

Raining Fire · *Carl Lindner*

From the roof ledge
six flights up
I could see
down to where
a man was staggering.
He was all alone
with me. The light
was fading as he wove
among the sidewalk squares
and a thread in me unraveled.
I could not rein
my adolescence in.
“He’s drunk, he’s drunk,”
I sang and opened
high above his head
a box of kitchen matches.
“Diamond” said the label
and my heart, hard
and faceted, flung
off the dying light.
Lucifer that night,
out of my own
matchless darkness
down I rained a flood
of splinters, red-
tipped with phosphorus.
How they crackled
on cement,
all two hundred
bursting into bloom.
Even at that height
and swallowed up
in glee,
I saw him flinch,

start from his reverie
on that sudden floor of flame,
that night I felt another's
radiant fear, both of us
branded, that night I howled
and fell from grace like a star.