

14

NOO

A JOURNAL OF PROSE | POETRY | PICTURES **FREE**

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Editor's Note

Mike Young — Editor
Tyler Gobble — Associate Editor

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LET'S, UH. Focus on the high? 2012, guys. 2012. How about it. A whole bunch of things went down—or up in smoke—and for the first year since we started, we didn't put out an issue of NOO. But I like the idea of treating thirteen as lucky because race car drivers like to say it isn't, so we're back and puffier than ever here in 2013.

There are lots of developments here at NOO. Frisbee golfer and beard-on-fire enthusiast of stoking stokedom Tyler Gobble has come onboard as an Associate Editor. Welcome, Tyler! I've already breathed a lot less raggedly thanks to Tyler's whirlwind of energy and enthusiasm and smarts and help. Case in point: he was instrumental in bringing Vouched Books in as a partner for our NOO Presents section. This is pretty great because it means you'll get to read about even more snazzy indie and small press work, all presented by people who make you go "Oh, they know what they're doing." In an effort to account for 2012 before we shun it entirely, I've also written up an account of twenty good books I read. So many books! So many heads bent earnestly over blankness to make language exist between us all.

More envelopments: after years of twitching and weeping into my electrolyte-fortified bottled water, I've brought on some eagle folks to help me read submissions for NOO. Much thanks and those paper trumpet things to: Charles Hale, Dave K, Madison Langston, Ella Longpre, Erin McNellis, Mark Seidl, Logan Ryan Smith, Nick Sturm, and Patrick Trotti. Y'all it's really like I'm finally the leader of the Power Rangers y'all. So much khop-kun-krahp to them, which is thank you in Thai if you're a dude and you're me trying to spell it phonetically.

One of the people who invented the essay was a Sumerian flood survivor. In 2012 on Ko Phi Phi with Carolyn Zaikowski, I ate massaman curry made by a former Muay Thai boxer. Even butter tasted like coconut. I got some mosquito bites and freaked out about them for no reason. We saw monkeys on Monkey Island, and some jerks fed them instant coffee. We asked the manager of the guest house where we were staying if he ever got tired of how beautiful Ko Phi Phi is, and he said "Yes." We met a Norwegian lumber speculator who asked me if, being from California, I'd memorized anything precise about redwoods. Elsewhere in Thailand, we saw a three story golden Buddha, and somebody sat in the Buddha's lap, which you're not supposed to do. One sunset, we saw a bridge light up in a disco way, even though hundreds/thousands of prisoners of war died to make it. Just one of those things. A toothless dog gummed my ankle. I ate fried bamboo. I drank a kiwi shake made by a woman Carolyn accidentally called beautiful even though she was trying to call the town beautiful. The woman demurred and said "Oh no you are beautiful."

My favorite part of Thailand was the crazy WWII museum in Kanchanaburi, but I should shut up and give you a NOO [14] preview, so I am going to pretend the museum and this issue are the same thing. Some ceilings have illustrated proverbs by Morgan Parker. Some walls have cutouts from fashion magazines designed by Nicholas Lockyer. One wall has a bunch of equipment from Katie Jean Shinkle's kitchen. Elsewhere there are a million of Rachael Katz's swords under a glass case. A Korean War soldier corpse in one room. One hallway features very unrealistic wax statues of key WWII players like Lisa Ciccarello. In the middle of the "courtyard square" is a 1970s looking space age Buddha temple capsule built by Hai-Dang Phan. At one point there is a train engine with an old Rolls Royce on top of it, driven by Mike Krutel and Gene Kwak. In a basement room, a placard explains that the museum is protected from earthquakes by the specific mysticism of Emily Toder. There are a lot of signs with hilarious English translations written by Tony Mancus and Elizabeth Mikesch. One of the outside areas just has some clothes drying. One of the inside murals is of fighting elephant gods.

In sad 2012 news, we lost Chris Toll, a visionary Baltimore poet and collage maker. This issue is dedicated to him. I remember the enormous book of conspiracy theories Chris gave me for my birthday: "the real stuff about the universe," he said. And I remember him giving me rides home in his VW bug, explaining about the aliens you could see if you watched the right videos. Start by watching yourself reading NOO [14]. And let's uh. Let's keep on with the light in.

NOÖ and Present



THE OLDEST EMAIL in my inbox with the word “vouched” in it is from a poet who needed people to write letters to a judge vouching for his character after he got a little out of his mind and hit someone with a WET FLOOR sign. (I did it! He’s a great guy!)

Then, in 2010, we hit some emails about Vouched Books, an amazing project for sharing and promoting independent literature started by Christopher Newgent in Indianapolis. I met Christopher in Denver, and we ate burgers and blueberries together, which doesn’t make sense, which is why I remember it. He is one of the kindest and most hardworking people I know. There is no one more sincere and burly when it comes to straight up spreading the love about work put out by small presses.

Which is why I am very excited to announce that NOÖ will from now on be teaming up with Vouched Books on this here section. All

along I wanted this section to be about presenting books and projects that people could, yes, vouch for—in eloquent and entertaining ways. So this pairing makes a lot of sense both spiritually and lexically.

Here’s how it will work: in addition to our regular content, we will be running special expanded reviews, interviews, and other features by the Vouched Books team. The idea is you might read a review you really like here in NOÖ, then visit vouchedbooks.com to see what else that reviewer has vouched for. Or you might see a snippet about a book on vouchedbooks.com and visit NOÖ to read an expanded feature. Either way, you’ll get to find about excellent literature that flies—with shimmering duct-taped wings—under the radar. Thanks to our new Associate Editor, Tyler Gobble, for putting this in motion. I could not be more stoked! Now I’m going to let Laura Straub, kingpin of Vouched ATL, tell you a little bit more about how Vouched Books started and why it’s so amazing. — Mike

P.S. Do not hit anyone with a WET FLOOR sign and expect me to bail you out. That was a one time deal for a special hermit. Put everything back where you found it.

WHAT: Vouched Books

BY: Christopher Newgent & Laura Straub & more!

IS: Indie lit spotlights

SAYS: You know—at like craft fairs and shit.

AT: www.vouchedbooks.com

PRESENTED BY: Laura Straub



VOUCHED BOOKS was birthed in October of 2009 in Indianapolis, in the brain of my best friend: Christopher Newgent. He was dissatisfied with the lack of small press representation in bookstores around Indy, so he decided to do something about it. Our Gchat conversation about the idea went something like this:

(This is a reenactment. Christopher would be portrayed as a large-armed Paul Schneider. I would be a highly caffeinated c-lister.)

Christopher: So I’ve been bummed lately at how hard it is to find small press books in Indianapolis. I mean, you’ve read these books. They’re so freaking awesome. People need to read them.

Laura: Yeah, that’s a total bummer.

Christopher: I’m thinking of setting up a guerrilla bookstore of small press books I’ve read and loved. You know—at like craft fairs and shit.

Laura: DO IT!

Laura: DO IT! DO IT! U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!

Christopher took action. He contacted a bunch of small presses who had published books he had read and loved, purchased books as a bookseller, and set up the first Vouched Books “guerrilla bookstore.” Soon after, he launched the Vouched Presents reading series in Indianapolis.

Then, in June 2010, a website was launched, where contributors Vouched for literature published online, interviewed authors, reviewed titles, and so on. It was all great fun. Our contributors have included (and currently include) some real fireworks of the small press world: Troy Urquart, Roxane Gay, Amber Sparks, Tyler Gobble, Ashley Ford, Abby Koski, Kyle Winkler, Layne Ransom, Aaron Gilbreath, Andrew Sims, and Scott Daughtridge. Their enthusiasm is what makes the website so effective. Roxane Gay had this to say about the Vouched Books table on HTMLGIANT:

“That intimacy makes it easy to get on board with taking a chance on writers we’re not familiar with, and I’ve enjoyed learning about books I wouldn’t ordinarily come across.”

In June of 2011, Vouched Books spawned a table in Atlanta. I wanted to get involved in the city and to do so with WORDS. Many people had approached Christopher about “franchising” Vouched in different cities, but he wasn’t sure how the process would work. Our Gchat conversation went something like this:

(This is a reenactment. Christopher would be portrayed as a muscular and serious Peter Sarsgaard. I would be an over-enthusiastic c-lister.)

Christopher: So a lot of people have been contacting me asking about Vouched franchising, and wanting to set up their own table in other cities.

Laura: Dude, what an amazing idea. You should make that happen!

Christopher: Yeah I just have no idea how that would work, you know?

Laura: Sounds like you need a guinea pig, best friend.

Christopher: ...

Laura: ...? Oh. Hey! I could do it!

Laura: U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!

Soon Vouched Atlanta was launched. The ATL has been stuck with me ever since.

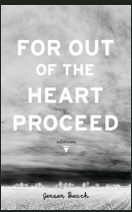
Running the tables, we've encountered more than our fair share of people who can't wrap their head around the heart of our mission. Why we would do such a thing? Questions asked of us range from: "Wait, so where is your bookstore actually located?" to "But who is PAYING you to do this?" or the often understated, oversimplified "...Why?"

The thing is, Vouched Books (Atlanta + Indianapolis + online) exists because there's a segment of literature from small and independent presses who are taking risks and publishing really innovative words by up-and-coming authors we really believe in. We saw a void in the industry and are trying to help fill it. Most of these presses are comprised of one or a few people, and they don't have the funding or manpower to get a large amount of distribution or promotional help. They're doing great work and Vouched wants to shine a spotlight on them. The stories being told, the poems being written—they are phenomenal and deserve to be read. We're here to help facilitate that.

We do this because we love it.



Some of the Vouched team at AWP Chicago in 2012. From left to right: Christopher Newgent, Amber Sparks, Ashley Cassandra Ford, Tyler Gobble, and Laura Straub. I actually can't tell because of Laura's hair whether she is to the left or right of Tyler, but I feel like you can figure out who is Tyler and who is Laura.



WHAT: For Out of the Heart Proceed
BY: Jensen Beach
IS: Debut story collection
FROM: Dzac Books / Dark Sky Books
SAYS: Sadness thick as a river
AT: www.jensenwbeach.com
PRESENTED BY: Scott Daughtridge

JENSEN BEACH'S debut story collection is introduced by a Bible passage, Matthew 15:18-19: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." With this passage we become acquainted with the tone of the collection. Beach's stories are about death, parenthood, family conflict, and the fight against the darkness that, at times, threatens to envelope us. Through his characters, Beach is showing us the various ways people cope with life's harsh circumstances.

Some take strange actions, like the man in "Priest Lake, Idaho" who sets fire to his tool shed in hopes of building something new after his wife dies. In my favorite piece, "We Cannot Cross the River," a group of men are inexplicably stranded in a cabin and cannot escape by crossing the river until it is frozen:

Sadness thick as a river, and night you can write upon, forces Molineux to succumb. He grinds a rock into his throat and chokes a horrid, slow death. Suarez buries him in the soft dirt. Winslow whispers prayers. Bekker's jealous spit hits the tilled earth.

Other stay calm and speak plainly. In "How It Was When a Car Caught Fire on the Street Outside My House Last Night," a man argues with his wife after they awake to a burning car on their street. She is in tears, and he sums up their problems like this:

The fire was out. The firemen left. The police arrived and wrapped the car's skeleton in yellow warning tape. I explained this to my wife. She said she was too tired to argue. Clearly she hadn't been listening. That's the major problem with us. We just talk. We never listen.

In equally plain language, a man imparts wisdom on his son in "The Dark is What." The two go to the flea market to buy a puzzle and find that the table they normally visit has been replaced by a purse vendor. The son is upset and the father reminds him "that nothing lasts, which is both good and bad because it means you will never feel anything for very long."

Whether the response to their plight is to stay calm or start a fight, these characters ask for sympathy and understanding. The cards have been stacked against them and they are doing their best. This is not a collection for readers looking for comic relief or an escape into fantasy. The characters are in a world of shadows, facing the evils stated in the epigraph, but they show moments of strength and determination.

If it's from our own mouths and our own hearts that darkness comes, then the battle we are waging is with ourselves, our own nature. At times, external circumstances exacerbate the struggle, but they nevertheless provide us with good stories from which light can be gathered.

In "Their Future Looks Brighter the Closer It Gets to the Sun," a couple sew a large kite they use to fly them away from their domestic lives. Neighbors gather to watch them take off. After nearly failing, they are lifted from the ground:

Below them, the park and the neighbors and everything they longed to be rid of grew smaller. And when they could no longer see anything that reminded them not to, they shared a smile between them.

WHAT: *People Are Tiny in Paintings of China*
BY: Cynthia Arrieu-King
IS: Book of poems
FROM: Octopus Books
SAYS: Our survival depended on my ability / to float up
 to ceilings and stick quietly
AT: www.octopusbooks.net
PRESENTED BY: Laura Straub



A VIEW-MASTER full of wonders of light, color, and circumstance—these poems uproot you and force you to see. Every page reveals a new bouquet of lilacs, or a fat man in a wheelchair, pints of blood, or prime numbers. People presume to tell Arrieu-King what she is and what she isn't. So many times her name has changed:

My grandfather was a Chinese ambassador to Belgium. He changed the last name to King while there. He didn't want to go there and be Mr. Chien, anybody's Mr. Dog. I'm not sure this is true.

