

# You Can Remain Anonymous

*by* Bud Smith

from time to time  
we descend the fire escape  
declaring war on 173rd street

on Friday night  
there was a wall of cops  
on the corner  
a girl, abducted  
an unmarked van  
gunpoint, ski masks,  
children seeing it all  
from the chain link  
in the dog park

our problems:  
the cornerstore is closed  
we have to walk uphill to get beer  
there's construction  
they've torn up the road  
I loop around forever  
searching for a spot  
"in the city it's not called a road"  
"who fucking cares"  
the subway will soon contain  
all the hellstorms of Hell itself  
and we will sweat  
the fruit stands return

but nothing is ripe yet  
I eat it anyway,  
like a world destroyer  
nothing sadder than a bland pear

Saturday, a squad car  
drives all up and down the block  
playing a loop  
"If anyone has information  
regarding an incident  
involving a missing person  
and a white unmarked van  
driven away in the night  
please contact the NYPD.  
You can remain anonymous."

for lunch I make eggs  
I make bacon  
the toast is perfect  
best toast I've ever toasted  
we sit at the yellow table  
slowly sipping hot coffee  
eyeing each other up  
all while the cop cars  
slowly circle below  
playing that announcement

she's afraid. I'm afraid.  
it's like we will be dragged off  
at any moment  
by our hair, by our teeth  
by the veins of our heart  
however they'd figure out  
how to do that  
criminal masterminds

Monday, at her desk  
her co-workers ask her about it  
"the thing". It gets much coverage  
all across the office.  
by lunch, a girl has found some info  
online that says: "over the weekend,  
persons of interest came forward  
and confessed to police  
that they were involved in the "abduction"  
on 173rd street. It seems  
that a young man was picking up  
his girlfriend for a SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY  
and startled her. She screamed.  
She got in the van. They drove away.  
To the party. Had cake. Had balloons.  
That was it. Happy Birthday."

and I stand  
at the window of my corner store  
peering into the darkness  
wondering  
when we'll crashland into Heaven  
and get our just rewards  
for all of our uphill struggles  
Never, probably.  
I crunch into a hard nectarine.

