

Megan A. Volpert

*an accidental conspiracy*

in the spring of a suspicion that there was discontent among the rebels  
new york came out of the closet as london  
and london was a bloodbath

cucumbers were rapidly beginning to resemble piano wire  
even at room temperature

one headlining dry martini recorded her conversation with a cockroach  
until it was rumored at the height of this hullabaloo  
there was a safe deposit box

a magnetic ribbon on several minivans assured that eyes had been poked out  
we tried so hard to remain we

*ape shit*

we are all in the same swift boat  
everybody wants onto somebody else's list  
everybody gets knocked up the list

there's a certain expectation in there  
we say white  
you fill it in  
you fill it in with house  
white house  
or white picket fence  
white privilege  
or even white elephant

we say white mongoose  
you like the sound of mongoose  
you think of albino mongoose  
you realize that you don't really know  
what a mongoose looks like  
disappointment  
frustration  
anger and if you are lucky  
some small lashing out  
inner fascist happy dance

narrator and inner fascist  
playing the same instrument  
cranial harp  
this is why we heart the narrator  
why we always agree  
with simon cowell

fascist loves his closet  
it is good for business  
we prefer not to divulge his opinion  
not even to acknowledge his location  
all his dates are blind

the painstaking dream of otherness  
never sending a postcard  
never leaving a forwarding address

the classic libidinal object fake out  
pertaining to the positions  
of the alveolar fricative  
and the labiodental fricative  
hereafter referred to as s and f  
s and f swap and flip  
fwap and slip and rhyme

the universal signified  
in a reversal rather dignified  
said to the nearest signifier  
dearest you're a liar

they slept together anyway  
everybody was talking about it  
nonsense tearing down fences  
defense tearing down senses  
in the post hullabaloo pile of scat  
the inner fascist jumping up and down  
life depending on expectations met  
life of the mind happy dance  
the bone of contention  
the but then  
the white mongoose  
derrida versus zizek  
celebrity grudge match

same seat again and scene the same  
we've seen this scene  
we've seen this scene before  
but now plus surplus  
the avant garde gives birth  
to the dreadmachine  
an equal opposite  
white baggage  
mongoose disaster surrealissimo  
happy bone of contention dance  
closet sweet closet  
six thick walls and a fire going

but then bring us our egg tooth  
we've seen your scene before

*a student of bourdieu's cultural competency*

obvious was born a captain and died a captain  
between bouts of careerism that led nowhere  
and schizophrenic episodes full of adventure  
he managed to discern exactly a dozen things  
which became principles he ruthlessly applied

chief among these epistemological gemstones  
was a conviction about leave taking gestures  
that we cannot help but make them all poorly  
in spite of whatever intention lies in our heart  
so obvious then never did goodbye to anything

also among his major intellectual influences  
were three ideas about the import of bananas  
one that the peels were not in fact at all slippery  
two fruit is always to be found when it's needed  
three the sex pistols were a great idea at the time

he also had something to say about faces of pigs  
that the best swine had paint where dirt should be  
and never tell a lie in a coffee house before dark  
unless it's a matter of saving someone else's ass  
but even then the ass will most likely grow back

of the twelve commandments captain lived by  
these are the only six he would divulge for us  
and even these were got by too little tonic water  
so there is simply no denying about dear obvious  
he gave his inner fascist full support to the end

perhaps this was the thing about captain obvious  
which he wanted most to impress upon our kind  
the importance of knowing a sought after secret  
and the sort of character it takes not to reveal it  
leaving it up to us a ghost the narrator to define

*love sick*

holy grail orange julius  
bat flavor in swedish  
red-eye faux-hawk blister

multiplied by itself to the smurf power  
the tentacles beep beeping  
a way of being

hysterical  
provoked by paranoia schizophrenia et cetera  
also  
given to violent expensive ironics or literalism  
previously  
having a dysfunctional uterus  
and a project for another day

your obvious and your fascist heart this  
recognition this in a crowded cafeteria  
hysterical is the straight shooter  
in a room full of bubble blowers  
waltz in the age of disco  
remember dismembering

you treat words instead of letters don't you  
let's get miniscule  
denial is hysterical  
admission is hysterical  
if these are your options you think you are  
you are citing a perceived major difference  
between the aurality of kabuki and bukkake  
something about homonyms or heterophones  
well take two and don't call us  
we don't have any defense  
a letter from richard foreman

