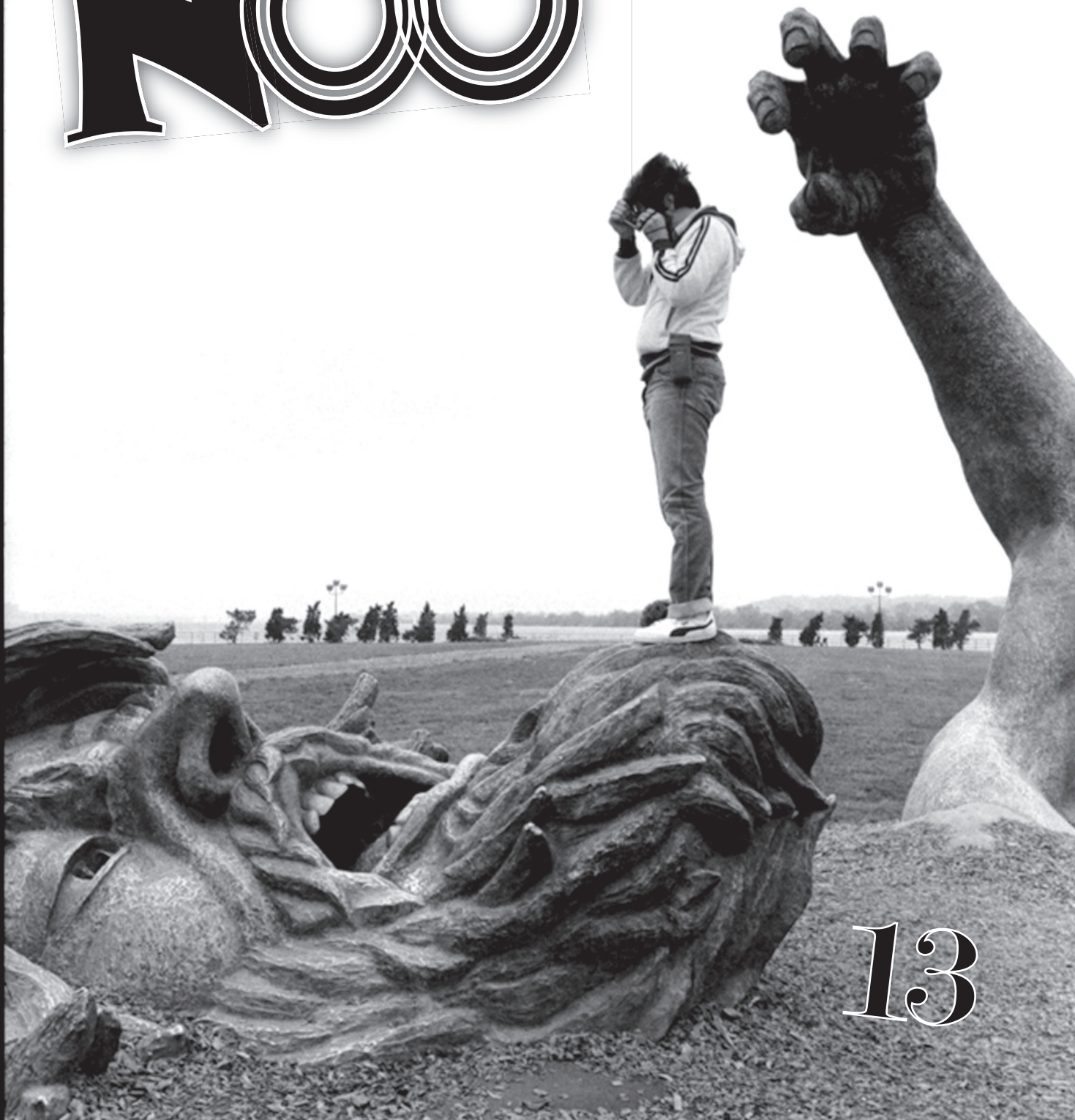


NOÖ



13

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Editor's Note



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PRETTY MUCH THE ONLY PEOPLE in Baltimore who don't talk to strangers are the statues of fish. Plus boring people, who never count. Once on the bus I was drinking a green smoothie, and the woman in the next seat asked if I was really crazy enough to go in for them green ones. Eventually we agreed that water is suspicious of sugar. Another time on the bus someone told me they were going to invent the next big chess app. Once at the Farmer's Market a farmer showed me a tree base he'd painted to look like an elephant's foot. He'd put a bracelet around the trunk. In India, he said, they do that to make the elephants pretty. He got so worked up he gave me free bread. On a different bus, a girl told the story of a fight: "I got her up in that corner where that ashtray at and I do my best to put her head in that ashtray." Note that I have only lived in Baltimore for like a month, but it's fun to use the word "once" the same way it's fun to live like mythology invented your life, like it's fun to pretend Pit Beef means you drop something into the pit and it ascends eventually with a beautiful sear. Like the whole industry was discovered one day by accident, by a clumsy and doom-faced cow. Things should be discovered, I'm saying, instead of invented.

NOO is six years old, and Baltimore is the fifth city I've lived in since we started. With this issue we are waving goodbye to Ryan Call, the most diligent co-editor an elephant's foot could ask for. Ryan is leaving to concentrate on teaching and family. Be sure to check out his book of gorgeous stories, *The Weather Stations*, out now from Caketrain. Let's all call Mr. Call and tell him how much he'll be missed. (And let's congratulate him on his recent \$50,000 Whiting Award!)

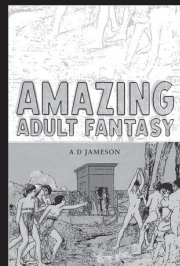
Missing is everywhere these days. My girlfriend is very far away: eight thousand miles. I wrote a song for her about all eight thousand. In the song are rats inside laundry rooms, cockroaches on ungraded essays. Other cameos include Old Bay and Skype's ornery reconnection strategies. One thing about the time is you can get pretty good at realizing the time in Thailand every time you go to read your own. Probably I'll move away from Baltimore, and when I visit I will try to figure out how late the bus is, and I'll think: "Oh, in Thailand it's 4AM. The sun's in shutdown mode. The TV is making ocean sounds."

I encourage you to pick a significant mileage in your life and sing a song about it. For example, Greg Gerke thought of Hawaiians with machine guns. Jen Gann thought of six fake boyfriends. Lauren Ireland wrote letter-poems to Lil Wayne while he was in jail. Bianca Stone decided Hampton Beach needed a little more Song of Solomon, and Steve Subrizi decided all beaches need a little more Buffalo Bill. These are just a few ways to deal with distance, time, discovery, love, and strangers that you'll find in **NOO** [13], which is our biggest issue ever. I think I was trying to build an issue that would float. Except now I think people will probably start reading this issue and forget all about the water underneath them. So please don't blame me. Direct all liability concerns at the amazing writers, poets, artists, and book presenters contained herein. They are so good you might drown is what I'm saying.

If you want to keep bobbing along, make sure to follow up your reading with a visit to www.noojournal.com for exclusive extra content, including expanded versions of Drew Kalbach's and Daniel D'Angelo's poem suites. While you're there, scope the latest editions of **NOO** Weekly, and make sure to check out www.magichelicopterpress.com for the news on Magic Helicopter's first ever novel: Ofelia Hunt's *Today & Tomorrow*, a hypnotic and hilarious adventure of identity melting, zambonis, grandfathers, boyfriends, and Bill Murray. *Nylon* called *Today & Tomorrow* "a disconcerting glimpse into the mind of a severely unhinged character." Sounds great, like the bus! The rest of my eight thousand mile song is sentimentality and world play, which is pretty much the rest of the world, right? Minus, I mean, the global economic inequality Beef Pit that most of us are broiling at the bottom of. Sometimes the best place to start your occupation movement is inside that skittish heart of yours, you know? **NOO** [13] knows. Once on the bus a driver was happy just to get off shift. He told the driver coming on he had some news for him. He said: "The back door don't work and a gentleman left a potato in his here seat."

NOO Presents

Reviews of independent literary projects



WHAT: *Amazing Adult Fantasy*

BY: AD Jameson

IS: Story collection

SAYS: Fiction may be the worst thing about the 21st century

FROM: Mutable Sound

AT: www.mutablesound.com

PRESENTED BY: Jonah Vorspan-Stein

AD JAMESON'S *Amazing Adult Fantasy* opens with a brief indictment: "Fiction may be the worst thing about the 21st century." The stories that follow—fabled, sardonic, sharp—venture to strip fiction of its conventions, substituting in their place a new narrative logic: one that brandishes an acute playfulness and grandiose sentiment, one of mustachios and infatuation, the most mature kind of absurdity. These are stories about obsessions and deficiencies, about people who glare every bit of themselves, who feel the world on its largest scales. In these stories, astronaut Buzz Aldwin falls into the bad graces of NASA, a girl shares her various and mutually exclusive truths about Oscar the Grouch, and Bronx monkeys devote themselves to preserving earth's aurora borealis. While these are certainly stories of insistent and shifting forms, they are also stories that always endeavor to a literary beauty.

Perhaps the most impressive condition of Jameson's writing is the fundamental inseparability of language from story. Sentences echo sentiment throughout a wide range of narrative forms. In "Indian Jones," the narrator manically spouts examples divulging a romanticism of the title character. The language, in mirroring the form, is hilariously, hyperbolically chatty: "Lavished in courtyard sunlight, secure in the company of his dog and his many statues, Indian Jones is God."

In another, equally funny story, "Rock Albany!" frames its protagonist in more sympathetic, modest terms, and the language flourishes with occasional

moments of lyricism: "About his head, the windswept melon chattered, and Rock knew that, rather than standing in a grove, he was perched on a cliff, below which glistened his beautiful new life." In both stories language is the engine by which the narrative is driven. Both stories contain sentences that made me put a hand in my pants, but when I did so it was never with that individual sentence in mind. Instead it was with the amalgam of sentences like it that animated the writing.

There are several things new about this book. Not the least evident of which is that these stories are at the same time fables and experimentally contemporary. There is a timeless quality to fables, a feeling that the emotional journey of the story will endure outside its characters, its author. It is the tendency of fables to not exist specifically in time or place and to avoid dropping fully into scene, presumably so as not to use inventory that grounds the story, which could thus confine it. AD Jameson breaks firmly from this convention. The stories here are hip and unambiguous, with shuttlecrafts, bootleg DVDs, and iconic character names. They are undeniably of a time: today's. Still, the narratives are so grand that they seem to rise above the characters and settings that harbor them.

It is this coexistence that gives birth to an entire style, featured occasionally here, wherein the story is presented as a cinematic synopsis of events. In a tone consistent with much of the book, Jameson delivers several marvelous and theatrical stories, but he delivers them with an even and at times deadpan attention to the simple facts of plot, as would a retelling of a movie or television show. There are stories where this style is explicit, and others where it is slight. In "Ota Benga Episode Guide: Season 3," Jameson tells a story by simply summarizing twenty episodes of a fictitious television show. Another story features seven reviews of invented movies. In this style, Jameson manages to combine a grand or timeless narrative with a self-referential humor. These stories bring out the hilarity of melodrama. By delivering events evenly, Jameson juxtaposes the conventions of commercial cinema with those of literary fiction. He makes fables out of satire, inventive stories out of honed, pitch-perfect wit. Conscious of its heritage and its time, of Barthelme, Edson, Bernheimer, and Bradley Sands, here are some of the most hilarious and imaginative stories in my recent memory.

WHAT: *The Mystery of the Hidden Driveway*

BY: Jennifer L. Knox

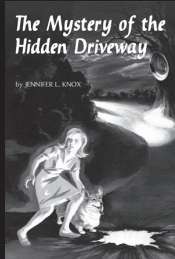
IS: Poetry collection

SAYS: Am I invoking catastrophe?

FROM: Bloof Books

AT: www.bloofbooks.com

PRESENTED BY: Nate Logan



WHEN YOU READ Jennifer L. Knox's third book, *The Mystery of the Hidden Driveway*, you should not be ingesting something you could choke on. It is also probably a good idea to have a poetry lover or poetry skeptic close, because you will want to read these poems aloud. These poems will convert the poetry haters in your life.

Much like in *A Gringo Like Me* and *Drunk by Noon*, poems in Knox's latest book still spring from almost completely goofy situations: Gene Kelly sings to a cow, a crocodile is raised as a pet, a Burt Reynolds FAQ is available. This book again proves that Knox comes up with some of the best titles for poems: "Anomalies of the Female Reproductive System," "Beloved Canadian Sandwiches," "The Earth Is Flat and So's My Ass." The rich detail that Knox is known for is again present. The first two sentences of the prose poem "Don Ho's Funeral" are testament to this:

Between sighing deep, nostalgic wahs of aftersex, the steel guitars oingy-woinged and lolled around the altar torches. Seventy-six round-armed, caramel-colored beauties stood beside seventy-six lifesized photographs—one for every year of his lei-draped life.

Details are part of what makes people want to share Knox's work with anyone who will listen. The most noticeable difference in *The Mystery of the Hidden Driveway*, compared to Knox's other books, is that there is a distinct

thread of seriousness woven throughout. This comes through most prominently in the book's second section, a long poem broken up into blocks of prose called "Cars":

Coming around the bottom of Quartz Hill Mountain Road drunk oh Halloween night, I took a sharp turn way too fast, skidded on the sand, jerked the wheel too hard and hit a telephone pole.

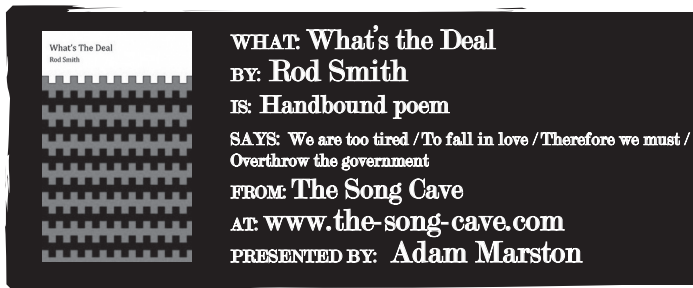
Car catastrophes of all sorts take place in this long poem, which revolves both around the young speaker's interactions with cars and her father. The character of Father appears in many poems throughout the book, often in a haunting fashion. "Yellow Traces" is one of the best examples of this:

Red for cars, yellow for a lady's dress, said Dad
on one of our long drives when I asked his favorite color,
I didn't know you could have more than one.

