

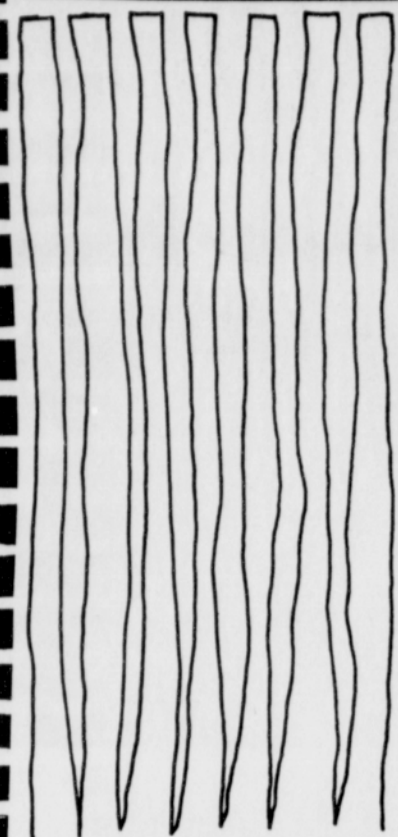
TOMPKINS SQUARE

8

OTHER ILL-FATED RIOTS

Poetry by

ARTHUR NERSESIAN

ILLUSTRATIONS
BY AGNES FIELD

ALWAYS ON

I turn off the TV,
but it blares on.
People in china are awakening
at night, when I yawn.
Schemes are planned
when I sleep.
People keep walking
when I leave the street.
I retreat to my apartment,
but the world outside still rages.
Major events occur
between the flips
of newspaper pages.

FALL OF THE WALL

TV reception's declining
cash machines are braking
the VCR is grinding
the hi-rise is quaking
digital clocks flicker and stop
credit lines are drying
CD players are scratching,
and cellular phones are dying
chasms yawn open on the sidewalks
and the sky is tumbling in,
people are screaming, racing, crying.
Not Locust but gnats I kept swatting away
that kept breeding and creeping
with an everydayness of their own;
every delayed utility bill, every book unread,
every unreturned phone call, every sentence half-said,
every angry and neglected friend, every unobserved hour
every act-a-like day,
precipitation now the shower
every debt I let suspend, every contradiction,
inaccuracy,
hypocrisy,
who was their common enemy---me.
All the piles of newspapers and bottle unrecycled
all the clipped fingernail fragments,
all the litter scraps
and issues that went unaddressed,
election ballot uncast,
all the lack and excess
all the shit and piss and snot and sperm
and sweat and hair and spit and burps and farts
the endless trail of waste
all the crappy foods I ate,
all the dumb TV shows
all the music videos
I watched over and over again,
it's too late to apologize rectify
or recant
wait up for me!
this day of reckoning
will take a second

PARTYKINDTM

Paramount (TM) has premiered
the lightning and earthquakes,
MGM (TM) the volcanoes and waves.
Coke (TM) and Pepsi (TM) have
taste-tested
and bottled divisions of water.
Television is a party room,
where you can always hang out, comp-free
General Foods (TM) gave its first promo apple to Adam,
and over the years diversified
Leveraged buy-outs keep the earth
on its axis.
Ford (TM) automated legs into wheels and rendered bodies
obselete.
The Wright brothers made the
globe a frills-filled hour away.
Edison ended the apartheid
of the night.
Los Alamos enfranchised the atom.
Telephone lines have nerverlinked mouths to ears.
Money has bottled fun.
Credit cards
have bottled those bottles.
Men speak assuredly
for absent gods.
Weather satellites have rendered the unpredictable, predictable.
Medical arts strive for the permanent youthful robustness.
But just in case,
antiquated religions don't
sufficiently airbrush death away,
there's always Spielbergian UFOs
willing to save the deserved few.
Split the atom of aging and growth,
dispose the aging, recyle growth.
You deserve to be here,
if you can get into this
six-figured deal of a club: Life.
Otherwise, wait
with nothingness pressing
outside the red-felt cordoned area
of the sidewalk.

ARTHUR NERSESIAN IS THE
AUTHOR OF SEVERAL SHORT
STORIES, PLAYS AND NOVELS
(INCLUDING THE SOON-TO-BE-
PUBLISHED NEW YORK CITY
SUBWAY SYSTEM) ARTHUR'S
TWIN BROTHER, PATRICK, USED
TO LIVE IN ASTORIA.

- Ag. F

