

Jazz over Washington

By Johnny Madsen (translation by Kristian F. Anker-Moeller)

Ben Webster's notes
alight
endless rows
of avenues
and seep through
Polish hotdogs
and Italian statuettes.
Quiet please, Lincoln is thinking
The Cuban taxi toots its way
through the city
with healthy Japanese
and lifestyle prophets on bikes
with sidecars
and the speeches of Babylon.
One came riding on a donkey
with no turn signal or bell.
The techno music resigns
at the five star pavilions by the lakes
that never solved the puzzle
of the mysterious migration of the eel
by virgin paths
and big rivers
The deep, deep drinks
with a salty taste of Venice
were right there at the edge of the
swimming pool
across from the church
delivering the backdrop for
fitness tickets
and tanning salon-looking
VIP representatives
of Kellogg's Corn Flakes
A Seventies choir
palisander-sounding
took the last lingering guests
through the darker outskirts
of the circle of fifths.
Musical small talk.

Muzak muss sein
for German Rieslings
from the more dubious districts
from Bern Kassel.
Quiet please, Lincoln is thinking.

Lincoln's foot
jollily keeping the beat

Don't be quiet Lincoln is thinking

An upright street cleaner
is sweeping up donuts
in front of the Christian Church
standing tall
like David Crocket's first encounter
with the Alamo.
Quiet please, Lincoln is thinking.

Dexter Gordon's last notes
tenderly descent into a puddle
and light up
the circular line dancer
and together,
like invisible threads,
on post-Dadaistic cobblestones
they swirl through the city
and the sax slips through the streets
and hits