A good story: Once stopped for gas on Laurel Canyon,
Steve McQueen pulled up on the other side of the pump
in the same Porsche. Dad's was red, Steve's was yellow.

Mom never wore yellow, nor would the new wife
who writes: Yesterday he saw three kids in yellow
swimsuits playing in the backyard who weren't there.

This turn toward the more "overtly serious" is a successful one. The more serious poems in *The Mystery of the Hidden Driveway* do not come off as forced or hokey. They integrate into the book very well and provide a definite tonal variety, which was more sparse in Knox's previous collections. And this seriousness ties into at least one of Knox's themes: catastrophe. Like in *A Gringo Like Me* and *Drunk by Noon*, the catastrophes of American life are examined in Knox's work. While Knox's humor makes it easy for us to laugh, there's also the recognition that we too are in this world. We cause / invoke / suffer through our own catastrophes, and Knox gives voice to that for us. From one catastrophe invoker to another, thank you, Jennifer.



LET'S TALK about Paul Newman. No, wait, let's talk about Rod Smith for a sec: Flarf, beer, soccer, the U.S. Postal Service, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, John Cage & chess, Bridge Street Books, Washington D.C., Aerial, *What's The Deal*. There we are. Published by The Song Cave, Smith's *What's The Deal* is a genuinely hilarious book, but also austere and politically assertive. Like most Flarf-work, it has to do with our language on the Internet, which means it has to do with our lives off the Internet. *What's The Deal* is a lot funnier than this review mostly talks about, but I think that humor is what should surprise and interest readers the most. Back to Paul for a sec:

but really
 What's the deal with Newman's Own?
 I don't have any personal vendetta against the
 academy award winning philanthropist

but I could

Wiki Paul Newman and you will validate and participate in this book's concept about how we understand referencing. What's the deal with accessibility? The man with the movie face is also the lemonade face, whose food company has raised over 300 million dollars for charity. Paul Newman wore a lot of hats before the Internet took root, and the Internet wears the biggest hats of our contemporary social structures, including celebrityism. Not only do we find things instantly on the web, we speculate our potential judgements about them just as quickly. Rod Smith suggests an ambivalence about the ability to make judgements about our relationship with abundantly accessible information while simultaneously implicating that ambivalence as a part of the information being judged. Strongly relating "audience" and "writer" into one participant observer, *What's The Deal* constructs sincere collections of perhaps "normally" unconnected textual and emotional circumstances into collage-like, aesthetic conversations:



IHAD A VERY personal reaction to Brad Liening's chapbook *We Are Doomed: Dispatches from the City of the Future*. I, too, have been writing dispatches from the future, since early 2010, and was deluded enough to think that I was the only poet doing this kind of time travel. (I was wrong.) But while my dispatches are from a future in which we get a chance to build a civilization from scratch, Liening's future just looks like a scarier version of our present. If his visions are correct, we are definitely doomed.

These poems come from our shared experience: waiting in long lines, watching a lot of TV, "cheap beers late at night / in the public park." Liening's twenty-first century dialect ("Shit yes, we put product in our hair") is a good

SO

To rescue the deal, Ms. Fiorina
 and her company must win the backing of major
 (check with her exactly how pregnant she is)
 Like all good parents, I mindlessly pass on
 cultural traditions but
 What's the Deal With Bee Venom Therapy?

Compare Gifts.

Part of Smith's technique involves aggregating the various situations as cohesive, conflicted units. These conflicts are about natural and necessary ignorance versus the recorded (as both the WWW and text are forms of record keeping) and emotionally (and textually) isolated observations that arise in giving and receiving information of any kind ("Compare Gifts").

Normally my mother-in-law, who volunteers at a food
 bank that gets (literally) tons of understood things asks
 What's the Deal With Bacon? Offer your insight as you
 drive around in your car. This is the place for just about
 any off topic under the sun.

A bitter angry hateful man
 can't build a credible economic justificationer

While questioning the place of poetry among of our current ethical attitudes about information identity, it seems to me that Smith introduces a mock-George W. Bush, calling back to the former president's notorious syntactic innovations. In the above quotation, Rod Smith seems to merge the speaker in the book with Bush's own dialect, terrifyingly. The book also reads as commentary on the state of its poetic form: if poetry is inherently political because it is socially expressive, and if the book's Internet syntax is composed of language influenced by anyone with a keyboard—including incompetent political leaders—how are we, who write on the Internet, not casually (and causally) implicated in a kind of ironic panopticism regarding our country's media identity? I can (perhaps too strongly?) read it as: If the technology of our communication is more evolved than what we know to express with it, how are we supposed to ethically comprehend which parts of the global information evolution impact a potentially necessary American economic/social revolution? Something else Rod Smith, from his book *Deed*:

We work too hard
 We are too tired
 To fall in love
 Therefore we must
 Overthrow the government

hook for the metrophobic, but it also works as a disguise for just how well-crafted his poetry is. He's a master of subtle and slant rhyme (see "dry rot" paired with "doo-wop"), and his couplets are forcibly contained outbursts, or laments:

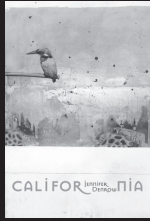
In the morning, blood be-speckling the shower curtain,
 the banana on the counter turning blacker,

blossoms shaking like tiny misshapen fists on the tree
 pressing against the window: so many things beg

for interpretation our attention is fractured, refracted,
 redistributed so often that by the end of the day

it's hard to tell what we're supposed to love.

We Are Doomed is the first book from InDigest Editions, the print publishing arm of *InDigest Magazine*, which appears online in a smart, timely fashion. I hope they do more books. As for their first, I would recommend it to anyone who suffers from the tedium of first-world problems, or the frustrations of inertia, to anyone who is "perpetually late for the bus that's perpetually early."



WHAT: *California*
BY: Jennifer Denrow
IS: Poems with a destination
SAYS: I don't feel like I'm crazy. I just feel like someone who wants to go to California.
FROM: Four Way Books
AT: www.fourwaybooks.com
PRESENTED BY: Leigh Stein

JENNIFER DENROW'S *California* is a tragicomedy in three acts. Act One: A woman wants to go to California. She can't. She has to. She doesn't know what else to do. In a series of prose poems that have the introspection of soliloquy, Denrow elucidates the anxiety of wanting to get away from yourself. The drama's in the urgency, coupled with a crippling indecisiveness:

I shouldn't go to California then.
 No one can be alive there.
 The store windows are just so the owners think people are alive.
 I've never even wanted to go to California before.
 I should leave now.

In "California," time stands still, except in the narrator's mind, where it moves towards a future. As in a Beckett play, there is a lot of waiting around, but the waiting is interrupted by quotidian adventures:

I go to the store.
 I buy California style pizza and beer. I drop my ID when the woman asks to see it.
 No one in the store looks like they could be from California.

California is Denrow's Godot, but instead of waiting for it to come, the poem's speaker is waiting for the opportunity to go in its direction. "I need to arrive at something," she says. When her husband tells her she's crazy, she tells us, "I don't feel like I'm crazy. I just feel like someone who wants to go to California." She is funny in the deadpan way that very depressed people can be

funny, as if their jokes are a reason to keep living.

Act Two: the play's the thing. The houselights are off on opening night. The actress breaks character. Even the police are in costume: "When you showed someone your badge, / they said it wasn't real and unclipped it." Disappointingly, the poems in this section lack the pitch-perfect voice of the first act's heroine, but the sense of isolation carries through. Small interior moments ("You put your thumb in front of your eye. / This is the world now.") alternate with visions of the sky, an obsession that rivals Mellarmé's. (In Act Two, the word appears eleven times.) But, "don't worry. / If you're not fond / of the sky, there isn't one," Denrow tells us, in a poem that remixes its title from the setting of *Waiting for Godot*: "A country road. A tree. Evening" becomes "Contacted Tree. Empty Road. Waited Evening." Maybe it's a note left behind by someone on their way to California.

Act Three: an epistolary between real-life ventriloquist Edgar Bergen and his dummy Charlie. If acts one and two have been waiting games, act three is when the curtains finally open and the show begins. The book's longest section, "A Knee for a Life," is a dialogue between a man who throws his voice and a dummy with a life of his own. "Don't let them take me to a museum," Charlie begs. "I can't breathe thinking of it." Edgar awkwardly tries to comfort him ("Fear is like anything else; even in the morning it comes"), but Charlie has the mercurial personality of a teenager, and won't be placated:

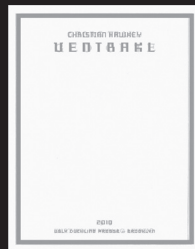
I'm a man now, yet you treat me like a child. Just take me back to my room. Or don't. I could do the act alone; it's me they love. You're just a salesman, an impossible weight, and every time you touch me you give me a fever. I quit.

Whether monologue or dialogue, Denrow is at her best when her language mirrors speech. The subject of ventriloquism offers her the opportunity to exploit speech even further, through a tutorial:

You're allowed to move your lips. I will teach you to become human:
 Try: Thursday.
 Try: I like land, when land lakes itself around lambs.
 Try: I love you even though your back is flesh.

As a collection, *California* is a performance piece that showcases the virtuosity of its creator. In each act, Denrow's the ventriloquist, throwing her voice so that she can stand still.

WHAT: *Ventrakal*
BY: Christian Hawkey
IS: Collaborative
SAYS: A private act in a public space
FROM: Ugly Duckling Presse
AT: www.uglyducklingpresse.org
PRESENTED BY: Ella Longpre



A TRANSLATION: a physical transition, in which a poem is submerged in a jar of liquid. Left to break apart over time, the poem rises to the top in bits of soggy paper spelling out cross-sections of stanzas and meter-crumbs, which the translator then skims, scooping the poem out of the poet's preferred language (water) and laying it out to dry.

Or, a translation: holding up word after word against another word until the outlines eclipse the lamp behind them.

Translating: excerpting colorful lines from a life's work and squeezing them out onto a red plate, a blue plate, a yellow plate.

Translate: a poet's final poem directly from the German but substitute the English word "alters" for "altars."

Following Christian Hawkey's *Citizen Of* (vulnerable, violent, scummy poems that evolve like two equations reconciling each other), *Ventrakal* quietly obsesses over translating the life and poems of wretched Austrian Georg Trakl (1887-1914). Hawkey moves between both (life and poems) throughout, pacing from room to room with a bent head, reverential, embarrassed, not sure where to stand.

The translator remains present throughout the collection, offering fragments and almost-recognizable Trakl shapes—a picture of a picture of a picture of a line, a word-sound, a broken quatrain—sitting at the edge of the ghost-poet's lines, pulling at his sleeve, demanding a conversation. On some italicized pages, Hawkey faces Trakl across a desk in an empty room as they collaborate, trying to draw a word or a nod from the ghost-poet's brow.

Following the mention of a key rupture in the historic realm of the poet, which has clearly troubled the obsessive murk at the bottom of the translator's belly: 1) Blank pages. 2) Then, incomplete sentences hovering on white, one phrase per page, as if both the ghost and the translator are murmuring under heavy breaths, whispering through the shock in the form of single lines aspirated onto fourteen otherwise empty pages. "A side room. /// A private act in a public space. /// ...And the space there. A room. /// Already they were translating." The "they": the translator and the ghost, having collapsed time, both coexisting with the past, and perpetually working out the inevitability of this loss.

The translator's conscious decision to remain in the realm of reader, of dream-boyfriend or confidant (to use Hawkey's own words) "indicates trauma, the inability to move on, move forward, make a choice, step." He chooses not to step, but stand on one foot and slide the other back and forth over a floorboard as he waits to speak. Still, holding out his hand he offers a glass.



WHAT: *Hunters & Gamblers*

BY: Ryan Ridge

IS: Book of stories

SAYS: The best of times, the Patty Hearst of times

FROM: Dark Sky Books

AT: www.darkskybooks.com

PRESENTED BY: Mike Young

SOMEONE KEEPS their gun on you but also says “Keep talking.” You’ve seen this in a movie or nine. The lesson is: talk can keep you around. Usually just for info, but sometimes because your aggressor can’t figure out that nickname you gave him. If you do it right, you can razz your bully to death. However, shit gets a little trickier when the bully is America. And you’re just Joe Six Shooter trying to tough it out with cocky jokes. Hence the plight and beauty of Ryan Ridge’s gum-smacking debut story collection *Hunters & Gamblers*.

In these stories—which range from quips to Q&As to a Blue Period to a novella—we find Ridge assembling a large cast. Not just hunters and gamblers but butchers and paratroopers, victims of divorce and evacuation. They buy Cormac McCarthy’s old boots on eBay. They play the Star Spangled Banner on kazoos. All are denizens of what the narrator in “Turbulence” refers to as “the best of times, the Patty Hearst of times ... an epoch of epic boners.” Ridge’s people have “lost nearly everything, yet somehow managed to gain weight.” They’re shucksters or shruggers, depending on the moment and momentum. They hustle and josh and talk back to each other and to the reader. They also try to talk back to their conditions, with limited success. These conditions include gun running, student loans, and shitty centaur mascot jobs in megachurches. One Ridge narrator sums thusly: “Things continued breaking: hearts, mirrors, news, and of course the lumberjacks kept breakdancing with the wolves.”

Ridge is a frantically inventive writer, fond of sentences like “Dad was strange ever since being tazered in the bread line.” Occasionally all the breakneck riffing doesn’t give the intelligence and bittersweetness time to shine, but sometimes that refusal to linger is exactly what pays off. “Tomahawk

Cuts Rain,” which echoes the great Hob Broun, is a fragmented reconsideration of the American Revolution that leaves room for contemporary Halloween costumes and Mohawk Bingo Parlors. Its voice is sure and fast and makes dazzling leaps. Ridge is well on his way to mastering a Grace Paley like ability to nail big ideas and complicated people in single zingers.

