

excerpts from
Devotions and Desecrations on the Downtown Bus
by JD Rage

Devotion #21

City Hall is smiling at me
her mouth is wide open
lit by spotlights
raised on eyebrows of
three draperies lined up in a row
over tall banks of windows
she sticks out her tongue
an imaginary red carpet tumbling
down granite stairs
between
toothy columns
In spite of how she mocks me
now
I think of all the dirty deals
corruption
maybe even plots to kill
she has harbored in her gut
In spite of her undesirable
history in a rough neighborhood
the golden glow
bathed in Nature's artistry
heightened by
the cold crisp atmosphere
makes her elegant
makes me wish she was something
I could be proud of.

Devotion #88

Redrum is the word
on the street
somebody OD'ed
on Redrum
murdeR brand
I wonder why it is suddenly
so potent
somebody died
and all the junkies
in the Tri-state area
flock to the Lower East Side
looking for
Redrum
that little white powder
with the big kick in the
head
that will take you
over to the other side
with no return ticket
I used to get a brand called
Black Sunday
I liked it because
its name agreed with my
black sunday
soul
its effect forced any day
to release its grip
around my neck
the bus has already passed

the methadone clinic
I didn't check to see if the line
had dwindled
if all the imprisoned clients
had gone off in search
of immortality

Devotion #116

Once again it is the day after
Labor day and I have lost another summer
I feel as if I must go to Woolworth's
and buy a notebook for the
fall semester even though I have
not been to school in 25 years.
The boss has returned from his vacation
my stomach cringes
he will reduce me to tears before the end of this day
I must remember it is Tuesday and
I can stand anything for 4 days
It is almost fall and we are in the hottest
days of summer, newscasters marvel at the
weather but I know it is no different
from many recent years where Winter
has juxtaposed with Summer leaving
no Fall in-between
Fall is my season
that is why they have canceled it again
it suits my hair and my skin
ideal for wearing leather and taking
marathon walks across the city
but I am prisoner on PA 1704
the bus to 4 days in Hell
it will plunge me into infernal regions
where a madman reigns and I am a
high-ranking crispy critter
nothing is quite good enough for him
real life is obliterated
I disintegrate inside his apoplectic screaming
Yes this is the bus to Hades
cleverly concealed to resemble any other
mild-mannered M-15 to City Hall

Devotion #150

On Veterans day it was announced
that possibly as high as 80% of
disabled Veterans are homeless
unable, after their stint of
guerrilla adventure in the Southeast
Asian jungles to ever live again
in comfort within the confines
of four walls
to accept and return to the
delicate sensibilities of gentle living
after learning
that it is all a lie
that death is the truth
and death does not come gentle to
the Third World
Death eats faces spotted with small black
holes from rapid fire weapons
swats down patriots regardless of
their national fervor

and brings young boys and girls with
shining faces from prosperous countries
to do the job for it
after reaching this degree of reality
a bed is beyond reason
a cardboard mat on Avenue A becomes
the only acceptable comfort
the side of a building for a bathroom
the bottom of a cheap pint to forget
no bus rides to a soft state job
no welfare checks for wine
and antipsychotic medications

Devotion #217

The old tattooed lady
has triumphed once again
placing herself on display
and throwing down
all of herself to the floor
of the lion's cage for adulation
and desecration
bathed in accolades
in praise and ripped within
the treacherous jaws
of a roaring beast
once again
home to the empty kitchen
the barren bedroom
the sad computer screen
home to no one
to the emptiness
made all the more vacant
by the expulsion of all the essences
and the presence of nobody
who can remember
what used to be inside
with her all that is remembered
is the outside
the pretty colors
of grim reapers
skulls and wild horses
the bus is a jerky one
the old tattooed lady's hand
lurches across the page

Desecration #27

New Year's Eve
what a party
I was privileged
with the offer
of a body
living of course
to which I could
do anything
including total
transformation into
a creature
completely new
that has not existed
before except in dreams
to be recreated
instantaneously at my

whim
an immobile bound
and beautiful
monster was made
by me at my
party of 2 on
N.Y.E.
who when directed
presented to me
a canvas of
white backside
on which I painted
words in blue
red orange and yellow
and flogged
them off then
spanked off the remnants
of those words
I made love to my
monster
I let it bite me
I watched him in his
mangled glory
and wanted to
invent him
until
he could stand
no more

Desecration #41

The gulls from the East River
perch on the tall street lamps
along Houston Street this morning
watching me as I walk along
they don't know what I have done
or what else I am capable of doing
or that I feel my power surging
I am a Conquistadora
I think a hood that laces up the back
with a snap-on blindfold and gag
is a very fine accessory
though it may be costly, there is
a deep peaceful beauty
in enforced leather silence

Desecration #47

the last poem in the book

I am confused about everything
can't seem to isolate the problem
I guess than means
I am the problem
too much work and no fun makes JD
a dull girl
I will interview a potential slaveboy tonight
without much enthusiasm
he is 46 years old and wants to be a girl
he is a chubette
from the photographs he has sent
he looks just like my first husband's
old Jewish battle-ax of an iron-willed mother
but he says he is a JAP and has a pretty smile
I am fed up with phony sissy boys

and this one may suffer from my
recent bad experiences
my patience is gone
If he can't cook
he is doomed
I was nasty to another guy because
he liked my poetry
I am such a mean bitch
I don't ever believe them when they say
that anyway because none of them have
the concentration it takes to read a simple poem
I guess I will have to change my haircolor again
maybe that will be the solution.

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