

TWO POEMS BY MIKE MINEHAN

Each Time I Ask You

each time I ask you for my identity back  
you shake your head  
and I run back to my bottle and typewriter  
and you  
you say as I flee through the door  
perhaps another two weeks?

another two weeks of what doctor?  
of listening to Joan tell of her mother  
who pointed a gun at her head and missed  
of Peter who stammers  
and says his father beat him solid for years  
another two weeks, you say?

another two weeks of blues playing  
of striving for tears that will not come  
of saying over and over  
I have nothing more to say  
I have bled enough  
see . . . those are my stains right there at your feet. . . .

You have me, thief, right there  
inside that building blue file  
I am a character in your book  
I am plagiarized  
I am raped  
but you have not rounded me off  
found me my tristan  
put me in my place  
given me a happy ending  
checked curtains or a frilly bedspread  
you have tapped me dead.

another two weeks  
two weeks friend doctor  
and I shall fall like red ink from your pen  
I shall be the ash you flick off your desk  
after my visits  
the smoke drifting from your window  
when I slam the door

## postscript 1976

damn it all  
i've travelled three thousand miles  
one end of the country almost to the other  
cutting you out of my head

i know what i want to say  
i've said it before  
will you *listen*?

look, lady, here i am  
still feeling the way i did  
four years ago  
when you picked jasmine for my hair.

i've written, written, written  
cajoled, laughed & cried  
gone on drunks in frustration  
dried out in strange wards  
in stranger cities

your silence batters me to death!