

Curfew

by Ann Bogle

Composing in my head this afternoon, I wrote a fast masterpiece. I had not had a glass of wine nor eaten a fruit; I had climbed a hill in high gear. Pushing against the pedals in sport sandals and pedal pushers -- a "crossbody mini" (as such purses are called in the industry) holding my nature-man cigarettes, phone, keys, and no notepad, bobbing against my backside, my organic cotton royal blue t-shirt -- I saw phrases, a seven-pack of lines, every line its reasons: nothing reasonable on the page's blank and nothing out of order. Every minute its thing. Every thing its minute memory. Every memory its own account threading rivulets to sea, spilling water to wall flowers.

What would be perfect.

Here, indoors, sitting merely where the equipment is, after a drink with the meal, nothing comes but the memory of heightened tactics.

I sing better in my mind than I sing aloud. Mentally, I sing soprano.

The story was about the adulterous man who shaved his head in spring. The story was about the Houston police devising a punishment for the adulterous man -- shaving heads of adulterers would be an excellent idea to them except the adulterer had beat them to it -- never letting him cut his hair would be another. Not that the courts would cite it. Not that the adulterous man was balding or a skinhead and so had shaved it; he was a thespian. The Houston police devised a punishment for the adulterous thespian that would not hurt the nights or household income of his French young wife. The Houston police caught him drinking. The parking lot behind the tavern emptied of its hundred cars. The police wanted that one bald thespian's car: The car was a Houston police car bought at auction and stripped of its decals. The police in their turquoise squad cars followed the thespian in his plain turquoise car as it followed a slate blue car Mondays and Wednesdays to a street far from where the

thespian lived with his wife. The thespian smoked a roach on the way, proudly unaware that the police were following him, preferring to think they were riding beside him.

That time the judge sentenced him to five A.A. meetings per week, a work permit (he kept the car), plates in the driveway weeknights by nine.