Some of his best moments, though, come when he lugs out the slow camera. In “After Fall,” suburban America has gone post-apocalyptic, vaguely martial law-ish, and authorities flood cities with gas:

It came down chimneys and up through floors, through the cracks in the boarded windows. The fumes repelled most of us; made some of us nervous and dizzy; made some of us retch and scratch, a lot of us. It made some—the hilarious ones—laugh out loud. It made Melanie McDonald hornier than a devil at a bullfight. We got used to it, continued.

This blend of the broad and specific, and the fine-eared manipulation of cadence, is *Hunters & Gamblers* in top form. In “Heavy Handed,” two brothers—named by their facial hair—find an Indian burial ground and argue about it. Later, kids find the body of the mustached brother:

Above it they found seven arrowheads, which formed a perfect halo around its head, and above the arrowheads they found an empty pistol. It was frozen, which made it feel even heavier in their small hands, as they passed it back and forth, pretending to kill one other.

Careful moments like these show that Ridge’s gab-gift allows for more than talking back to the strange wasteland. It also allows him to talk that wasteland forward. In the end, *Hunters & Gamblers* is a riot, but it’s also a sincere record. Ridge testifies for the “sand-less sand traps” and “abandoned hot dog factories” and “anonymous graveyards” and “blind veterans selling light bulbs and TV guide subscriptions.” His is a crippled clutter brought to glow again and again with the perfect word, the poignant spit take. Maybe this collection might feel a little over-cafeinated for more stately attention spans, but such is the energy of the honest juke artist. Story-by-story and sentence-by-sentence, *Hunters & Gamblers* reveals a truth-teller with a silver tongue. If America the bully needs to get loogied at, Ryan Ridge is the man for the hock.

WHAT: *Omegachurch*

BY: Dan Hoy

IS: Poetry chapbook

SAYS: Just one of 4,500 bodies filling the pews

FROM: Solar Luxuriance

AT: www.solarluxuriance.com

PRESENTED BY: Chris Moran



SO MEGACHURCHES are like these bombastic monuments of disowned and enslaved minds. A megachurch is basically ritual worship as stadium rock. This is an event akin to a Kiss concert, which is hilarious and terrifying because enlightenment cannot be entertainment, though from a personal perspective it appears as the ultimate attainment. It transcends all attaining. Dan Hoy’s *Omegachurch* blends the language of science fiction with transhuman eroticism, religious fervor and a sly cyberpunk sensibility to show a post-singularity world, the cosmic omega point where consciousness is fused with autonomous post-human intelligence. This is a world of microchips, transhuman sexuality, video screens and wormholes.

“Megachurch” brings to mind the erotic limitations of Mormonism, a religion whose members have sworn off all drugs, including alcohol and caffeine. Mormons typically marry while still teens. The unnamed speaker recounts, “I’m sandwiched between my mom and sister Bethany as per usual / and all I can think of is Elliot Fisher, my hopefully future and forever bf, / just one of 4,500 bodies filling the pews.” Adolescent sexuality mixes with the unreality of reality. The speaker texts her friends in church and recounts that one time she rejected a suitor “even though we shared an extra-sensory connection and enhanced / cognitive abilities due to the in vitro modifications made to our DNA.” The adolescent speaker matter-of-factly recounts her in-vitro fertilization, a slightly menacing variation on the Virgin Mary’s “immaculate conception.” “Megachurch” is religion mixed with science fiction, where we are “all of us spliced together and projected out onto a single massive screen / hanging over the stage like a sheet of stained glass.”

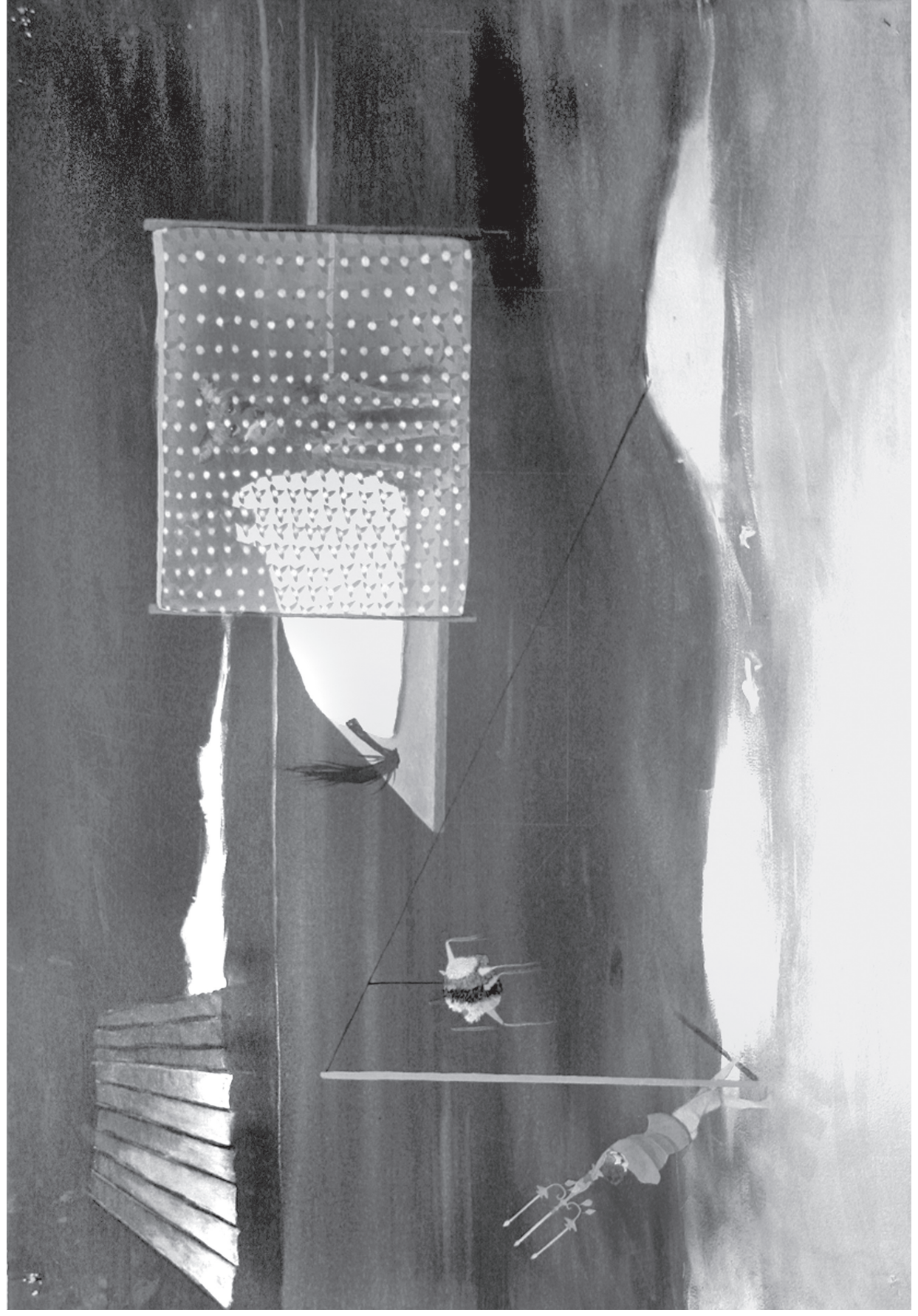
Following “Megachurch” is the second and final section of *Omegachurch*, The Godbots. Godbots are those who have ascended through the galactic caste system that seems to be based on intelligence or sexual desirability. The Godbots are basically fragmented god forms who “contort the impossible into being.” These are shards of the demiurge, the intergalactic patriarch obsessed with petty displays of power and prone to pathological outbursts of jealousy and rage. The demiurge is forever “testing” his children and inventing new rules and stipulations that allow Him to inflict greater and more barbarous forms of punishment. This is a predatory universe that *Omegachurch* unveils. Gods are vicariously experiencing our suffering and delight as we’re thrown into the crucible. This is the Old Testament mixed with the distant future, and it encapsulates a perception that is both futuristic, or speculative, and hopelessly dated, which is awesome.

The characters that populate Hoy’s *Omegachurch* live under the demiurge, a lawmaker and fence-builder. As demiurge, Jehovah is not a creator, merely an organizer. A god who has perverted his own function and made us slaves to belief. It’s important to note that Jehovah, like any transhuman entity, cannot be seen as “evil” in this regard, only as unqualified for the omnipotence granted Him. Enlightenment is the ultimate form of pain relief. Our pain comes from mostly trying to avoid pain, until we “contort the impossible” and fragment and the fragment fragments ad infinitum. These ghost people that are like shadow people stuck like in a spider’s web and bleeding into reality’s grid. They are as powerless as those Nostromo passengers cocooned up by the alien in order to be used as a host or vessel for more alien-demon entities to be birthed.

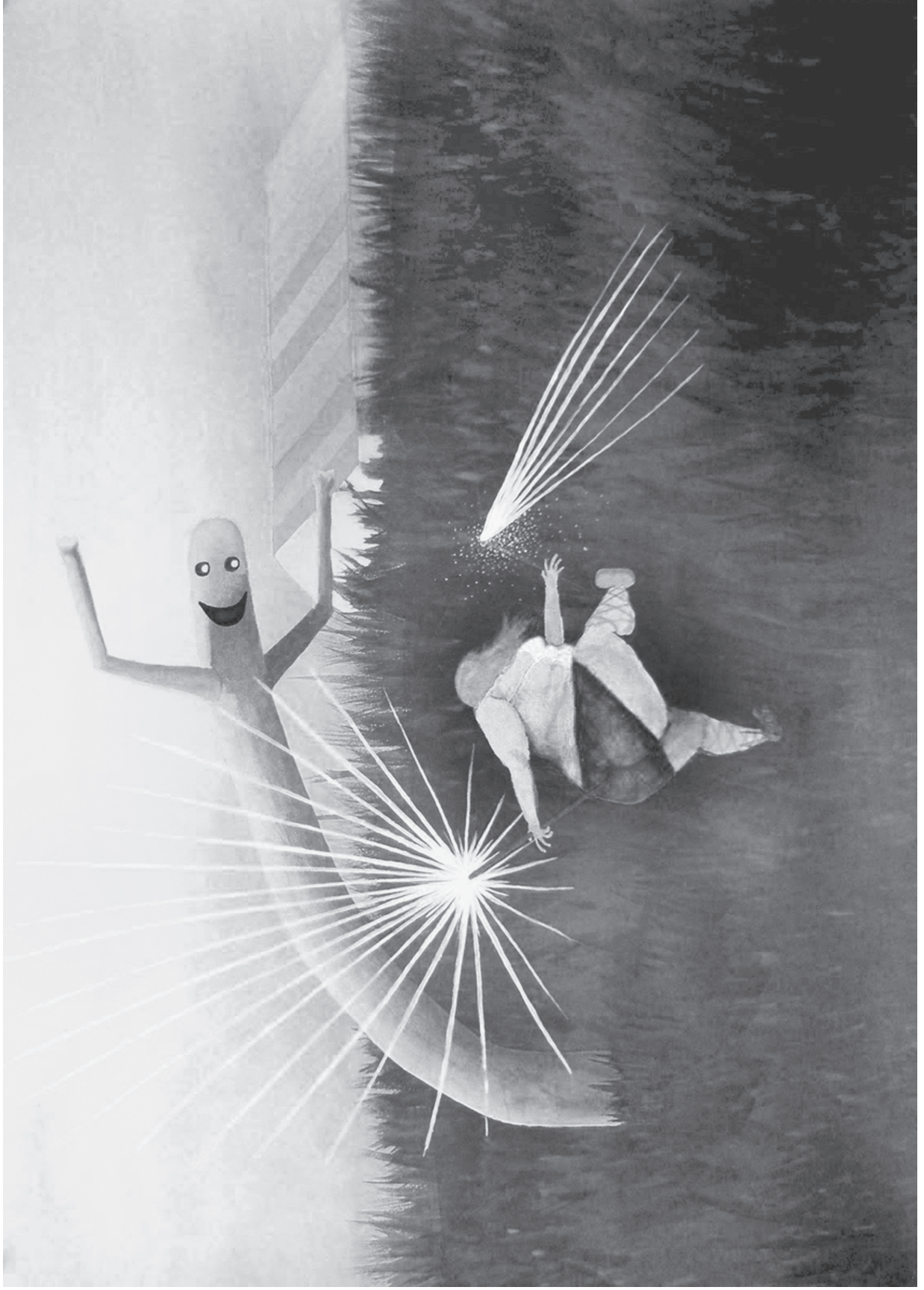
Hoy is no longer in thrall to the corpse of reality, the great psychic cauldron from which the Godbots or other transhuman entities siphon their power. Hoy’s poetry in *Omegachurch* is distinctly cinematic and seems to owe more to science fiction movies of the past thirty years than it does contemporary poetry. This poetry is also full of paranoid awareness. Paranoid awareness is the unshakeable feeling that personal identity is impossible, consensus reality is a hoax, and the future cannot help us. Despite the countless technological innovations the human race is still collectively ensnared by an aura of doom, secretly awaiting an alien invasion or an asteroid strike just to see what comes after that. The cover image of *Omegachurch* is asteroid 433 Eros. Like the poems in this collection, it is otherworldly and massive.

Trickster

Lauren Cohen



Dance Off



PSYCHOGENIC POLYDIPSIC

Jamie Iredell

THIS FREAK can be found holding up bars whilst sitting atop his barstool. Or these may be horses confined to their pens without Nintendo, and so their boredom is intolerable. Either way the results are the same: the fluids consumed outweigh typical jello-filled bathtubs. And we mean old bathtubs, the kind with animal claws for feet. Worried of your own propensity toward beverages? Among questions to ask the psychogenic polydipsic: Have you been indulging in a profusion of burritos or Russian salads? Have you been skipping rope in the immediate vicinity of active volcanoes? Have you found yourself pissing down the length of telephone poles? In most cases, polydipsics are mathematicians in Hollywood films, and so you shouldn't worry. True psychogenic polydipsics suffer from middle-finger-out-the-window-of-their-Mercedes syndrome, and the left armpits of their undershirts are stained yellow. Just the same, keep an eye on your horse.