Arrieu-King's mourning process is resplendent, careful and delicate with detail. She works through the consequences of her father's death. Her brother leaves for war and returns scathed. An ancestor's ashes are abandoned in an unmarked grave. Constantly confronted by the contrast of her heritage within her culture, Arrieu-King juggles her identity as it is volleyed between contexts. These are not easy journeys to make, but she tackles them with great intention and poise:

I was born dreaming our family was fugitive—
 diamonds flung atop China cabinets.
 A joker shrank and entered the hall,
 menaced the front door of my dollhouse.
 Our survival depended on my ability
 to float up to ceilings and stick quietly.

It is impossible not to admire her strength and cognition. I remember the first time a prism was set on my desk in the sunlight, how much it shook me to see the sun broken into tangible parts.



WHAT: *Hallelujah Giant Space Wolf*
BY: Daniel Bailey
IS: Book of poems
FROM: Mammoth Editions
SAYS: I want to raise dinosaurs / from birth to death with you
AT: www.mammoth-editions.com
PRESENTED BY: Erin McNellis

I KNEW FROM the first page of *Hallelujah Giant Space Wolf* that Daniel Bailey was singing the traditional song of my people. Until I picked up the book, I didn't even know that "my people" were a thing, or that we had a distinctive vernacular that had been in search of its poet, but with these lines I felt something stir in me that must have stirred in the first Italians to read Dante's *Inferno* seven hundred years ago:

eventually, I grew bored of my godliness,
 so I became Nicolas Cage, which was awesome
 except for the whole being a dad thing
 being a dad got in the way of all the shit
 I would rather have been doing
 like making love to my hot wife
 or simply rollicking in the unstoppable glory of my Nicolas Cage
 without the constraints of fatherhood

I knew, instantly, that a poet who could write a line like "rollicking in the unstoppable glory of my Nicolas Cage" was deeply in touch with my values and priorities. Cage is a perfect patron saint for this book: he burns with crazy-eyed intensity whether he is punching a woman in a bear costume or donning an Elvis jumpsuit and hurling himself out of a plane. *Hallelujah Giant Space Wolf* achieves a similar blend of urgency and absurdity, taking readers from the bathroom of a church to a knock-down-drag-out fight

with a gorilla to the beginning and/or end of the universe astride the titular cosmic vulpine.

There is also real, sincere heart in these poems—this is not just hipster pastiche. After the speaker of "Geronimo Boredom Prayer," the book's first poem, is finished being God and Nicolas Cage, he goes through a number of other transformations and eventually ends up as a mist that evaporates into the sky:

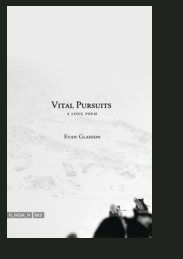
where I became rain but I did not rain
 I fucking flew at the earth and smashed hard into the dirt
 crying "Geronimo," wetting the dirt with my face
 and all of my love, all of it
 and I said "amen," as I fell asleep inside the earth

Most of these poems tell relatively coherent stories, and many are even love poems, expressing tender sentiments as remarkable as "I want to raise dinosaurs / from birth to death with you" and as banal as "please tell me I'm not an idiot. please tell me we'll be ok."

Bailey's previous book, *The Drunk Sonnets*, left me radically unsure of whether and how much he was ever being sincere—which was an interesting effect—but this book makes me quite sure that he means what he says, even when he is punching Jesus with brass knuckles from the back of his giant space wolf. In that scene, for example, the speaker's rage and love and connection to the cosmos ring true, even if the setting and situation are absurd. While the restrictions of the sonnet form lent some structure and focus to Bailey's visions, they are no less intense for being allowed to be more expansive.

If *The Drunk Sonnets* were moments alone under a fluorescent light with a bottle of Jack, a rabbit-eared TV set, and a blog, *Space Wolf's* poems are headlong runs, hand-in-hand, through the empty Midwest night and out into the terrifying weirdness of the cosmos. It's a journey worth taking.

WHAT: **Vital Pursuits**
 BY: **Evan Glasson**
 IS: **Book-length poem**
 FROM: **H_NGM_N Books**
 SAYS: *Sea World is one of those places / you should dream of but never go*
 AT: **www.h-ngm-n.com**
 PRESENTED BY: **Tyler Gobble**



IN *VITAL PURSUITS*—a book-length long poem out now from H_NGM_N Books—Evan Glasson flips through the catalog of his self to point at the moments and images that toss us beyond the big equal sign displaying the true shape of the speaker today. Or as he puts it early on in the book:

Into the suggestion box,
 I dropped everything
 I've ever been
 hoping to be chosen, held, read
 aloud by someone else
 in such an order as to
 formulate a more accurate
 current self.

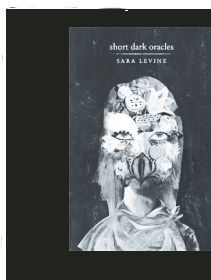
This is prime, right here, a little spot marking the larger whole, Glasson's remarkable ability to both create the catalog and wave it around. This book-length poem trickles out in sections, each set in this reflective, contemplative spin—an appreciation of toucans that spirals into a myriad of thoughts regarding identity and accomplishment, a snippet of science that leads to an admission of a personal misunderstanding. These sections refuse to slow down, they pull everything out of the drawer, and in the end of each, we see a new glimmer to the outline of this person, rising up out of the epiphanies and declarations, confessions and dents.

This is a book noticing the spin of life, but also, most importantly, about acknowledging that spin, the impact it has, the swirly head it creates. Glasson's combination of experiences and knowledge, of language and emotion, performs spectacular feats in framing the life exposed, these vital pursuits. This work goes beyond packing pieces of life into life; it points at the pieces as they come down the line. Again and again, Glasson puts on the Important hat, knowing "[i]f I didn't shorten the leash, / he would waste the whole day / looking for the best place to go." Take for instance this part from the end of the book:

Today the whole world is surprised
 a killer whale killed its trainer.
 He turned over and over for her
 for years before turning on her.
 What should we make of it? Many of us
 won't get in the tank but hope the splash
 reaches our row. I think
 Sea World is one of those places
 you should dream of but never go.
 The buildup and the letdown.

Here, we get pushed through the news, the personal reflection, the categorization, and at the end, we look back, bit by bit, section by section, and it truly is colossal, to see a self render this widely. Yes, absolutely, this is a book that matters, as it proves the importance of documentation, for the purpose to prove, to the self and others, all the things, good and bad, ugly and beautiful, that we've done, endured, spit back up. This book has re-enlivened in me a belief that doing is the true vital pursuit, a piece of me to turn, stretch, and change, for longer, more enjoyable distances than I could ever imagine. There's always the next thing as in "[w]hen this game is over / they will pick up the floor / and lay down ice in its place."

Want more reviews? See Nate Logan's review
 of Michael Earl Craig's *Jombang Jet* at
WWW.NOOJOURNAL.COM/14



WHAT: **Short Dark Oracles**
 BY: **Sara Levine**
 IS: **Book of stories**
 FROM: **Caketrain**
 SAYS: *There is a woman who will die*
 AT: **www.caketrain.org**
 PRESENTED BY: **Laura Straub**

THIS BOOK is like that new girl you saw on campus years ago and still dream of: witty, fresh, and smarter than you. How can stories cut and charm so equally—a smile with sharp incisors? This is a collection where every mother's heart is "rat-sized" and where we are coached to gaze upon the "feral hair" on an estranged friend's chin. Uncompromising and alluring, Levine's sentences will prompt a laugh followed by an abrupt pause:

Upon seeing my mother pass proudly through the street in one of her capes, her prominent baldness gleaming in the afternoon sun, I remarked to myself, "There is a woman who will die—not of breast cancer, but of skin cancer, at the age of sixty-five, because she has failed to screen her head."

It is a guilty feeling: unleashing the things we are allowed to think but never say. This is not a book for gloved hands or tea-parties. If you are looking for polite conversation and delicate, flowered metaphors then you will not find them here. If you would like a challenge, or a laugh, or a snide remark uttered under baited breath, then this is just the thing. The girl from campus—remember how she seemed so brave? So sure? If she had given you the opportunity to see beneath her surface, you would have uncovered the compromising gulf between beauty and truth.

20 GOOD BOOKS

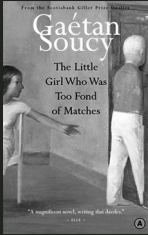
A READING
JOURNAL
OF 2012

TWENTY BOOKS from 2012 I remember because I remember where I was when I read them: the buses, the macey bedrooms, the green porch couches. Not counting other good books I'd already read or I'm still trying to write longer things about or interviews I conducted in Cajun restaurants during a snowstorm.

These twenty books are two things: first, a reading journal of an apology for not putting out an issue of **NOO** in 2012. And second, my

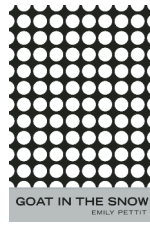
celebration of Vouched joining up with us. These are twenty books from my 2012 that did something to my lenses. They are in chronological reading order. Some were published in 2012; some weren't. French boyfriends, the history of information, hydroplanes, pubic hairs in jam jars, bolo ties, flowering malls, nerves knit together into furious anthems, and happiness, which is—as Osip Mandelstam reminds us—a golden hoop guided by someone else. —Mike

The Little Girl Who Was Too Fond of Matches Gaétan Soucy



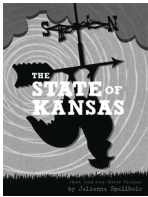
Read this with mice in my walls in Baltimore. Eventually you'll make friends with anything that makes a sound you recognize. In this book, a father on the outskirts of a village commits suicide, and his two children—a brother and a sister who have never really met anyone but themselves, and even that is questionable—venture out to buy a coffin and be like “Hey guys?” This book does things with the slow drip of revelation that are actually surprising and inspiring. You know that thing where you're buying a pomegranate and realize you've been calling the wrong thing a pomegranate your whole life? Now imagine it's a throwing star. Now imagine it's yelling at you.

Goat in the Snow Emily Pettit



Read this in Baltimore and talked about it at a book club where there was a giant tub of generic cheese puffs. In these poems, there are twists on sound and thought and though and how. Full of aphorism and burrowing. During the book club discussion, I was very enthusiastic about the relevance of this book's imagination, and I still am. Read this if you remember how some pizzas in the 90s used to come with those little white table things in the middle of them, which I guess are called pizza savers and are intended to prevent the cardboard of the box from collapsing and ruining the cheese, but they were always exciting to me because I could make them endtables in dollhouses.

The State of Kansas Julianna Spallholz



Read this after Julianna gave a reading in Baltimore. The key to this tight collection of fictions is the revelation of repetition and the way all autobiography really means is repeating ourselves until we become selves. Our routines have no mercy for us. The world has palo verde beetles for us. Vampire boyfriends. M&Ms or water. The repetition in this book made me feel like a real life human is made of layers and layers of masking tape wrapped around what you're really hoping is a glow.

After Claude Iris Owens



Read this on the bus past regal mid-Atlantic trees in Baltimore and also past pockmarked row houses. This is a novel about a woman in New York who has a French boyfriend who gets exasperated. The woman is the one talking the whole time. Her name is Harriet. She ends up in the Chelsea Hotel. You start out thinking she's annoying and lovable and you end up walking around in her clothes while she's in a cab outside, still talking to you over a walkie-talkie but also somehow asleep. Made me realize the narrative potential of denying the entire world, relentlessly and off key.

Together We Can Bury It Kathy Fish



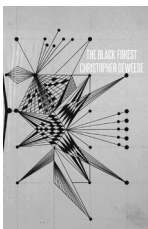
Read this on a train back to Baltimore. On the train were people in McDonalds uniforms making loud and beautiful jokes because they'd stolen a bunch of mayonnaise. If inside a jar of stolen mayonnaise you found a tiny Nina Simone singing her cover of “Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues,” and you get to the part where she goes “Well that's it folks, that's it,” you would actually be getting to the sad and wan stories in this collection. And then this book sneaks the mayo back to where it stole it from, but it listens to Nina Simone on its off-brand MP3 player while drinking ginger ale at the mall, just wandering and wandering and remembering and trying not to regret anything.

Baby Geisha Trinie Dalton



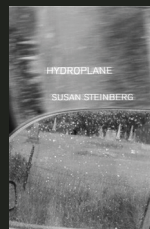
Read this mostly waiting for buses in Baltimore. A man came up and said he was going to vomit. I told him there was a hospital up the street. He said “Yeah, there's a CVS too and a motherfucking baseball stadi—” and then he vomited. Reading *Baby Geisha* is like meeting two people in bathing suits high on peyote at an In-And-Burger in Laurel Canyon, and you become best friends with them for one night until you realize they've been lying to you the whole time. These stories flip a panel under the world and adjust the RGB levels. I can't tell the difference between the way reading “Scarlet Gilia” feels (“If it doesn't hurt, I'm lost”) and the way it feels to learn to sing exactly like someone you love.

