

The Code is on the Street

by Ann Bogle

The couple who moved in next door—attractive in a way I try to figure out—smoke outside their front and side doors, as I do. The man's voice is distinctive and carries. For their first month there, my life evolved in non-stop monologue. They may have heard parts of it, the memoir in me. Then I took a trip—to New York, though they wouldn't have known where—and when I returned, I was entirely mum unless I had the phone with me. On the phone, we talked of publishing and poetry. I interjected only enough so the caller would know he hadn't lost or started to bore me.

It occurred to me that the couple next door, he or she, or together, they, may have believed that I had gone away to be treated medically for the talking.

Then I read a quote from Noam Chomsky in an article about his linguistics in *Discover*: "It takes a strong act of will to try not to talk to yourself when you're walking down the street."

