

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Tony Magistrale: Going Back to the World

Tony Magistrale · Wednesday, May 15th, 2013

Tony Magistrale is the author of two books of poetry: *What She Says About Love* (Bordighera Press 2008) and *The Last Soldiers of Love* (Literary Laundry Press, 2012). “Crime Scene” is part of his new poetry collection entitled *Entanglements* (Fomite Press).

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## Alone Musing in Front of the Barnes & Noble Magazine Rack

Ten below zero, my world colder than Juneau,  
 reduced to solid blocks of white & gray;  
 who can blame a man coughing at the bottom of January  
 desperate for change & some color, who finds himself  
 slightly eroticized despite heavy layers of clothing,  
 his heart blossoming among a succession of telescoped  
 headshots of high-glossed pouting lips  
 & wide-eyed mascara-layered eagerness  
 adorning models, movie starlets, & flavor-of-the-month celebrities,  
 little blond soldiers of capitalism.  
 Although guilty of far worse infractions,  
 I am embarrassed by my prurient fascination—  
 a gender interloper, spy behind enemy lines,  
 more than a little curious about the location  
 of *that elusive G spot* and the *must have*  
*shoes* for spring. The covers track merrily  
 the seasons melding into one another,  
 a smooth & orderly transition, and while  
 none of these women looks very cold  
 or bored or old, I’d be willing to bet my woolen hat  
 every one of them would teeter  
 across their covers atop stiletto-heeled shoes,  
 might even relinquish some haughty complacency,  
 for the promise of a well-made hot fudge sundae.

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## Crime Scene

The cop shows have taken my television hostage  
 a nightly line up of criminologists, forensics, & SWAT teams  
 righting an array of dark atrocities,  
 subconsciously reaffirming to inert & terrified TV Land America  
 our collective vulnerability & need of police intervention.  
 Cops on TV don't bludgeon unarmed citizens because  
 they can. They are regular guys & gals  
 balancing superhero powers in uncomplicated harmony:  
 equally at home in soup kitchens & ballistics,  
 prone to violence yet psychologically nuanced,  
 holding compatible degrees in martial arts and marital therapy.  
 No TV cop is ever a drunk, on the take, or criminally insane.  
 Police dramas whet the insatiable American appetite  
 for a sip of ferocity before bed  
 tinged with a short moral chaser;  
 each creepy, sociopathic nut job  
 gets his fifty minutes of mayhem  
 as prelude to teary lock up, or bullet-riddled resolution.  
 If TV cops patrolled the world,  
 prostitutes would regenerate their virginity,  
 abandoned kids would get furnished apartments at Disneyland,  
 & Jesus would pack a .357 Magnum, just in case.  
 Meanwhile, the rest of us would behave  
 as if we lived in church  
 & spoke only with library voices.  
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## Failure

With so much to admire  
 it's easy to overlook the perseverance—  
 the getting up each morning to paint again,  
 to drink another cup of bitter coffee  
 and go back to work. This was long before  
 any of the work—yellow sun and star clusters  
 spackled to the blank faces of white canvas—  
 auctioned for millions of euros.  
 What he remembers is slightly less wonderful—  
 so much failure to overcome:  
 not lucky in love, not lucky with friends,  
 not lucky selling the damn paintings.  
 Somehow he kept finding purple irises  
 rioting inside the cracked wall of an asylum,  
 a haloed sower tossing sunflower seeds at barren soil,  
 the white explosions of peach blossoms  
 blooming hysterically in some absent farmer's orchard.  
 When achievement finally trumped failure,  
 museums constructed entire rooms of rolling French  
 landscapes and flaming gardens in midsummer heat,

a tsunami of colors that defied Nature's own  
bright enough to blind the human eye,  
ignite an internal blaze.  
Visionaries always find their own way;  
legacies come from equal parts talent  
and refusal to quit. In the time it took  
to stretch a canvas and drop himself down  
into another painting, for those few hours at least,  
beauty reigned.

*Cultural Weekly is proud to premiere "Alone Musing in Front of the Barnes & Noble Magazine Rack" and "Failure" in this edition.*

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