

GARY PIERLUIGI

## THE HEROIN MACHINE

Each palm in sea oblivious, arcane,  
shimmering blue night scalping water,  
ribs cracking. He is on the road again,  
1971, hitchhiking in May,  
untethered.

Freaks piss in mounds of snow. He  
can smell the mania, the freebase.  
He is warmed in his high sexy  
mood, but there is cold, somehow,  
perhaps driven in with subtle shades  
of light. Taste of an acetylene torch.

It seemed his mind was tipping out  
of his mouth, so many people with  
angular faces, mean-spirited, near-  
minded, aggressive. Is this  
the downside, the sun-gone night  
trailing evil on its backside?

Clouds unleash their holy liquor; a  
pinhole in one's forehead where all  
the pain comes screeching out, then  
in, then out. Pain is pain anyways.  
Keep your eyes on the road, son.

If you keep your eyes closed they  
can't see you, his brain now like a  
city centre. A lungful of cool star-  
light, medieval scent by a scatter of  
woods in occult air, the fat knuckle  
of a mountain miles from home.

The lake is trapped with indolence,  
the river a distinct rush. It is every-  
thing he needs. Sweet pale skin waits  
for a poem beneath the skin of  
the earth. Motes of air rise to form  
age-weary conquistadors.

Regal clockwork from one town to  
the next, the bead of eye from herons.  
Metallic gleam from their grey  
coats. A sense of something other-  
worldly. Eat the pig, act the goat, unclothe  
the sheep, derail the train. Morning  
rises slate grey to pea-soup green.  
Melancholy has a colour. A  
nor-easterly, it rises across  
the countryside, swirling snares.

A surprising excess of energy,  
swans trying to snap off their long  
necks. How sweet! He thinks maybe  
he can fly and bends at his back,  
arms limp.

He keeps on moving. Motion is  
the catchpenny, the catchphrase. Still  
the sexy air of spring and the grinding  
sounds of the heroin machine.