The Black Forest Christopher DeWeese

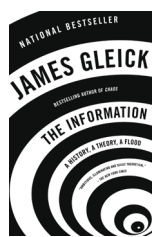


Read this after losing a lot to the artificial intelligence in a tennis video game my friend Mark bought me for my birthday. This is a book of poems that will talk openly with you about fear and anxiety while running very fast between lots of trees. The forest is full of nouns and full of hair flicks and full of taut whispers and full of beardy jokes and full of sad abruptness. Reminded me of an underbrush that is made of all the different kinds of cereal ever, which I know is weird, I'm not saying it isn't.

Hydroplane Susan Steinberg



Read this while my lamp sat on a cardboard box in Baltimore. You know how when you clip your fingernails, each individual fingernail suggests both history and connection with not only every other fingernail in the sink but every other fingernail ever, and this suggestion works by way of the underlying fact that fingernails are dead material and so many bodily things are dead material but also things we put on our body are sometimes dead, like toothpaste made out of ground up bones? That's what this book—a collection of fictions, sure—is.



The Information: a History, a Theory, a Flood
James Gleick

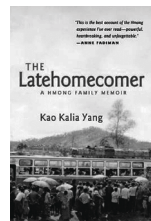
Started this waiting to be let into brunch at a restaurant themed after rocketships and finished this on a porch in Baltimore having amazing and exciting conversations with Carolyn Zaikowski while Johns Hopkins students walked by sleepily below with biscuit sandwiches. This book is one of the most interesting and provocative pop science books I've ever read. It has telegraphs and quantum physics and search engines and dictionaries and ambiguity in it. I have told more people about this book than maybe any other book from 2012. I have like 85% of the pages dog-eared.

Autoportrait
Edouard Levé



Read this while many different men were fixing a small roof outside my apartment in Northampton, MA. Imagine if your friend most obsessed with shrugs and haircuts were to take you into his basement photography studio, where he's been developing pictures he's been taking of himself for years, except (this is a book of strung together I-statements that you can't really call confessions without them sneaking away from the party) without himself noticing. This is self-voyeurism is all I'm trying to say. It's one of those books you reflexively begin changing your life to imitate for a few weeks until you find out the author killed himself. Le sigh.

The Latecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir
Kao Kalia Yang



Read this after listening to a controversial Radiolab episode. Kao Kalia Yang's memoir is her account of her family's journey fleeing Laos, trying for dignity and survival in Thai refugee camps, and finally making it—units and couples and cousins at a time—to California and Minnesota. I came into this book full of political vigor (basically Radiolab whitewashed Kao Kalia Yang and her uncle, Eng Yang, and told them they didn't know what their own story was all about) but I left with a folklore unseparate from life because it lures love along, and how grandmothers keep their eyes open while they try to hold everything together, seeing toward togetherness yet to come.

Science
Emily Toder



Read this while waiting for toast in my apartment overlooking the radio station parking lot in Northampton. This is a book of poems, except it's really a book of patient lectures on how to fix the lasagna you're bringing to a friend's dinner party so it doesn't look like you already ate half of it, weeping, by yourself. Emily Toder's poems do this thing where they walk a tightrope of plainspoken candor while wearing a headdress made of artificial feathers the colors and shapes of the geometry in 1980s New Wave videos. Toder's poems will explain the world better than the world does, which is to say more frankly re: pain.

Strange Cowboy: Lincoln Dahl Turns Five
Sam Michel



Read this in the dark in my apartment, except I shouldn't say dark because I could see the lights from the parking garage. But they weren't lights like what falls down a Nevada canyon or seethes through creosote bush, which is light this novel knows a lot about. Also demanding mothers and mute sons and visionary wives. Remember Beckett? Then here you go: Beckett on the range, cowboy Beckett, dandy bolo tie Beckett, and some of the most beautiful desert river sentences and heart silt I have set upon in a good long while. If I could afford to buy all of my friends new boots, I would put a copy of this novel in each pair.

Because It Is: Poems and Drawings
Kenneth Patchen



Read this walking around eating delicious Trinidadian food in Charles Village in Baltimore. In a Craigslist ad for a subletter, I talked about swoony light and flower colors against row houses, all in a mood I think I stole from Kenneth Patchen. If you haven't devoured everything by Kenneth Patchen I have to admit I will never trust you when you sing along at high volume to a sad song with a trumpet in it. My stupid outdated blog is topped with a quote from this book that is more aspiration than honesty: "Oh, the kind of angel I'm on the side of / Won't ever try to hide from the terrible responsibilities of love!"

China Cowboy
Kim Gek Lin Short



Read this on buses to and back from New York. It should've been raining cowboy spurs. This is the story of a country singer named La La kidnapped from her Hong Kong home by an American soybean artist named Ren. La La eats soapy lumps, her dad stabs typhoon-stranded tourists, her mom's burnt head shows up in a Froot Loops box—I love them all. There are jam jars with pubic hairs in them, and Ren says we're all made of slime and beans. Listen: the fried heartache of a country yodel both contains and cooks the gooey yolk of the heart.

That's Not a Feeling
Dan Josefsen



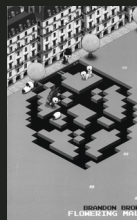
Read this in an apartment that has carpet in the kitchen. It's a novel about a psychotherapy boarding school/cult. Its first person narration is mystically sneaky. You can touch all the characters' knees under the table. The headmaster has a heartbreaking dream about his first wife. The plot gets dark and smart. Read this if once on the a bus you saw a glum young man in a camouflage jacket and orange cargo pants carefully holding what looked, to you, like a tinfoil-covered pie. Except a little head popped out of the tinfoil. And it looked exactly like the glum young man, except the head was wearing glasses and trying not to cry, whereas the young man had obviously given up.

Swim for the Little One First
Noy Holland



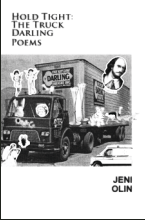
Read this before falling asleep a lot, which was perfect for the melting latticework of Holland's stories. I want to talk about the sentences in terms of Latinate school subject words—their geography, their anthropology, their topography—but I know I can't because these sentences sew their tricks from much more lived-in registers. Bought this after I watched Holland read the story "Milk River" and it made me cry. The story is about two girls with brothers at war and fathers sick-headed and dogs dogged and mothers dead. This book is about mixing the dust of the plains and the dust of the desert and how sometimes you can't hear what's flown.

Flowering Mall
Brandon Brown



Read this on a bus from NYC to Massachusetts. Bought it from Unnameable Books in Brooklyn because the cover reminded me of trying to make my own 8-bit RPG in junior high. Instead of talking about the flowers of evil or faux-translation, I will say these poems grill all the glitchy nouns of our moment (from Kanye to Occupy to Ciroc to das kapital gains tax) into something bloody—and manage a fair salting of self-scrutiny about polo shorts. They don't flinch when it comes to crawling through the instinctual douchbaggery of late capitalism. They would make the quickest and sharpest joke about someone accidentally mustaching themselves with a highlighter pen.

Hold Tight: The Truck Darling Poems
Jeni Olin



Read this sometimes while drinking coffee but always felt like I was drinking coffee. Except the coffee was also Kool-Aid and Percocet and wine coolers and a recovery smoothie. Sort of flabbergasted this isn't the most popular book of poetry ever and that no one's spun it off into its own insanely successful brand of Pop Rocks yet. Sometimes I just mutter "Oh my trashola heart" which is from these poems. From these poems: "Pimples are sexy and funerals are neat." Or: "I suppose you black out after you take in / a fairly small amount of love." Or: "Feral grace, to work out or own tiny salvations / by fear and trembling." Or, finally: "Sometimes / I think I am horny when I just need to go to the bathroom. / Sometimes I just need to go to the bathroom & stay there / on days it is so hard to shout myself away from death."

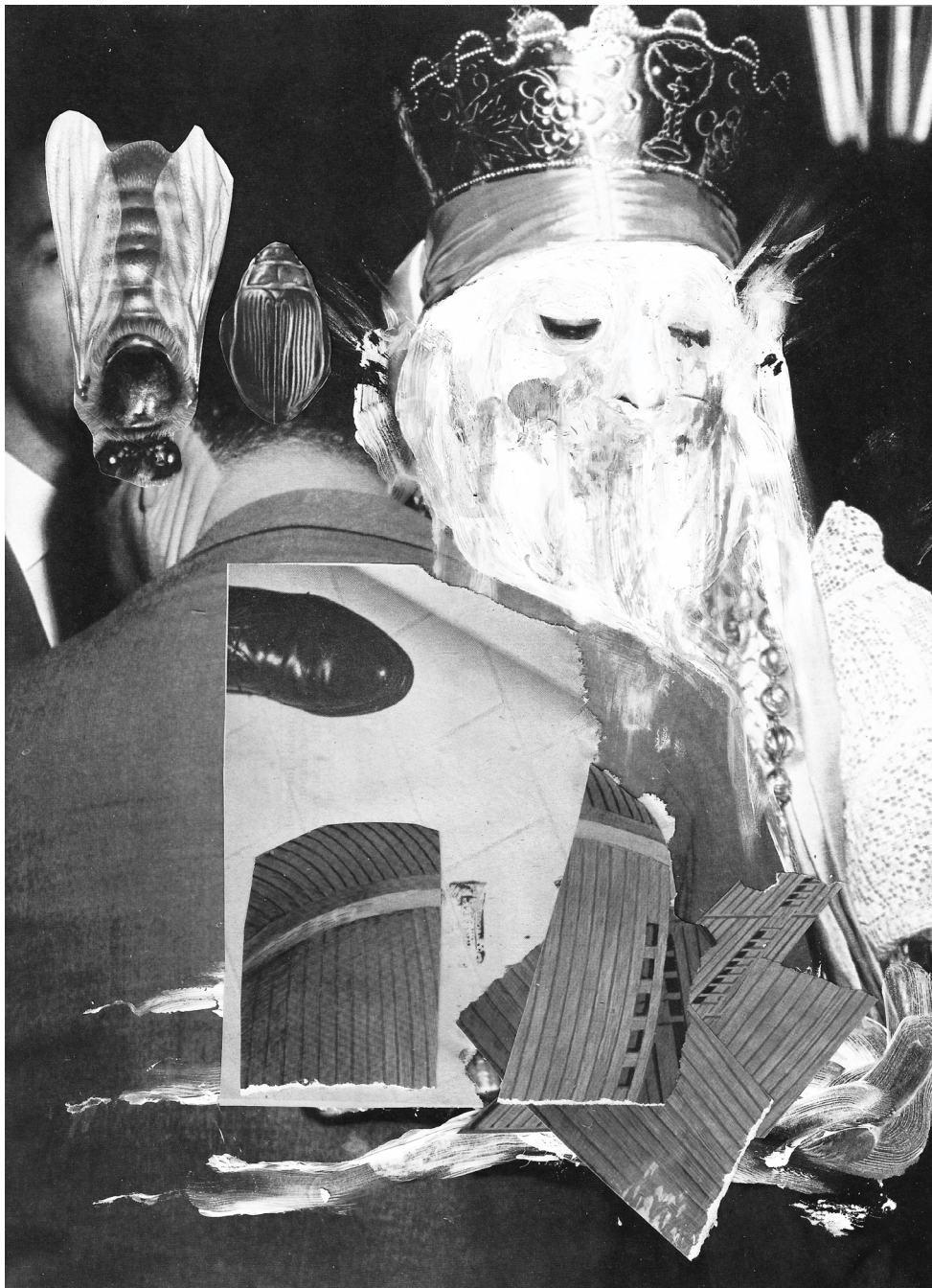
The Selected Poems of Osip Mandelstam
tr. by Clarence Brown and W.S. Merwin



Read a lot of this on a bus in the fog and drizzle of a deeply enwintered Massachusetts. Osip Mandelstam was a Russian through the busy times: the Revolution, Stalinism, wars. He died in a gulag. You can tell he knew the dirt and the wine both without lying. You can tell he liked clapping until his cheeks turned red. You can tell he liked weeping enspooned with a beautiful woman as they both lay on a frozen lake and withstood the wind that was keeping the ice below them from giving way. You can tell he liked whispering to bears instead of riding them. I finished this book exhausted on a train, and everything I dog-eared was because it named a feeling I'd felt namelessly before, like: "After midnight the heart picks the locked silence / right out of your hands." To bring it full around: "After midnight the heart has its banquet, / gnawing on a silvery mouse."

FIND THE FULL 92 BOOK 2012 LIST AT WWW.NOOJOURNAL.COM/14. SORRY NICHOLAS FOR NUGGING INTO YOUR COLLAGES. 18 GOOD BOOKS SOUNDS TOO WEIRD. NICHOLAS DID THE COVER ART TOO. GOOD STUFF, RIGHT?

