

No Contest
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MICHAEL KLEIN
from then, we were still living

2001

But wasn't it always a scene
in a movie to delay it in the world?
The *always* movie?

In America, we make movies
before anything really happens.

It wasn't like the movies and it wasn't real.

It was our entirety emptying into the fully realized emptiness.

Then, we were still dead,

Then, we were still lost on our own soil.

Then, we were still living.

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LIVING

Some of the living have unpopular thoughts.
One of the living says: *it isn't*
all dangerous life inside the mind of the terrorist.
Thought's policy can still register a light called childhood.

Oh! childhood, where each little king
sings to the off-key world before joining.

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THE MOVIES

The old fear always follows you into the new life. Who will I be?

Then, paradise takes the old fear back like something lost in light
of all the fear again.

Or

Sometimes movies can see what's invisible.

Dr. Frankenstein kept his new life from slipping around a spiral
threading science and then darkening down into the village. And rising from the
middle

of those wavy white bolts he cooked up – rising from those electric

ords that passed back and forth like early television in the air
of his wavy life-after-death lab – rising from the final shock it took
to make the monster black and white – was ancient love.

Love made the air visible – made it
so those bolts didn't escape the poles that made them current.
And burn up the place.

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WHAT WAR?

Some people look into the television into Afghanistan
and say they can't see anything.

Or that they've missed that landscape,
in their own life – the moon,
horses on the moon,

men have nothing but what they have in front of them and have nothing.

Some people are in love with those men *and* the enemy.

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THE FALL OF KABUL

Captured music set free
back on the radio, back in the air, through two speakers hanging like two amazed
heads on a pole
at the marketplace.

What kind of music is this? that makes a curtain rise
on these two radicals: *a man's close shave,*
a woman's face?

Such an old and beautiful world on top of a such and old and modern world –
light mixed up with rubble.

Almost free?

Almost enough horses?

Peace passeth not *their* understanding, but *ours*.

MICHAEL KLEIN'S books are: *Track Conditions*, a memoir, *The End of Being Known*, a memoir, and *1990*, a book of poems which tied with James Schuyler to win a Lambda Literary Award in 1993. He teaches in the MFA Program at Goddard College and is on the summer faculty at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. His new book, *then, we were still living*, will be published in 2010 by GenPop Books, and he is currently working on a book version of his blog to be called *States of Independence*. He divides his time between Provincetown and New York City.