

What Heroin Feels Like

By Ross Robbins

Sweet opiate tongue, lick my aching bones
Bring me back to steady, steady my shaking blood.
The needle's like a knife, cuts like a splinter,
Draws out some poison I stored deep inside—
Leaves back impression of something like love
Or perhaps just a hint of the death that's to come.

If you want to know what heroin feels like
Just orgasm through every vein and cell
And feel the bonebreak of a sweaty palm nightmare
Melting away as the runoff in spring.
The sweetness of sunshine breaking through cumulus
And blood-drip down arm of the body cry joy.

If you want to know what an injection can be
Just slip in the barrel and pull on the trigger
And shoot the warm bullet of the sweetest black tar.
Feel warm water flowing through arteries, a wave
Tidal in scope the honeyblood liplick
Put yourself up on the shelf for a while.

If you want, however, to know the lack-need
Of heroin flitting gone down the slipstream
The spray of shot all faded away
Keep yourself on too long by one day
Metastasize smack through spirit and mind
And feel your skin break, and feel your bones crawl.

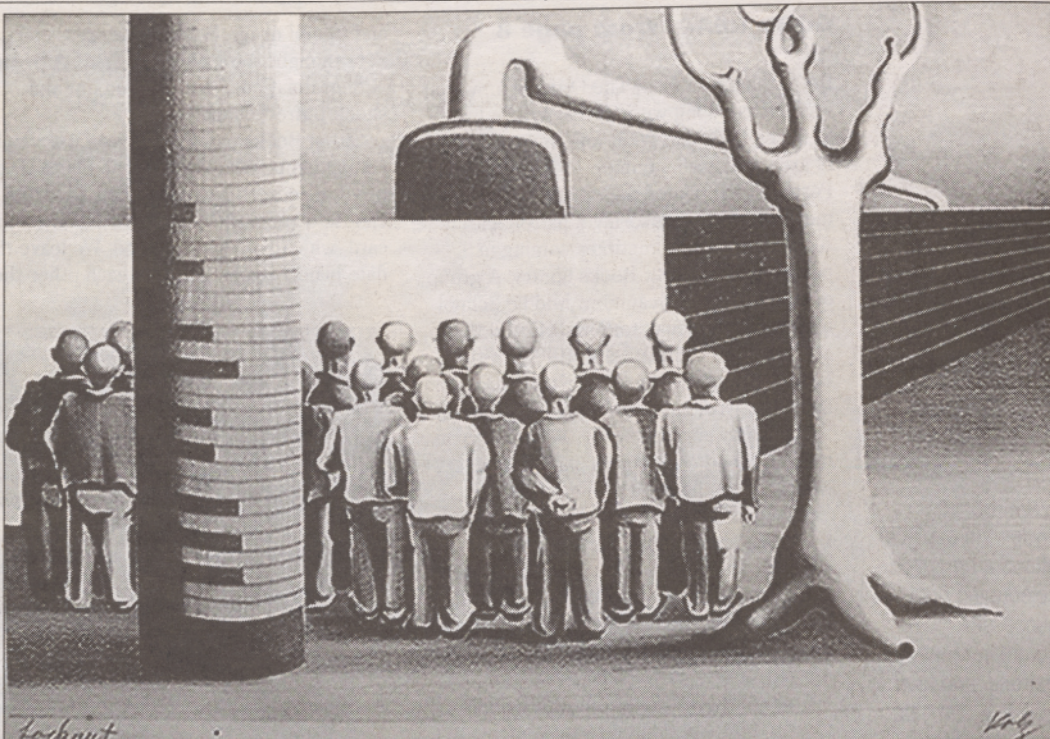
What heroin feels like is mortgaged heart and form
Pay on it daily or sickness repossess flesh
As if your guts were on loan
The spoon held all the papers
And 'round the banker came, spoon belly all empty,
Demanded a hit and finding none ate the high.

And down you spiraled down to find the lowest low
The soul could dig down
And dig down it did—
When you bottom out you'll find what heroin is:
A temporary fix that ends up fixing you
With a collar and a shock
And no key, no end in sight.

Missing

By Jason

Something is missing deep within my soul
I've been searching for something, what it is I do not know
I've been feeling this pain lingering down inside
No matter how much I run, I just cannot hide
My patience wearing thin and I don't want to wait
I feel like a worm on a hook being used as bait
Much time is lost waiting for that day
For that something special to come my way
Is it already here or has it already gone
Or is it a game of chess and I'm just a pawn
Will it come to me or do I go and look
Are there instructions on how to find it inside of a book
As the time passes me by I am starting to think
That my hope is no longer floating but starting to sink
Spiraling down like water inside of a funnel
I have only one question, is there light at the end of this tunnel



"Lockout," c. 1938, by Herman Volz. Courtesy of M. Lee Stone Fine Prints, San Jose, CA

'Hobos to Street People' chronicles art of the oppressed

FROM THE WESTERN REGIONAL
ADVOCACY PROJECT

Vagrants, transients, hobos, tramps, and street people — whatever names we have used to describe their particular circumstances, homeless people have been a part of American society throughout the nation's history.



"Brother Can You Spare A Dime," 1933/36, by Albert Potter. Courtesy of M. Lee Stone Fine Prints, San Jose, CA

In the Great Depression of the 1930s many artists for the first time in US history began to address issues of human rights. The large number of poor, displaced and homeless people was one important focus. Artists were not only observers, but they actively found ways to influence society through exhibition and distribution of their work.

During the decades following World War II, artists

shifted their energies elsewhere, but by the late 1970s with the rise of the modern era of mass homelessness many artists again began to focus on what was happening to poor people in our society. Structural changes in the American economy and a return to fiscally conservative ideology began a period of increased poverty and economic inequality. Over the following decades, the problems contributing to homelessness increased. By 2008, an estimated 3.5 million Americans lived without housing and homeless children in school exceeded 900,000 according to the U.S. Department of Education.

The book, "Hobos to Street People" presents a social, cultural and political history of homelessness from the Great Depression to the present as seen through the work of artists from Dorothea Lange, Rockwell Kent and Fritz Eichenberg to contemporary artists Kiki Smith, Eric Drooker, Jos Sances and David Bacon.

The book is based on the traveling exhibition of the same name that is currently showing at the de Saisset Museum, University of Santa Clara, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053. The exhibition is also available online at WRAP's Web site.

A portion of the sales of this book will be donated to Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) when you purchase through www.freedomvoices.org and enter WRAP in the comment box.



"The Jungle," c. 1940, Charles Surendorf. Courtesy of Surendorf Gallery Collection