DIGGING LORCA

Do soggy bones matter
more than Bernarda's broken
cane or New York
tenements or a perfect pair of olives
in hand? For if we hold, Federico,
your delicate fingers, trace the lines
of your lips with our fingers,
and hear your inspiration
even now, we have no need
for the palpable
to imagine you.

Exhumation reminds me more
of the next innocent
to die wordlessly
in a ditch.

charlie

the little
must
ache
--
querulously
it revs up from attraction to the
high light
right eye,
then alternates with the pendulum
of
time
current,
frees the nose to inhale gusts
of great air,
and, truly,
enforces a smirk,
the little man is empowered.

EULOGY AT OPRYLAND

Merle Watson, he done it right:
He didn' plow'is veins
with rock 'n' roll
or mill'is brains
with jazz. That
boy jest slid'is strings
o'er the songs of'is pa.
Didn' open'is mouth,
didn' hog the light.

I a'ays thought
I'd like t'expire here
on this stage
with my fiddle
fallin' on me like a lily.

But Merle was a realer country boy
to die wrapped up
in the hum of'is tractor.

RUDY

Emerging from the parking garage
to the November light of 51st Street
I needed a Circle in the Square
where Ah Wilderness was
amidst crowds jaywalking to queues
for curtains when I felt a startling
thump to my back. It smacked of
mugger, spun me round like a
revolving door, but spindleless I
plummeted down shelves of strangers
to the ground on my ass and so saw
his horizontal right arm a bulbous bow
breaking the ice of pre-theater klatches
and the carelessly ignorant gutter bergs,
his muffler flying behind on the wind
his stride created: Nurevey, head knitted,
feet booted for the cold, commanding
the theatre district, utterly
virtuosic--in a coup de Tatar--rushing
street-lit to the wings and Margot
deux in fewer than ten minutes. I sat
an invisible corps in his life's ballet
losing my breath for his buoyancy.

WOODY ALLEN, ALIVE AND WELL

I trailed Woody Allen up Madison Avenue once.
Block after block, I slowed to his footsteps. He
talked with a woman oh
twice his height. Not Keaton,
nor Mia of course. They parted the waves.
In the wake, I watched millions
tilt their eyes and try to watch
with casualness
where they went.
Not one broke stride;
we yielded Woody his vector. But at the plane
of passage
all turned for the denouement
with their heads upon their shoulders
and quickly back to each other to ask,
rhetorically, "Do you know who that was?"
or to say who that was.
The sure
only smiled.
Others looked back.
This city was Woody's.

I watched Woody and the woman
turn a block onto Fifth and into an apartment house.

It has taken me years to intrude with this, but
my sadness
makes me want to write
that Woody
lived with reverence.

STALKING CELEBRITIES

POEMS
BY JAMES PENHA

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and 'stalker'

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