

Maxine Gadd / from GREENSTONE COVE

Maxine Meets Proteus in Gastown

scene one

1967, the street

cordova
has led me lonely
to the mountain pass
all night long
the indians are singing carry me away red eyed daemons
rush past me and my friend
hunker in the little hatchway filled with bliss
filled with the young one's dream
of midnight living
of giant blue souls
of the noble nine foot monk
striding thru
this mountain highway
 his huge hand field up HALT
 the hand of my friend Martin
the little rat faces holding hard
 to our stories for five year olds

Dr. Fu Manchu squats
down beside us and invites us home
for a drink
with the Dalai Lama
It is hard to refuse
such finesse
but we want to wait
till this
street
is gold
at dawn
my friend
has disappeared

and for half an hour the wind takes me down to the

trees
where an old man
is twisting the body
of a rat

he looks at me sadly and sez
i cn show you where the bears are but
they
they're too big fr me now
and the farmers shoot yu if yu even ask

fr a job and fr welfare
yv got to have an address at the Hung Up Inn
where the young junkies wld twist my body like this rat's

so yu cn devour this with some equanimity , say i conferring on the old man a
robe of red velvet come on across the water, he sez and see where i live
tis the ancient forest, i come into town for the kill the kill only

and what of yr friends say i
wondering of mine

heroes, ma'am, he sez, all brave like yrself and tight, tight
as an arse that speaks; they despise all that's ignoble like myself
but you, you oh lady they'd take to the highest estate, come meet the princes
of the forest
and amazons there are there too all thrust into life
shining with inheritance
though none will spend a sou
for the soul of old Jean Paul

yr from Mallardville, then, are yu, i ask
unstitching the soles of the old man's shoes
yr fever's past, buddy
these now go to the soup
for the one last union

ah, pegasus, he cries
yu cldn't spare an hour to take an old man to Dairyland

my pleasure, say i
maybe they'll let you keep yr rat in their fridge
and we walk off, hand in hand

coming up powell street into the rising sun
me feeling soft and gentle as an old lady who has done no wrong
 who gave birth to children like butter
 and kept them alive in apple trees
 who took them all swimming in the one big sea
 and now has been set free
to enter her City