

RODRIGO TOSCANO

from "Explosion Rocks Springfield"

*The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled
a strip club next to a day care.*

I remember the breeze right before...
Burrs of—was it willow—slant-falling.
The gray sidewalk, schist granules, scattering.
A brown dumpster lid smushing its green plastic, sandwich meat.
A rat made its debut, but for a moment.

I remember an awning string's knotted tip soft-thudding a windowpane
—tympani's uneven beat.
The rustle of stray trash—bass strings, almost rising
—but never.
And the chopper, the chopper—spittletatootling, spittletatootling—
A proud boot landing on obedient asphalt.
The stern, unweeping chrome.
The flighty flames' decorative gas tank.

I can't forget the beryllium blue sunshades
—orange hued at a glance.
And the stars and bars, starched, pressed, bandana.
Nation Idol Gorge
But for a moment
Then
Boom.

*The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled
a strip club next to a day care.*

Spartacus sprinklers (top rail)
Serial no. 21809A
Inspector 480F
Jiangxi Quality Products
Night Hawk Importers, San Bruno, CA
Roman Roads Distributors, Phoenix, AZ
Port of entry, Tacoma, WA
Tankard 10179.03
Inspector 4201
ILO quarterly report:
Case study 1142
Tingting Liu, 23, female
I.D. 41732
Platform 12, line 8, station 4
Muscular skeletal paralysis
3rd metatarsal taped to 2nd phalangeal
4th proximal splinted to 5th distal
OSHA Region 1 final report:
Incident 2267, explosion (gas)
Inspector 505F
Sprinklers inoperable
Logic Tree branch 20
System of Safety failure
Mitigation device
16 drill holes stoppered
Weld burrs not filed
Citation: 29CFR.1910.159(c)(12)
Notes: inspector 505F on leave
DOL budget sequestered
PUB.L. 112-25
District 2, 112th Congress
United States of America

*The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled
a strip club next to a day care.*

I remember the plume right after...
Orbs of—was it cinnamon—black-rising.
Vapor gray whitening shingle powder rain.
A dumpster lid sheered off a gravestone's angel face.
A hawk's claws claimed the stump.

I remember two spouts of thin flame, blue, making an X
—mind's waking dream.
The hissing of gurgling plastic, supplicant—sick
—stomach's inner eyeball.
And the bathtub, the bathtub—sittin' pretty—sittin' pretty—
The hysteric roof flopping on an unfazed floor.
The wise, ever-wakeful steel beams.
The cheery glass—beaming—everywhere.

I can't forget that purple doorknob
—horny at a glance.
And the plump couch stuffing foam, blazing, angry.
City's Final Chorus
But for a moment
Then
Sh-sh.

The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled a strip club next to a day care.

Spartacus Sprinklers (top rail)
Serial no. 21809A
Scrap metal yard F-2
Stripped steel tankard 28
Sampson Recyclers Ltd., Pittsfield, MA
Steelworkers local 4-12026
Smelting furnace 48
Slab beam rollout batch 81.2014
Semper Fortis Steel Precision Corp, Brooklyn, NY
Steelworkers local 4-200
Section cutting station no. 12
Steel cylinder hollow type 2b
Store & send department 4
Spirit of 76 Commercial Furnishing Corp, Slidell, LA
Steelworkers local 3-275
Sargon Sprinklers (bottom rail)
Serial no. 321911B
Sink coating station 12
Sanding unit 25
Seal testing station no. 7
Sprinklers standard specification 29CFR1910.159(b)
Station inspector 13
Sales packaging room H
Sort and storage garage 4
Second incidence of forklift crushing worker's toes
Spirit of 76 Personnel Motivation Free Cupcake Fridays director,
Chet Baker
Steelworkers local 3-275 chief steward, Marynella Fernandez
Section 5, clause 2 "Management shall comply with all state and
federal standards"
Safety committee grievance no. 78: unannounced station rotations /
inadequate training
Staff training regulation arbitration hearing 501.P.36
Sargon Sprinklers 1st annual wet t-shirt contest
Super Sonic Dance Club, 3rd Floor, Picayune, MS

*The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled
a strip club next to a day care.*

I don't remember the very moment...
Flashes of—was I daydreaming—Biloxi Bound.
The termite swarm at dusk, balling up, sprinkling.
A skeeter swirling in its hotel pool—for the first time.
A no-see-um bug popped out from nowhere—but for a moment—to romp.

I can't say I recall Cleopatra's hairpiece flying off in a speeding
four-cylinder vehicle
—Empire of the Great Somewhere, but never.
And the flying fish, the flying fish—hither-flopping, hither-flopping—
The carefree palms, twerking, injured.
The bald, unyielding sun, giddy.
Tentative feet in knee high water, gripping.

Have I forgotten the name of that triple IPA—something like
—*Rondez the Moon à la Batshit*.
And the ample sized black polka dots—in my eyes, twerking, carefully.
Empire of the Great Somewhere
But for a moment
Then
Then

*The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled
a strip club next to a day care.*

“Unbutton here, this strap.
Even jugs, see, real nice.
Now clip on this red tail
One minute into it.
Double flare it, why not.
Five, can only be five
Per booth—including you.
Or eight, if two of you.
Now, that’s this club’s reg, right?
Other clubs make their own.
Boss, each has a “vision.”
Same old dance, count on it.
Well, maybe two buttons.
These strobes, they blind, crazy.
Night owl shots at The Coop?
Nah. Scoop me on a cone
This shift always, I’m licked.
Thursday—right, at my house.
You should chair it, why not?
All right, honey, be safe.
Don’t let them guys steer you.”

*The Friday evening gas explosion in Springfield leveled
a strip club next to a day care.*

“Spread out the ice like this.
Twelve chocolate, three white milks.
Watch how I wedge them in.
Roster should say fifteen.
Do a roll call, why not.
Four, only four can go
This bathroom and that one.
That’s *this* center’s regs, right?
Other ones have their own.
Counties, each one decides.
Similar norms, you’ll see.
Yeah, check for leaky ones
These cartons, they rip, tons.
Rump shake shooters at Ski’s?
Nah. Crunk on without me
This shift always, I’m zonked.
Thursday—right, at the rec.
You should chair it, why not?
All right then girl, be safe.
Don’t let these kids crank you.”