

STEPHEN RODEFER



S A F E T Y

"MIAM" # 1

May 1977. Edited by Tom Mandel. "Miam" appears monthly.
Subscription by contribution to cover mailing
costs. Contents © 1977 Stephen Rodefer.

11/01 .00 \$15.00

S A F E T Y

Today the light is so pervasive
A bird lit for a second by mistake
On the edge of my lawn chair
And then was gone,
But not before I could see
In the glint of its eye and tilt of its head
How it would have stayed were it just
A little other than it was.

On such a day and because of such a bird
I wish you were here with me,
Changing the weather.

I have nothing to offer
But more love
And having everything
Why should you want any more?

Still I light a pine needle
Hoping you will come.

What's better than sucking ice
On a hot summer day?
Or in the winter after a giant snowstorm
Going for a walk under the moon.

I'll tell you—
What beats them both
Is two people lying in one sleeping bag
In early spring.

It is difficult to resist loving
That which caresses you, and in this
My desire for you is like the sun.
Sitting in the sun I am hopeful.
It is noon and already I miss
Seeing you. I think of phoning
Knowing how your voice could last
Me a week. It is difficult
Though with great effort
I do, but it is busy.

These words die upon the air
But are immortal in their impulse.

The morons on the block gossip
When nothing is happening: a double pain.
When I see your dress
It kills me with loneliness.

I pour a drink for
Your absent friend.

Eros loves
His mother
Venus. Sleep
Is the darling of childhood.
And sometimes you are clumsy
But with the difficulty of a horse
Rolling off her back to rise
To her feet.

I put in for a position
At the nursery school where you work
But they sent word rejecting me
For an interview, and wishing me luck.

There is no one so poor but you can't
Find some poor bastard who isn't worse,
And romance without finance is
A nuisance—people die everyday
For want of love and a few dollars.

At night I go into the backyard
And look up at the lights
Of the apartment house
Behind it.

I put away the presents in trunks
I buy for you everyday.

If you tell her too much
She'll hate you
And some ardent mute
Will bend himself to her will
In spite of your complaining.

So take my advice
And if you see something
Forget it.
Deny it
If you feel any pain.

Isn't there another word for *never*
That means just for awhile?
If only I could watch you dance a little
From afar.
In the twilight at Miramar
Venus rises, the most distinguished
And most breathtaking star.

Though I am not six feet
My two arms long
To encircle your waist.
If we tried
We could lift the roof off
This little room
And see the sky.

At least it is time
For your charming self to play
A set of tennis after work with me.

For you are a daughter of God,
And my backhand's much improved.

.

I drink to your health
And forget my own.
Soon you will have
Everything you ever wanted.

.

Your virginity
Maintains its strength
Even after you lie
With your lover.

Its life
Is diurnal.

For months now I have been crazy
About you and I feel I am destined
To sleepwalk in your absence forever.

Leave the city,
Come breathe in the grass
Behind my house. We will be
Like a bee in the clover.

The water is from the well.
There's strong coffee
Always on the stove.
My sheets are fresh and wrinkled,
Made of a thousand patches
Of Indian cotton, each of a different color.
Overgrown blackberries hide the corner
Where we will mark each other in the sun.

From across the street
I actually see you
In the window of the bar,
Waiting.

Why do you make me lose my mind?

I no longer make my bed
Since you first did.
Come to see me once
Before you go at least.

If you do you will
Row me down to earth
From this heavenly desire
With your ordinary smile.

What can I say
Because say I must.
Love me unwillingly
If unwilling is all you can be.

You are famous at home in bed.
You are famous abroad in the streets.
You are famous in the great lakes.
You are famous in Crete.

You are remembered forever
By the *Oakland* branch of contemporary dejection.

Your eyes are like lips.
No one in the sunlight
Comes even near your shadow.

The navy,
The marine,
The air force,
You kill them all.

If you will not come out
And let us lay eyes on you
I will never speak
To you again.

Get up, get out of bed,
We bought you a new dress at the flea market
And we want to see your suppleness
Fully extended within it.

