

William C. Blome

Above the Boulevard

Allowing herself a clearance of maybe an inch at best on either side of the catwalk's handrails, my Vietnamese neighbor is standing high in the night and swaying gently some thirty feet above the boulevard. There's rush hour traffic still passing by below, and anyone looking up at the right, refracted moment might say, "That's a giantess up there!", and I think it's true that by the illusion or factor of height alone, she holds interest along with wonder, as she slowly and methodically takes off her blouse, her skirt, and her bracelet, and makes a neat pile beside her.

Seeing her move within a cramped space, it's easy to next picture her swaying in tandem with exotic-and-faraway music, yet there is no music and nothing to stop her from firing a one-of-a-kind smile at me and beckoning me to climb out my window and join her on the catwalk, which I eagerly do, of course. But it's soon apparent she really isn't into sharing, because she flings her bracelet down and off the roof of a passing Pontiac; she throws her skirt at a small red truck; and then she pauses awhile. She relaxes and leans against a railing; she looks up at the darkening sky; she brushes strands of hair away from her eyes, and then she turns and asks me if I have a cigarette (which I do not). She continues to pause and reflect—she continues to appear quite studious—and then she reaches down for her blouse.

I figure time might be overdue for me to ask her if I can have the privilege of tossing her blouse out and into the night. I gesture several times that I want to do it with my eyes shut—hurl it blind, in other words—but I guess I'm too late, because though I imagined she was hanging on my every word and motion, when I open my eyes, she communicates (with another one-of-a-kind smile on her beaming face) that she has just finished doing the very thing I kept requesting, "and with eyes closed, too!"

William C. Blome writes poetry and short fiction. He lives wedged between Baltimore and Washington, DC, and he is a master's degree graduate of the Johns Hopkins University Writing Seminars. His work has previously seen the light of day in such fine little mags as *Amarillo Bay*, *PRISM International*, *Fiction Southeast*, *Roanoke Review*, *Salted Feathers* and *The California Quarterly*.