

Mother Piaf's second greatest hit title
Is taped to the inside of my brain
And silently repeated like a mantra:
"Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien."

I don't regret the hot Latino boxer
I made love to on Riverside Drive
Prior to a Washington march.
I don't regret wild Jersey nights
Spent in the arms of conflicted satyrs;
I don't regret late-night and early a.m.
Encounters with world-class insatiates.

My only regrets are being ill,
Bedridden and having no boyfriend
To pray over me.
And that now I'll never see Europe
Or my African homeland except
In photos in a book or magazine.

Engrave on my tombstone:
"Here sleeps a *happy* Black faggot
Who lived to love and died
With no guilt."

No, I regret nothing
Of the gay life I've led and
There's no way in Heaven or Hell
I'll let anyone make me.

From Here to Dare
Galions Press 1992

David Warren Frechette



don Charles

RINGS ON GLOVED FINGERS

DON CHARLES was born thirty-two years ago in
Kansas City, Missouri, where he still lives and works.
"Writing and calligraphy give me the means to defy
society's attempts to classify me as just another
uneducated, unskilled, frequently unemployed Black
man."

To LBJ, who made me write "An Open Letter To Black
Men."



here to dare

(25)

MARK BIBBINS

Kamikaze

An open oven door
is the glass runway
upon which the pilot lands
after circling for years

in a contagious fog.
He has waited so long
for lights that would guide him
safely to the ground.

Everyone has disappeared
from this hollow plane,
though the parachutes hang
like bats asleep in rows,

dreaming of the sky.
This cave smells sweeter
than he had imagined.
Its air sounds like rain

falling through trees.
It helps him now to remember
that there is still nothing
easier than breathing.

in Take Three: 3: Agni New Poets Series
Graywolf Press, 1998.

MARK BIBBINS

The Parts of This We Remember

Without television, they might have been
no more than stolen coins left
on a railroad track and flattened,

making it difficult to imagine faces
with mouths telling us
that love is not a feeling

but a decision some people don't make —
and heaven is even better than peace.
In a laundromat in Manhattan

a Korean man stands bewildered
as he stares at his wet clothes
falling in circles behind the glass

like seaweed in a wave,
as if they might have an answer.
The owner of the laundromat is convinced

the Korean man will understand English
if he yells his words and repeats them.
There are men even worse than this

on the radio tonight, telling us
we need tougher immigration laws.
It is hard to think

of a building as being alive
until we see its entrails trying to close
themselves around a wound

and failing. We can almost see
the sky pull back
during the next few days,