2001

tarantinoesque

Joshua Graham Buursma

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

tarantinoesque

"Immature poets imitate;
mature poets steal."

--T.S. Eliot

Johnny and I needed a poem;
we were literary desperadoes
driving with the top down
along forsaken highways
in Death Valley

shotguns in the back seat;
suits still stained with blood,
mud from a dirty limerick
and the job we pulled
in Bristol

The fella there didn't have it;
But we beat the name of a bank
From him: First Third National,
the first line of an unwritten haiku,
in Barstow

We pulled up at noon;
tasting the gray dust
that rose up around us
like death shrouds,
mist that cloaked Odysseus and Aeneas

It was a teetering fortress;
bars across the windows
the door squeaked with fear
when we drifted in
an onomatopoetic scream

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A muse of blood sang in me;
from the fold of my coat I pulled death
Which embraced me like a winter rose
and shot the guard in the back
Crack of a shattered spine

Like a puppet without strings
he collapsed against the corner
streaked the wood crimson
Lips locked in a death-kiss
With the splintered wall

Johnny's face
was flecked in blood
from the girl behind the desk
A few blasts took the bars off the windows
Like the teeth of the poet we shot back in Bristol

By luck
the safe was open
the poem flapped in the wind
Vergil would have been proud
As we drove away with the top down

      Chased by the sound of a thousand Sirens

Joshua Graham Buursma