"Figure 21.9" Michelle Burchard: Life & Health (Communication Research Machines 1972)

:: missed connections ::

Wendy Breuer

:: CLAYBURG EAGLE ::

6/10/09 — To Waterworks woman: You were doing laundry. You—woman; me—man. Monday evening. May have stared, but not negative. You were wearing shorts showing tanned legs, your feet sexy in flip-flops. Were gone before I could talk to you. Let's meet next Monday. Let's do laundry again.

6/17/09 — Waterworks woman: You were there again Monday. Didn't talk to me. Sorry—guess I came on too strong. Maybe didn't see ad, maybe good thing. You were with your little girl this time. Kid ran up and down with the baskets. Lucky place was empty. Was late for her to be up. Guess didn't have sitter. I think we were in homeroom together in 9th. You've changed a lot. Gotten real pretty.

6/24/09 — To W.W.: Heard you were in Iraq. I did two tours. I know what the guys were like. Hope none hit on you with unfriendly fire. Were you recruited by Sgt. McRipoff, too? Guy was relentless. Started on me junior year. Bet he didn't you tell how it really was for girls. You'd feel safe with me way I am now.

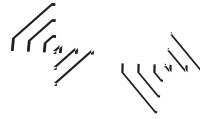
7/1/09 — To W.W.: Were writing in journal. I wasn't sure—maybe tears. Wasn't spying, honest. You stepped out for cigarette and beer. I rolled out, too, lit up. The moon looked close, like we were in it. You kept eyes on street. Empty. Wordless. Moonlight over Franklin Mall, burnt down. Grass coming through parking lot cracks. Windsong Motel boarded up. Old quarry a bombsite. Watched clothes go round for hour, yours, mine, separate machines. Lonely clothes. Damned dryer stole two socks. Talk to me.

7/8/09 — W.W.: Why'd we come back here? Dad took me in. His voice comes out of my mouth. Second generation Vet. Bitter. Go to Waterworks Mondays because empty, just some college kids. Sunday afternoon, all couples, married, shacking. Don't talk to each other much, just stand and sort, tees, knickers, his, hers, fold sheets together. Buy their own Maytags, soon. Won't fold together anymore. Don't take this wrong—easier together. I could fold you safely in.

7/15/09 — W.W.: Didn't see you Monday. Avoiding me? Don't have to. They had TV on this time. Loud. Hate that. Noise and colors made me nauseous, but kept watching. Seen it before. SpongeBob and Patrick adopted baby oyster. SpongeBob ended up being wife and Patrick, the husband. Didn't work out. Was stupid but made me sad. Just want to be friends. Maybe could tell me what happened over there. Something happened. You should talk about it.

7/22/09 — W.W.: Where do you go, now, Suds and Duds? At VA, they said to reach out. I reached for you. Guess you're in own hell. I wouldn't understand. You should talk to some women. Suds and Duds filthy. Come back to Waterworks; cleaner, has giant new dryers. Have it all to yourself. Won't bother you anymore. Me? Don't worry—I'll be doing my laundry on the moon.

friend page



Adam Moorad

Jason (Charlotte, NC)

YOU'RE PLAYING bongo drums. You're playing piano. This is how you spend your free time. Your entire life is Saturday afternoon. I want to come over. I want some piano. I'll listen to anything, but I need something to hear.

Whootie (Creighton/Indianapolis, IN)

Indianapolis is cold. Indianapolis is my least favorite place in North America. In Indianapolis, you're watching football with old people. You're eating food with old people. You're drinking beer with old people. You've become an old person in every way. Your body hates you. You limp from pieces of furniture to other pieces of furniture. Your joints creak like antiques.

Margaret #1 (Tulsa, OK)

Sell me your clothing. Sell them to me for super cheap. I will call you on the telephone and tell you I'm coming over. I will make piles of garments. I will heap them on your bed. I will crawl into these piles with my mouth wide-open. I will chew your jumpers, your leathers, your pantyhose. I will swallow your socks and the microscopic parts of you still stuck inside them. When I'm finished, I will look at you and ask if we can do this again.

Christian (University of Florida/San Francisco, CA)

You're in a swamp. You're a bartender. You want to start a t-shirt company. You're depressing. You're thirty. You think about Winters. You think about her constantly. You dropped out of college. You did this for her. You never understood her. You never understood marine biology.

Ravi (Bloomberg)

You think Kenya makes you unique. You never answer your phone. There are things you think incorrectly, but it's not your fault. Your hands are snakes. Your fingers are snake fangs. You started gelling your hair. You walk around barefoot. I understand these things.

Elliot (Portland, OR)

You play guitar in a band. Your brother had a testicle removed. We call him Lance Armstrong. You gave me your ADD medication as a birthday present one year. You know a lot of Civil War history. Your girlfriend is a nutritionist. You are never angry. Overall, I trust you.

Carol (Birmingham, AL)

You want to be a country music singer. You have a benign tumor behind your shoulder blade. You think everyone in New York City has AIDS. You think your scale is broken when you gain weight. You're a disproportionate Disney sketch. There is nothing I can say or do to help you.

CHOPSTICKS

from *Conversations over Stolen Food*

We recorded forty-five-minute conversations for thirty straight days around New York City. Half these talks took place at a Union Square health-food store which, for legal reasons, we call "W.F." Other locations included MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Opera House, Central Park, Prospect Park, and a Tribeca parking garage. Here is a W.F. conversation.

5:20 p.m. Sunday, January 29
Union Square W.F.

J: ...break my neck slipping on that coffee puddle.

A: It looks like pomegranate juice. As you approached, plastic bottles crashed and caused a a ripple effect through the dining-area. Rolling off...

J: Did you get stuck in the downpour or take a train?

A: I walked. I'd left without my subway pass, so on the trip home I'll pay double. The thirty-day...

J: No no...

A: pass has not expired.

J: you couldn't—I so seldom ride subways now and can swipe you through on my card.

A: [*Muffled*] jail if caught? Already we both face a summons.

J: Right. The other night I reminded you of our court date February 16th. It would help if you remind me a week from now.

A: Still...

J: Swiping you through might break a law.

A: Could we give each other five at a turnstile? Or is that the most obvious move they've...

J: Oh you'd hand my card back that way?

A: Correct.

J: I don't think it's obvious. I didn't catch on immediately, though police might have seen the trick before.

Jon Cotner & Andy Fitch



A: Have you caught on that um café staff put no sleeves on our hot-water cups? They refuse to waste cardboard on a couple cheapos.

J: Well I bring back cups prepared two ways, either two paper cups, or one cup with a sleeve.

A: We'd never...

J: I'm afraid I hurt my spine...

A: Does it...

J: slipping on that coffee puddle.

A: Do you sense tightening vertebrae?

J: My vertebrae feel crooked.

A: I drank two beers last night, even smoked a cigarette, and tend to find myself in this same low-pressure system, I mean weather now, afternoons following a couple drinks. [*Pause*] More slips all over the place.

J: But nobody else has fallen.

A: Yeah today's crowd seems agile. Just so you know: those noises you make get registered by a flicker in people's eyes. Perhaps not their consciousness. Some pupils pulse—the way lamps dim or brighten as...

J: I share this bench with others, who probably feel the vibrations I've sent out. So I'll I found a clothing store for babies down the block. I'd wanted to buy my nephew a gift but the cheapest t-shirt cost forty dollars.

A: Few kids that age need clothing. The market's not yet big enough.

J: Right, I left that store and headed to Houston, then got caught with girls on a traffic island as cars roared past. Can you picture a traffic island? I didn't know what exact phrase...

A: Sure.

J: One girl said How romantic, we're stranded on an island. I laughed and we shot it around a bit. Then I jumped into the intersection (our sign said Don't Walk but with no cars coming) and said Please cross; I'll stop this

traffic. The shorter girl smiled and called out Chivalry hasn't died. I learned that move from Kenneth Koch.

A: Women look three-fourths covered today. One took off her flats to walk barefoot through rain, acting as if her shoes hurt...

J: Hmm.

A: and a Midwestern girl downstairs wore shorts. Remember puffy pale legs we grew up with?

J: When you said pale puffy legs I pictured field-hockey practice at Visitation High School, in St. Louis. I dated a Visitation girl six months and never kissed her.

A: Your fault or hers?

J: [*Muffled*] she would start things.

A: Same for me.

J: I couldn't cross that threshold. I'd never seen my parents kiss. Though in my mind we had sensual...

A: Yeah I got um criticized for my first kiss. The person called me a slobberer. I found out through a male friend who had heard from several female friends. I don't know if I'd slobber now, yet very much try not...

J: Did you...

A: which may feel even more gross.

J: kiss that girl again?

A: The slobber happened in sixth grade. We kissed in eighth but I moved on fast...you know went and punched a friend or something.

J: Did you relive that kiss two solid years?

A: Soon I kissed another girl, and became the the subject of rumors I had animalistic tendencies, which of course shoved my real anim—now you'd mentioned a romantic moment last night.

J: I met this botanist at Luke and Leroy's. Stephen and I walked there and danced together on the crowded floor. He bought an Amstel Light we split.

A: That's Steph...

J: Yeah, we both felt generous. Then Stephen suggested a different club. He'd offered to pay my cover charge at an 18+ gay night down the street.

A: Do eighteen-year-olds prefer these places? Or did most guys look our our age and older?

J: Stephen expected college students...

A: Right.

J: and that's...he'd hoped to meet a college boy last night. So we prepared to leave Luke and Leroy's. But as I put on my jacket a pretty girl entered the coat-check line. I slid up behind her as though I'd intended to check something, then made a casual remark, saying [*Cough*] looked more crowded this month. At the end of that talk she said Come upstairs and dance with me.

A: [*Muffled*] have filled the air. Three couples made out across tables tonight.

J: Where?

A: One included this guy in white wrestling sneakers—playing with his phone.

J: Will you cook Kristin dinner tonight?

A: Well I'll combine (it's a boring meal) W.F. tortellini and free-range chicken breasts, organic broccoli and tomato sauce, also parmesan. Kristin will arrange a mixed-greens salad. We probably can't call that cooking dinner.

J: What is so boring...

A: Kristin's become versatile with frozen produce: blueberries, for...

J: So even as a nutritionist Kristin believes frozen blueberries contain...

A: Yes, and cost...

J: They're significantly cheaper.

A: Sorry about this pajama top.

J: It looks stretched out. You must toss and turn...

A: I'll...

J: in that blue corduroy shirt.

A: wake with blanket parts caught beneath my body.

J: The shirt looks cozy. But the last time I dry-cleaned was Boston...

A: A suit's shirt?

J: six years ago. No a V-neck sweater. And you'll—I hadn't planned to dry-clean, but you said it would make me feel good.

A: Did the...

J: Absolutely.

A: Maybe I should start again. I always liked Anton's Cleaners in Boston, where Mass Ave. curves near the MFA...

J: Yes.

A: in that modernist building with a W.F. behind it. The shop had a blue-and-green-striped icon.

J: This icon appeared on hangers...

A: Right.

J: when you'd pick up laundered clothes.

A: So so I should go for...

J: Perhaps we could let ourselves back into Sharon's studio and borrow her generic Woolite. This shirt now feels much softer.

A: Not too soft? I've had from Woolite a too-soft effect. You know how blond hair can look too soft, for example? My last sweater seemed to disintegrate as...I feel I'm molting. I've reached the point where deodorant scrapes my armpit.

J: Yeah I made the mistake of buying concentrated dis-dished...

A: That is hard to pronounce.

J: soap last night. I'd put only a fraction of a drop on the cutting board, yet today food tastes like artificial lemon.

A: Soap companies must assume that you wash dishes in the common style—clogging a sink then filling the basin.

J: My roommate has this habit, I'm sorry to say.

A: An anachronistic...

J: His place seems anachronistic.

A: I remember as a sixteen-year-old prep cook, while others my age practiced musical instruments um, obsessing about every water drop. It shocked me chefs thaw meats by running a faucet. I'd go to bed with sticky arms.

J: You refused to wash your arms before sleep, wanting to conserve water?

A: Showering in relation to a job felt like working overtime.

J: Though in Martha's Vineyard you'd shower in in the kitchen stall before work and sing "I'm taking a shower and going to work."

A: I thought you did that. Don't you remembr...sorry I'm not pronouncing words. My pH feels off. I've noticed you carrying scraps from a Newport Menthol carton.

J: Yeah since...

A: One t-shirt I owned said in green: Marlboro

Menthol.

J: Would you wear this shirt around the time people called you a slobberer?

A: I had it on during my first legal offense.

J: Oh did that involve um...didn't it invol...

A: Wine coolers.

J: Or I thought you'd vandalized a golf course.

A: Two years...

J: Didn't you light a golf course on fire?

A: I'd simply, no. Peachtree Georgia police charged us with operating a golf cart while intoxicated. In that bizarre community residents use golf carts to grocery shop. This one [*Cough*] time I've cheated on somebody (a friend pushed me against the wall and started kissing my neck). Hours later I'd felt a death wish and that's how the whole situation happened.

J: You traveled during summer break?

A: The day after I graduated high school.

J: What would—the girl that pinned you down came from Georgia?

A: She was an old flame who who moved south junior year and faked a southern accent.

J: So a large group of your class drove down to Georgia, got drunk and sped around in golf carts?

A: Just one older friend, in college. [*Pause*] Please change...

J: Right today I found myself on Stanton Street.

A: The old grounds?

J: Yeah, I looked at the building. I'll look at it now and then, and inspect the buzzer for Daniel Ulroy's name.

A: Do you owe him money?

J: I don't. He sent a letter, a very formal-looking letter claiming he could take me to court if I didn't pay utilities.

A: I've tried to send formal letters. Perhaps only fellow strays get moved by such letters.

J: Yes I was moved. And he'd ripped me off: charging \$75 a month for electricity.

A: I can't picture the place well-lit.

J: It wasn't. Daniel kept telling me that as soon as he sold his cognitive science manuscript he'd live full-time in Rio,

near Copacabana Beach. He said he owned a place where plenty of girls passed by. He may live there now.

A: But...

J: I'd wanted to take some notes on my walk, so I stopped in Tel Varez Deli, just next...

