

strolling half-consciously

MATTHEW COSTELLO

strolling half-consciously
on Hollywood streets,
I walked toward the
distant bass beats and
floating strings,
taking my place
in the steady, graceful
sauntering race

the crowd swarmed
its way into form
in the distance--
bodies trudged
drudgingly, tumbling
forward over one another--
an intoxicated gait,
leaning into the music
and adding, perhaps
unknowingly,
to the droning tone
of the masses ahead

we all walked
in the midst of interests
so much greater than ours--

the Rainforest Action Network
needed signatures to
stop the destruction
in Sarawak and Sabah--
states in the far away
Malaysian haze.
I have not heard of the
Panan, Iban, or Kayan
people. I have not
seen their trees.
"should I sign my name?"

a holy crusader,
megaphone in hand,
wandered almost unnoticed--
bleating the beliefs of
a found sheep,
seeming not to wonder
"how can I be
ignored?" or
"can anyone be changed?"
certainly not by
high-volume monotonous
megaphone nonsense, but
I silently admired his
publicly personal preaching
truth

a slumping, dirty
beautiful black man
saxophone player blew
his hungry song,
nodding at passing
coin-droppers, but not
stopping his song, not
pausing to count money--
"should I sit with him
and listen? should I
ask his name?"

with all of this
in mind,
the asphalt passed
under my feet.
"concrete ground is
the most fertile,"
I thought, but
what of it?
my harvest feeds no one--
my coins are better
than my truth.