

# Drug Series # 19: Heroin

by Sean Lovelace

Billie Holiday and I want a cup of coffee and they tell us to go fuck ourselves. To take the service elevator straight to hell, and make sure nobody sees us. Billie hands me aluminum foil and I chew it with my molars. I know she has a pocketful of runny eggs, but isn't sharing. We hear the dogs, something unleashed. We run. I say, "Don't watch yourself, Billie. That's how you'll get caught." She doesn't watch herself; I don't watch myself. We are hit by a garbage truck and end up dead, then moments later, back alive, in a hospital room. "These are the whitest sheets in the universe," I tell Billie. "I'm so glad we left a vein open for the doctors." Billie, she hums something. We rip out the IV lines; we rip out the shiny nickels attached to our skin. We sneak into a supply closet and stuff our pockets with 300 diabetic syringes. For kicks, Billie grabs a Q-tip. We climb across a glistening floor. We climb a parking lot, a tree, alongside an icy river. Billie says, "Here comes the legal system," though I sense nothing. Just low sky and black sucking water and my fingers red and numb. I have this thing with my fingers—they sting in any kind of cold, always the middle and the ring fingers. Billie smiles and makes a shadow puppet with her thumbs, a bird crumpling through the air. I know she is trying to warm me, from the inside. A parting gift, a lullaby. She flings herself into the river. Or maybe slips and falls. The Q-tip spinning yellow after. I do cling.