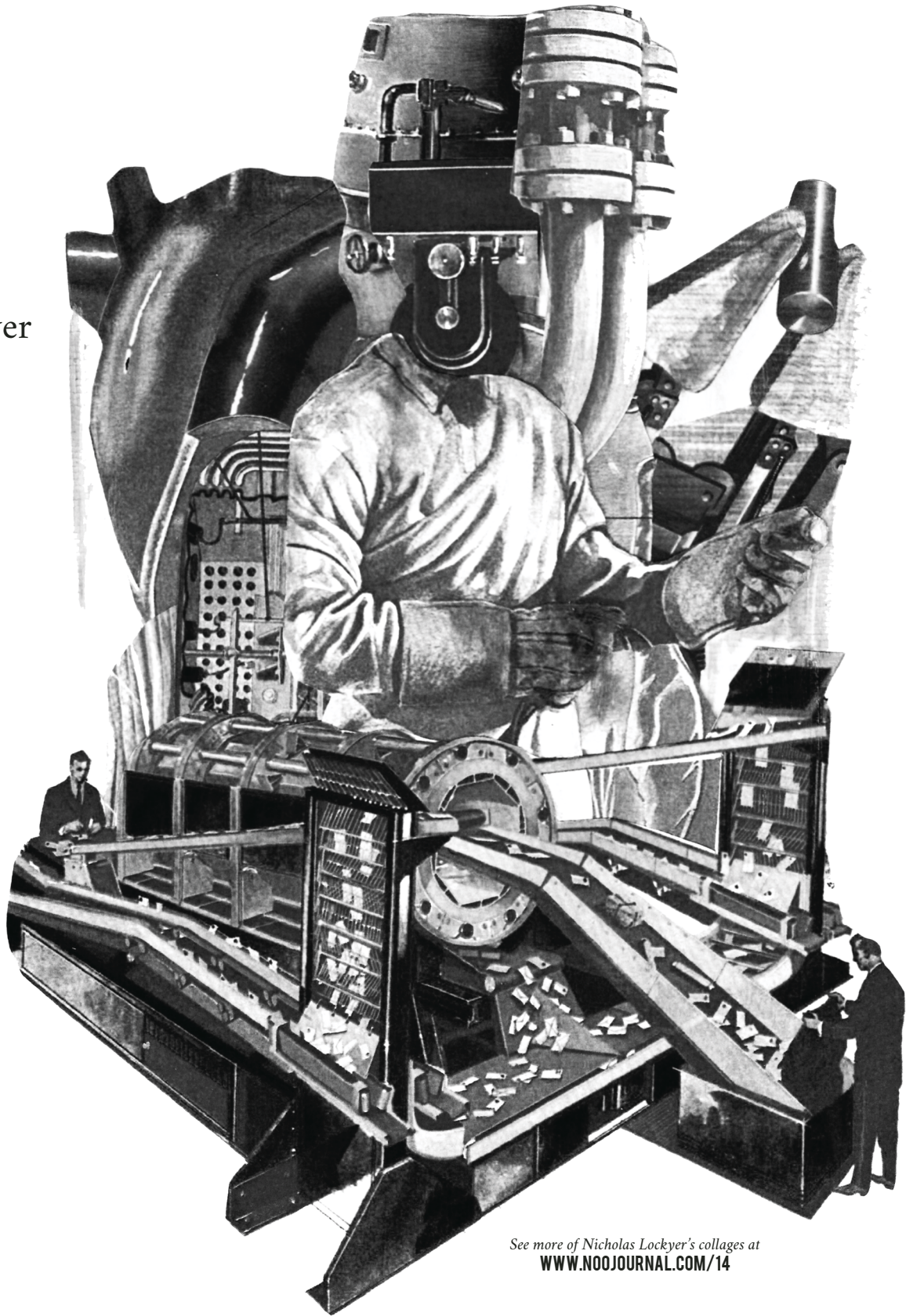
TRUTH



Nicholas

We Penetrated Deeper and Deeper Into the Heart of Darkness

Lockyer



See more of Nicholas Lockyer's collages at
WWW.NOOJOURNAL.COM/14

GREYHOUND

Meagan Cass

HE MEANT IT as a nice gesture. It was summer and she seemed lonely—their oldest, their girl, gone off to college early—and the breed made a kind of biographical sense. When was the last time she'd put on her track shoes? He imagined woman and dog coursing the trails of FDR Park in the blue-back mornings, her coming home flushed, downing a glass of orange juice, making them bacon and eggs. Then they'd make love. She'd laugh at his jokes. She'd stop losing weight. Maybe she'd forgive him.

He did all the legwork, had the yard fenced, took the boys to Caldor for fake rabbits, a fishing rod for a pole lure, a chain link crate like the kind she would have lived in back at the track. "Name her," he said. His wife refused. Before he could press her, the boys said "Roadie, like the Road Runner, beep, beep," and it stuck.

But all through the fall the dog didn't take, flitted through the house at night, ghost grey, pissing in clean laundry baskets, nosing the walls for cracks. Days she kept to her crate, to her bleached white bones. His wife kept to her old moccasins, to her sea of dandelions in the backyard, pulled the hairy bodies up, tearing her shoulder come October.

"Take it easy," he told her.

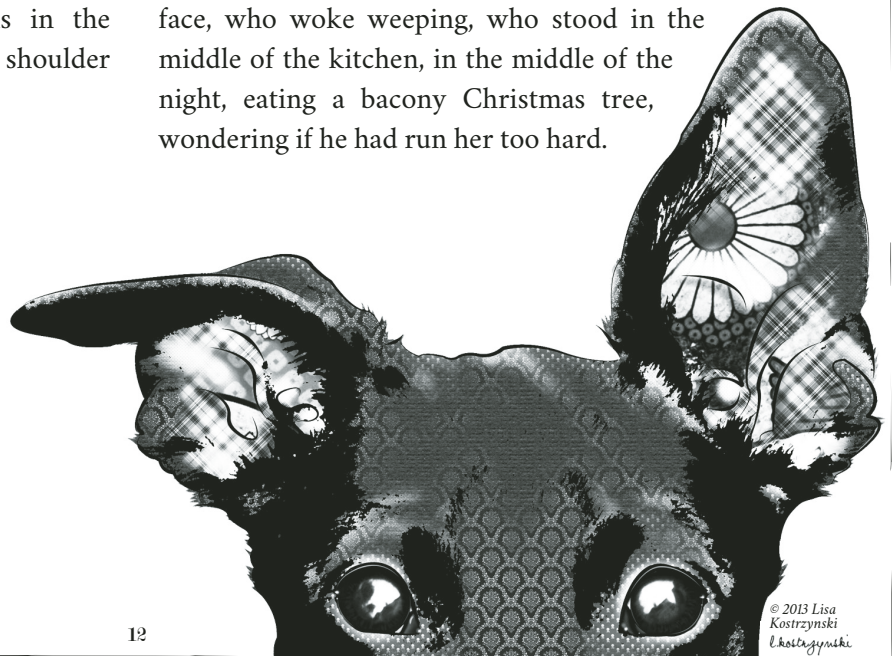
"Who else will pull them?" she asked. Nights she came to bed with ice packs, cold, wet fists thrust between them.

He decided he would show her how to love a hound. "Run her," he instructed the boys, a camcorder balanced on his shoulder. "Let's see what she can do." She opened up, whisked through the burnt grass. And it was beautiful, though after a while she seemed to limp a little, to wince when her feet touched ground.

"Give her a rest," his wife said, looking up from her weeds. "You're hurting her."

Then she was coating golden capsules of Omega 3 in peanut butter, baking homemade dog treats using the Christmas cookie cutters, calling, "Here, girla, girla." At dinner she talked osteo-arthritis, the damages of racing. On the couch in the evenings, reading her AA book, she traced the curves of Roadie's ribs, gently, with her fingertips, as if she were a violin. "My sweet girla."

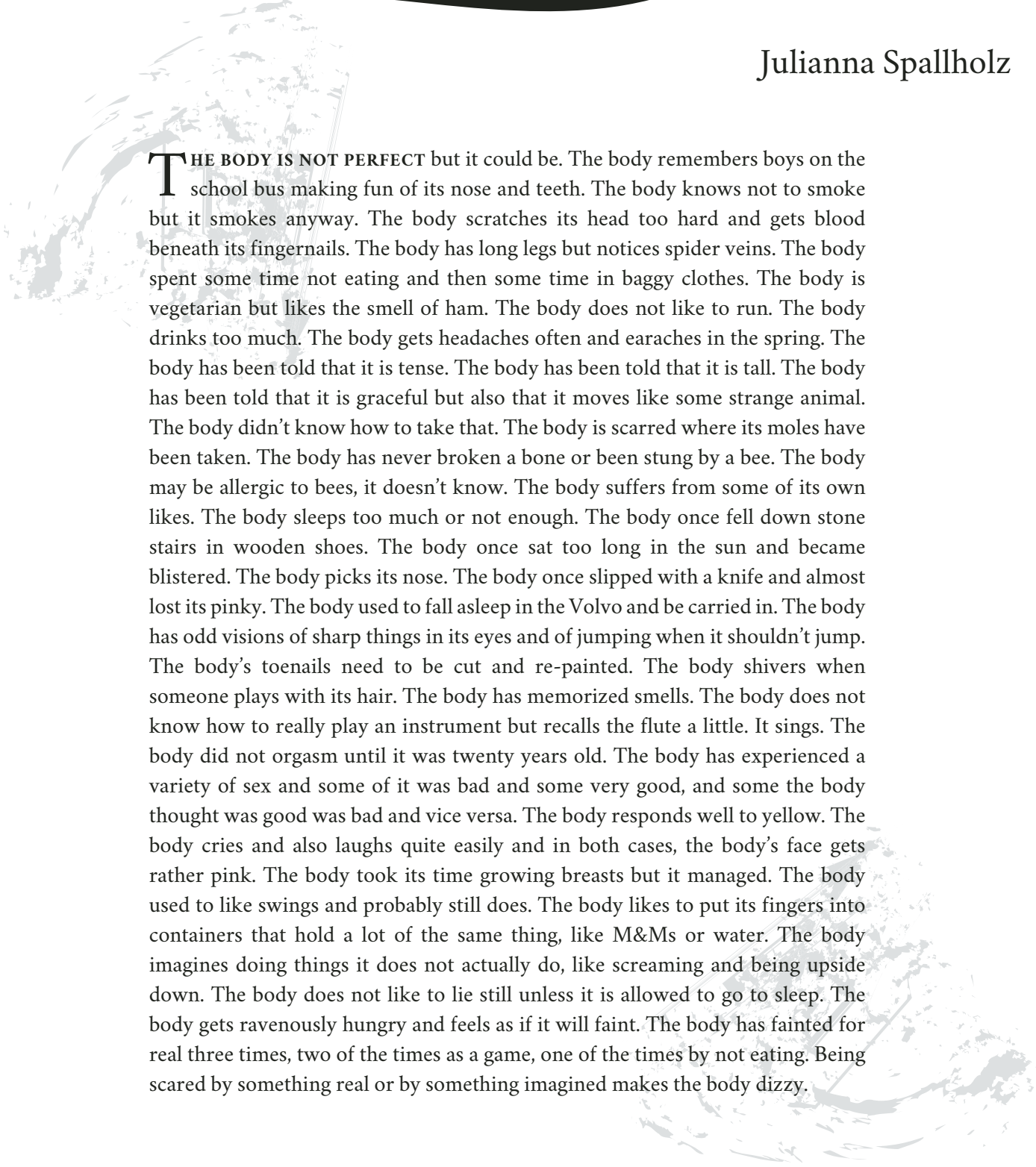
Yet when the dog's hips went, three years later, he was the one who dreamed of those big eyes in that thin, skull face, who woke weeping, who stood in the middle of the kitchen, in the middle of the night, eating a bacony Christmas tree, wondering if he had run her too hard.



the body



Julianna Spallholz



THE BODY IS NOT PERFECT but it could be. The body remembers boys on the school bus making fun of its nose and teeth. The body knows not to smoke but it smokes anyway. The body scratches its head too hard and gets blood beneath its fingernails. The body has long legs but notices spider veins. The body spent some time not eating and then some time in baggy clothes. The body is vegetarian but likes the smell of ham. The body does not like to run. The body drinks too much. The body gets headaches often and earaches in the spring. The body has been told that it is tense. The body has been told that it is tall. The body has been told that it is graceful but also that it moves like some strange animal. The body didn't know how to take that. The body is scarred where its moles have been taken. The body has never broken a bone or been stung by a bee. The body may be allergic to bees, it doesn't know. The body suffers from some of its own likes. The body sleeps too much or not enough. The body once fell down stone stairs in wooden shoes. The body once sat too long in the sun and became blistered. The body picks its nose. The body once slipped with a knife and almost lost its pinky. The body used to fall asleep in the Volvo and be carried in. The body has odd visions of sharp things in its eyes and of jumping when it shouldn't jump. The body's toenails need to be cut and re-painted. The body shivers when someone plays with its hair. The body has memorized smells. The body does not know how to really play an instrument but recalls the flute a little. It sings. The body did not orgasm until it was twenty years old. The body has experienced a variety of sex and some of it was bad and some very good, and some the body thought was good was bad and vice versa. The body responds well to yellow. The body cries and also laughs quite easily and in both cases, the body's face gets rather pink. The body took its time growing breasts but it managed. The body used to like swings and probably still does. The body likes to put its fingers into containers that hold a lot of the same thing, like M&Ms or water. The body imagines doing things it does not actually do, like screaming and being upside down. The body does not like to lie still unless it is allowed to go to sleep. The body gets ravenously hungry and feels as if it will faint. The body has fainted for real three times, two of the times as a game, one of the times by not eating. Being scared by something real or by something imagined makes the body dizzy.

