

In Memory of Polish Poet Zbigniew Herbert's Visit, Los Angeles, 1971

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KATIE FARRIS

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You cannot save this city; you must burn it.
—Z. Herbert

When he came back to our free union,
which is to say *America*, which is to say
home,
he was already gone.

He dusted the crown
moldings looking for fingerprints,
or more vivid evidences, perhaps an
insurgent, perhaps an
arsenal.

Since he returned to our free
union he kept his mouth inside
his pants pocket,
and his keys sometimes
chipped his teeth, and this grin
embarrassed us.

He lost reality; he sat oftentimes abruptly
down, and splintered chair
after chair

shouting from his pants
pocket to Be careful!
Get down!

We looked at him
when he shouted like that.

We would have taken him back,
but he was already gone—
gumming benchbacks in public
parks, knocking on windows

with his forehead, a balding
bumblebee.

SASCHA FEINSTEIN

The Mothers of Invention

*"If you end up with a boring miserable life because you listened to your mom,
your dad, your teacher, your priest, or some guy on television telling you
how to do your shit, then you deserve it."*
— Frank Zappa

I would have electrocuted
myself, knife in toaster,
had I not already lost
my arm from waving
out the car window.

Don't despair.
I grew a cherry branch
from a pit I swallowed
that rooted and grew
through my soiled stomach.

I cannot tell a lie.
Then I cracked my knuckles
and the cherries fell,
uneaten, wasted—*wasted!*—
ripening to too, too red

like enough blood
for a hospital scene
where you imagine
clean emergency undies
hiding with a lost sock.