

All the Same

Sal Cetrano

—“Political correctness is the most cowardly form
of free speech.” —Frank Zappa

Old Berkowitz, distracted,
fights to recollect the names
for things, the windblown kind:
philosophies, programs,
the inveterate skirmishes
that script and score an era,
pack its duffel tight
with forbidden freight.
Would the lady, he extends,
care to be more *specific*?
Who was it, exactly, who'd held
you down—or was that *back*?
The wash of her alarums
makes waves in his whiskey,
disturbs icy faces, the cozy
leaden feel of the tumbler,
snug as a hand grenade.
What a *gift*, to recognize
the enemy in any landscape!
Parties, he aches wistfully,
once offered shelter.

The Lady, for all her rocks
and ten-buck words

just a dyke in taffeta to Berkowitz,
chafes on: equal something
for somebody, level tracks,
affirmative assholes . . .
He is dim on the details.
Life is complicated enough,
he is thinking. Can he even
find his way to the *john*?
Men now used ju-jitsu—
kiss her ass just right, and
she'll swear she's kicking yours.
Refocusing the mute blonde
over by the dip, it is all
the same to him—the hollow
that he may have had her before,
or the notion that she's had *him*.