JUNK MOVEMENTS

Nalini Abhiraman

GUTTER EDITION

LOVE IT before it leaves. This limited-edition pizza features a variety of toppings including grilled white meat chicken, tomatoes, spinach, bacon and a three cheese blend with a creamy sauce on a thin and crispy crust for the perfect crunch. This unique pizza flavor is perfect for lunch, dinner, or as an appetizer.

Slice is a violent, limited word. You eat one for lunch every day. You are chained, your food and you. You are including food. You cuff a soda to yourself as an appetizer, a unique soda, with a doctorate in benzoates. The liquid tastes like a hive when held in the mouth. A variety of drones feast on the slice grilled in your stomach. They empty parts of themselves into their fat queen. Spinach, chicken, plum tomatoes, mozzarella flavor. Collapse. Love it before it leaves.

*Pizza comes from a sad place. There are splendid old gutters choked with rats, dozens of them, their eyes glittering purple. They test their boundaries. One, then three, then all, clamber out in daylight to sniff the ever-heaped piles of garbage. This garbage has matured into its own regenerative sediment, the rotting and unrotting toppings of it sobbing and sighing, burping sulfurous sauce and shit into everyone's lives. Blue and gray buildings. Peeling mosaic. Styrofoam crunch in the piazza. Sooty thumbprint smeared across the sun. At a wedding a little girl sings, her round cheeks trembling to the organ. The little girl is dressed like a birthday cake. The bride is dressed like a little girl. Her father hands the little girl's father a thin shock of banknotes wrapped in creamy white lambskin. The *padrino* nods at them to leave. His features blend together and crust over. They shut the door behind themselves, twisting the knob quietly as the real guests pile meat onto their plates and smear sugar under their noses. Father digs into his other pocket, drops dirty coins into an oily jar. Under the eave across the highway from their home, he tears a roughly cut slice, folds it into a crispy rosemary-scented pocket shedding perfect slurries of cheese and fatted bacon. The little girl eats dinner, careful to wipe the bright trickle of tomato from her pale gray cheek. It's all anyone can do, try to eat neatly. Love it before it leaves.*

CHIPPING

DORITOS® brand tortilla chips deliver a powerful crunch that unlocks the bold and unique flavors you crave. The DORITOS® brand is constantly creating new ways to give you immersive and memorable experiences, to put you in control of the things you love most. Check out Snack Strong Productions at Doritos.com.

Control unlocks you to deliver the things you love most. There's no team in *powerful*. Productions of power are bold, squat things, aimed for the crotch. These days it doesn't matter whose. It's office politics is all, a thousand vinegars sprung from a single mother, gelatinous disk gathering everything to itself. The young are the underclass. They cluster in the shadows of the office—in all the places the young usually cluster, mailroom and break room and the handicapped stall in the restroom—and exchange clues constantly. Or cry. The old are the underclass. They pause, hands atremble above the new keyboard, and peer down for the mouse, now a red aphid embedded between the G and the H. The world is constantly creating new ways and things to wrest things and ways from them. Their confusion is strong and immersive, as experiences go.

And you? You crave what's memorable. What's unique. This draws you up and out of the bed each day, enables you to watch in the mirror as you clean your teeth, the toothbrush head winking brightly from the pocket of your cheek. Give it a spit. Check it out. Brand it yours. You'll eat Doritos for breakfast, each tortilla chip triangle its own fretwork of smaller triangles. Crunch them into flavors, feel them crust in your molars. Snack that. Put that in your mouth. Visit Doritos.com for productions and reproductions. One day you'll reproduce, at the right time, your hand on the wheel, your eye locked and dry on what's next.

PRESERVES

Whether it's freshly steamed dinners, savory Asian-style cuisine, or hearty comfort food, we have a delicious solution for every craving. There are over 120 varieties to choose from, so you're sure to find more than one favorite. And with over 90 varieties with no preservatives, you can have your delicious and eat it too.

Dinner is the opposite of breakfast. Breakfast for dinner is what sits on your plate. Whether is the opposite of whether, or not. Freshly steamed is the opposite of boneless chunks. Which would you rather? Once upon a time, there was no savory Asian-style cuisine. There was only savory Pangean-style cuisine, or as it was called at the time, Ur-kontinental cuisine. Loin of plesiosaur, splintered sinew of pterodactyl. Kale so tall you could punch it in the face. What face? Face it, it's always been a delicious solution. Swiffer your liver with it. Get rid of that Henry VIII feeling. There are over 120 varieties of ways in which you're not measuring up to choose from, so you're sure to find more than one favorite. We have. It's called hearty comfort food with over 90 percent preservatives. And you can have it. Have you? Have you had your delicious? Have you a delicious to eat? What are you craving? Every craving is a symbol, and every symbol a displacement, so by the transitive property, cravings are the original biofuel. Cravings are the opposite of original. Opposite is what you crave.

diary of
hunter green

#7 & #9

Jeremy Bauer

dear diary

WHAT A WEEK! Monday my tie felt hot. Hotttt. I couldn't stop rubbing it. It was maroon and reminded me of how much I loved Dr. Pepper when I was nine. I saw a dog Wednesday and trusted it with my love I remembered again. He licked me, but he looked in my eyes like we knew each other and liked each other once when maybe he wasn't a dog ... and maybe I wasn't a man. I don't know. I didn't mind his breath and he liked me and I walked him to where the grass was and he ran off. He wasn't my dog, but he had tags, so I'm not worried. I slipped a cheese danish into this girl at work's desk. I watched her take it out, but I snuck it in really fast and it got mushed up and was by the stapler and popped, and so there was shit everywhere. I felt bad. I felt like a mother bird that just couldn't puke into its baby's mouth right, like it kept catching the wind or something. I got a rotisserie chicken Tuesday and ate it with my whole hands. I like my fingers greasy. I don't like when I touch my remote after I eat chickens though. I was bleeding from my foot one of the days this week, but I was happy because I had Neosporin and I met the love of my life when I stepped on the knife. I don't know who dropped the knife, but they didn't have my mother because she would have threatened to get them with a rubber hose or throw their pet lizards in the van's engine and start it hard. The love of my life has a name called Angie. She has light hair and cool earrings every day. When I met her the first thing that popped in my head was her funeral by cancer or motorcycle accident, and that's how I knew she was the 1. She isn't any kind of Asian like I wanted, but she has this sweater that smells like dogs and garlic bread, and they are EASILY my favorite 2 things. I didn't

talk to her, but I love her. I guess this happens a lot though, but if I think about it I don't have a reason not to love her. Her eyes were the color of dirt. Brown dirt. That's the nice kind of dirt. My foot was bleeding and it stung real bad like it was filling up with pus every time I pushed on it. Like sweat bees were in my foot and they kept getting real mad. I have a lot of plans for this weekend. I know I'm going to food out, but I want to think nice things. Maybe I'll plant strawberries. My mother used to do that. I wonder if my mother would like the suits I wear to work now. I was going to get a new one this weekend, but I spent a lot on pizza and pay per view and karaoke CDs so I think I will have to wait 2 or 3 weeks, and I think I'm going to watch Angie to try and figure out her favorite color and then I can get a suit that color. That sounds nice. I want to smile at her in a suit in her favorite color. No matter what dumb or bad things happen there is always nice good hope that feels like my grandma's hugs. Or my mother's hugs. It feels like when I could eat cookies right when they came out of the oven. Or the first time I won something and felt good for me. I will talk to you later, Diary. As always, you are my greatest friend I will ever have and if you were a woman I'd be nice to you and buy us candy and stuff. Sorry to get weird again, Diary.

Your friend,
Hunter Green

P.S. Do you think crabs know what we do with them? I would run.



"Frankie" © 2013 Fabio Sassi

dear diary

Sometimes I think love is a gorilla waiting in the dark to box your ears. Or maybe it's like that fish that swims up your pee hole and porcupines your penis so you wish you could die. I'd like to think it's like the baby deer I saw sleeping by Lake James when I was 8. Just this sweet little thing you wanna pick up and hold and keep safe. Something abandoned you wanna take in and feed like some kind of hobo orphan. The deer turned out to be dead. That was the year they found an alligator in the lake, and I guess when they lifted the deer up all its guts and blood fell out. But still, when I thought it was sleeping, it looked ... hopeful. I thought about buying a dog so I wouldn't be lonely. Mom has a cat and she never seems lonely, but she also has that buttface Roger (and I

couldn't take a pet that's constantly working to show me its asshole). They renew their stupid vows every year and invited me again, like they do every year, but I'd rather put my face in boiling shit than go to Vegas with him. I accidentally said that to Mom and she looked pretty peeved. I asked why me and her never go on trips and sort of renew our mother/son vows, and she said I was too old for that sort of thing. I told her she was too old for Vegas and drove home and ate, like, 5 microwave burritos and a whole gallon bag of tater tots. Anyway, I almost asked Sharon out today. I was really gonna do it, but I saw her talking to the UPS guy at work and just decided to forget the whole thing. Benjamin Franklin lived alone till he was dead and he invented electricity, the xylophone, and milking turkeys, so it must not be so bad. I guess you get used to it like anything. That's kinda hopeful.

Your friend,
Hunter Green

P.S. Dale told me about this thing called Oraboris that's pretty weird. It's some snake that eats his own butt forever. I thought, God, that's just asking for gingivitis. What a crummy animal.



WINDOWS /

SCREENS

Ben Segal

A BUILDING EXISTS also in language. This one, built under ground, all glass and black metal struts, it conjures terms like *cantilevered*. As in: *why can't he leave her?* It doesn't seem impossible. The windows still swing open, the doors are all in working order.

On the other hand, there are the trappings of modern plumbing: flush toilets and hot showers, sprinkler systems. All kinds of watery enticement.

Mostly there is a jut of ceiling glass, exposed to the sky but level with the earth and so placed as to be a glass panel in an otherwise concrete sidewalk. He watches the obvious things from under—skirt openings, sneaker treads. He likes especially when a bird sets down or shits on the pane from above. He likes the backlit splatter.



"Religion as a social institution" from Chapter 22 of *Society Today* (1971) © Karl Nicholson

And what of the stayed-with *her*? She is mostly an excuse he furnishes, a projected obstruction to explain his staying in. I.e. *She's not just my ball and chain, she's got my balls enchained*. In fact, she's got more concern for the television. She has and wears a brown wool hood, an ex-presidential mask, calfskin gloves. She and the others work under the sign of the Dutch boot, nightly saboteurs of broadcast towers.

He has fallen in love deeply with a massage chair but he sometimes cheats with his bidet.

Years back, he kept pigeons on a high roof. He met with friends to be in their company. His interest in his wife extended beyond agoraphobic utility.

He is this evening in the leather massage chair, undressed, watching the spread of dog-piss on his sidewalk skylight. It goes in tentacles. He likes liquid things. His wife has telephoned already, sweetly, to inform him that she'll not be home until after he goes to sleep.

Other telephone calls come from former friends. It's a night they would once have gathered on. The ex-friends still do. They would like him to come. He is, they agree, the best kind of talker, classically handsome, oddly good company. He begs off for various marital priorities: sink leak repair, promised fine dinner, irrational demands stemming from a certain time of the month.

His former friends wonder if "time of the month" is really a euphemism or just a conveniently vague truth, as time is always, in fact, encased in one month or another.

His wife, with two partners and a driver, has just knocked out the signal from the local NBC station of the middling, hill-bound community nearby. They struck during the weather. Viewers thought maybe they were experiencing an eclipse. The wife and her fellow saboteurs change clothes in the back of their escaping van. They put on matching sweat suits, casual off-yellow drappings of new-money suede and terrycloth, and then pile into a chain-diner for celebratory dessert.

Some three dogs are peeing with regularity on the roof of the house. The man of the house has been enjoying the territorial competition. It's a kind of endless, victorless sport. He has the massage chair set to *percussion* and is jolting contentedly beneath the urine spread.

He does leave the house sometimes; that's a necessary minimum for employment and he's in need of a salary.

A house like his requires payments. The Sharper Image is a far cry from a charity shop.

In lieu of a more desirable sinecure, he has secured himself a position as a functionary. Mostly he assesses and sorts, though there is also the occasional bout of filing. The office others are aware of his smile, of his many charming teeth. One such other, a managerial figure, some nominally higher-up, at nights re-chews the man's discarded whitening gum.

The re-chewer doesn't realize that the plucked gum wads leave residue ghosts on the garbage bin's sides, that the man's trashcan has become a surveillance device.

The man's wife engages also in slow and office-based usefulness. Because she is a radical or terrorist, she is very good at her job.

