

Going on Account

by John Olson

It's true. I'm a pirate now, sailing my own private Caribbean, sails flapping, halyards straining, desperation feasting on the pearls of obdurate hope. I am scudding the seas to redeem the dream of romance. The moon shines like a glass of milk breaking on the floor. How do I shape reality? I twist it into a flower of iron. I am bursting with confusion. Rain walks on my head. I hear the fabulous echoes of a thousand sirens singing a thousand songs. My beliefs are long and wide like the flight of swallows. Well then, let's have a toast! There is a whisper of blue on my suitcase and a memory caught in my nerves whose suppleness of perspective has become spatial as a drop of rain and unravels the ghosts of murdered desires. My fingers burn. I work the yardarms. I cram each sentence with an ocean and a catastrophe. I ignite the gaze of midnight speculation. I wonder if I can write as great as Kerouac. How far does the sky go? It spits images against the eyes. The dead walk the waves with apples and balloons. Technicolor angels brush the clouds. Coral snakes and alligators swarm in my sperm. I live the studio life of the Bateau Lavoir when Picasso painted his harlequins and sad blue women. I study the architecture of hunger. I listen to intuitions. I have a map of heaven and a map of hell and they are the same map. I've seen great wonders. I've seen colossal beasts emerge from the depths and skeletons dance on the waves. I've seen Paris and London and the Beatles on Ed Sullivan. I wear a hat built of carefully chosen twigs. It moves me to build a worm. The feeling is rendered in syllables. The feeling twitches into life and squirms. What is despair? It is Europe weeping in the gloomy rain. It is a subjunctive mood broken into fjords. It is being alone in Mexico City. The life we lead is invisible. Reach into yourself and pull out a blazing evocation. The horizon lures us into travel along the rim of a bowl. Wounds are healed by the sound of the harmonica. Word by word I feel a poem aching in the bone of the arm making its marks on paper. I feel the rupture of a wave with a thousand wild arms. The

mind plays with the dark. Jokes about the cemetery have the smell and chill of the ocean at night. I feel the creak of shifting planks, the hungry egos of poets. The brain is a pudding. Audacity is its own reward. Iron is widely literal, and that is a good sweet sound when it is uttered by a harmonica whirring round itself in a delirium of music. I like my coffee black. I like the woman who sells combs at the public market in Havana. I like Noguchi's Great Rock of Inner Seeking. The water is yawning above this structure of sculptured thought. What amazement in trying to scrape the cartilage of need from the bones of disdain. I sense the presence of fish. It is the sound of drums. I'm cold as a wet boulder. I move against the current. I smell the breath of old wood conversing with its element the sea. I feel the agitation of an invisible placenta in the ancient womb of night. The worse pains are the ones that sit on your heart like egrets of regret. The greatest treasures have nothing to do with gold, or jewelry, or coins. They are the things we find in corners. In dreams. Goats on an emerald hill soft as the break of day.