*on the origin of species by means of natural selection*

rugby then christ church at oxford lewis carroll eventually turns sixty  
this is twenty seven years after alice and through the looking glass is twenty one  
yeats would be thirty three just then  
the age at which jesus was convicted  
the age at which lewis finished alice  
this is more than thirty years before the second coming and sailing to byzantium  
so eight years before the twentieth century the morbid tea party commences

y a pleasure to meet you sir  
c sit down sit down likewise and all that such formalities at this age with your sir

the third person is a disembodied voice you recognize  
sweater on backwards and inside out  
you think to yourself how appropriate

c read your letter what do you want  
y the jabberwocky strange dreams of it  
c not the first not the last not the best not in the habit of inviting them all over

you laugh at the voice from nowhere  
don't want to dissect everything today  
don't mean to pick you apart  
you see but can't help it

y dream caught in the gyre of slithy toves history is one long procession of toves  
the jabberwock beheaded bird and bandersnatch remain an antichrist at every turn  
c the most well reasoned terror to date you read too many books too deeply  
the line by line letter by letter is for children  
y are we not as terrified as children

you begin to see the purpose of the voice  
all we really want is some patience  
a way to calm the angry voice  
all we really want is deliverance

c only the aged are terrified children are too new to fear  
y are we ancient then  
c modernist so busy fleeing terror behind can't see the one right in front  
y can't understand

you begin to resent the location of the voice

do we wear you out  
we are relentless and all strung out  
consumed by the chill of solitary

c running with the head turned backward is never a good idea  
better to write stories for children  
y shouldn't art console  
deflect the disorder of human events a structure answer poems of youth

the voice begins to resent you right back  
frustrated by your apathy  
frightened by the corrupted ways of this land

c poems with answers for fools some children are fools  
but fools are never children  
y beg your pardon  
c of course you do  
look here the life of the child unexpected excitement unanswered  
only old fools are afraid of the happy mess and such a man is a paltry thing indeed  
y are we not symbol making animals are answers not what we do

you wish the voice would intervene and explain  
let's talk about you for a minute  
enough about you let's talk about life for awhile  
the conflicts the craziness  
the sound of pretenses falling all around

c we concoct questions and the jabberwocky has no answers  
this obsession is not good news and art can't reason us out of the unreasonable  
y this is impossible the creative never dies immortal art escapes unreasoning reality  
c the most irrational of all constructs art as permanent orderly rational congratulations  
y somewhere is a country where art never dies

the voice is trying to provoke you  
why are you so petrified of silence  
here can you handle this

c that is a country for old men art that never dies is only the kind that never lives  
y are the modernists afraid to realize that we are not forever young and poems die

the voice is hoping for a dialogue now  
all we need now is intellectual intercourse  
a soul to dig the hole much deeper

c chaos our world is filled with rough beasts but the jabberwock does not simply slouch  
y it's all just a big adventure to you

the voice is praying you are onboard now  
we have no concept of time other than it is flying  
if only we could kill the killer

y do you miss the forest for the trees  
c how you miss the trees for the forest

the voice has sort of given up but not on you  
all we really want is some peace man  
a place to find a common ground  
but then who is narrating the thoughts of the voice

c the mome raths outgrabe you know  
y you said that was all nonsense  
c nonsense is good advice for a fool

the irishman and the englishman never walk into the same bar  
carroll lives to be sixty six yeats lives to be seventy four  
seventy six years after carroll thirty five years after yeats  
alanis morissette is born

*Megan A. Volpert is a performance poet from Chicago who has settled in Atlanta. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Louisiana State University, and currently teaches High School English. From 2002-2006, she performed largely under the pseudonym dr. madelyn hatter, and featured at over fifty venues in more than a dozen states promoting her spoken word CD, no morning after. This self-proclaimed love child of Joan Jett and Tina Fey has shared her witty left-wing banter and moderately obnoxious shenanigans on stage with a wide range of poets: from Bitch, Buddy Wakefield and Collin Kelley, to Laura Mullen, Christian Bök and Andrei Codrescu. Volpert has been in competition at the National Poetry Slam, and is a board member of Poetry Atlanta. She published two collections in 2007: face blindness with BlazeVOX Books and a chapbook, domestic transmission, with MetroMania Press. Her other publications credits include columbia poetry review, coconut and MiPOesias Magazine. Rooted in confessionalism and surrealism, her work has a strong interest in the performative and is also influenced by second-generation New York School poetry.*