

numb to a lecture on Picasso--
your mind cubistic with lack of sleep--
trying to stay conscious
till you could turn that paper in.

It was going through the line at Cowan
coming back to a table of friends
with barbeque (which had been
pork roast and would be chili.
Saga Food Service being what it was)
eating between bites of sleep
and crisscrossed conversation

“Hey, did you get that paper done?”

“So what happened to Terry?”

“Are you coming to the march?”

For it was also 1968, 69, 70,
King’s death and Bobby Kennedy’s,
the Chicago convention and Kent State,
picketing so black students
could get haircuts on Main Street,
marching against the war.

It was reading the names of the dead
all day, all night
under trees in front of the library,
knowing that some of our names
could be added to the list.

It was classes cancelled
so that we mourned together
part of the nation
part of the world.

It was fire when a topic
finally caught your heart
and you read and wrote
and read and wrote
till the page seemed to gleam
with promise
and the world widened
as your eyes opened
and the past deepened
as the future beckoned
and you felt yourself
a center
of becoming
the you
you were meant to be.

3.

I arrived in 1967
in a red, white, and blue dress
and left in 1971
in a brown and beige one.

4.

From Ezra Pound
to the stages of mitosis
to the Franco-Prussian war
to idiomatic uses of the pluperfect tense:
those were our days.

Doctrina Lux Mentis
and they meant it all right
those professors—Feese,
Cantrell, Somville, White--
up front opening doors like mad,
doors we had to read and think to get through
only to find more doors waiting

Lux: a lot of good luck
and good looks in those classrooms,
all of us with the shine of well-fed youth
in our Villagers or jeans and workshirts,
our Papagallos or hiking boots,
taking notes on each other
as well as the text
for we were also required material
demanding much study, some of it close,
trying to learn
what we were made of.

Climbing trees
and the water tower
in search of ourselves,
standing inside
the Flame.

Reaching for connection
while keeping cool
even when down on our lux.

Doctrina—she could have been
that girl you sat next to
in genetics. Doctrina Sabrina—
from Louisville, am I right?
And she could have dated
what's-his-name: Brent Lux.