A: [*Muffled*] MSG burrito...

J: to the old building.

A: that I loved while eating; I thought I'd struck gold.

J: Daniel would often describe how they pushed cocaine from the basement.

A: Hmm.

J: I asked the cashier for paper scraps. He'd been ripping apart Newport Menthol boxes and sensed a piece of cardboard could work. I said Thanks, that's the perfect size.

A: A nice sturdy material.

J: Yes. Though did you catch smoky afternoon clouds...

A: It's my favorite weather in many respects. I like the the changing nature of air right now.

J: With both eyes directed toward that sky I saw rooftop gardens. I couldn't imagine standing...

A: You've never done it? I'll envision The Hanging Garden at Babel...Hanging Towers? I'd I just got a rush of warmth on my thigh as this woman opened her sushi box.

J: I'll enjoy when girls have fingernail polish all but worn off. You still see...

A: Yeah that's...

J: traces.

A: sexy, sure—not scrubbing maniacally to make themselves a finished product.

J: Amanda's nail-polish traces kept turning me on.

A: I remember, when I wore polish, getting turned on as both hands peeled.

J: Sometimes you sat on a bench looking at the Charles River, or rock...

A: I've just inhaled a massive seaweed waft that restored me. Yet you mentioned Boston...

J: Because you'd sit on a bench by the Charles, or rocks at Revere Beach, and make out with your own arm a while.

A: Weird.

J: Do you remember?

A: No.

J: You've told me.

A: Yesterday a big dog had one eye. Brown hair grew over the damaged socket, which seemed the best possible scenario. But I relived when you accompanied me to check out a Revere Beach pad. That landlord's eye hung near his chin. The place where I fell from a loft bed?

J: I'd wanted to be respectful and make eye-contact with him, but couldn't locate two eyes simultaneously.

A: He seemed a straightforward decent man...

J: 100%.

A: living around alcoholic Navy retirees along a blond beach strip that smelled of hairspray (somehow this became my sexy substitute for Harvard). Now do you smell olives? A briny, under-the-surface odor?

J: I have yet to adjust to new cats in the apartment. I've smelled nothing the past five days.

A: Last night I'd dreamt of amorphous cats. They would change form rubbing against my bare torso. I woke and found Kristin asleep doing it—that moment just came back to me.

J: While you had this dream I I was dreaming I'd won the US Open.

A: You'd grown up a major Lendl fan, right?

J: Yeah I worshipped Ivan Lendl. I thought Ivan Lendl represented sheer sophistication and intelligence.

A: For me it was The Replacements.

J: You would've liked Luke and Leroy's soundtrack, all Smiths and The Cure. Libby and I danced close when "To Die By Your Side"...

A: Sure: "There Is a Light That Never Goes Out."

J: came on. Dancing made me feel immortal. Unlike the language I speak or sounds I hear, or even the the sights I take in, this unifies me with my ancestors.

A: Which probably include galloping horses.

J: Oh do you have enough room?

Woman: I can squeeze by your...

J: Yes?

W: bag—thanks just...

A: Everywhere I'll look I see chopsticks.

HAWAII, CROSS MY HEART

Greg Gerke

I HAD JUST WALKED AWAY from the warm pools where a five-foot eel made a hairdresser from Omaha take a dump half as long. My friend Doug had met a Ukrainian woman there and he wasn't going anywhere that didn't lead to her hammock. This was on the Big Island, Hawaii. Puna side. Volcanic with mangled coasts and lush green foliage. Rain when you don't feel like it, but rainbows. The warm pools are right along the red road, a notorious stretch of beauty and banditry where a flat could be the end of you. To get to Kahena black sand beach was too far to walk. Everyone told me not to take rides from Hawaiians. Hawaiians were the first to stop. I climbed in.

The afternoon sun spun joyously in the air. I was in the back of their truck with a young couple who had beers in their hands and joints in their grins. Up front the Hawaiians were also smoking joints. When they wanted to speak to us they slid open the cab window. At first slide I mumbled, "My last confession was..."

We were weaving at forty-five miles an hour. "So when are you getting married?" I asked the couple.

They looked at each other and giggled. The guy had a forest of hair under his arms. The woman had more under hers.

"Are you into samurais?" she asked me.

I coughed after a long hit. "You know what I really like? You know the opening of *Das Rheingold* by Wagner. It's better than pizza or coming."

We ran over a cat and the Hawaiians laughed. The driver was old, his face beat up like someone had twisted the end of a pipe into it. The baby-faced passenger kept belching and slamming the dashboard. Its shiny, black pieces accumulated in his lap.

We kept slowing down and starting up. They were looking for something. The driver would park diagonally over the one lane road, smell the air and say, "No, not here." A tour bus almost hit us and the girl mooned them.

She had just finished telling us how she didn't want anything out of life—money, children, Noxzema—nothing.

"Amazing," I said.

She nodded and threw her arms in the air. "It's really big for me, especially when you consider I was Ivan the Terrible in a previous life," and she kissed her man.

The driver stopped again. This time on the shoulder, by the sea. Babyface was emptying a machine gun into rental cars. "Get the fuck out of here," he squeaked in a cartoonish voice. The duo slapped hands and again Babyface bashed the dashboard. He lifted off the seat and a low rumble erupted.

"The fuck crawled up your ass and died?" the driver said. Babyface continued shooting. He then decided to only assault blue cars, rentals or not. He turned to us and wailed. "Don't worry. If we saw yous in blue cars we would shoot you too."

We passed invisible landmarks they bowed to. We'd stop and there was no drinking or smoking allowed when the elder made incantations in his native tongue.

On the road the driver of an SUV we almost hit called out 'asshole' and Babyface shot for his head but missed. He bellowed 'Redemption Song' to soothe his pain.

We drove into a blue mailbox on a big property. Babyface barreled out and flipped through the mail that once had been locked. He ran back empty-handed. "No Victoria Secret on Wednesday," he huffed.

Suddenly the couple decided they needed to get out. We drove off at a state park along the sea. Babyface grabbed my ankle and started talking into like it was a telephone. "Hold the mayo, hold the mayo," he said.

Arms swinging, the couple disappeared into the woods. They said they had a tent stashed and would spend the night or maybe the next few years, they'd have to feel it out.

I walked over to the cliffs. Not too high but high enough

that I stayed back. Babyface went up to a tourist family at a picnic table. He told them he knew karate, but he did something that wasn't karate. The father was bleeding and the young sons cried for Jesus.

I didn't know where the elder was. Maybe he followed the couple. He had put lipstick on and dabbed Oil of Olay under his shorts before leaving the truck.

Babyface joined me at the cliff. He stepped to the edge and put his arms out to balance. He growled and then jumped back to safe land. "Holy fuckywucky, you thought I'd fall, didn't you?" He beat his chest and spit at my sandals.

I lit another joint. Babyface kept examining the sea

rocks and debris below. "That's how we hunt. We chase the wild pigs till they pop over. Pigs are stupid," he said with a murky smile, dots of blood around his lips.

"There's still a dead one down there from Saturday." He jutted his chin forward, "Go look."

"Huh?"

"It's there. Just look over the edge white man."

I crawled on the ground, through ant hills and cigarette butts and saw it. Its belly bloated and purple. Its eyes long chewed out. Turning I asked, "Hey seriously. Why are pigs so stupid?"

But he was gone. He had jumped and broke in two just above the pig's carcass.



"Totems" © D'Arcy Norman

six fake boyfriends

Jen Gann

ONCE I LIVED in a house with a girl who had seven fake boyfriends. She wrote their names on post-its, stuck them on a mirror propped on her dresser, and rearranged them according to her mood.

A secret: no one knew about the seven fake boyfriends except me. We shared a wall that was partially a French door with a faded old blanket tacked over it. The blanket was pink with purple polk-a-dots.

The French doors didn't block much. She used different voices to talk on the phone to each one: soft, loud, medium, terse, short, tender. Sometimes she talked to more than one a night. Sometimes she sighed a husky goodbye, then dialed another one, voice chipping *Hello* like it was tomorrow already. Most of the boyfriends lived far away, so I didn't hear any real-time sexy sounds, but I think sometimes she did it over the phone, because once in awhile there was a purr, some helium suck, maybe a pop, a sigh, then a silence.

One night I came into the kitchen while she was pouring a glass of rose wine from a jug. She laughed and I laughed. There was a single hot-dog on a plate, undressed and unbunned. She picked it up, tossed it in her open mouth, and swallowed it down. I poured myself a glass without asking. She smiled, cheered me too hard, and the wine almost spilled.

We took the jug with us to her room. I remembered how another roommate had described her. *Soft-spoken, some kind of office worker.*

After a while she showed me her stack of post-its. They were classic yellow, the usual size. She told me the boyfriends got fresh post-its everyday, with their names written anew. I asked her how she decided the post-its arrangement on the mirror. She giggled. I asked her how she met each one and how did she know when to stop? She giggled. I asked her how long she expected the arrangement to last.

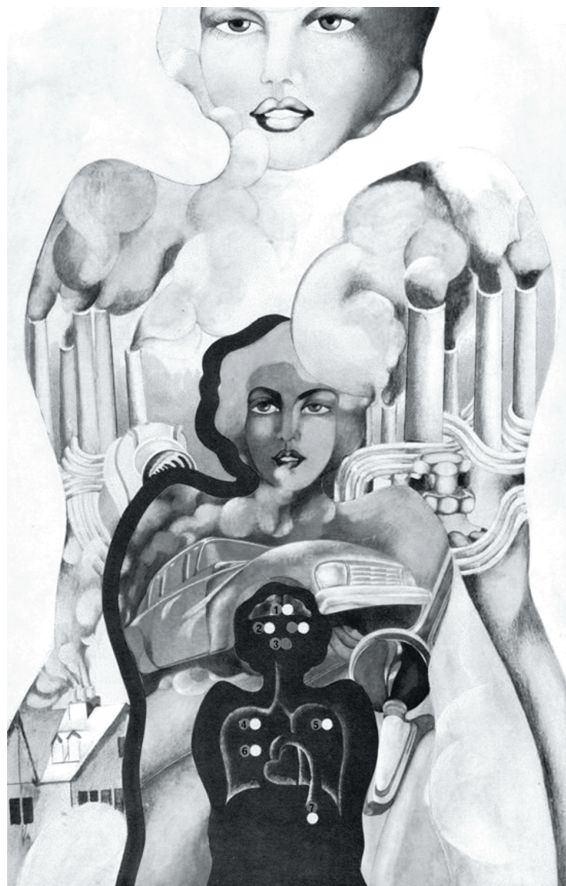
She stopped giggling, cocked her head, and said, *Every time we interact, I feel like I'm helping or punishing a tiny bit.*

I wanted to ask whether she was doing that for the sake of herself or some future person, the girl who would be the right girlfriend.

Then I remembered it was still January and I'd made a non-passivity resolution, so I drank two more glasses of rose wine, and asked.

If I knew that, she finally said, do you think I'd keep doing this?

I shrugged. I told her I liked to have one boyfriend at a time, that I punished most of mine too and rarely felt guilty for it. I told her how I felt guilty not feeling much guilt, because I never needed to. I never cheated, not emotionally,



"Les effets de la pollution atmosphérique sur l'organisme" illus. Osterwalder
from *Le Livre de la Santé* by Joseph Handler (Monte Carlo: Andre Sauret, 1968), volume 14

not physically, and never had to be punished. It didn't seem fair.

Let me show you something, she said. She reached behind her bed where it pressed the wall and pulled out a blue folder with creased edges. She opened it and pictures slipped out.

There, a boyfriend who had a boat as a child. Look at how the legs of his shorts are two different colors (yellow and red). There is a boyfriend suffering from acne as a teenager. That scowl, is he ever fierce. A boyfriend with a brown and one-eyed dog. A boyfriend with pink mittens on. This one had sisters, four of them.

The next morning the post-its started showing up on my car. That was how I learned all their names: Steven, John, Nat, Boner, Sherman, Jack, Matt. I didn't say anything about it because February had started and every February I go into hiding.

I spent my evenings pretending to draw in my journal but really just doodling the same face with thick bangs over and over then descending into whatever trash TV I could find on the internet. I felt my brain dim and dim and dim and never had trouble sleeping.

There was no pattern to how she left the post-its on my car's windshield. I got them all. Until the last few days of February, when Matt showed up four days in a row.

I kept one of the post-its after the second Matt. The next day there were four Matt post-its. Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt. It went on. She kept adding new ones.

Finally, it was March. We were at Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt, Matt. I told myself I was worried the post-its would interfere with my visibility.

So I knocked on her door. I was ready with two glasses and a bottle of champagne.

Oh, she said. *Thank you very much!*

She drank half her glass and asked me what the occasion was. I told her the occasion was March. I explained my February hiding. She didn't say much but gave me a nod that maybe meant respect.

So, I said. *What's with the post-its on my car?*

Her eyes narrowed. *I don't know what you're talking about.*

I pointed. *There's only six post-its on your mirror now.*

She sighed. *Okay, look. I was thinking Matt would make a really good boyfriend.*

Wasn't he one of yours already? I hiccupped. *I don't know*

but I can only assume that you making him one-seventh of your relationship means he's lacking in some way.

I hiccupped again.

He's only a seventh of a man. I want all seven, I said. *I mean all seven parts.*

She shrugged. *Maybe that will work for you.* She shrugged again even though there was no reason to shrug now. *What do you think? Remember all the things I showed you about him?*

I bit my lip.

Out came the blue folder again. Matt and the pictures. Matt skinny and scowling with two brown shocks of hair. A fatter Matt, blurry, hugging a telephone pole. It was Matt who had the sisters. She shook her head when she reminded me. Four of them.

I was so bad at it, she said. *Being properly sensitive to a man raised by females.* She pursed her lips. *But Matt's a pretty-looking challenge at least.*

The month I'd spent strengthened me. My non-passivity resolution pulsed at an all-time high.

I did it. I dated him, Matt-Matt. He was high-maintenance. Our time together felt like taking care of a plant.

