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YES

Catch me in a softened moment

and you have me trapped

the lust spelled in your eyes trembles my belly into a miniature volcano

toss me your weekend passion

and you have me welded

to your escapeless fingers smelling your wild perfume relinquishing my paternity of thought exchanging it for papal eyeshutedness re babies born in wedless darkness

leave me to amuse myself

and you'll have me chasing

the sin of you through shadows crowding time into corners forcing love along sewers thrusting sex down rainpipes you may retire from the interlude with minute scars to remind you of a passion that blazed

only instantly

but I must live with persistent embers

I envy your peace how fine to turn to new diversions and overcome my ghostly whispering with a glass of wine

my bleaching of joint memories requires

-24-

the cauterizing bite of heated steel to sterilize my heart whole again

yes I say

you win

give me the glass

yes take what's left

> that you'd like to keep

> > YES

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--Ottone M. Riccio

OLD BOOK SHOP

Squeezed (boldly) between used cars (BIG BIG DEALS) and a barber shop (English as she is spoke) is a gray frog of a place where on (knotty) pine boards books books books books sulk (some in sets) and wait for sticky fingers And a new sign pleads SMOKERS PLEASE USE ASH TRAYS which has just been installed by the goateed management who pads about like a seal in worn carpet slippers and busily re-stacks National Geographics.

-- David Pearson Etter