

LOTUS LAND POEMS SECTION XV

Predictable and certain:

nothing short of misery in a teenager's eyes.

And those hot summer high school nights

cruising up and down the boulevards:

that animal ache, that insatiable longing.

And father's stern and prescient warning:

Remember to keep your pecker in your pants.

But we were sixteen. All dewy fresh and firm.

French kissing in the park,

sneaking a fuck in the back seat of father's Ford.

Christine, pubescently pure, pouty lips, almond eyes,

sharp pointed chin, narrow waist and hips,

tits like succulent flowers. Rancor and Rapture.

The Hollywood Free Clinic dispensing birth control like candy.

O we sang the body electric, Mr. Whitman,

Our currents blazing, our circuits singed.

Like a bloodhound sniffing the air,

the musk of that memory has never left me.

Like a junkie unable to tell the pure stuff from the bad,

I have gone through life both pursuer and pursued

caught within the snare of my own ambivalent clutches.

Even now, staring into the mirror of my middle years,

the hunger tempered, the appetite gorged

with the fat of that fervor,

I am yet haunted by a demon wind,

a breeze blowing out from my youth

urging me follow the hot fragrance, renew the old fury,

succumb to the savor of that endless pursuit.



A Mid-West native from Cleveland, Ohio, J.R. Phillips has spent the majority of his years in Los Angeles, California. His father was an immigrant from the U.K. & his mother was first generation Irish American. He attended university courses at University of Oregon, Cal Ploy San Luis Obispo and received his undergraduate degree from the Cal State University Northridge where he studied under the guidance of renown California poet Ann Stanford. He received his MFA in Creative Writing from Antioch University. He has published two books of poetry from Half Moon Books—*Living in Lotus Land* and *A Mirage of Suspended Gardens*. Journal and anthology publications include the Centennial Edition of *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Red Fez*, *Modern Images*, *The Edgar Allan Poe Journal*, *The San Gabriel Valley Journal*, *The Four Chambered Heart: A Tribute to Anais Nin*, *The Art of Being Human*, and *Men in the Company of Women*. He co-hosted along Apryl Skies the Valley Poets East Reading series in Studio City, California. He resides with a first generation Scottish lassie in the San Fernando Valley area of L.A.

J.R. PHILLIPS