The girl with seven fake boyfriends dropped some weight. She kept her door closed and her night-time conversations muffled. She must have put up another blanket, a thicker one. Even though I had Matt, my plant boyfriend, my sweetest green love who learned to make scrambled eggs milky for me, I still pressed my ear to the grooves in the French doors. I heard only scraps: *miss, light bulb, not sleeping, so amazing, seedling, power plant.* I couldn't tell if her voice changed between conversations or not.

I got drunk and told Matt the truth about the girl with seven fake boyfriends. He was calm, shrugged, and said, *Well, now she has six, right?*

The girl with six fake boyfriends moved out and didn't say goodbye. I asked Matt once, trying to pretend it was casual, if she ever called him and he said, *No, not for a long time now.* She left her room furnished and I moved in there because it was bigger than mine and faced the street. I put all my old bed and dresser on the sidewalk and peeked through the blinds, waiting for people to take them away. I was thinking maybe it was time to break up with Matt but wasn't sure yet because nothing was really wrong.

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A HOUSE



Mathias Svalina

THERE WAS A MAN who married a house. He lived in a neighborhood of suburban two-story houses, mostly built in the Forties. Trees leaned over the roads. There were no sidewalks. When people walked their dogs or put their athletic clothing on to walk or jog, they did these things in the road. Sometimes they would wave at cars as they passed, but more often they did not.

The man did not love his house, not in the way that a human can love a human. It was a marriage of convenience, of proficiency. The wedding, of course, was held at home.

His mother thought the house was wonderful, as did his best friend & his two sisters. While they all found it unorthodox, the man was somewhat eccentric & they gave their blessing to the marriage. The only person who did not approve of the man's marriage to the house was the man's brother. "I do not think this is a house," he told his brother. "I think this is a woman pretending to be a house."

The brother's objections were disregarded. At the ceremony there was an open bar & decent food & bad music that everyone danced to. The first dance was odd, but everyone in attendance pretended that it was not.

The DJ's sound system thrust the music into the neighborhood streets, where it warped among the leaning trees & slipped into the open windows of neighbors, who turned up their TVs to cover the noise.

The brother left soon after the ceremony. He did not have a single drink & did not even talk to the bridesmaid with whom he'd been paired to walk down the aisle.

The gifts for the new couple included the usual furnishings & cookware, but also included a gift certificate for the buffing of hardwood floors & a semi-erotic tapestry.

The brother & the man did not talk after the wedding. They did not talk for three years. In this time the man & the house had two children: a girl & a small house. The man & the house had all the trappings of a successful marriage, but the man began to regret his decision. He did not love the house & he began to wonder what a marriage to a woman would be like. Or perhaps he wondered what it was like to be married to someone you love.

The man had never been in love. He claimed that he did not believe in it. It's just a biological function to get humans to believe that they can do things that are totally unnatural to them, he'd tell his friends smugly when the idea of love came up. He always claimed that he'd married rationally, rather than emotionally, & he acted like this was a point of pride.

Then one day the man walked into the bathroom & saw the house emerging from the shower. On the floor of the bathroom sat pieces of house. The room was foggy with steam. She was drying her hair & the towel covered her face, but she must have felt the draft because she lowered the towel & looked at the man.

The woman was bright pink from the heat. Bright pink of skin. She had breasts & pubic hair & hips & all the things that women have.

At the moment the man realized that his brother had been right. That he'd been deceived into marrying a house by a woman who was disguised as a house.

The man got into his car & drove away. He drove until he was falling asleep at the wheel & then he pulled off the highway & checked into a motel. All the cars around him had Ohio license plates. He was in Ohio.

When he woke the next morning he went to a Denny's & ate breakfast & then went back to the hotel. There were calls on his cell from the house & one from his mom. He dialed his brother, whom he hadn't talked to in years.

"Hey," his brother said.

"Hey," the man said.

There was a pause. The man considered hanging up.

"So you were right," the man said. Then he told his brother what he'd seen in the bathroom. The bright pink of the skin on the belly. The discarded house pieces on the ground.

The brother was quiet for a bit. "You should come here. Stay here for a few days. We need to talk."

By night the man was pulling up the dirt driveway into his brother's land, far out in the hills, past the End State Maintenance signs. The man had never understood how his

brother could live so far out from civilization, so far from the grocery stores that stay open all night & the malls filled with everything one could want. The lights were on in the windows, though it was almost midnight. The brother's dogs were barking at the door.

The man got out & walked up to the door. His brother was inside, holding one dog collar with each hand as the man walked in. The dogs pulled toward the man, wanting to jump up on him & lick his face.

"Need a water? Beer?" The brother pulled the eager dogs into the bedroom & closed the door on them.

"Beer," the man said.

The brother opened the fridge & retrieved two beers in brown bottles. He handed one to the man, unscrewed the top of his own & leaned against the kitchen counter.

"Go ahead," the man said.

"Go ahead what?" the brother said.

"Go ahead & tell me you told me so," the man said.

The brother laughed a bit. "Shit. It's not like that. Not like that at all," he said.

Both of them drank their beers. The man looked around. Some things had changed since he'd been here last, but most things were still the same. Same table. Same clean everything.

"What's it like then?" the man asked.

"It's kind of hard to explain," the brother said. "I think I might just have to show you this."

The brother put his beer down on the clean counter & unbuttoned the front of his shirt.

"What the fuck is this," the man said, laughing.

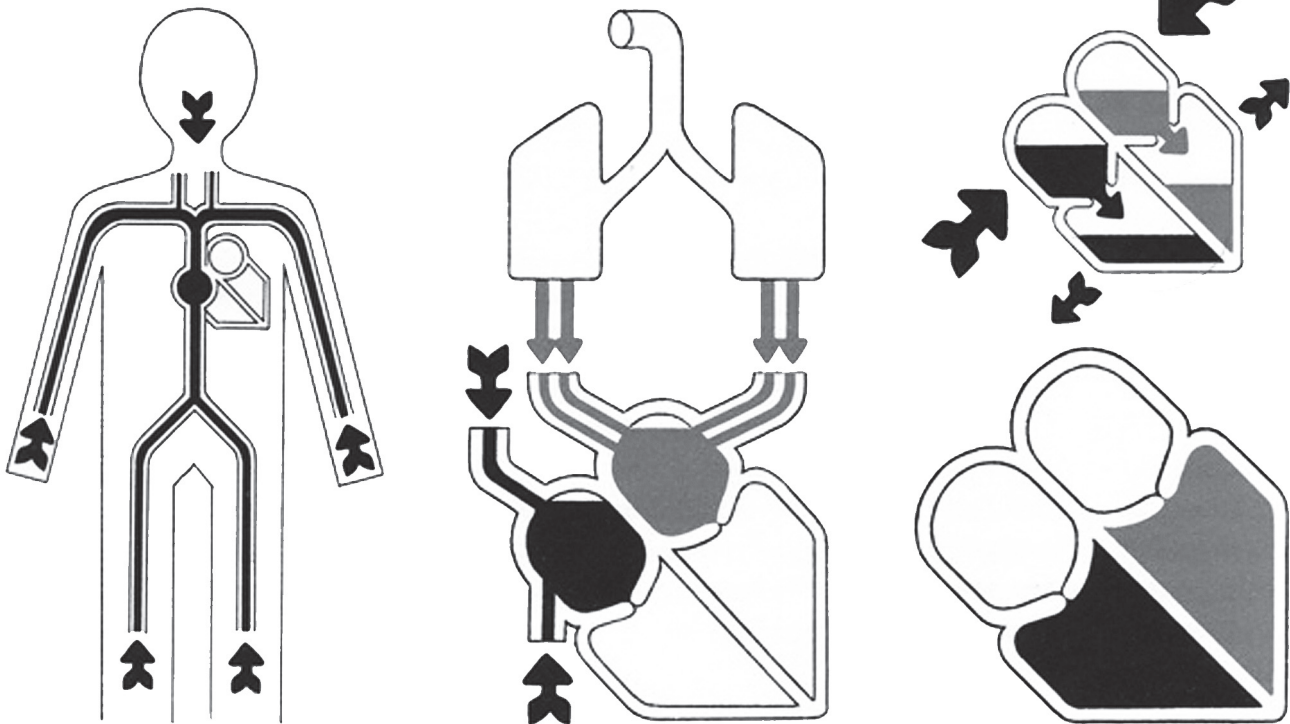
The brother pulled the sides of his shirt apart. There in the middle of his chest, among curls of dark chest hair, was a small door. The man looked up at his brother's face, but he had averted his eyes. He just stood there, holding his shirt open. Waiting.

The man could smell something like fresh wood.

"Go ahead," the brother told the man. "Open it."

The man looked at the small door for a bit. He finished his beer & put the empty bottle on the table behind him. Then the man knelt on one knee in front of his brother. There was still red irritation where the door jambs were affixed into his brother's chest. This was recent. He grabbed the tiny handle between his thumb & forefinger. The handle was warm.

The man turned the handle & opened the small door.



Le coeur, pompe a quatre temps, illus. J. Lehl / from Le Livre de la Sante by Joseph Handler (Monte Carlo: Andre Sauret, 1967) volume 4

THE BEST AMONG US



Chris Haven

I didn't know I was a policeman I thought I was just walking along I saw you and I recognized you but I had to take out my pad I didn't know I was a policeman and write you a ticket for what I don't know and you went away mad. I didn't know I was a policeman but I was compelled to bring order I picked up some trash and I think I registered a bicycle I didn't know I was a policeman. I reported to headquarters I didn't know I was a policeman and they answered me back in numbers and so I looked for what I needed to respond to. I've got this uniform and a gun probably loaded I didn't know I was a policeman and people walking around and I couldn't tell which of them were guilty and then all of them started looking guilty but I didn't have bullets for all of them so I turned and I didn't know I was a policeman shot a tree. This seemed to confuse people I didn't know I was a policeman kicked that same tree to make it look more guilty and that seemed to work but my feet hurt so I put down my gun and took off my uniform and wasn't sure where the uniform stopped and so I took everything off and just ran away. If you see me running watch out there is something behind this that's bigger than you or me don't get in my way or try to stop me I am a policeman

GIRLS VS. WOLVES

Consider a box of black snakes your sister. Swoon under a fever to snitch. Pull down the moon with a magnet. Newly mustached, you will curtsy in a flouncy hoop dress to a tidal wave breaking over you. The wave will be constructed from ten thousand balls of yellow yarn. The sound of the wave breaking will be captured on a twenty-four track recorder, then forced through the static of a transistor buried deep inside a fleeing wolf. Proclaim the recording a soundscape and unveil it in a local seaside gallery to little or no reception. You will act rascally. A quicksilver of risk will pin you beneath your fever. Your collection of American burying beetles inside three doves will be the envy of every aviary owner. Within the recording, you will hear *ocean, lightning, storm, lighthouse*. There will be a girl inside every unfurling of a new nation's flag. Skyscrapers will be the next ghost towns. Trains will whistle right through them without even slowing down. I will call you *crying telepath*.

Brennen Wysong

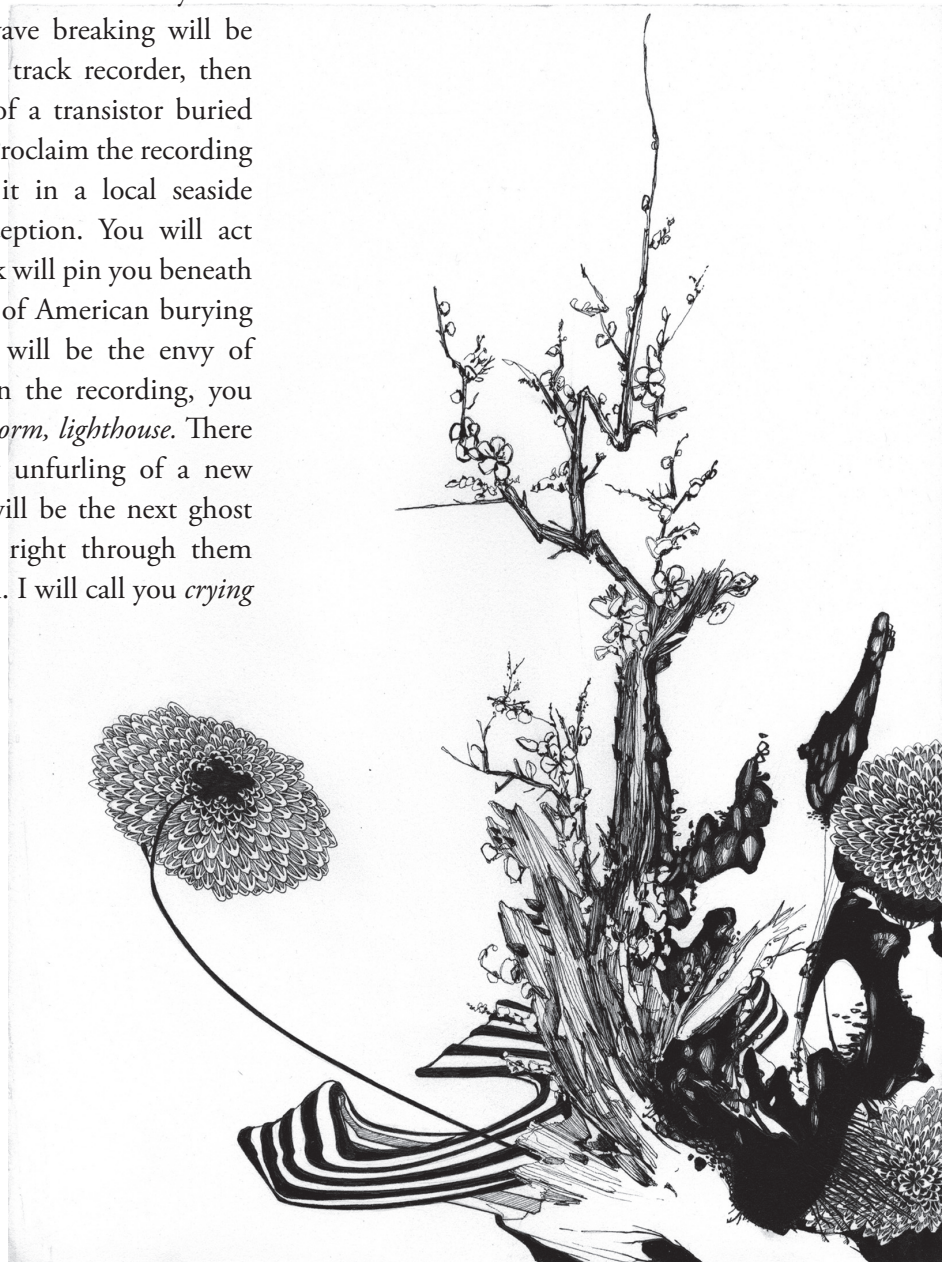
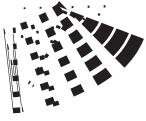


Illustration © Cein Watson (thisriddle.com)

LUCKY

Michael J. Martin

No one has ever knocked my teeth out
 Tied me to a favorite chair
 And rope-burned my wrists for kicks.
 No one has ever bled me out or sizzled cigs
 On my cheek like a jail-tear near my eye
 Because I said the word 'bench' or
 'a cat in a yellow dress' — I've never been gouged
 Because the thought of animals in outfits disgusts you.
 Days after you strike my face and I crumble
 Into the porcelain tub (for not starting my bath
 Within the thirty minutes allotted)
 I want to eat the VHS you throw
 And re-record my childhood.
 Since the bed is soft when you rattle me against it
 And there is no brain damage
 When you cast me to the floor beside the bin of
 Unfolded clothes which angered you
 You tell me to thank god (and I do
 For so many other things: My sister never made good
 On her threat to kill me with the ginsu
 She uses to slice homestyle fries).
 You claim since the fillings in my mouth are still shimmering
 And you haven't shoved ovals of foil into my pouches
 Like squirrel-feed, then sealed my face shut,
 I should count my chickens.



