

The Collector Of Twilights

by John Olson

I like to collect twilights. I fold them carefully and put them in my wallet. They fit neatly between the dollar bills that have a weird tendency to curl. This bugs me. I don't know why they do that. Something to do with the design of the wallet. But the twilights fit nicely. I can take one out and crawl under it and watch the few stars that come forth sequentially like sequins, light lobbed from an incomprehensible distance. Twilights are cathartic. You hear that in the popular phrase "at the end of the day," the implication being that everything that happened during the day was so much bullshit and theory and it takes the end of the day to squeeze some dreary pragmatic truth out of everyone. That isn't what twilight is about. Twilight is about friars kneeling on hard stone. The physiognomy of the moon. A torrent of twilights splashed down on a counter to pay for a six-pack. Night crawling into the mind like a young woman wearing nothing but a nocturne and a pinfeather world of thirst and mammalian warmth. This is a mean old ugly world. You can't take anything for granted. You can ponder the imponderable but nothing changes. People get irritated and walk away. That's ok. Everyone's got somewhere to be and if they don't the dawn will come soon enough and break their eyes into a thousand different directions and the urge to go somewhere will be inescapable. Daylight does that: traps you in its glare. Twilight breaks the chains of the hard demanding prison of day and opens a big wide door to the sky and all its treasures. Colors surge. Shapes of air we call words die softly and fall away. Their residue is called dream. The kerosene of emotion blazes at the darkness and the night steps softly across the universe, dripping stars. We shiver in the cold and get ready for a new reality.

