

with one crunchy bite on the phallic biscuit.
In my boyish womanhood, with my soul in drag,
I have been personal concubine to hundreds
of queens and princes, mistress of many
hedonists, lover of all.

I have pricked, prodded, pampered and pumped,
held my knees to my ears in the amyl twilight
and gone totally and obtusely mad, because
one halfway beautiful man weighed
a thousand tons on my fragile psyche.
My anima is stripped by the sight of my
wrinkled ego hanging out his back pocket
always two steps ahead of me.

I will go on, unknown lovers in my future,
I will be there, waiting with my mouth in my hand
to show you the ways into my body/being,
curling my wits to help you laugh out your orgasms,
but I am totally insane
because one of you, one too many of you
walked out that morning with all my reason
crumpled inside your tawny levis.

Explanation

I am not gay by your definition.
I will not stand in the drab beige men's room
like a fern watered with urine,
and wait for penises. I'm sorry.
Morality will just have to change.

I speak directly to the sons of
your officials, under the moon,
with the professors listening.
We have burned the closet door in effigy.
There will be no more watching for the feet
of policemen under the partitions.

Nor
the mediocrity of masses of shuffling gays
in the dark bars, ghettoed and ethnic.

I love men. I tell them so directly.
Wherever we encounter, there are no categories.

William Barber from
Columbia Anthology
of Gay Literature
Fall 1998

Perry Brass (b. 1947)

Only Silly Faggots Know (1973)

— Only Silly Faggots Know only faggots know
only silly faggots know
pain, nights and nights of dark
streets, rain, raining alone
and parks full of crocodiles
Men who beat up faggots know crocodiles
eat men slowly, little by little bit by bit
and shit them out into the dark sewage water
of jungles without flowers—but
only silly faggots know and know and know
and see and see and see cha-cha down the streets of tinsel
and dinosaur rhinestone teeth and know and know and know
what only silly faggots know and drugs don't know
and Men who beat up faggots don't know
and faggots from the Stock Exchange don't know
and faggots from Abercrombie and Fitch don't know
and faggots from the Metropolitan Opera don't know

but the subways at three o'clock in the morning know
and Christopher Street at 4 a.m. knows
and the baths too exhausted to care
and too exalted to give up know
and split the sides with tell-it-all
tell-it-all tell-it-all tell-it-all
because that's what we're here for
and that's why I love you
because you do know
where I have been and you have walked with me
through the mined crocodile fields
and passed the straight apes on the street corners
and gone through the morning hours with me, afraid
oh, sooooo afraid,
but not turned-off, not to turn back
but to reach for me
to reach out for me sitting here
when I needed you
because only you know.

I Have This Vision of Madness (1972)

I have this vision of madness:
dear gay brothers,

6/25/98
Fr Walter
Hallard,
Perry Brass

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Hustlers

for Jerry Patterson ✓

Two beers screw my head up.
I lean back against a dark wall.
My long hair drifts in my eyes.
Let's say the moon makes a decision.
I land the corner legend surrounds.
I say more than I pretend to.
I prefer to be fucked to The Beatles.
I stand with the guys I resemble.
Jerry, Tom, Dick, Sam, Julian, Max, Timmy.
Guess which of those names is perfect.
We dream of a casual million.
We light our cigarettes gently.
I take what the night has to offer.
I roll a ripe peach from one wrist to the other.
I can't speak I'm so fucking stupid.
Our bodies are simply stupendous.
When we breathe, it takes us apart.
You know. You're inside us.

Dennis Cooper Dream Police 1995
Grave Press

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For Mark Stephens

My mother drank, and she sat
in a house the size of the Hilton
in one small room, at a black
grand piano, through cigarette
smoke, by a dinner so old it
cracked like dried mud. A tune
created her mood. Some whim
was letting her play the same
exercise seventeen times. She
had been smart in the Fifties.
She was not handsome, but she
was composed, made me between
vodkas. My room was up one
or more of the stairways, left
down the hall, left again. I
knelt here, twisted a knob, and
rock music rose genie-like in
the room, gripped me and took
me away. I'd leap in my room,
hand strumming my belt like a
rock star, lip-synching what
hid my new thoughts in my body.
When my sister split, there
were places to hide in the
mansion. Piles of her junk
became far distant planets.
I couldn't quite build a
transporter, though I hung up
black lights, sheets over
lamps, played songs at half-speed.