials, C.C.

FAST THINGS

my red shorts and Pumas  
dart over the vanishing trail,  
brushing past brush,  
and then a lizard,  
a black stick running  
like the devil  
from devil's work.

825 BRAZIL

the weeds on either  
side of the walk to  
her door  
were wet and quiet  
when  
she told me  
after she kissed me  
to be sure not to  
step on the snails  
on the way back.

KISS ME, BOB, SHE SAID

on the bus from  
the ninth grade graduation  
picnic where  
Jason and Murdock  
swiped her purse they  
got embarrassed when  
they found 32 cents  
and some Tampax.