



Gregory Gilbert Gumbs

Alone at Night in My New York  
Hotel Room

I quickly look through some notes for my many  
meetings with various producers the next day as  
disjointed pieces and bits of conversation float  
up

past my window from the restless streets in  
front

of my hotel down below

“I can’t find a job” . . . “Uuhm, things getting real  
tough for the ordinary man

In these United States nowadays” . . . “Tell, may  
again . . . things more and more fuck up . . .

Uhm”

I quickly glance through the numbers of the  
projected budget, some suggestions about  
casting

the parts, a very brief description of my  
screenplay

“He’s a real sonofabitch, girlfriend, don’t you  
sweat

him” followed by words I can’t hear

“No good, girlfriend, naah . . . and these are  
dangerous times . . . you just can’t take a chance  
with a man like tha . . .”

Alone at night in my New York hotel room

On the television one of my favorite movies is  
playing, “Casablanca,” and I check it out every  
now and then while still going through my  
notes

A group of young teenagers pass in front of the  
hotel screaming, singing, rapping  
“Fight the Power” quickly followed by  
“Quantanamera”

A Cuban song very close to my heart  
Maybe they are on their way to a party or a club  
or  
maybe even the movies

All of this talking and singing, constantly and  
sometimes uneasily mixed in with the droning  
noises of passing cars and busses making their  
distinct mournful stopping followed by their  
roaring driving away sounds

And then, every so often  
Just for a few brief and intensely relieving  
seconds  
As I lie down, fold into the warm comfortable  
bed  
Distractedly observing the white peeling ceiling  
with the TV lights and images bouncing off it  
Nearly surreal  
Alone, at night, in my New York hotel room  
A very strange  
Intense stillness falls over the busy New York  
streets beneath  
Happily embracing the tired city, quickly  
interrupted  
By the barely audible sounds, of frantically  
wailing  
sirens  
Growing louder and louder and  
Completely shattering the desperate silence, like  
exploding glass  
Alone, at night, in my New York hotel room  
Longing for my beautiful California sweetheart  
far,  
far away  
as the wet snowflakes, start to drift and waltz  
downwards, past my shimmering windowsill.

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Gregory Gilbert Gumbs was born on the small Dutch island of Aruba, in the Caribbean. He has worked as a criminologist, lawyer, and screenwriter, and has published poems in anthologies and magazines in many countries, including The Netherlands, England, France, Ireland, Australia, and India.