

The Beat Goes On

It could happen that you are
a child of the sixties and you hit it off
with an exotic singer with raven black hair to her waist
and you sing duets together that become so popular you get
your own TV show that thrusts you to super stardom and your lives
are lived in a fishbowl where things like
the odd name you choose for your daughter
become national fodder and it's reported
that you're having affairs and your wife is having affairs
and you break up amicably, lay low for a decade,
then reinvent yourself as a Reagan republican,
have a new family, run for mayor, run for congress
and surprising everyone, win, continue along
clean cut wearing modest suits and ties,
sporting short hair, and you are no longer considered
the Sonny half of "Sonny and Cher" and
haven't been for some time, you are just another
adequate minor conservative California congressman
then one day in 1998 you're out skiing in Tahoe
and no one knows what happens for sure, you may have
skidded on some ice, or gone too fast, or weren't
paying attention, and you slam head first into a tree
dying on the spot, and it could happen
that fifteen years later "The Beat Goes On" is playing
on the loudspeaker at the "Christmas Tree Shoppe"
in Sherwood Plaza, in Natick, Massachusetts
and a man could be walking aimlessly through the store
killing time a few minutes early to a meeting
and while he is walking past a display of Foofa pillows that
you can wrap on the back of your neck to sit comfortably
in an airplane or in a car he stops and listens
to you and Cher sing over that hypnotic, seductive bass
and he is not really sure of the physiology
of what makes a song so satisfying
but *drums keep pounding rhythm to the brain*
and he listens and starts thinking
about the incredible randomness of life
and how your life in particular represents
what is bizarre and wonderful about America
and he sees the pillows piled in the bin
in all different colors, and decides
if he were to buy one it would be orange.