

C. A. Smith

AN AMERICAN SONG

The songs of silence have ceased.  
I've found my voice  
And now I speak.

The son not quite a daughter  
Of a priest--a dead, always just buried  
Maintenance man with a pipefitter brain,  
Flannel shirts, and work boots as a legacy.  
A son himself of Americus  
A son of ignorance  
A son of the poverty of a technology  
He had no interest in.

I am the one just behind, just ahead of the one...  
I await my turn,  
The astronomer with no stars  
The mathematician with no figures  
The driver with nothing to drive  
The card carrying American with no card.

Is this the Isle of Samos,  
The spiritual center of our search?  
Is this the renewed Roman Republic--  
Impurities to be snuffed by impunities.  
I am the test tube child of an aging Thomas Jefferson  
The offspring of a slave  
Plodding through an unknown land  
With only a surveyor's compass to guide me.

I live many of the freedoms Tom talked of.  
I have no account books to register my slaves  
But I keep accounts,  
And we all have our slaves.

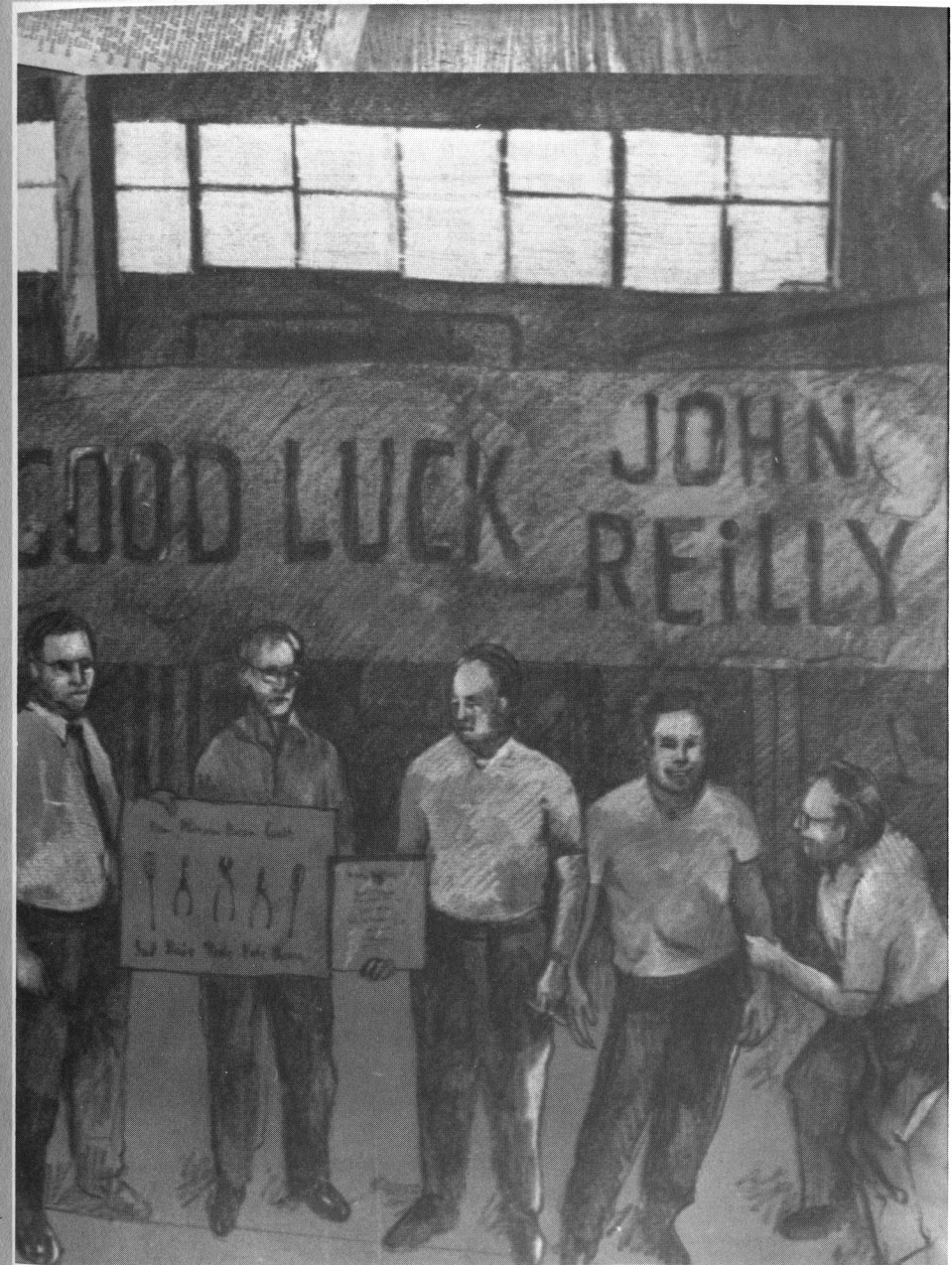
Hear the welcome to the wild  
And wonderful Western Hemisphere:  
"All men are created!"  
It was pretty wild and not quite wonderful  
Never before and so much again, for the first time  
Power possessed by common men.  
Ah, but where were the women?  
Baking the bread and making the bed--  
Waiting.

And where were the slavs  
And where were the blacks  
And where were the Indians we didn't attack?  
This sand was ours before we sank in it.  
Our tongues captured the dreams so many had wanted  
Beyond the money box of the Methodist missionaries  
Beyond the old world schemes  
We searched with at least a part of our hearts.  
And I guess we continue with that part.

A land of freedom for all!  
Bring your search here--if we'll allow you in.  
"No polynesians, no polygymists, no prostitutes,  
no poor,  
No idiots nor epileptics, no Asians, nor anyone who  
Requires public care--we're not particular here.

And what is this new creature,  
This American?  
Yes, he is, she is a ptolemaic astronomer  
Afraid to move this nation--not quite the dream--  
Away from the center of the Universe.

And the fragile voice of understanding  
Is broken often here.  
Celtic dreamers and Phoenecian mariners  
Have left little trace of the foundations  
Of this tomorrow.  
The waste  
The remains  
Of plain people with powerful ideas  
Sometimes lost, sometimes discovered,  
Regularly distorted in neon signs, color TV sets,  
And computer control boards.



John Giannotti

I make no messianic mantras,  
No claims of perfections  
Just a heart as wide as the sunset  
Sitting here smiling  
Wishing to be as big as the rise.

I await the trade winds for this journey,  
No facades, the place goes on.  
I search to be a part if I can find the rest of me.  
Jew, Gentile, Moslem, untouchable,  
Is it I have no place  
Or no understanding of one in my guts?

I don't know but I got the dream  
Got the dream  
I mean it's as real as it is not  
And I dance to this song  
In a union I have with no other.

People hate, people fear, people kill and people  
Will love you just as easily as you will.

Yes, a lobotomy has been performed  
On my memory.  
And it appears that poverty is big business,  
Or is it the other way around here?

I don't know but the trade winds brought me  
And they'll take me on, work boots in hand,  
This land in my pocket.

"And if anybody should ask  
Who made up this song  
Tell um Jack the rabbit,  
Been here an' gone."