Prince's Trombone Player Coughs up a Cat

Don't let the tiny man fool you.
Godless, he was godless in rehearsals.
One time he locked all of our car keys
in a safe and said, *No one is going home*

until the songs sound insane.
A backup singer—with him since
Dirty Mind—said it started in LA,
when they were booed opening

for the Rolling Stones. So
much for his trench coat and
pink bikini. I called him Scorpion
because his poison got into you,

you didn't know who you were
any more. You became uncivil
on your instrument, screwing it
for best notes. Him on guitar was

sorcery, revolutionary, the baddest
rock star in heels. But sometimes
stone cold. Act One tour, I missed
a high B during "The Flow."

Next day, *You're gonna play*
that solo right tonight? I said,
I'll do my best, and he said, *Uh,*
you did your best last night.

That night, he came up to me
with his golden gun microphone and
held it to my head. I miss him. He
jammed it right here. He left a mark.

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