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Untitled

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Cover Page Footnote

"Second Prize Winner" Appeared in the issue: Volume 4, Issue 3, 2004.

STARASIA DANIEL

UNTITLED

I decided to take the "C" local into Brooklyn
I sat down and looked across
Alone
In a seat built for two
She sat across from me
And everything about her
Reminded me of my past
That brown slim frame
Those long tattered arms
The muddy blue jeans
Worn and wrinkled Nikes
With the shoestrings strung tight
Like they were choking the life
Out of her feet
What life?

And although I didn't know this woman
One thing was for damn sure
She was fucked up
Strung out
Or whatever those African American Addicts
Call it

She owned a small afro
With a few dashes of salt
Could be someone's
Daughter, auntie, sister, mother or mistress
All that responsibility neglected, avoided

What I'll never forget
About this woman
Was her leaning off her chair
As if she would fall
This is what we Brooklyn Knights
Call the dope-fiend lean
She had her doctrine!
Her eyes were filled with
Pain, sadness, separation, alienation
And not to mention
Her last fix

I was in a trance when
The conductor announced
"Next stop, Euclid Avenue
Stand clear the closing doors"
I held my hands close together
And said a secret silent prayer
For my black sister
And while tears watered
And eventually rolled down my face
I realized that there was nothing
I could do

As I stood up, to get off the train
I frantically dug in my pockets
Looking for a dollar bill
But what would she do with it?
Get a fix, buy food or put it toward the family

Time was running out
I stepped off the train
And watched it put out of the station

Going, Going, Gone

As quick as that drug escaped from the syringe
into her vein
As quick as life was slipping from that Black Queen
Gone and never coming back

That dollar
Could have saved
Or taken her life
I thought to myself
In the rat race climbing the stairs
To the street

That's not a risk I am willing to take
I thought to myself
Walking down
Euclid Avenue.