

*Air guitars, blues bars &  
Crotchless jeans*

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Furthermore, money and I have always had our problems. Like Wendy O. Williams and Milwaukee cops, we just don't get along. We hardly even see each other, money and I.

So one night drunk I was blabbing on a buddy about how bummed I was to be so broke. Owed all kinds of money to all kinds of people, and so many people owed me so much that I felt totally unnecessary in the whole twisted affair of no cash no credit no change in my pockets no crotches in my jeans.

"Damn," I said, "what do I do?" to my buddy who wasn't even listening but just sort of sitting there sifting through his own great array of calamities.

"...Huh?..." he said when he'd noticed I'd stopped blabbing. "You got problems...? Try writing poetry."

"Poetry? For money?"

"...Huh?...no man, for peace of mind..."

Oh, what the hell, I figured – for peace of mind. So I did poetry, and this is what I came up with. I call it, "Money and Peace of Mind":

*My money isn't my own. I owe it.*

*I own no money. None.*

That depressed me, so I added more:

*but I rot comfortably regardless*

*in hot places under the moon where*

*stellar instruments shoot down*

*narcotic chords of light*

*and the night*

*rips me hard to see things*

*that all begin and end with light*

*- a pale blue light at the end of*

*the tunnel*

“Well, whuduyathink?” I asked.

“...Huh?...” he said and then mumbled something about me “putting some fire in it” (or was it “putting it in some fire”?) At any rate, I knew poetry wasn’t enough.

“What else?” I asked desperately. “What else can I do to make myself feel better and forget about shit?”

“...Eh?...” he said, “...uh, how ‘bout music?...”

Music? Sure. I got right on it.

Picked up an air guitar real cheap and started practicing like a demon possessed. I figured I could make enough money playing in air bands at various air clubs around town to finance a

trip to the Mid-East. Maybe work on my poetry there. Follow in the footsteps of Kahil Gibran or something.

Well, that didn't pan out.

I couldn't develop a following, got discouraged, pawned my air guitar and blew the \$55 Pabst by Pabst at blues bars on Farwell and North. Good bye Mid-East. Hello Mid-West. Sweet home, Milwaukee.

So it be.

Monday nights Hooligans...Tuesday bluesday Murray Tap...Friday free bands Century Hall...Saturday...crazy time...scrape up a car and go OUT...Jazz Gallery...Teddy's...Turning Point...The Junction...it all depends on the moon...and the mood...and the money...

So many times, standing on the corner of Farwell and North, listening to the din of the cars and the bars and the whoops and screams of the guys and dolls as they strut their stuff, while I, sidewalk mesmerized, watch the whole wicked intersection spin...slowly at first...then a little faster...faster...faster yet...until five solid blocks of asphalt and buildings, cars and people lifts itself like a gyrocopter and spins free of the Earth.

Spinning still faster...higher...louder...harder...I find myself thrown to the sidewalk deaf from the hum. Centrifugal force is trying to push me off...off this huge platter of odd matter spinning sinister-like, all in synch with the hell-bent rotation of an invisible turntable below...33rpm...45rpm...78rpm...out of control and gone...

Cars screech through the intersection.

North Avenue, Farwell and Murray overlap in a trinity, the epicenter of which is the center of the universe. I stand against the forces throwing me back and run for that spot out there in the midst of all that busy asphalt, where the pale blue light burns and no force exerts itself.

I want to be there...on that spot...spinning...in the eye of the hurricane...letting the cars run through me. I'd plant myself there and scream to the screeches of the tires until my maker calls me away.

But she never calls.

So I spin, and sometimes I let go. I know I let go the first time I saw that gaudy Kiko's sign that flashes nauseous neon throughout my hallowed crossroad. (Las Vegas this aint, and I think the only place a sign of that caliber would appear properly in Milwaukee would be in an inextricable embrace with the De Suvero Starburst, after being jettisoned from a C-150 at 30,000 feet.) I let go and fly through the air always being drawn back to Earth by the strains of some instrument.

Sometimes it's a harmonica that pulls me back and I find myself in front of Jim Liban and whoever he's playing with, or Jammin Jimmy Davis of Positive Traction, or the harp player for Stokes and the Raw Rockers.

Other times it's a saxophone that lures me back and I find myself contorting to the tones of Hattush Alexander, or bopping to the beat of Beat Sector, in which Kathy Halverson demonstrates the prowess of a female sax virtuoso.

Still other times I find myself returning to the Earth at the beckoning of a bass guitar and I'm jumping with the Numb Jitters while David Nelson (the Prince of Twang) is letting go with the

rest of this fine ska/beat band. Or it could be Oceans, composed of some of Milwaukee's finest musicians that pulls me from my lunar limbo.

Actually, I return to Earth to hear any fine band regardless of style, because I now know that I can't live without music. All other vices have no hold on me. I can survive without coffee, dope, sex or cigarettes if I have to (and many are the times that I've had to) but without music I would be forever lost, just a useless speck of human flesh floating through the universe.

So I'm out, listening to music and looking for two things that have eluded me so long: sexual security, and a skinny-punk-acid-freak named Robert who owes me money and causes me to have violent dreams in which I tear out his throat and lungs and eyes and break his bones and push them into his hollow, pimply face.

Sexual security (ha!!). I hope I find it. If I do I'll hold on and try never to let go. And if I find that piece of scum who owes me \$50 I'll hold on also and hope I don't lose my cool. But I don't know...

Money and music...poison and elixir...and me, just a helpless pawn being pushed off the edge every time I run for the pale blue light...spinning...faster...harder...higher...louder... faster... harder...higher...ahhhhh.....

