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this city needs danced over

Charles Rampp

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bright gold medals. Just at that moment, the meadowlark flew in the window and allowed the china doll to climb up the ladder of willow strands, but, before they could escape, the soldier's drum started tap-tap-tapping out an alert.

In a moment, the tin soldier awoke from his sleep. Looking up to see the meadowlark with the china doll upon its back, he came to the conclusion that she was being kidnapped. Seizing his rifle, the tin soldier charged towards the meadowlark and pierced its leg with his bayonet.

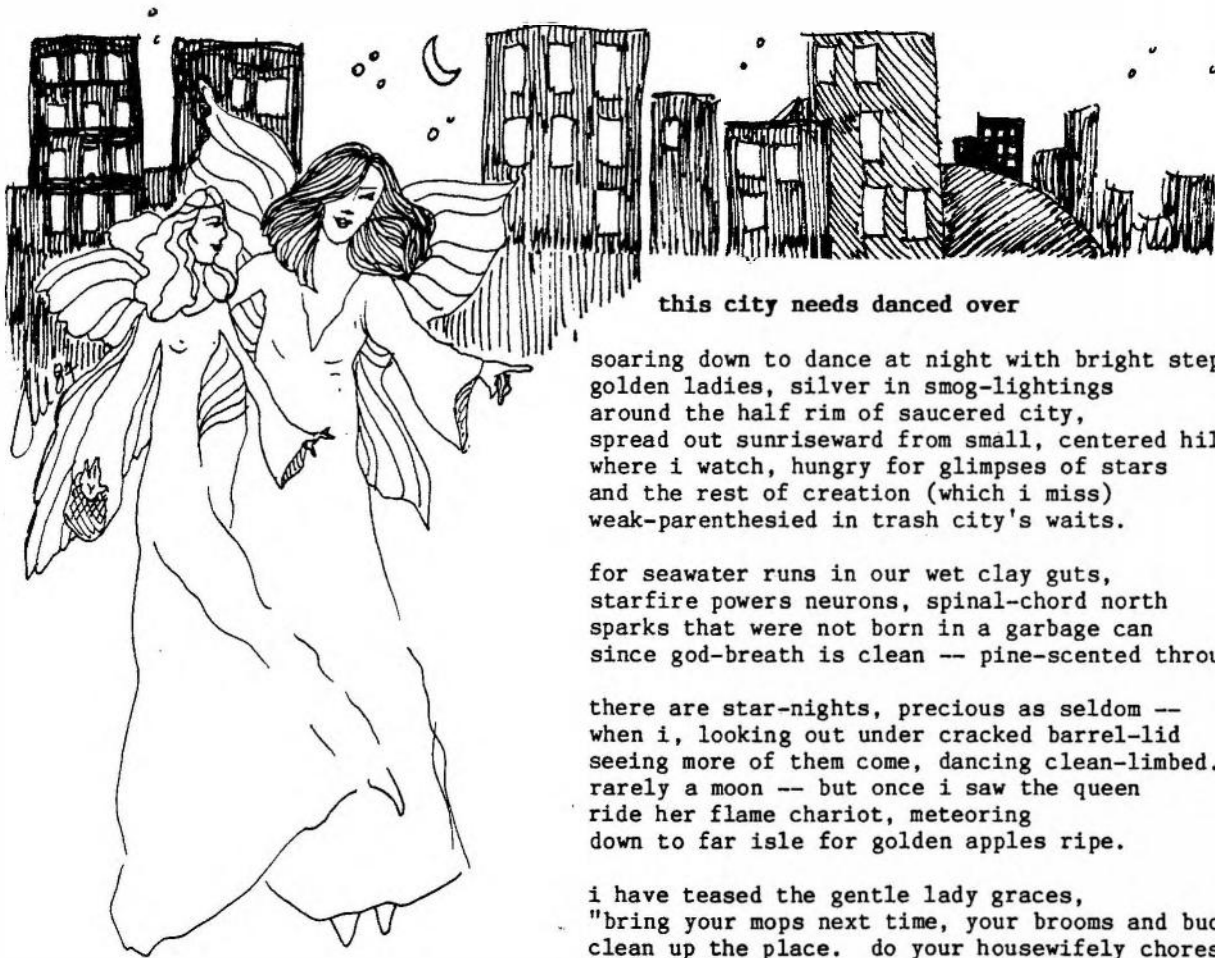
Screaming in pain, the meadowlark hastily set the china doll upon the window ledge, and flew back to attack the tin soldier. As the drum tapped out its support, the tin soldier valiantly struggled to defend himself, but the match proved too much for him. After a few brief minutes, the meadowlark seized the tin soldier in its claws, and tossed him into the fire.

Standing bolt upright in the hearth, his form illuminated by the rising flames, the china doll watched in silence as first the blue in his pants, and then the green in his

uniform began to fade -- all without his uttering a single word of complaint. At the sight of someone she had once loved, suffering a slow death, all the feeling she had fought to hide swelled within her, and released itself in a cry of anguish. Forgetting where she was, she started to rush forward to save him -- and tumbled off the ledge, onto the floor, where she broke into a dozen pieces.

The tin soldier knew he was melting; but the sight of the china doll, lying there broken on the floor, consumed him even more than the fire. She looked at him from where she lay, and he looked at her; and for one brief instant, before the soldier disappeared, they were united as one.

It was all over very soon. In the morning, all that was left in the fire was a lump of tin, and a bit of porcelain shaped like a heart. No one knew how it got there, but the two had melted together, overnight, and formed a little lump of black coal that was buried in the garden the following day -- near the pond shaped like a silver saucer.



this city needs danced over

soaring down to dance at night with bright steps --
golden ladies, silver in smog-lightings
around the half rim of saucered city,
spread out sunriseward from small, centered hill
where i watch, hungry for glimpses of stars
and the rest of creation (which i miss)
weak-parenthesied in trash city's waits.

for seawater runs in our wet clay guts,
starfire powers neurons, spinal-chord north
sparks that were not born in a garbage can
since god-breath is clean -- pine-scented through roses.

there are star-nights, precious as seldom --
when i, looking out under cracked barrel-lid
seeing more of them come, dancing clean-limbed.
rarely a moon -- but once i saw the queen
ride her flame chariot, meteoring
down to far isle for golden apples ripe.

i have teased the gentle lady graces,
"bring your mops next time, your brooms and buckets,
clean up the place. do your housewifely chores."
their laughs are never tinged with bitterness:
"we wait the time to come much closer, dear --
so barefoot we can dance and feel no pain,
quick hand in yours, up every brightened path."

-- Charles Rapp