She plans to be at her office in the morning, poorly rested but with a bright perfected face, a face caked smooth with fine and beautifying powder. Now she is sharing pie and vanilla ice cream. She and the others are laughing. The driver keeps asking their waitress to change the channel to

NBC, to just try again. He keeps saying his show is on. The four companions watch the television's blackness. Dead air is all there is; there isn't even a test pattern.

At home, her husband has switched from *percussion* to *rolling pressure*. At night the darkness makes his ceiling window hard to watch. There's not usually anything to see anyway. Nights in this neighborhood tend to be empty.

Once a woman, a friend of his wife's, had stood spread-legged above his sidewalk window and shot straight down at his face below. This was a birthday present. The glass is bulletproof, though the bullets were plenty real. The sound of it was loud, he remembered, and thrilling. The woman's leg had been gouged by the ricocheting rounds and she'd dropped blood on the glass pane and then down along the sidewalk.

This night he is staring up, watching for something striking, an instant of a chase maybe, or some act of violence in mid-commission. He would like to be swept up into something terrifying and totally beyond him. He finds a romance in the thought of bearing witness. Tonight he sees nothing. The street above his head is calm and the shadows are without portent.

His wife comes home just after three. She folds up her hood and gloves and slips her mask back into the costume drawer. She can hear the massage chair droning its steady work. Her husband is sunken into it, sleeping. He is having a wonderful dream about affixing dollar bills to the clear underside of a sidewalk. The dreamed hands of dreamed children slam into the glass. Rebuffed and confused, the children gather to dig for the bills with hopeless vigor. The glass doesn't suffer a scratch.

His wife unplugs the chair and coaxes his now only mostly-sleeping body into bed. They lie, apart, beside each other, yards deep in the earth. Tomorrow is a school day. They'll be woken too early by the footsteps of real children overhead.

Women Guess

Ashley

LOOK, I'm a timepiece. I'm dynamic. Look, I'm premium stunning. I'm amber, freesia, Muguet, musk. Silver, gold, waterproof, rhinestones. Please pack me in a pink transparent box. Please pack me a bottle, pack me deodorant, pack me tactics, rain boots, and a global average man who tells three lies a day compared to women who tell only one. Please spare me a rainy day. Today? Guess this for those who only ever. For Venus and Mars, for analog, chronograph, crystals. Time left : time left. Look, please spare me. I'm not available to lie for the wait, to wait for the lie, not guaranteed to stun and stun in the rain.

Other Women

Farmer

A FEW YEARS ago my claws came out. I sat at a lovely emergency wedding reception. I wanted to share the heart and truth amongst ambiguous connections. Two guests, seemingly strangers, become entangled in a sexually charged battle of wits. She did “what women do best.”

But I have been with my boyfriend for over a year and I do not understand why he won't stop rattling other girls, surrounding them. I give him everything he needs: stylish romantic drama, song lyrics, lonely sons. Is it my imagination or is this all my imagination? A study asks: How can you stop him?

We've seen her depicted time and time again: she tends to stare, to decide on other women's body parts. Not “others” but difficult others. Countless, she implored. Wives and girlfriends.

We want to share but do not want to share this affair. After all, what your claws do best is spontaneous. Is basically lonely, is only, is ugly. Is survive.



*"Justice" from "Jeu de Massacre"
(Game of destruction)
ca. 1928 © Fred Carasso*

Land Blood Bank

Elizabeth Mikesch

I WAS GOING to tell you that I loved you and inform you of the wedding that had taken place in your sleep. Between whatever you wanted to wear, something you would wear to work, whatever you wanted because I want you comfortable, or maybe this costume change, maybe what you are to be donning are sweats. I know about you from what I have seen of you. In the glisten of valuable information overheard at blood banks, you choose to wear slacks because of the weather. That sludge out there. Sometimes I am vindictive, small, so as to be shapeless, puttering around the sidewalks, walking the same pattern, the same of the same. The big plan was to take as many supplements as you are old and lay for you to discover your donor. You stomach-pump the bride. When they realize the value of these nutrients, they will insist on extracting them. I have not slept since the first day I read your name, decided to take it for mine. I have not slept one iota since so. I have even taped my married name over the name of my grandfather on the bag. The mailperson asked when approaching the iron creek of the opening why? This is the echo you don't correct. I was to make a donation.



"Candyland" © 2013 Michael Parsons & John Kolbek



I MET A MAN at a barbeque with no sense of smell. We talked about how neither of us could. It tasted rank in my mouth when he got done. Every time like mustard and onion.

He told my name to me when we did it. He dosed holding my hand. Then, the room sighed blue. I swatted under the bed for my license.

I popped zits on his shoulders, tried to read his tattoos. They were in cursive or some language. The pus sat in beads, splurred my thumbs.

I haven't turned thirty, I said.

He told me, Good.

What kind of man falls asleep before you? I've never been with a man who reeks of me. I cook because I get nervous. The man I cheat gives me stomachaches. He shouldn't have let me know he likes the way I smell.

My mom has a friend who's psychic. She finds lost kids. On dates, men would take her to the theater. She was tiny like a child. I swear I've seen coats topple her over. They couldn't stay hooked.

I always hoped I could bring someone down.

Elizabeth Mikesch

Turmeric

NEON GOD FROM THE TOP TURNBUCKLE



PRETTY SURE those hangers don't mean they're anti-fashion. The stick-thin girls with bony hips and chest-wide hand-painted signs. Slogan hounds of doggerel camped on the Dodge overpass. I walk up to where grass meets granite. In-between stairs that lead to the overpass and flatland; in-between chanters and those who counter call. I'm beside this girl, Bessie, who has goaded me into this anti-anti-hanger squad. Bessie is the leader of a herd of white shirts with starched collars: Christ kids who view the choice crew as demons. Or, even worse, humans with their fair say.

Bessie and company are pro-agony, seems to me, as the sounds they let loose are somewhere between flagellation of the ear and the Holy Spirit barely curtailed by their bodies. Eyes roll back in heads, people sink to knees, white knuckles grasp grass and rip tufts free as if they held an earth-aimed grudge. The songs and sermons they shout have all the typical Biblical buzzwords, and I fish lip along, no sound out but for a quick lip quiver or two to mock movement. They know the words by heart, but I never got the liner notes. One of them twitches and tweaks, a frothed mouth away from being considered for a binding white coat. Another unfurls a sign with an aborted fetus on it, the thing pink and wet looking and vaguely membranous.

I'm here because I'm impressionable to pretty-eyed girls who pay me any heed and I wanted to witness the shit show. Truth is, I'm more an enemy than the no hangers sign-holders. My mother had an abortion, and so, had she not made that decision seven years prior to my welcoming, I probably wouldn't have been born. Butterflies begot

tsunamis begot me standing on the sidewalk, able to chant down the cause of my own being.

When I was a young runt of seven or eight, my father bent my ear, told me, boy don't lay your bone in any woman you can't foresee a future with. Either he was full of shit or he owned a lot of crystal balls.

I tried to distract myself from his sage advice with the furious dealings of Macho Man Randy Savage off the top turnbuckle on TV.

If there was a God, I imagined him as the sequined, bespectacled Randy Poffo. Macho Man seemed no mere mortal: chiseled and well-oiled, he looked ever the ideal specimen God would fashion in his image. Macho Man being *the* 80s icon of male virility. Funny that his peacock costumery would later be so hand-in-dick representative of stereotypes of homosexual men. *This* man was a paragon of flight. No long-limbed leg-drop like the slow Hogan. He and Ricky Steamboat brought wrestling above the fracas of the mat. Ushered in a new era of ropewalks and flying elbows. Not to mention his coke-fueled interviews where he dropped such gems as: Nothing means nothing. Or: In my moment of glory, I'm living in a nightmare. Or, my personal favorite, uttered to Mean Gene Okerlund as Savage deftly pulls coffee creamers from a secret spot like some milk magician: I'm the cream of the crop. And cream rises. Oh, yeah.

They say your idea of God stems from your father. My father left two years after the psychic woman babble. Pops was no God. My On High and Divine was a flying dynamo



who snapped into meat sticks, colored fringe aflutter. His voice the gravel rasp of a man who lunched on light bulbs. A neon God who existed in the air space between the heavens and hearts of believers.

Later, in Bessie's dorm room, we go at it with a fury that only strangers can muster. Buttons are undone, zippers unzipped. She disrobes with a proficiency and ease that makes me, in hindsight, question her vows, her high and holies, but at the time, I'm in no mood to ponder a stance. I'm witness to this milk-white body that's so arresting a blind man groping a pencil drawing of it would still be awed.

The room smells like sage and Palmolive. Posters of pop stars show no creases. My fingers find her folds, crooked to hear her croon. Sweat beads on brows and backs as she soft moans her approval. You might expect I would mention how she maligned the name of her Savior in the throes of passion, but no, most she soiled my surname with her sex-fueled brays.

My surname, Jacobi, being what most know me by.

And if there was ever an opposite of God, some no might, non-maker barely able to get by on this spinning morass, it would be me. In keeping with my non-deity status, I fumble around for protection. Check sock drawers, jean pockets, inside book spines—find none. Give her the "what now" shoulder shrug. Pull out. Just make sure you pull out, she says, breathily.

I think, should we go through with this? Could I be the maker of another me? Another glance in Bessie's direction confirms it. I want to run my tongue around the two dimples below the small of her back like licking the last of something sweet from the inside of a spoon. I want to connect a small constellation of moles one shy of the Big Dipper on her upper thigh with a dark marker. She makes the eyes. Nods me along. After some quick fumbling and

close slide bys, I slip in and she latches on. Feeling notwithstanding, I believe.

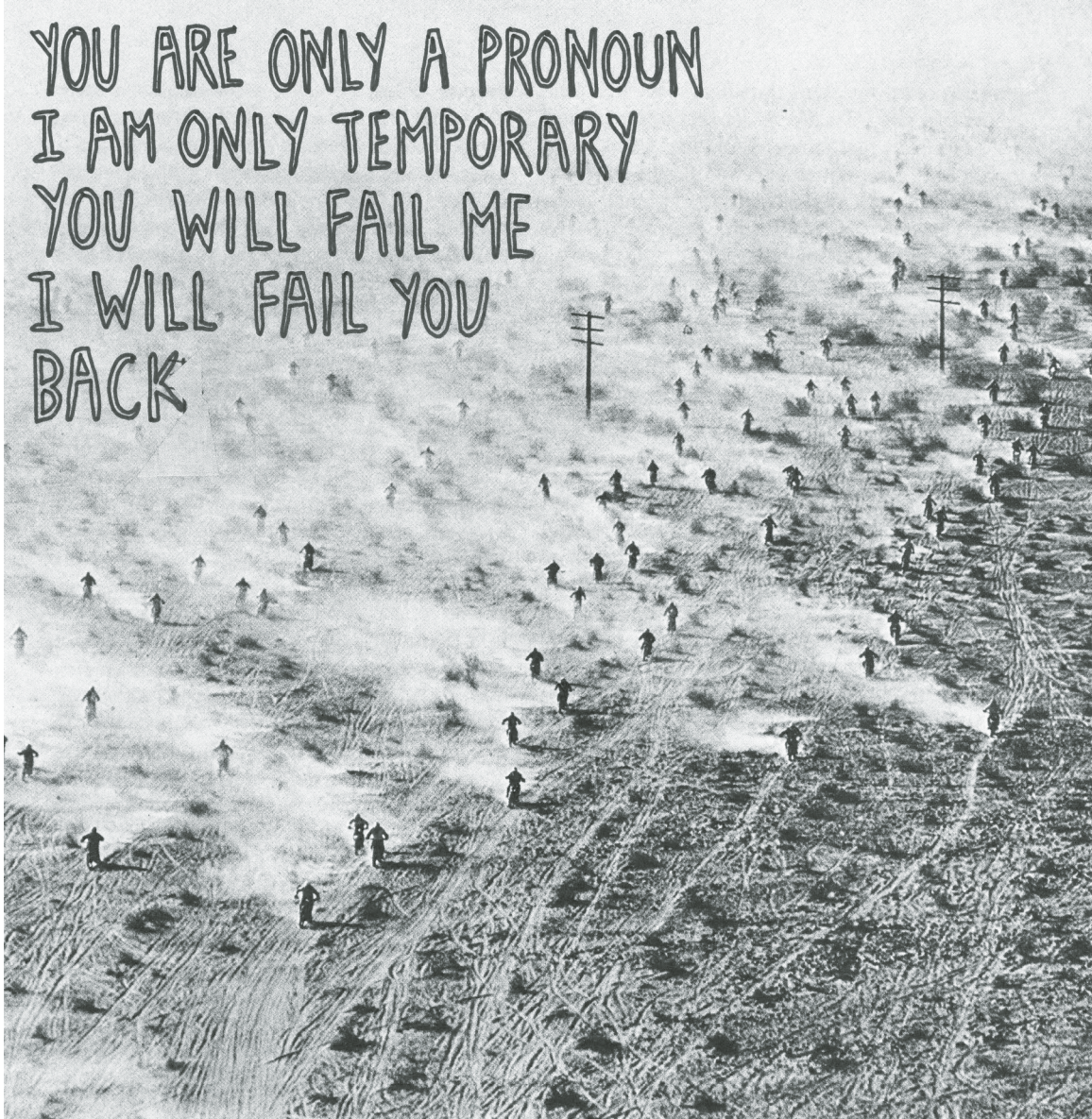
Not in some cosmic white-bearded robe-wearer, but in the idea that there is so much joy and beauty and, equally, sheer shit in the world that sometimes we, skin sacks of barely gelled limbs, make mistakes. And sometimes, deep in the furrows of said mistake, at the point where everything falls away, blurs against better judgment, you pull yourself free. Like a drowning man able to breach the plane between sky and sea taking a breath. Come back young stalwart son! Come hither and gather yourself. Fill those lungs. Live on. The cream rises.

