



# Three Poems by Michael Shorb

[Home](#)

[Summer 2011](#)

[Winter/Spring 2011](#)

[Autumn/Winter 2011](#)

[Summer 2010](#)

[Spring 2010](#)

[Winter 2010](#)

[Autumn 2009](#)

[Summer 2009](#)

[Spring 2009](#)

[Autumn 2008](#)

[Summer 2008](#)

[Spring/Summer 2008](#)

[Winter/Spring 2008](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[Contact](#)

## Cures for Insomnia

Night unending and rain  
Spearing the pavements  
I turn sleepless  
Imagining each watery  
Shaft an echo  
Of the world's unending  
Troubles

the pallor of starving skin  
Gray feet of refugees  
Navigating bone-  
dry roads

The cry of the prisoner  
The arching emptiness of  
Loved ones washed away  
In memory's red water.

I put on an old noir mystery  
And soothe myself to sleep  
With a focused and specific  
Evil

a gunman staring  
From the window of a seedy room

A detective  
Shouldering the burdens  
Of the last honest man

A beauty in a sports car  
Engine running smoothly  
Aimed at the nearby  
Borders of resolution.

## The Black Box of Angus the Tinker

I walk backward in the steam-  
Shrouded light of depots.  
I ask the lounging railroad men where  
I can get hot food.

They point out the door  
A battered Camel billboard  
Fast food strip joint  
Araby beyond the intersection  
Of alarm and vision  
To the north shore of Lake Huron  
200 years ago.

Walking again I'm startled  
By geese overhead in roaring profusion,



I feel better now that commerce is here.  
I rush over to launch a barrage of questions.  
He silences me with an imperious  
Gesture.

    "Damn you and your questions,"  
He says gruffly, throwing down  
A large black box and clattering  
northward in the waning light.

Eagerly, with shaking hands,  
I open terra concordia

The Black Box of Angus the Tinker,  
And look inside.

## Escaping

They weren't after me.

I wasn't the one tied  
by the ankles to  
a Cyclops of uranium  
dragged across floors  
of the Age of Invention  
a convict in chains  
ram in the thorns  
steel mill rabbit  
in thickets of rain

they didn't hunt me down  
in coal-

    black veins of my own land  
smash the colored beads  
of my alphabet  
hook me across the gills  
with a printing press  
shoot me in some  
neck of the woods  
when nothing was looking

I'll see you around  
drifting

    through town  
soiled parody from  
the Book of Prophets  
blurring the old green songs.

last seed bursting  
last wind stirring  
last swordfish  
    in slate-green sea.

*Morning*, will appear in Winter 2013 from Shabda Press.

**Copyright 2011, Michael Shorb.** © This work is protected under the U.S. copyright laws. It may not be reproduced, reprinted, reused, or altered without the expressed written permission of the author.