

5-1-1992

The Water's Fine

Victoria Monfort

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces>

Recommended Citation

Monfort, Victoria (1992) "The Water's Fine," *Forces*: Vol. 1992 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol1992/iss1/19>

This Short Story is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Collin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forces by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Collin. For more information, please contact mtomlin@collin.edu.

The Water's Fine

Victoria Monfort

I like to swim through the city's night. It's a test of bravado or something. We walk uphill past a doorway reeking of urine where a person is sleeping or dead, past the water garden looking like a fairy landscape, past the walls of concrete blushing in the twilight.

Distorted bass wraps around the buildings like an arrhythmic heartbeat luring us to the source. The source is full of kids, dogs, yuppies, and bums. I see secretaries catch a later bus; I see business travelers jog from their hotel rooms surprised by the moment; I see retired couples lean back in folding chairs swirling wine coolers and pointing at the stars. I study their faces and imagine their lives. People sprawl over pavement on blankets and are more comfortable and more correct than the person in the doorway.

We circle like sharks, then hover between Ross and the stage on our backs on the steps. It's an artificial sort of night, the clouds borrowed from Pirates of the Caribbean in Disneyworld, the sleek angular buildings overlaid on acetate with aircraft beacons flashing oddly in unison with the syncopated beat. The bald man bobs his shiny head, but his message is muddled by marble walls and glass. If he plays it just right, all the sound waves will return to the stage at once and blow him up. Across Ross the old church glows warm yellow in the shadow of the steel blue skyscraper. Welcome to the nineties, I think.

We leave when our backs hurt and walk to the West End. A more intelligible beat calls to us from a side street where we find a six-piece jazz band lighting up a virtually empty restaurant and bar. We order a beer. The music flows about knee deep in here. It curls and coils up the legs and backs of the chairs and you can see it climbing and trailing up to the ceiling in the corners of the room. This band, this place, at this hour is jazz. The folks who look around trying to know how to move right are gone.

The sparse crowd is mesmerized, each person's body sways somehow responding to a part of the tune. This band improvises, and they pull us along the plank with them. We all grin when we land without a splash. Their eyes follow their music around the walls; their bodies and instruments pulse and lure thought deep into complicated rhythms. The flute player sits on the side, twitching, anticipating his moment when the wiry sax man yields the microphone. We struggle for breath as he winds down an incredibly long solo, and soar when the flute man springs up and drops to one knee to carry us further.

We send thought out on the music and get it back free of care. We give our burden to the smiling jazz men, who lead it on such a chase it comes back happy. Swimming through the night we are restored.

