

OCTOBER 2011

REAL LIFE ROCK TOP TEN

A MONTHLY COLUMN
OF EVERYDAY CULTURE
AND FOUND OBJECTS

by Greil Marcus

"For years, Blakely has written what she calls 'duets' with Robert Johnson: her poems visiting his songs, his songs breathing in her poems. [In "Dead Shrimp Blues," with comment by Spaar], she has Tennessee Williams and Maggie from CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF cross paths with the blues singer in Clarksdale, Mississippi, so she can address him directly, circling around the imagery in one of at least two Johnson songs built around a metaphor for impotence. She writes like a window-peeper: 'I'll undress / Down to my humid white-girl slip.' Spaar follows the way Blakely's words curl around Johnson's until it can seem as if Johnson's are curling around hers; she rescues the phrase 'posted out' from the murk of Johnson's song so you can hear it crack in Blakely's."