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## Angels

Arthur Gottlieb

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## Gottlieb: Angels

### ANGELS

Arthur Gottlieb

Weary of illuminating bibles,  
they hang up their wings  
and sit on tombstones  
in the city cemeteries,  
listening to bone turn to stone.

When the mid-morning sun  
chases them,  
most, dressed in rags of mist,  
fade with the fog.

Some venture downtown  
to wrestle with consciences.  
Beaten,  
they sprawl in wet gutters,  
white wings soiled,  
like some drunk dead to the world  
in a dark doorway.

A few,  
never forgiven by heaven,  
fold their withered pinions  
under old overcoats  
and panhandle to keep body and soul  
together,  
until they atone for the sin  
of being human.

Not many, but maybe one lucky devil  
might make it back.  
Most,  
mistaken for street people  
by strangers to saints,  
lay where they slipped and slid  
on skid row,

drinking blood from a wine bottle  
to raise their spirits  
a little above dead flesh.