

## Steve Deutsch

### Stan

He looked as if  
he'd never caught a break,  
worn through—in need of a shave  
and a shower  
and a hundred other things  
only money could buy.  
His lifeless eyes looked through me.  
The knife was real enough.

“Junkie,”  
I thought.

He recognized me first.  
“Potsy,” he said softly,  
using a nickname  
I hadn't heard in years.  
“Stan—Stan the man,”  
my voice rippled with relief.  
Stan held every record  
in high school track—  
it was a wonder  
to watch him run.  
He joined the Rangers  
right out of school—  
Nixon sent him to Nam.

He lowered the knife  
and there, on an unlit  
street corner in lower Manhattan,  
we shot the shit about the old days—  
of Brownsville and the guys.

We didn't pretend  
we'd stay in touch.  
To see him on his way  
I emptied my wallet  
and gave him thirty one dollars—  
it would help him  
do up once or twice.  
The twelve hundred bucks  
I earned in that night's poker game

stayed hidden in my shoes.

I hailed a cab on East Broadway,  
and had it take me  
the four blocks home.  
It wasn't until I  
climbed the stairs  
and flipped on the light  
that I began to shake.

**Steve Deutsch** lives with his wife Karen--a visual artist, in State College, PA. He writes poetry and the blog:[stevieslaw@wordpress.com](http://stevieslaw.wordpress.com). His recent publications have been in *Borfski Press*, *Streetlight Press*, *Gravel*, *Literary Heist*, *Nixes Mate Review*, *Third Wednesday*, *Misfit Magazine*, *Word Fountain*, *Eclectica Magazine*, *The Drabble*, and *The Ekphrastic Review*. In 2017, he was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His Chapbook, *Perhaps You Can*, will be published next year by Kelsay Press.