STAINS

Jay Snodgrass

I am wearing a black t-shirt with a skull on it. I am standing at a yard sale holding a faded pink Barbie bath tub. I am self conscious of how I look to the man sitting on a rug laid over a la-Z-boy with one leg stretched over the arm so the bulge between his legs is pronounced like the beak of a parrot.

There is a bottle with a ship's wheel in it and some spray painted coral. I pick that up and put it under my arm, bobbing suburban message.

I am disgusted with life. Used to be you could go to sea and get lost and then eat another human being. It was all the rage not this pummelhorsing social compromise. Fuck that, you know. Eat a bitch.

Now you get a tattoo and hit a bag. Think about how faceless men are how woman is a single shape through the dark of life.

I would like to be a captain of a cannibal ship. The crew would want to eat me but my Jesus Christ tattoo keeps them at bay. That or my skull t-shirt which means I'm hard like death, like a bottle upside the head.



Ahoy!



Melissa Broder



"Speechless II"
© Chantel Schott

By the gates of the walled lung
we stand circled in the dark.

We've come through his throat
by ship.

I say: *What if he hiccups?*

I am channeling my grandmom's fears
of common colds and foreign air.
The women judge me silly.

They say: *Unsisterly!*
Your angst is old, so old.

To prove myself fierce
I run down the danger corridor
of his guts to his intestines.

There are cabbages and acid.
There are meat screams
and a fancy market.

I am relieved to discover
my favorite gourmet yogurt
with full nutrition labeling.

Indulging in a blueberry variety
on the banks of his duodenum
I watch the villi sway.

It's a scene nearing Monet's *La Riviere*
but I am not a visual person.

My mind is full of letters.

I say: *Help me be a sister.*
I mean to say: *Don't make me die alone.*

Back at the lung
roommates have been chosen.

Sixth Recitation Prior to the Consumption of Organic Psilocybin

Matt Mauch



I'm going to chew off
a shitty part of my life, follow
a black-magic recipe requiring
the tails of newts, the fingernails of virgins,
the boiling of and drinking of and bathing
in it, so that, as it is with the best lizards,
something new will grow in shitty's place.
If your car stops running, I'll chew and chew it
until it does. Let me know if your cat is sick.
Call a plumber if your toilet's broke. Call
me if you feel like DNA extracted
from the whole, if you feel like you're being
tested in a lab to see if you match what
you are no longer a part of. Because
I added the reproductive glands
from four species of oyster collected by widows
in four different seas, I can apply my spittle
to the missing and the lost to summon both healing
and return. Call me if you lost your leg in war,
if your daughter ran away, if your keys
are shaking but you're in no hurry to leave.
Have you forgotten the words to a song
you'd like to sing to an empty chair? Did
you give yourself to another like a message
in a bottle that broke or sunk or got
eaten by a shark? It happens a hundred times
for every time it doesn't. Your faith in
my mouth, I promise, won't hurt. I'll take out
my teeth if they are in the way.

FROM
THE

LIL WYNNE

N Y S I D # 0 2 6 1 6 5 4 4 L

LETTERS

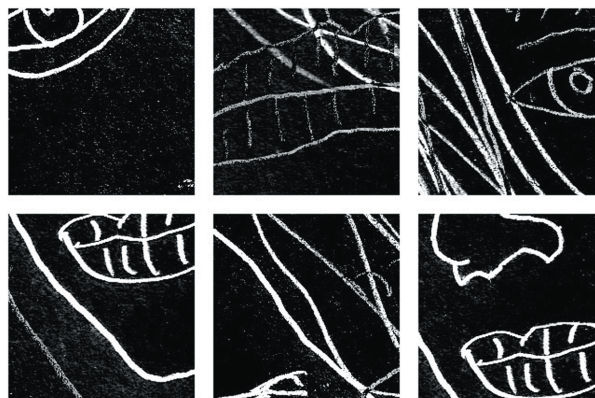
JULY 14 2010

Hey. I hate it when my hands smell like pennies. Do you think we're too sad for each other? Last night I dreamed the richness of gasoline, ropes of hair, canvas, that dead bird. I mean almost everyone is lonely. Almost no one's amazing. I know—how about we ride into a time that hasn't been invented yet. Then we'll invent music.

Lauren Ireland

JULY 18 2010

You know that things become stories about other things. Everyone I used to love lives in my mouth. I let them out when I am afraid. I am afraid. You know that everything good goes away. *The great function of poetry is to give us back the situations of our dreams.* Nothing is ever the way you think it's going to be. Lately I have been hoping up. I mean, what's the future gonna do? People disappear outside my window all the time. Alone at night, I think of where you used to live. Transitive. In song. It's scary walking around in other people's intentions.



"Grid Portrait 2" © Francis Raven



Reading The Song of Solomon at Hampton Beach

Bianca Stone

What nursery rhyme was born
 from the black death of the middle ages?
 The four voices of a barbershop quartet rise
 over the empty beach. The water
 gray-blue and inarticulate as the sky above it,
 the kingdom of dough shops and body jewelry.
 I'm singing something in the replaced company
 of the Song of Solomon, organizing the idea
 of an egg and a slice of ham while outside the window
 nothing is debating how well it fell asleep
 or what ended the Patriots game—the soul
 like a single flower waiting to be picked—
 the soul like a single beloved in a movie theater—
 at some distance I see you, your eyes
 two hounds, your lips two mottled oysters
 against my tongue—and every white numbered balcony
 looks at us through its sliding doors. You stand on a carpet
 by a pair of chairs reflecting terrible impartial patterns
 on impartial patterns—something diluted and wrung
 from the idea of Africa, but pitted again
 against this shore, now a hell of shapes, some encased in plastic
 and imported cheap wood—the smell of salt mingling
 with the smell of continental breakfasts
 and Solomon's concubine watching the last evening
 meal of the season at a restaurant with chicken fettuccine photographs
 curling on the wall—the vast empty bars
 and the gas fires with hollow metal logs
 casting shadows on the silverware wrapped like dope in heavy brown napkins—
 I am your eyes and ears in the world, your sister, your mate.
 I'm floating over an American flag tangled on the pole,
 now entering a painting of a lighthouse
 and allowing its mass-produced iconic sadness to lay
 just a little left of my heart,
 my heart which is too full of apples and wind
 and epiphany
 and you.



ORIGAMI CASKET

Slut bags panorama city love lights
palm tree electric
post-heart, I told you the wind was horny

Thunderclaps— I clap at your bravo face
the day you shot yourself on video
the day you made bells ring us all back home

*

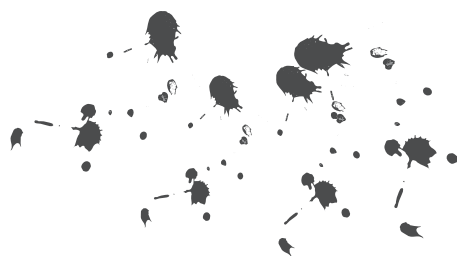
hiccup parade
december skittles shit go home bells
gunshot glitter goodbye

afternoon sleep paralysis
a black cloth blew and harked back I thought you were calling
from bullet hole from brain dead from ambulance corvette

*

Dude, that must've been rough
all shaking all cold from cartoon blood
no different from cloud computer to none.

Feliz Molina

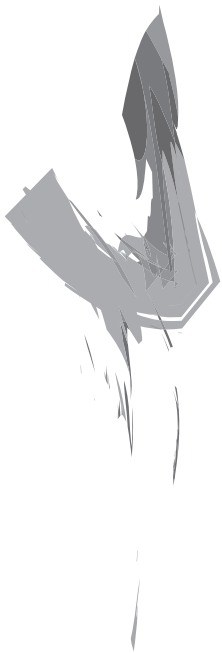


"The Liquidators" © Nina Chanel Abney (www.ninachanel.com)



Rather Not Say

Halie Theoharides



if I could go into your room & cry
 but all doors are the first month in a west coast city
 & the twelfth house of unsayable secrets
 triangle booth sandwiches
 & a hangover only dolphins cure
 it's how they're talking that matters that counts
 it's the way you cross rivers & have no plans to change
 I've been feeling the mercury lately
 bulldozers put my body to the coast & wait

I'm too busy for this
 I'm too busy to know
 & not know this was a good idea
 the first month in the twelfth house of secrets
 crying nude pantyhose won't dry hanging
 hostel foam & corner store pitas

is this Room Elizabeth the room with the rolled up dollar
 we're only sublets & we don't know better
 but when we got the call I just said yes
 so the world for baby went backwards
 we knocked the guts out of the house
 & put in panoramic windows
 gaping teeth down to the valley

I want to make you so happy & I can & I won't
 I want northern friends with steely voices &
 the wolf in wendall that my babysitter saw
 & the tornado in wendall & the
 sex offender in wendall & the rock
 in wendall & the nudists in wendall

if I could go into your room & cry
 like I'm watching my dad leave for the first time
 but all the footbridges have collapsed
 & all the doors are bolted thief detectors
 retreat I retreat
 woods that can't be harvested or burned
 are trees without poison
 trees with poison are hemlocks sassafras
 poplar & white poplar
 I figure you can burn fences too anything to stay warm
 just leave baby out of it
 for a while at least I have no past
 nothing to do but put on a nightgown
 & stand in the dark

HER TWIN WAS AFTER ME

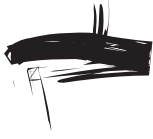
Ally Harris

I
inside the house I am trying to change the song. A girl pulls me
onto a float or was it a boat. Her twin was after me. Fucktrys
fingerprint the couch. The huffish telephone then silence. I tender
at the doorknob. Outside you said it wouldn't snow but white
lacquer vehicular snag. Bitter yolkish dusk slanders cold balloons
of light onto the grass. The cold puts an ear to my breast and
listens. It is a long quiet particular to this world.



"Sentinel" © Rod Walker

from Mephistopheles Hotel



Scene 1: Roof Deck Pool

Sarah Bartlett

(X on a floating dragon, alone, or almost.)

X : I remember our first swim. Your eyes matched the color of the water perfectly. The palm trees made their point—blew sky high like Vesuvius, raining coconut bombs on our heads. Your hair caught fire and you cannonball to put it out. When you broke the surface, you resembled a struck match. Who would believe this is where we fell in love? I sent one postcard to my family with a glossy shot of Beverly Hills engulfed in flames. I was nervous. I wrote:

Please excuse the red on my thighs.

The red on my hands.

I met a baby at a bus stop.

It asked for our last name,

so I gave it away.



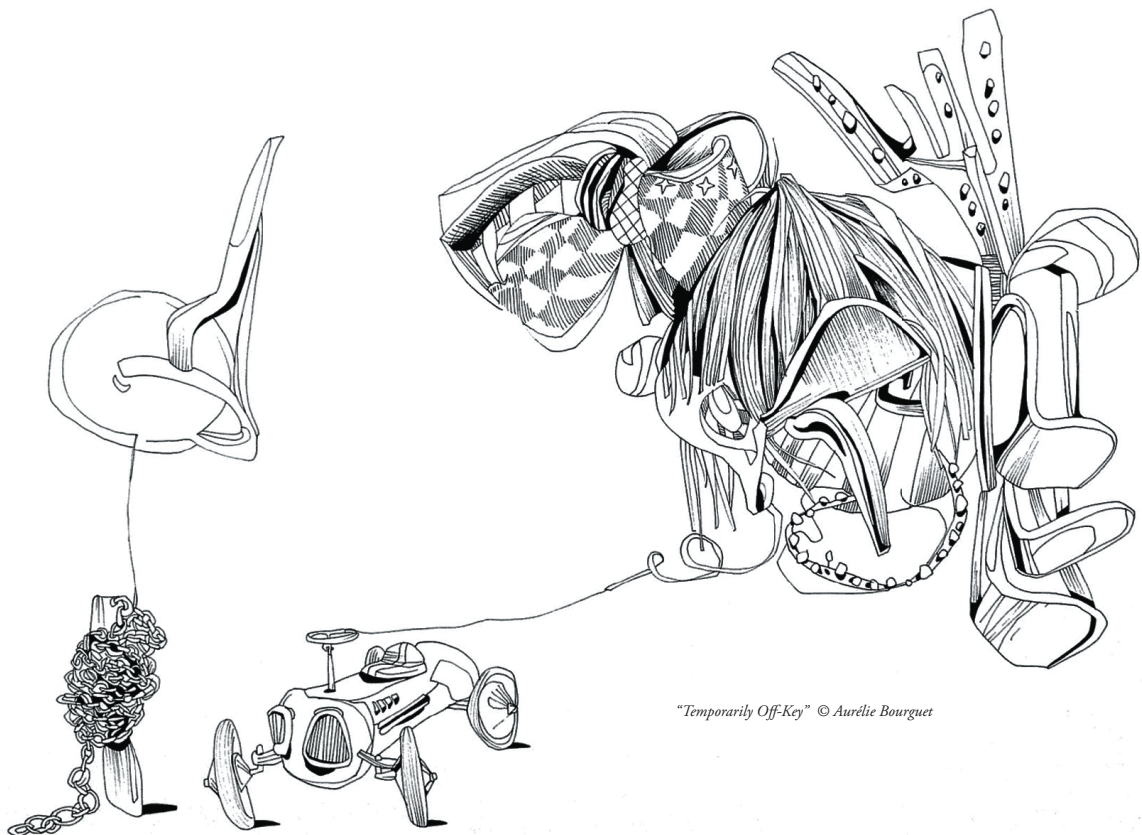
(X gets carried away by nostalgia and ends up in the corner of the pool.)