Without it
You will have nothing on.
We'll walk up on the avenue with you
And watch the rabble fly by us.
But you don't even go
The distance. Confess.
You cheapen love itself
With such forgetfulness.

Someday without warning
If you should continue to remain
Holed-up in that fern-window-flat
We will come to get you
Like terrorists sweeping down
Upon an heiress!

Should you come willingly
We'll greet you with
A pillow on each shoulder.

Now it is clear
Why of all the rabble
In heaven Eros
Is the most desired.

But you, *idiote*, you
Are the most loved,
And for no
Reasonable cause.

I heard that if you're bitten
By a mad dog you begin to see
The visage of the attack
Floating at you from every wall
And you turn pale with trembling.

The same thing has happened to me
Since I first saw you.

Your sweet
And irresistable
Venom relaxes
These limbs &
Making them
A snake as well
Poisons the world.

You are not responsible.

But maintaining
The ability to respond
Is all that was ever meant.

The thought of loving you
Drives me wild. I become
A little girl again,
Screaming at her mother.

By now it is known—
Neither love, nor money,
Nor friendship, nor sweetness of life
Can be had for long
Through these years.

Everyday
You fantasize
Your own demise.

Every night
You struggle
And are rabid with hunger.

Only work is real.

Then you come back
And say *here I am,*
See, I have returned,
It is all right.

Tell me of all creatures
Where is there one
Who will love you
Better than this?

You may forget me
But understand
Someone far off from now
Will pause over some unmarked
Unlooked for book
And remember us both.

The heart is in the body
And that has the shirt on.
I am nearly gone. I cough
At the sky.

Far off the sound of some horn
Measures the distance
From my heart to yours,
And I dreamt last night
You spoke to me.

Tonight out my window
I'll watch Venus pass the moon
And sleep alone.

Love's image
Cheats
Love's life.

Love's
Labor
Loses love.

Pain soaks through me
Colder than rain.

I wish I were back in school.

I wish I were not so lucky.

I wish I were safe.

I wish I didn't see your dark reflection
With some victory in disguise.

I hear your lover now
Has his ardor sticking out
All over him
Everyday for you—

And he doesn't even know
How to write.

Love can't compete
With compatibility.

It is a beautiful engagement ring,
But when he kisses you
And folds you in his arm
And asks you of others
As lovers always do,
Please I beg you leave me out of it!

Now you are rich,
Now you have everything
You wanted,

And I am not
Hard to please.
All I require is boundless love.

It is a cold night
And the wind blows the rain
Into our bed.

Everybody loves a whore
Who loves the poor.

The live oak I planted
In my backyard
Is not going to make it.

And to think that once
We were the minion
Of each other's appetite.

My lips are still numb.

If this embarrasses you
Forget it. If it injures you
Forgive it. If it angers you
Become someone's friend.

Death is the necessary evil
That will destroy us all.
Only gold is harder
Than your heart.

I see children after school
And wonder how they can
Withstand the pain
Of never knowing you.
But you know many
Whom I never see.

As for the others
They never wanted
What I did.
If they spoke sweetly
To you of love
It was a parody
Of uneventfulness.

Do you remember the order
Of turning the multi on and off?

Do you remember the blue jacket you wore
When we went for ice.

You will get well
And sleep thoughtfully
Upon another's breast.

I have asked too much
And this death-like sleep I'm in
Augurs a long life.

All birds in this light
Leave their human chairs
To return to the blackberries.

But I will give up your ghost
As willingly as one falls
From a cliff.

I may never mean
As much to you again,
Sister dearer to me than life,
But I will love you forever.

The sun over the ocean
Warms the wind.

I have no more complaints,
Except to see you again.

Stephen Rodefer

(SAFETY derives from Sappho and other poets and women
of the daylight. Brightness falls from the air.)

"Miami"
1578 Waller street
San Francisco, CA 94117

David Prudetti

6616 Telegraph #303

Dulles, CA 94609

THIRD CLASS

