

A Summoning

by John Olson

I don't know, maybe it's just me, but if the vault is variegated my elbow clicks like drapery. I don't know where else to keep my money. I'm not entirely sure what makes money money in the first place. I do find that it's democratic to blend with reality as much as possible, but if one's illusions are compelling enough, well, why not just go ahead and walk into the mirror à la Jean Marais following Heurtibise into the underworld. It is said that if one looks long enough in the mirror one will see death. What I see is a face creased with age and eyebrows going crazy under a bad haircut. A bad haircut is a sure ticket to the underworld. You don't need gloves. All you need is love, sang the Beatles, and they were right, of course. But it's harder than one might think to go around in love with the world all the time. There are a lot of people out there that require a supreme effort to like, much less love. It's slightly easier but less democratic to parachute through one's mind without getting tangled up in one's thoughts. Thoughts are funny things. They're like doors to other dimensions. Sometimes you can find redemption in a trumpet or hot dog. Scan the fetus and see if it smells of puddles. The fetus to which I refer is that of thought of course. Because each thought is a fetus in its infancy. And if it smells like rain or puddles in the street it's time to go bowling my friend and get out of your head. Calendars are fun too, giving names to all the shifts in temperature, draping the sullen cliffs of Arizona with amulets of sunset fire or blanketing Ireland and its ancient castles with snow. If you act like a clarinet expect quartz to appear on your chest in place of your other minerals. There is ore in the heart, gold and copper and sometimes veins of silver. Imagine it raining on a tank. The men inside playing cards. That's my definition of breath. Another is lungs. And still another is streams of air flowing out of the mouth, thoughts included, getting sculpted into words. Variables and dots, tinfoil oysters wrapped in zip code catfish skulls. That's my idea of thinking. It's a calling of things forth. A summoning. A provocation.

A fishing around in the depths, dangling words in the limpid pool of a cavern. The syntax of blind white fish. Wiggling. Outside in the good clean air the atomic moon becomes a highway and illumines our personal histories with the kerosene of desire and the wick of remorse. Who wouldn't want to walk through that mirror to the underworld just to retrieve a past moment, a bittersweet morsel from the vault of that ancient jukebox stuck beneath the ribs, the bump bump bump of the beating heart, blood pumped to the brain, oblivion lapping the ghostly shores of a scene enacted over and over again, behind those curtains, behind that mirror in the bathroom, the one that smiles back, and looks like you, and is you, and isn't you. The twisting you do, the voltage it takes to run a thrill up and down the spine, a trembling in the membrane of night.