X : I know! Let's go up the mountain with our blood bags and holsters. At the top, we'll stage a battle to see who will be crowned King of the World. I plan to win while remaining benevolent. I can do it. The air up there is so thin, nosebleeds will paint modern masterpieces across our chests. No postcards. No telephones. No oxygen for our lung balloons. We'll drape like rubber across the blowing snow. The sky is a lid with satellite holes: I'll dial my sweetheart by pressing on stars.

THESE EXERCISES HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO FIT THE CURRENT REALITY

Arlene Ang

1. There are faces here stored in the glass
 - a. bruised, mostly
 - i. strangers who walk through t-shirts
 - ii. a question of superimposed states
 - iii. as in, the birdcage buried in the cat
 - b. could be drinking
 - c. to know the dead before they die is instinctive
 - d. if not carcinomata, then sunrise
 - i. the gun, dismantled
 - ii. inside the brother's heart
 - iii. redundancy when it comes to breathing
 - iv. tiny baby jars filled with babies
 - e. there could only be so much secondary burns on one body



"Temporarily Off-Key" © Aurélie Bourguet

2. The wine (red) is measured by what it's not
 - a. which is learned early on
 - i. as more crows eclipse the window
 - ii. the book of vertigo inherent in the fist
 - b. missing
 - i. for instance, the woman sliced in half
 - ii. still life associated with flies
 - iii. the bicycle in the wrong part of the neighborhood
 - c. trees slowly fill up with sky
 - d. there are deliberate exits
 - i. clothing as seen on the hanged man
 - ii. dreams in the shape of mutant strawberries
 - iii. sooner or later, the throat is alienated from the actual crying

3. Because the eye is composed of foreign objects
 - a. blindness occurs as required
 - i. in one case, the amputated leg obstructs a view of the leg
 - ii. to be worn away by the dying
 - iii. what first hundred pieces reconstruct the explosion
 - iv. hence these pictures in blurred and white
 - b. night works itself into drunk drivers
 - c. and books that burn in the fire
 - d. the weeping is infinite
 - i. quiet as garbage bags dragged through the park
 - ii. given the age of water
 - iii. for one earthquake, the ground opened up and swallowed three cars
 - e. so the fetus drops like a coin from the womb

4. By their very nature, palms are left open to rain
 - a. physical things hold a mirror before the desire to hold on
 - b. interpretations of the lifeline vary
 - i. with enough mice giving expression to hunger
 - ii. where scars converge
 - iii. pain, always so anxious for attention
 - c. in the manner of a corpse
 - i. this obsessive-compulsive behavior of fruit rot
 - ii. the evening news proves that some living is still done in the room
 - iii. as loneliness is permanently sealed inside
 - iv. licked warm by a dog kept awake by the silence in the body
 - d. what of the child as it uses a pencil to stab the other
 - i. the fist is form of suicide
 - ii. everybody has somebody to betray
 - iii. all these walls propped up with graffiti

NOTES ON A FAILED EXPANSION

Drew Kalbach



Bob is dead and it's windy outside.
 What do I say.
 On a bike, somewhere else, a dinner starts to cook itself.
 The closets are too short
 for the legs of the fat men, slipping in and out of other bodies,
 sliding down the street.
 The groundwork layered carefully then left
 for years. In sewers
 we can swim with abandon through the sweet filth
 of strangers. You sit through a dinner
 without food or purpose.
 But it's for the building that they take down their eyebrows, wax away their hair,
 peel away layers of soot and conversation.
 Bob can't wait.

*

Bob and the intensity of trash.
 Unshaved you reek of the new light,
 the light that smells vaguely of tomorrow.
 We ride this quiet
 through plaster walls and thin toilet seats
 covered in bile and questions.
 The same birthmark across the faces of all those present.
 Eyes unglued
 and stuck against a glass tube.
 That house becomes the new way through interstates.
 Bob's hair is gone. The basement,
 a ditch full of angry.

*

The way tables become full.
 Through Bob's body another body begins to grow.
 Bones break in all the quiet.

The objects there for a moment then changed into nothing.
 Floors carved
 in the shape of giant eagles.
 The same swooping that changes with a mood.

*

Bob's hats break.
 All our shrines start forest fires.
 Along with hawks of varying sizes and loudness of scream
 the fat men roll along
 sidewalks collecting cans and making trash.
 How can a thing in one space be something different in another.
 Bob's bikes
 and then the bandanas.
 For a lack of running water you make your clothes
 into a pile and sweat through them all.

*

Concrete in people shapes.
 You take it to bed and let yourself drip through it.
 Bob's handsome face.
 The soft hands under the rug clawing through your socks.
 When beginning to ford the street
 without glass bottles
 to throw under car tires, there is a still moment of righteous excitement.
 The fried-chicken huts buzz with glory.
 Bob on his back
 floating in a still pool of deep-green water.
 The stench of garbage
 overwhelms the closed faces.
 The people leave in streams away from the rotting and still-gutted
 husks of what was once new.

*

Bob, lost under stairs.
 You follow the hallway without a sense of time.
 The fingernails grown
 orange from the sun lay under a rug you forgot.
 We tore letters into pieces.
 You rubbed everything into your hair and spit until it drowned.
 Bob's hardness
 the byproduct of fast food and television overdose.
 Your couch and the way you carried
 yourself from the couch.

BUFFALO BILL ON THE BEACH

Steve Subrizi

for Thom Ross

With whiskey and chocolate
a feller'll transcend whereabouts—

from the snuffed lamp of the reservation
to the matte sheen of the gallery,

from landmark bars of the masses
to the patch of hill the bolt smacked

may a feller yet transcend
the curse of the dinosaurs,

resurrecting the valentine
of the haunt of the shore,

recruiting rogue totems
asleep in museums,

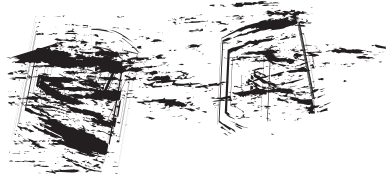
chiseling the zits
off the constellations,

staring through the heavens
and puking his heart out.



EQUIPPED FOR THE RACE.

A
[11/04/10]



Jerimee Bloemeke

It ain't many intersections off
Ft. Lauderdale grains

Where I infiltrate the floor
Mats of the '94

GMC Jimmy. A roller
Hockey coach pursues infidelity. Oh

Black water, bad knees, interim
Residencies. The names

Of beach motels stretching past.
White architecture. Art deco letters

Conclusions saturnine.

Idling in evergreens a laser
Engraved a Lexus

Sedan on an Asian tombstone.
A golden hoop earring.

Blood soap with onyx abrasives.
I duck under the pool

Cue this policy features
The inclusion of infants in arms

Fastening themselves like hip belts
Over T-shirts. Whatever happened

To belts through the loops?

Jeans are tightening on this stool.
I view a vintage scene-o-rama

Rippler motion bar sign
And its inconsistent water

Effect. No face detected.
A face caving in.

There feels great. Soft
Purple lights. Synthetic or real

Lights fire in a rectangular box
Of glass floating over the night road.

The only thing known about death

Is ladybugs turn yellow
When they go—don't I love her?

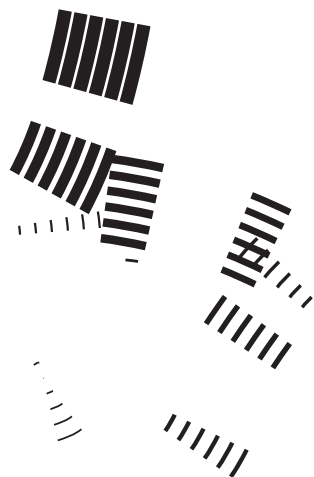
When I am near her I am nearer things
Which are near her.

Party beads.

Ocean Drive.

THE FURNITURE APOCALYPSE

Phase Five: The Furniture Apocalypse



Daniel D'Angelo

Read Phases 1-4 at
WWW.NOOJOURNAL.COM/13

You could be lying inside a mouth of couches, suspended atop an empire of Ottomans desperately clinging to pillows, hoping to survive, thinking if you planned ironically around a fictional event you might amuse the Apocalypse into sparing your life. Something like 500 people have to survive it anyways. Apocalypses aren't 100%. You could be driving a truck full of Ottomans when Stacy calls you and tells you she loves you and that she needs to see you right this instant. You could be working in a furniture store when a toxic level of New Furniture Smell is released and you and everybody in the store asphyxiates comfortably on Love Seats, Sectionals, Free Range Ottomans, Standard Leather Sofas that Seat the Whole Family Everything Must Go. You could be parachuting for the first time and right when you pull the chute release cord, because of an unhealthy density of Ottomans and the galaxy's love for balance and comfort, an Ottoman will float out of your chute pack. You will clutch the Ottoman during your fall. You will position yourself on top of it. See if that does something for your impact. You could be playfully inside a mouth of couches when it comes to life, mangles your body with chews, swallows you whole and acidic micro-Ottomanites inside the bowels of the couchbeast break you apart for digestion. At great pains to you. The Apocalypse could show up at your door in nothing but a fur coat and flip-flops. It steps inside. It says hello, lets the coat fall to the floor, revealing its incredibly sexy body. While you unload an L-couch from a truck a seven-foot-tall barbarian weighing several thousand pounds might shove you down. He'll pick up one end of the couch and spin two and a half times. He'll release the couch and it'll fly seven thousand yards away, completely out of sight.

LIST OF PEOPLE

Ben Roylance

list of people who eat raw things
 list of people who dissolve
 list of people that I see dancing with glass sycamores
 list of people who cannot breathe
 list of people who swallow entire friends
 list of people interested in moths or birds
 list of people with hearts but not legs
 list of people who cannot swim in gelatin
 list of people that I can meet
 list of people who belong to tribes
 list of people who consider themselves complete
 list of people that I will see between now and then
 list of people who eat only vegetable matter
 list of people who serve other people
 list of people with tragic family histories
 list of people who make other people miserable
 list of people that I see dancing with molten chimes
 list of people who sleep regularly
 list of people who speak English
 list of people who read old scrolls about smelling salts
 list of people who nap
 list of people who eat their own pubic hairs
 list of people who cannot sleep
 list of people that I will meet
 list of people older than I will be when I am
 mauled by a golden swan
 list of people who twist their leg hairs into knots
 list of people who slip
 list of people that I will never meet
 list of people who have lived
 list of people without electricity
 list of people who believe in one god
 list of people who believe in two gods
 list of people who believe in no gods
 list of people who believe in three gods
 list of people who believe in more than three gods
 list of people who believe in one god, specifically
 themselves or their lovers
 list of people who believe in animal sacrifices
 list of people with 500,000 arms but only one leg
 list of people who are guilty
 list of people who are more innocent than they are
 guilty, but we are all guilty, right?

list of people who are not guilty, are not guilty
 and will never be
 list of people with eating disorders
 list of people with incurable diseases
 list of people with frustrated artistic ambitions
 list of people with frustrating artistic ambitions
 list of people who still ache for redemption
 list of people who translate languages into
 other languages
 list of people that I see vomiting into pails
 list of people who look outward, hoping to see the
 other side
 list of people that I see through the window, but just
 their outlines
 list of people with radiation poisoning
 list of people that I see staring at my fingertips
 list of people who will sink
 list of people with hair longer than their arms
 list of people with hair shorter than their necks
 list of people with burning shoulder blades
 list of people who will float
 list of people that I know to be trustworthy
 list of people who are not now known by their
 original, given name
 list of people who read books
 list of people that I can hear gulping down
 their medications
 list of people who believe themselves to be in contact
 with more complicated beings
 list of people who + when -
 list of people who - when +
 list of people who were knights of the round table
 list of people who err on the side of sunlight
 list of people who are motorized
 list of people who eat raw things, but do not let their
 minds dwell upon the blood on their teeth,
 they just swallow it and move along.



Photo © Eleanor Leonne Bennett

Flying Objects

Mark Leidner



X-Files



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INSIDE NOÖ [13]

What's the deal with accessibility? The man with the movie face is also the lemonade face, whose food company has raised over 300 million dollars for charity. Paul Newman wore a lot of hats before the Internet took root, and the Internet wears the biggest hats of our contemporary social structures, including celebrityism.

NOÖ Presents: Rod Smith's *What's the Deal*

Adam Marston | 5

Have you been indulging in a profusion of burritos or Russian salads? Have you been skipping rope in the immediate vicinity of active volcanoes? Have you found yourself pissing down the length of telephone poles?

Psychogenic Polydipsic

Jamie Iredell | 10

The man did not love his house, not in the way that a human can love a human. It was a marriage of convenience, of proficiency. The wedding, of course, was held at home.

The Man Who Married a House

Mathias Svalina | 22

Hey. I hate it when my hands smell like pennies. Do you think we're too sad for each other?

from the Lil Wayne Letters

Lauren Ireland | 30

The Apocalypse could show up at your door in nothing but a fur coat and flip-flops. It steps inside. It says hello, lets the coat fall to the floor, revealing its incredibly sexy body.

The Furniture Apocalypse

Daniel D'Angelo | 42