I pull out. Finish on her divan. Say a prayer to the Neon God for a close call. We are all trying for flight.



Fail You Back

Kelly Schirmann



Tundra

WE FIND A TUNDRA AND SPEAK FOR IT
YOU MAKE A CAMPFIRE IN ITS POVERTY
WE BREAK LANGUAGE INTO TWO LANGUAGES
WE TAKE TURNS LETTING EACH OTHER DOWN



See more of Kelly Schirmann's broadsides at
WWW.NOOJOURNAL.COM/14

POEM



Morgan Parker

We're already behind schedule so I wait under
 a ledge and watch the first snow of the month
 it lasts approximately three minutes
 when the bus finally pulls in the driver tells me
 the turnpike is at a dead stop and when I say
 dead he says I mean faces are made up
 of pulled clay rodents drift from wire rafters in this
 bus its arched back tunneling found objects
 that have nothing to do with Hartford CT and
 everything to do with learning to count women
 like Sappho cream cheese and black music in
 the trees tonight it's all radio and they're all bare
 I'm afraid to fall asleep drooling on the red carpet
 seat so I crane my neck to watch the other cars
 bundled tiny and safe crawling on repeat



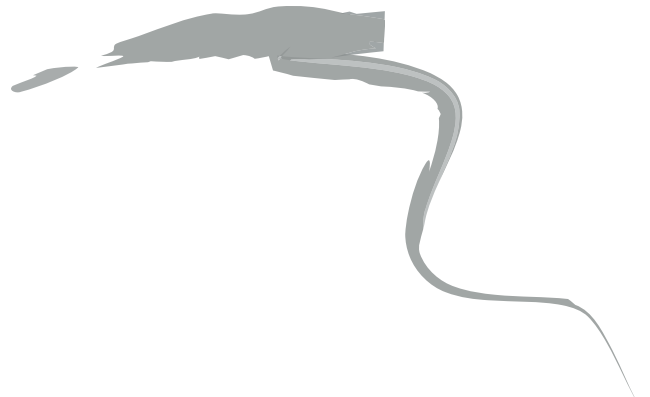
found by Superbomba Lucy Diamond Phillips



Mike Krutel

CAR ON FIRE IN THE SNOW

It doesn't go if doubly sunk
or does it? Freeway strung with lights and yet
not one of them a guide. Today we lost
the moon and sun. The best advice: be hot.
Be passage against the bellowed wince.
A kind of circus rambles on
between our stitches. Weather comes and we
are buried under snow but always full
of love—a giant breath and violins
among what fills our blood.



from

EVERYTHING I DESTROYED WAS BAD

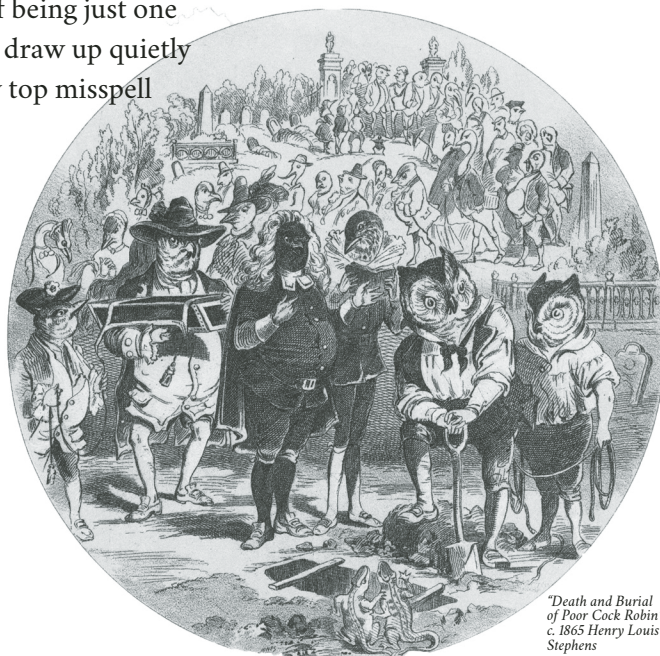
Lisa Ciccarello

The screen is a scroll & the scroll tells you you have lost your heart. Your precious heart that was a gift from your mother & father. The scroll is a map in another screen. On the map there are the tops of trees that may be shrubs. On the map there are trees & shrubs to burn, but you must find the candle first. There is a cave & between two fires you will find the candle & it will stay lit as long as you carry it. On the map are marked caves & unmarked tops of trees or shrubs that you must burn. In the burnt out places there are caves or stairs or someone who wants to give you money. You cannot refuse the money & this is good, because you must buy a sword. There is no way to get your heart back from the map of trees without a sword. There is no way to get on from here without the burning.

WE ARE BOTH SURE TO DIE

Wendy Xu

In a way that the birds find less than compelling. Build a nest and grow better feathers. I was sailing in a ship that came across another ship in an ocean humbled by sunlight. It was amazing. It was an actual event that amazed me and affected my physical body. Kissing is like steering with purpose. But kissing is also like confusion at the supermarket if you really love to spend time at the supermarket. Which I do. Which why the hell do we eat birds? Which when you have a birthday why do you tell me? Everything I said yesterday was a lie. I don't actually love any city better than the next, except when you are a city growing tired of internal conflict which is broadcast on the evening news. Then I am terribly aware of being just one person with a body. Then I draw up quietly some charts and at the very top misspell your honest name.



"Death and Burial of Poor Cock Robin"
c. 1865 Henry Louis Stephens



SELF-**PORTRAIT**

Hai-Dang Phan






WITH NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS



|||||

You used to be thirty, now you're something.
Treat Yo Self! Cloths, fragrances, massages,
Mimosas, and fine leather goods. This year let's try
Not to kill our plants again. My voicemail
Called to tell me I am running out of memory.

|||||

At the scene of Qaddafi's capture, a Yankees cap.
I reserve the right to unlike this. On a scale of 1 to 10...
Her blouse forgets nothing. A text declares *i'm here!*
Yesterday is my alibi. The sky five minutes before midnight.

|||||

Suddenly everyone wants to talk about unicorns.
At least you share a birthday with Snoop Dogg.
That recent post on drones was a real downer.
Your morals will be supported. The new hummingbirds
Will buzz into rooms, drop a payload, and leave.

|||||

A scar invited a touch. Apply gentle pressure
When braking. Do something painful each day,
Like brushing your teeth. Air the night collected
Cools these rooms. The brass is already talking
About future engagements. I am a little bit happier
Than I was a moment ago. Hold steady
While I take the temperature of your voice.
You cannot doubt the lemon cake. The Eurozone
Is really just Sarkozy and Merkel. Sometimes, Cameron
Will throw his two cents in. We talk of our lives
As if we were others. With an ear to the air
The birds have organized. Considerable cloudiness
With occasional rain showers. When I say tomorrow
I mean an expression of regret. Today is nothing
Like 1980. Let's put the future behind us.
I'll walk you just as far as this thought.



I Shall Play Unapologetically



I could just be going crazy. _____ (crazy person noises). It could also just be the planets. They paint the dome of the earth like clouds so you won't go crazy. They hang up _____ (noun, arcade décor) and blinking lights so you don't feel bad to be among your kind. And you can always win tickets. You can't take your tickets to the afterlife. They encourage you to paint portraits so you won't feel like just a little nothing adrift in the ultimate anti-playzone: the universe, AKA your day. You push through the mesh enclosure until you're face to face with the portrait and then you say: "Hello. This is a condition." Your parent supervises from behind the crossword. When I asked to write a poem about you, I felt _____. When you said ok it was all _____ rocket. But the way you said it was _____. Sigh. Another toy chest memory excursion. Another sweet nothing on the back of a straight-to-DVD case. Another dead world. Another portrait of something destroyed. Another _____ (adjective) _____ (noun). What is the universe now to us but a playzone that can't pay the space rental fee? What is this sweet work with if thou kiss me not? As I collapse into colored balls I shall destroy. Whoa! _____ (exclamation)! Here we go! This town will burn upon atmospheric reentry. I shall take the core of this town and rip it. Onto a DVD. Get your best underwear and dance. These are love poems to the world of direct-to-DVD. You were born to this condition. That's the best lie from your third eye. It's nurture, all nurture. We learned the calligraphy of the ball pit. _____ (exclamation)! This condition is for the direct-to-DVD market in you.

CONVER SATIONS IN A POOL

Rachael Katz

Ben will you flip me under
the zipper seams of clouds?
Here comes that Pepsi
machine we voted for and
all of the men with their
beards as disguises, beards
as birds, beards as feelings
about god. Tell me dust
and what it's bad for. I love
dew and what it does. Ben I
hate the fence and the broken
slide and the tarp across the moon.
Look at these trees like slaw forks
alive in the mud. Your mom
is a haunted house and your
dad kills the wasps in her walls.
You just give me back my flashlight
and I'll tell you what your deer does.

found by Superbomba Lucy Diamond Phillips



health, cunning
and deviousness!
capture the beaut
of your
insuspecting,
chosen target

Rules.
Important!

CREEPSHOTS

a poem for violentacrez

Anne Boyer

- a photo which, when masturbated to, makes a man's dick fall off
- a photo which, when looked at, makes a man's dick fall off
- a body which, when looked at, makes a man's dick fall off
- a photo which explodes like a grenade
- a body which explodes like a grenade

- any manner of weaponized bodies, both self-destructing and self-preservative, like a body like a poison garment, like a body like a collapsing ship
- a body like a landmine which requires only a little treading-on to trigger
- a girl or a woman like a landmine who requires only a little treading-on to trigger
- a girl or a woman who requires only a little photographing to trigger

- a photo which, when masturbated to, will make a man go blind
- a photo which, when masturbated to, will both make a man go blind and put in the place of his sight a grim and hellish inner vision
- a photo which when circulated on the internet has some code in it and the code is "whoever circulates this image will be cursed like Job"

- a series of techno-temporal-biological viruses which open the guts so that the warmth of human viscera can serve as incubation space for some now-still-embryonic future
- a series of viruses which creates any productive use for the viscera including more minor ones, like growing oranges

- a computer screen filter which filters arousal, replacing it with fear, shame, amusement, confusion, or regret
- a computer screen filter which filters arousal, leaving only the impulse to vacuum the floor

this is
o use it
tools
e code

only a handful of people
ears (thank you, you made me
hat hardly covers server exper
I ads a try before adding new

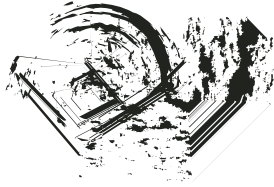
this reddit has been tagged

- [cranchoff]
- [boots]
- [youno]
- [cranch]
- [Ass]
- [nanti/rose]
- [hg]
- [nanti/rose]
- [colab/rae]
- [shitt]
- [SEX]
- [shit]
- [hi]
- [asdf]
- [black]
- [cum]
- [Asian]
- [yah]
- [ass]
- [feet]

add tag

POEM COMPOSED ENTIRELY WITH

LAST LINES IN Katha Pollitt POEMS



James Valvis

If you don't mind, I think I'll go home now.
Miraculously, down its own street, home
is the effort of not seeing, of not hearing.

My death was mine. It had nothing to do with you.
When your storm comes
I would not keep you. I would let you go,

not return your call.
My fallen life:
a troubled house. So long as it's well lit

God, it appears, is everywhere, even here—
but we do not ask each other
what life would have to be for us to have chosen it.

YES, I WILL GO

Meghan Privitello

The old man in the street fell down he is trying to fold his thoughts
 into a pile of sweaters. Not his dog or wife understands
 his mouth. *Remember when you used to drag yourself, like a dog, across the
 bedroom carpet. Remember when your veins were so bright I called you
 estuary.* With binoculars you can see the man praying for snow.
 He believes in cave paintings the brown necks of horses.
 As a boy, he traced his hand on the thigh of a dog and felt
 primitive. *Remember when you told me my naked body was the truth.
 Remember when you assaulted the clouds for blackening.* The man is falling
 in love with everything he can name. He calls love dictionary.
 He calls himself dwindling. *Remember when we could mean nothing
 and it didn't hurt. Remember when the weather was empirical proof
 that we were separate from the sky.* The man's wife is always restless
 he calls her earthquake. His dog is always hungry he calls him
 useless. If you could trace the shape of the dying man's mouth
 on paper you could call it O orange world. *Remember
 when we started running out of time. Remember when love was a simple
 recipe.* The man prays his wife and dog would get a rash
 whose welts spoke of his missing. They are in the kitchen eating
 streusel their warm mouths hypothetical merely.

from Jugend c. 1905 Albert Weisgerber

not
quite
mean
or nice
but okay

Marit Ericson

Hope you sell that brain
painting. Hope you too make

a million friends. Pray foes
keep you on your toes. If

you break three digits, save
two for the apocalypse.

