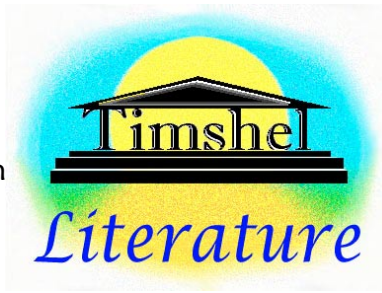


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Just Thinking, 08/25/03:

To My Audience

by Justin Katz

I hear whispers through the window,
Creeping footsteps in the hallway;
They're the shadows in the darkness,
And the statues in the store display.
Strange circuits in my telephone,
Are why it never rings, you see;
And crows that seem not quite alive
Float the street a bit too patiently.
One asset that I've come to have,
What keeps me just one step ahead:
I foresee ev'ry move they make,
And I'm really hunting them instead.

I know just who's the mastermind,
A name I hear in ev'ry hiss;
And ev'ry where I look it seems
I find traces of this nemesis.
I've set aside a special room
With nothing but a single chair;
I'll sit upon the villain's knees
Put head in hand, and just stare and stare.
In time I'll bring forth all the proof,
Establish my sanity,
Replete with charts and catalogues
Of the more ephem'ral evidence:

Glances caught in public places,
Cars parked crooked in their spaces,
Couples stopped in feigned embraces.
It's all subtle, yes, but common sense.
Notes passed secretly with flowers,
Hikers that walk on for hours,
Dancers out in thundershowers.
Could one see this as coincidence?
A counterfeit society,
Except for maybe two or three,
Like misanthropic charity,
Unaware to sympathize with me.

The sum of all my hoarded facts
Insinuates a well-planned hell;
And so I've found a place to hide,
A vast and hidden citadel.
From time to time I must submit,
And risk disclosing my abode;
But stringently I lay it out:
A call in esoteric code.

I tell you this with faithless hope.
A writer's trust I give to you.
Perhaps you'll take me at my word,
But then you're in on it, too.

[Note: this poem is a few years old, but I'm once again behind myself, and as one of my personal favorites, it's a poem that I thought merited further presentation.]