

Mark and Alan

by Carl Santoro

They came running into
my dorm room,
album in hand.
"You gotta hear this guy,
you just gotta listen!"

It was 1965,
Farmingdale, New York

They urged me to
follow them to their room.
They had a phonograph player.

They carefully lined up
the needle with the third track.
We all went over to the bed
and began to stare at the 1963 album cover.
Masters of War began to play.

I cringed at the raspy voice,
but was immediately blown away
at the enthusiasm and intense excitement
in my friends.
They were singing along.
They knew every word.
They knew EVERY word!

College suddenly took on
a new feel and meaning for me.
Protesting, Dylan, Baez,
Civil Rights, Vietnam,
Ginsberg,

Ferlinghetti,
Malcom X, the Draft,
Martin Luther King, Jr.,
Watts, Lyndon Johnson

Beatles, Byrds,
Turn, turn, turn.
And I was only here
for Advertising Art & Design.

I left them to get us cokes from the machine.
Somehow I felt inexplicably different,
smarter maybe, but worried.
Mark and Alan were exposing me
to a new and unexpected curriculum. Reality.
A different campus. The campus of life.

As I walked back down the hall
Dylan whined out a warning,
"...even Jesus would never
forgive what you do."

I stood in their doorway
cokes in hand.
They both looked up at me
at the same moment.
"Anyone want to get pizza?" I said.
"Get in here, " Mark snapped.
Alan reached for the drinks.
"Now shut the door."

