

## Two Poems · *Stuart Friebert*

### WHEN THERE'S TOO MUCH LOVE

My companion doesn't always reply  
at once, but she'll tell you we met

at La Scala, S.R.O. And I offered her  
half my bed. As recently as thirty

years ago it was. We looked funny  
as hell with our butts backed up,

but all we did was lie there all  
night long I swear. Best thing was

her name: Henry Aldrich Ravoni!  
Her mother loved Mickey Rooney

and the gang, and how could  
the bishop object: he used to go

out on the lake at night, diddle  
around, Henry said. So much for him.

I light her 1000th cigarette,  
fetch more cappuccino. When we break

love on the wheel, we may just  
be lapsing into the mistake

the child makes who hits the chair  
he bumps into, Lichtenberg noted.

Henry, Henry Aldrich! I cry at dawn.  
Are you calling I, my companion says

under her breath. In a good radio show,  
everyone's always in the right, and love,

like talent, seems to run in families.

### THE HUNGARIAN TELEPHONOGRAPH

It was the first of its kind anywhere.  
And no one seemed to know who invented it.  
Great grampa signed up for one and the day  
it came the whole neighborhood came over  
to see it installed above the couch, for  
"reclining listening," the ad suggested.

You didn't talk into it. What was the point  
of that? great gramma said. All you did was  
lie back and listen to things coming across  
the precious wire from the central station.

Days there'd be news, stock reports, lectures  
the government selected. Great grampa was glad  
of that, he couldn't read and arranged to stay  
home from the factory so he could learn everything.  
Nights, workers hauled the huge sender to the opera  
or the People's Theater, and no one minded grampa  
falling asleep snoring by the second curtain.

Once, when they tuned it to the big earthquake  
out east, sisters rapped on each other's doors,  
Praised Be Thy Most Holy Sacrament! they yelled  
back and forth across the clotheslines. The terrified  
inventor shot himself in the leg at the asylum.