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As if New York was enough

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Cover Page Footnote

"Second Prize Winner" Appeared in the issue: October 1997.

Second Prize Winner

As if New York was enough

outside in Central State where life still
buds like the leaves on our trees,
where obscurity hangs like the clouds overhead,
where Buddhist monks always feel my pain and I always come running to Liberty,
Liberty lives at home with Billy Idol under her bed,
Liberty lives at home three pushes down the blacktop river from me,
three pushes down from where we never were,
from where barbecue chips are bestowed upon recently weakened livers,
three pushes down but 400 miles away,
miles separated by dirt and grass and cigarette butts,
miles separated by circles forming in our pool from
overhead rain descending and assimilating into water,
assimilating itself as we vowed we never would be into
pop culture, where we vowed to leave that night of rain,
of pools, of chips, of law and order, of myself in aftershock,
that night we vowed to leave for London
but instead found ourselves looking,
gasping, asking how soon is now,
asking and dancing as only she can,
dancing like a shook up can of shiver churning,
yearning to breathe free in a dim lit
shore lacking factions and coffee and poetry,
dancing here on a sweaty floor with her
champaign plagued friend,
her champaign plagued friend who wears a string around
his waist for protection from liver disease,
her champaign plagued friend who obsesses over Atalanta,
over bourbon, over park benches and New York,
as if New York was enough,
as if the sky was clear and I could ride down
the coast past endless shades of green, past thirteen cities and
into one harbor,
one harbor where one woman stands cloaked in green raising a torch,
raising the torch she clutches and says,
as if night falls and leaves an endless glow over one park,
as if fire doesn't burn and scar skin like
drinks from a candle holder burn the throat,
go liberty be free out in your city by the sea,
go liberty forget about me, about the life you once had,

about how snow covers your back porch and raises above the rooftop to
a point beyond what I could see,
go forget about sleeping in back yards, forget about
the sky, the stars, the moon,
go, go live in a back alley asking for change from an overhead window,
go liberty dance on into your life
upon a fiery backdrop of intensely fierce buildings
that retreat with flickering admiration into the night.

--Mark Bowers