

**LEE WM. ATKINSON**

---

**Love's Hold**

Her love held him fast.  
Her love was crisp, clean, natural,  
a well-iced Montrachet.  
The strength of it had lured him,  
netted him, held him long,  
long, long after  
the tide of his passion had ebbed.  
Passed caring it held him  
until the holding bruised.  
Free of it now,  
the memory holds him still.

## **Encounter: First Kind**

Her legs, good legs in dark stockings,  
and the deep lilt of her voice  
as she spoke of two children. These things  
he remembers, and day dreams  
of moments of passion, redolent in harmless  
fantastic profusion. He liked the soft tan of her hands,  
and her dangling earrings, these too, he remembers.  
Indelible etchings,  
the marks of chance meeting.

### **Pattern Killer Ensnared**

He sits across the courtroom from me,  
slack-jawed, dead eyed, big hands  
bespeak a power otherwise belied.  
Plain-faced and non-descript, nothing cries out,  
“Warning! Beware!  
A killer lurks here, unannounced,  
hatred hibernate.” His moustache is pallid,  
a blond cipher on pale skin, no  
statement there, no declaration of his war.

I eye him as a mongoose eyes the snake,  
instinctive. Does he know I know?  
Does he know the death I would deal him?  
The depth of the fear I would share?

A lizard has more warmth, more animated eyes.  
My eyes, hawk’s eyes, see everything:  
the faces of his victims, the cold hunger  
of his need. He wakes me,  
on moonless nights I start, awake,  
feeling the cords of his neck resist my hands.

I shall hear their begging voices in my grave—  
I hear them now, pleading for life,  
Greek chorused, dead. My justice  
little comfort to them now.

## **The Legend of “Foots” and “Britchs”**

“Foots” and “Britchs” worked the projects,  
uniform patrol in District Two  
“Rollers,” the people say.

“Foots”

he was big, and black, and mean,  
slow talking, some kind of quick,  
and patient, waiting,  
always waiting for *your* time,  
he walked, slow and quiet on the street.

“Britchs”

was small, and white, and mean,  
fast talking, nervous looking, quick,  
and patient, waiting,  
always waiting for *your* time,  
she drove, slow and quiet through the streets.

Listen to what the people say:

“D’em bro’s gathered on da co’ners,  
at dark,  
near da Hole.  
Da cars be goin’ by, den pullin’ over,  
an’ da bro’s, dey be leanin’,  
dealin’ some  
dat Fo’t Myers package,  
to da dude’s  
an’ Foots’, well  
he be creepin’ roun’, comin’ down on ‘em  
from in da dark,  
all quick like puttin’  
dat big paw on some one’s neck,  
an’ den”  
(the people chuckle here, and grin  
remembering)  
“bro’s beatin’ feets all roun’, an’  
‘britchs’  
she done roll dat car, lights out,  
up on da sidewalk, knockin’ over trash,  
den flippin’ on dem brights and over-heads,

da PA blarin'  
"Freeze! You Mother-fuckers, Freeze!"  
(the people roll their eyes here,  
at the wonder of it all,  
the little honky yelling,  
"Mo-ther-Fuck-ers, Freeze!")

Two big women, mamas, sitting  
in rockers on a porch,  
searching, waiting patient  
for a breeze.

