

**The perks, my love?
for Lesley Carroll, a fellow sufferer**

where are the perks
I ask you I ask myself I ask others
in a transaction in a commerce
that hardly exists.
(save 15 minute phone chats or tragically tasteless
love poems inspired by
the lyrics of 'our songs')

perks, like the special additions to any business deal
that happens while poets
and other sensitive types
are unawares and avoiding positivism
especially if they don't know
what it is, and because they like to keep wisdom and experience
unsubstantiated, like you and me

I want some perks.
to be able to notice a shifty expression
in mid-sentence
to be able to touch the real you
and not just the chimera I've been lugging around in the rain
for the past six weeks
I want to pick up on some sidelong glances intimating
our naught ideas if we're standing
In the hall outside a public restrooms
of endless possibility

the fact is
no public restroom has rows of stalls spanning
for hundreds of miles
and there'd be driving for both of us
if I were to meet you in one

so when I try to find you after perkless months and months
in one of the huge truck-stop potties and after opening
door after door of women's restrooms
I finally barge in
on the springtime limbs of a stranger with
your highest voice, raised two octaves
don't be sad
when I'm 15 minutes late finding you in the men's
there were bruised knees involved

-Kimberly Campanello