

His Name Was Tokarsky, But He Looked Like Bob Dylan

by Jerry Ratch

Tokarsky and I got chased off an El train by a couple of mean-looking black dudes who looked like they were going to crush us. I let go a spritz of tear gas that I had on me in the train and we ran as it came to a stop at the Morris Street stop. They chased us down the steps all the way to the street, before they left off because of the crowd of people there. We looked at each other. Tokarsky was a full foot shorter than me, and I only had the one arm. They could have killed us, easy.

Tokarsky was the first one I knew who did acid. He'd come to our poetry class at the Chicago Circle campus and his eyes were all red from being on a three day high all weekend. He said it was mind bending. Also, he was never without a joint that I knew of. Myself, I drank scotch. We were in Karl Shapiro's poetry writing class, and I remember a girl in that class describing me as the one who always smelled of scotch. I had high tastes, but was on a low budget. I worked weekends at my dad's gas station, which was over near Humboldt Park on the near North side.

I don't know where the hell we were going that day on the El train, but those tough dudes would have killed us for sure, if they had ever been able to corner us. They didn't like white boys getting on the El train on the South Side, which was where our campus was.

