

Veins Of Crazy Water

by John Olson

People tell me my personality is a drug. Could be. My shadow is a spine. And I have the current density of copper. A welcoming face. Opium eyes opium thumbs.

The piccolo is parenthetical.

I've been behind bars ten times in my life. Once, for robbing a 7-11 with a squirt gun.

Life is often difficult. I always feel like I'm falling into a hole. Others, like I'm dancing on a cloud.

I remember seeing Sonny and Cher arrive at the Target Ballroom in Burien, Washington, in 1965. They glowed. They had at least two hit songs on the radio.

I cried the first time I rode in an elevator. It was so beautiful. Not at all what I expected. The way the doors slid shut. The way people stood clustered together inside. So solemn and quiet. As if they were at a funeral. And this was when the elevator was going up. People seemed more cheerful when the elevator was going down. And then I realized. This was because they were leaving their jobs and medical appointments and returning to the world. To their homes and friends. Or a drink at the local bar.

I got married in 1970 and divorced in 1972. That was a ride. Let me tell you.

My wallet is a museum of personal details. Driver's license, library card, credit cards, angels, movie stubs, drugstore receipts, a prescription for codeine, I have roots in this sentence, that's why it's taking so long to complete it, because the roots are sinking into the dirt and the words are blossoming at the top.

And so now you know a little about me.

Yesterday, Adriana made scones for all the poets in town. I didn't go. I had already eaten breakfast. This consisted of a slice of cherry pie with whipped cream on top, an orange, a cup of coffee, and a poem by Baudelaire in which a woman dances so beautifully he compares her undulatory movements to a snake.

I dislike sticky fingers, don't you?
Especially blood.
I like carnivals, friendly dogs, and cleavage.
Silverware shining in sunlight.
One must come to terms with pain. Because if you don't, pain
will engulf and drown you. The cloud assumes itself in accumulation.
It is the same with pain. It will accumulate. Like a cloud. But
remember. Remember what it is that clouds do.
That's right. Clouds rain.
Sweet sweet rain.
Veins of crazy water zigzagging to the sill.

