

## Who Understands Me But Me

They turn the water off, so I live without water,  
they build walls higher, so I live without treetops,  
they paint the windows black, so I live without sunshine,  
they lock my cage, so I live without going anywhere,  
they take each last tear I have, I live without tears,  
they take my heart and rip it open, I live without heart,  
they take my life and crush it, so I live without a future,  
they say I am beastly and fiendish, so I have no friends,  
they stop up each hope, so I have no passage out of hell,  
they give me pain, so I live with pain,  
they give me hate, so I live with my hate,  
they have changed me, and I am not the same man,  
they give me no shower, so I live with my smell,  
they separate me from my brothers, so I live without brothers,  
who understands me when I say this is beautiful?  
who understands me when I say I have found other freedoms?

I cannot fly or make something appear in my hand,  
I cannot make the heavens open or the earth tremble,  
I can live with myself, and I am amazed at myself, my love,  
my beauty,  
I am taken by my failures, astounded by my fears,  
I am stubborn and childish,  
in the midst of this wreckage of life they incurred,  
I practice being myself,  
and I have found parts of myself never dreamed of by me,  
they were goaded out from under rocks in my heart  
when the walls were built higher,  
when the water was turned off and the windows painted black.  
I followed these signs  
like an old tracker and followed the tracks deep into myself,  
followed the blood-spotted path,  
deeper into dangerous regions, and found so many parts of myself,  
who taught me water is not everything,  
and gave me new eyes to see through walls,  
and when they spoke, sunlight came out of their mouths,  
and I was laughing at me with them,  
we laughed like children and made pacts to always be loyal,  
who understands me when I say this is beautiful?

## There's Me

There's me & Thelma & Louie & Lisa.

We're the kinda people, don't know too much about that place.  
We know about factories all right, but not about how everybody  
up there makes so much money.

Like Louie says, how you gonna make so much money  
if you don't work? And Thelma says, sure people use their brains,  
but a body works too. But a body costs a nickel, a mind costs  
a million. And all them minds, what if there weren't no bodies  
to work for them? Huh?

Up in that place, that's really something  
uh Lisa, really something.

Here we are in clothes and talk and faces.

We know what's going on down here, but up there? Man . . .  
So don't ask me why I carry a knife. Like

this, and don't ask me no questions, because I don't understand;  
but take a cop wants to arrest somebody, and I'm walking  
down the street, why me? He just wants to arrest somebody.  
Not him, but someone told him to arrest somebody. And that  
someone was told by someone else, who had little numbers in  
a paper that say things ain't going too well. Now where'd  
he get them numbers? Maybe from somebody with a computer  
up there in one of them offices up there. Just a regular old man  
or lady standing in front of a machine writing out numbers  
and figuring stuff up.

Now why's he figuring something up? Ok Lisa  
look: he's figuring up something, because someone else  
somewhere wants him to. And you know someone who can make  
him figure something up, is somebody big. Way up there . . .  
probably got a whole bunch of things in this world like  
boat companies and oil companies and things like that.

Just think, why does he want anyone to figure  
up something? Cause one of the dudes that work for him told  
him something was going wrong somewhere, and the figuring  
needed to be done cuz it was messing things up.

And how does he know? I think he looks at  
all these charts, you know, and if the line goes down, that  
means the chump is losing. He's paid to win. So he's got  
all these college dudes with degrees, thousands of them,  
in a big ole building, working all day, so he can win.

Tommy Santiago  
Baca