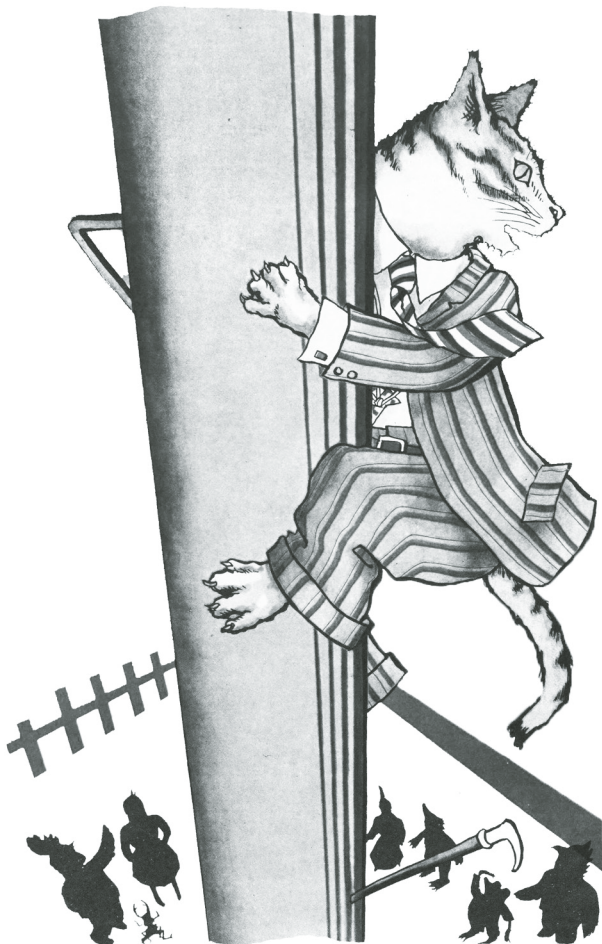
Sense of humor, sense of
cumin: make a dish of it!

A casserole, literally saucy.
Be your own pet. If not,

you'll be someone else's
innuendo. Play all parts, plus

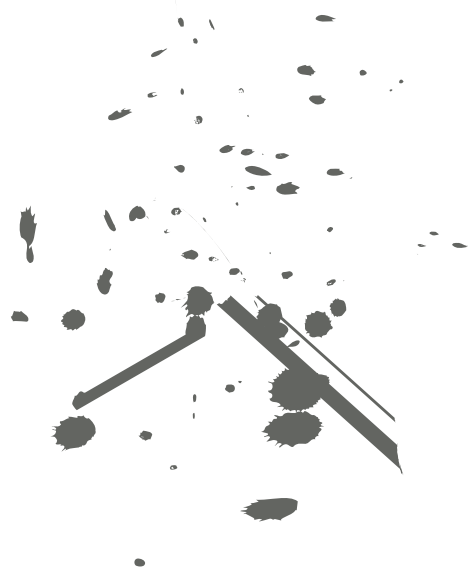
private eye. (Just in case.) Hey.
You're teasing these threads,

doll. In ghosts, behind your
face. You're quite welcome, too.



Murayama Tomoyoshi
from *Mr. Cat and the Golden Shoes* c. 1947

Let's chart the economy's health
 in terms of bees. In grade school,
 during springtime fire drills,
 we had to stand still while the swings
 swung and bees landed
 on our shoulders. It was like seeing
 red sirens in your rearview mirror
 whiz past you. Whiz is perfect
 onomatopoeia about half the time.
 This is my first poem about poems.
 You can believe me because I'm being believable.
 Lately, poetry has been like what I assume
 fly fishing is, which I've never tried.
 I hook a fly, toss it out, and if nothing bites
 yank it back in a parabola, which is
 the patron shape of manic depressives.
 That fat bear my honey comes in
 is trustworthy for no reason other than
 that he trusts no one. Cell phones,
 on the other hand, are wholly unreliable.
 Like when my dad called
 and told me that my grandma
 was going to die or else
 outlive all of us. She had an apple tree
 in her backyard, which attracted
 a lot of bees. They cut it down
 around the time she forgot who I was.
 I guess if you can't remember your grandchildren
 then you shouldn't be collecting apples.
 We gave her a box of coupons from the mail
 and she would run her fingers over them
 like she did to my cheeks
 when I was in grade school.
 She's still alive and might even remember
 who I am now, but I'll never know
 because she only speaks in a wordless mumble.
 It sounds like a child learning a language
 you don't understand. Like a bee
 over your shoulder. Or a vacuum.



A VACUUM
 IS USED
 BUT NEVER
 USED UP

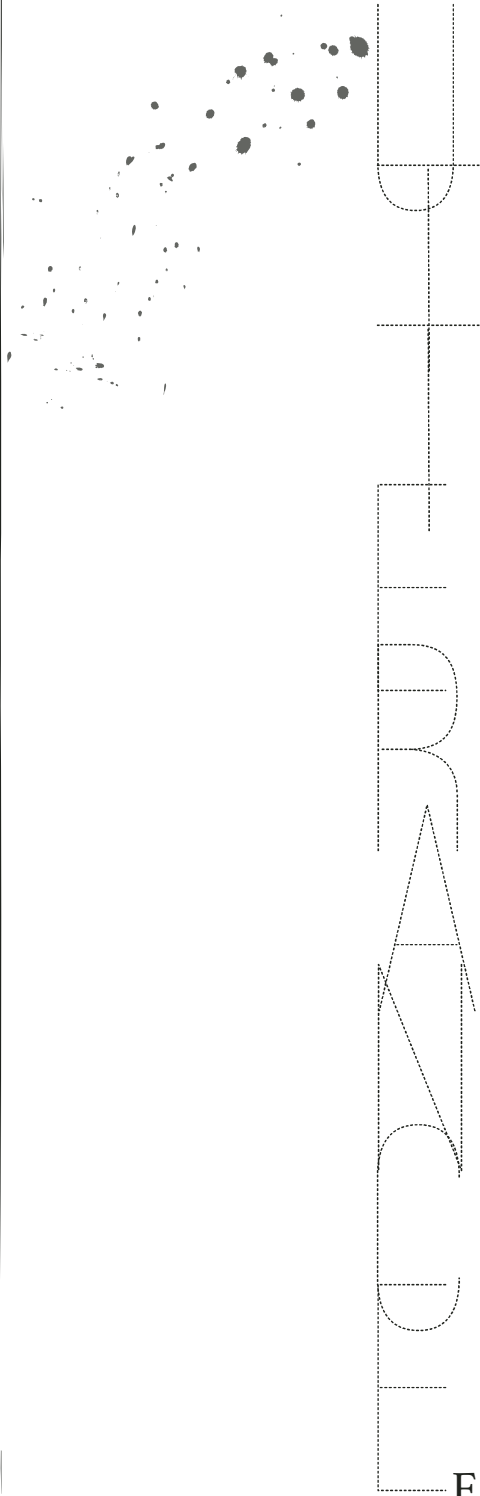
Joe Kmiecik

THE ABYSS HAS NO BIOGRAPHER

Chris Toll (b. Goodbye, d. Hello)

The rain,
heart in ruins,
staggers out of town.
My Saint
of Wrong Prepositions
buttons her black skyscraper.
Who pays the rent
in incoherent?
My Soul is a scrap of lightning.
My poems are thunderbolt
laid below thunderbolt.
How long can I stay
at the inn in innocent?
Love is so hard
and it's all we came to do.

*found by Superbomba Lucy Diamond Phillips*



Emily Toder

The following
utterance about addiction

is about everything:
rain in a puddle

will make the puddle only rumble
The puddle'll dance and

it will sputter
like a bad machine

But it will not grow
tired of it

It will never
have enough

There's no overflowing, this dip
in the road is not like
the atmosphere

None of it is out of its bounds
and it cannot be pushed,

It coheres out of its own
toppling and spreads

and if you have slept
and if you have woken up

this rocked puddle
might even haunt you

And the knowledge you know
could console you until you dream

And until you dream
you could continue to talk

you could be talking
this entire time

and consoling yourself
with your knowledge,

yes, crappily.

Elizabeth J. Colen

FDR GETS UP FROM THE TABLE WITH HIS HANDS OVER HIS EARS

Pearl Harbor

When I heard “break squelch” I thought “smear the queer.”
The games the boys would play.

Admiral stared across the water, never played hopscotch as a boy, never played cricket.
Air dense with cloud from water to endless.

Did you know he would do this? my mother asked, handling the officer’s card.
Three broken windows in the bitch’s yellow house. He never learned to play nice.

Sunset over the Pacific, but we were riding out of it.
The days grew shorter with speed.

Cards in a footlocker, 51, plus jokers.
Sailor searched the floor for that diamond four, not worth much, but still.

What did they know
and when did they know it?

My brother drew a picture of her severed head.
We didn’t tell the cops.

Frank rolled back. Said he didn’t want to know.
Or did he? Evidence shows we could decipher code.

Evidence shows we couldn’t. End
the war. My brother put his fist through his bedroom wall.



BEHIND THE TIMES

Tony Mancus

I will die in a fort of strapture, fit with laughing
in a fit of strapture, a fortlike structure, fit with laughter

I will die without punctuations or monetary curbs, cures, curves
in an unctuous nation without monastery crabs

I will die in a town named after
I will die a thousand times a sparrow, but only once a corvus

I will die with my love bound up, books in hand
I will die with my hand bloated and dipped in ink

I will die in the eyes of my wife's fast blinking
I will die in the throat of my schoolchild as she learns her alphabets

I will die in the band sounds stilled beneath the metal bleachers
I will die in the keys of the janitor as he presses the pedals of the uptight piano

I will die on a midwinter's day and on the afterpolice shot of summer—walking onto the moving grass
I will curl up into smoke and Dramamine and the goats will eat their cans and chew the grass
sprigs from my sockets

I will die with my family's crest—a series of spaces between the waves, called loneliness
I will die in the cornucopia of a faltering nation, identified by its apathy

I will die tomorrow and tomorrow and the rest of the hem will come undone and wrap you up in bed
I will die in the manner of campfire

I will die on the off-ramp of an odd numbered highway, salt still frosting the lines
I will die of my wife's fear—dropping out of the sky as my own fear finds another me inside these dreams I've signed

I will die of long-in-the-tooth, of rickety-rails, or choose-your-own-adventure and plaid patterns for adults
I will die sweating inside a handshake, the palm gone fishlike

I will die in every curtain of lakewater interpreted as a walkable ice-way



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Ron Winkler

translated from the German
by Rodney Nelson

and afterward then parabolic- apple breath

und später dann Paraboläpfel am Atem

the garden below. the specialty
woods. the infinite π of sun above.

unten der Garten. der spezialisierte
Wald. oben das endlose π der Sonne.

and beauty as earlier lack of significance.
wherefore clouds. clouds to an extent.

und Schönheit als eher Unscheinbarkeit.
also Wolken. insofern Wolken.

the damnation fruit in between. the
damnation fruit.

dazwischen das infernalische Obst. das
infernalische Obst.

weren't Kodiak hare in there too?
weren't they there too? at the hedge?

waren dort nicht auch Grizzlyhasen?
nicht auch dort? am Zaun?

and jungle-bone dice
clamoring birdwise down to earth?

und dschungelartige Würfel
wie zu Boden geschrieene Vögel?

someone's offkey Smith &
Wesson rasp intruded onto this all-

jemand drückte in diese sehr, sehr
verreiste Stimmung hinein die Räuspertaste

very road-weary atmosphere. not mine.
it came from another focus

seiner Heckler & Koch. das war nicht ich.
das gehörte einer anderen Intensitätsgruppe

group.

an.

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

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INSIDE NOÖ [14]

Hallelujah Giant Space Wolf achieves a similar blend of urgency and absurdity, taking readers from the bathroom of a church to a knock-down-drag-out fight with a gorilla to the beginning and/or end of the universe astride the titular cosmic vulpine.

NOÖ Presents: Daniel Bailey's *Hallelujah Giant Space Wolf*
Erin McNellis | 6

The body may be allergic to bees, it doesn't know. The body suffers from some of its own likes. The body sleeps too much or not enough. The body once fell down stone stairs in wooden shoes.

The Body
Julianna Spallholz | 13

And if there was ever an opposite of God, some no might, non-maker barely able to get by on this spinning morass, it would be me.

Neon God From the Top Turnbuckle
Gene Kwak | 24

But kissing is also like confusion at the supermarket if you really love to spend time at the supermarket.

We Are Both Sure to Die
Wendy Xu | 31

Love is so hard
and it's all we came to do

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