

For Alvin & The Corridor

By

Jack Galmitz

WHY I LIKE THEM; Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH SCRETCH writes... In Jack Galmitz, 'For Alvin' I was captured by his opening lines "I am sitting in a room. / The sun has followed me in." Okay, just about every line "I want my privacy complete. / I don't want to be / in the spotlight of things" Next, "There is a square of light / where my wife's portrait hangs." . . . "I will hold on here until / dawn sits in my lap." Why don't you just read the couple of lines we left out... In 'The Corridor' "I like quotation marks. / They lend an air of dignity / to what we say." "I like the sound of organs. / They punctuate our prayers." "I like the people. / They dress like store windows" Just who's Jack holding a mirror to? There's always room for one more view. (Spacing is poet's own.)

For Alvin

I am sitting in a room.
The sun has followed me in.
It will always do.
I want my privacy complete.
I don't want to be
in the spotlight of things.
I am sitting in a room
looking at the wall.
There is a square of light
where my wife's portrait hangs.
The light has suffused everything.
Now it is growing dark.
I am sitting in a chair.
Light is becoming an idea,
at least it is to me.
I will hold on here until
dawn sits in my lap.

The Corridor

I like quotation marks.
They lend an air of dignity
to what we say.
You can quote me on that.
Whatever you say.
I like the sound of organs.
They punctuate our prayers.
They make them dramatic.
Terror goes on up there.
I like to see
the refineries
along the Thruway.
I like the smokestacks
that loosen smudge
from their mouths to the estuaries.
I like the rest stops.
I like the chili
and the counters.
I like the people.
They dress like store windows.
Mostly, I like the gift shops
afterwards.
And then there's night.
What can I say?
It's a perfect backdrop
to the lights.
It's a giveaway.

THE POET SPEAKS: *Poetry for me is the creation of patterns of sounds and meanings that reflect my thinking and feeling about experiences. The experiences are usually mental, that is, ideas of the events that occurred at different times and places in my life. The poems utilize the method of combination, uniting disparate senses and impressions to create something other than an experience in itself.*

For example, the poems "Alvin" is a response to the sound/electronic music/poetry of Alvin Lucier. In fact, it is a take off on his famous work, "I Am Sitting In A Room." In the work, he records over and over and over the words, "I Am Sitting In A Room" in order to, in his words, reveal the resonances of the room itself. My work, a homage to him, translates his overlapping sound and repetition of the same words by first incorporating his words and then creating my own patterns and repetitions and incremental changes to the words. My experience is not intended to reveal a room, since I am not using the medium of music. I am revealing the resonance of the tonalities, sounds, and meanings of my words as a meditation, of sorts.

In the poem "Corridor," I move through a corridor of sounds and sights created by sounds and their meanings, much as a traveler moves through space on a Highway. Enclosure of speech as a quote, as something memorable invites the reader to see, hear, to memorialize their own memories. I like to connect in my work the simple, the very quotidian and something larger and grander, "night," for instance as both a fact and as a gift.

I write poetry in an intuitive way. I let the writing and what comes of it dictate the steps I take in the poem. The poem writes itself with me acting as a occasional mediator or editor. I read a good deal of poetry, but without using the skills I find in a given poem in my poems. I find that impossible and intrusive on the creative process. I have been reading John Berryman, Robert Creeley, and especially Frank O'Hara lately. Great craftsmen and great poets. They give me a heightened sense of experience and that is why I turn to them. Poetry distills experience and it is for that reason that I read it.

AUTHOR BIO: Jack Galmitz was born in 1951 in New York City. He attended the public schools from which he graduated. He now spends most of his time listening to electronic music and writing and sometimes painting. He is widely published and recently had two free-form haiku sequences accepted for publication in *Bones: The Journal*, which publishes out of the Netherlands.