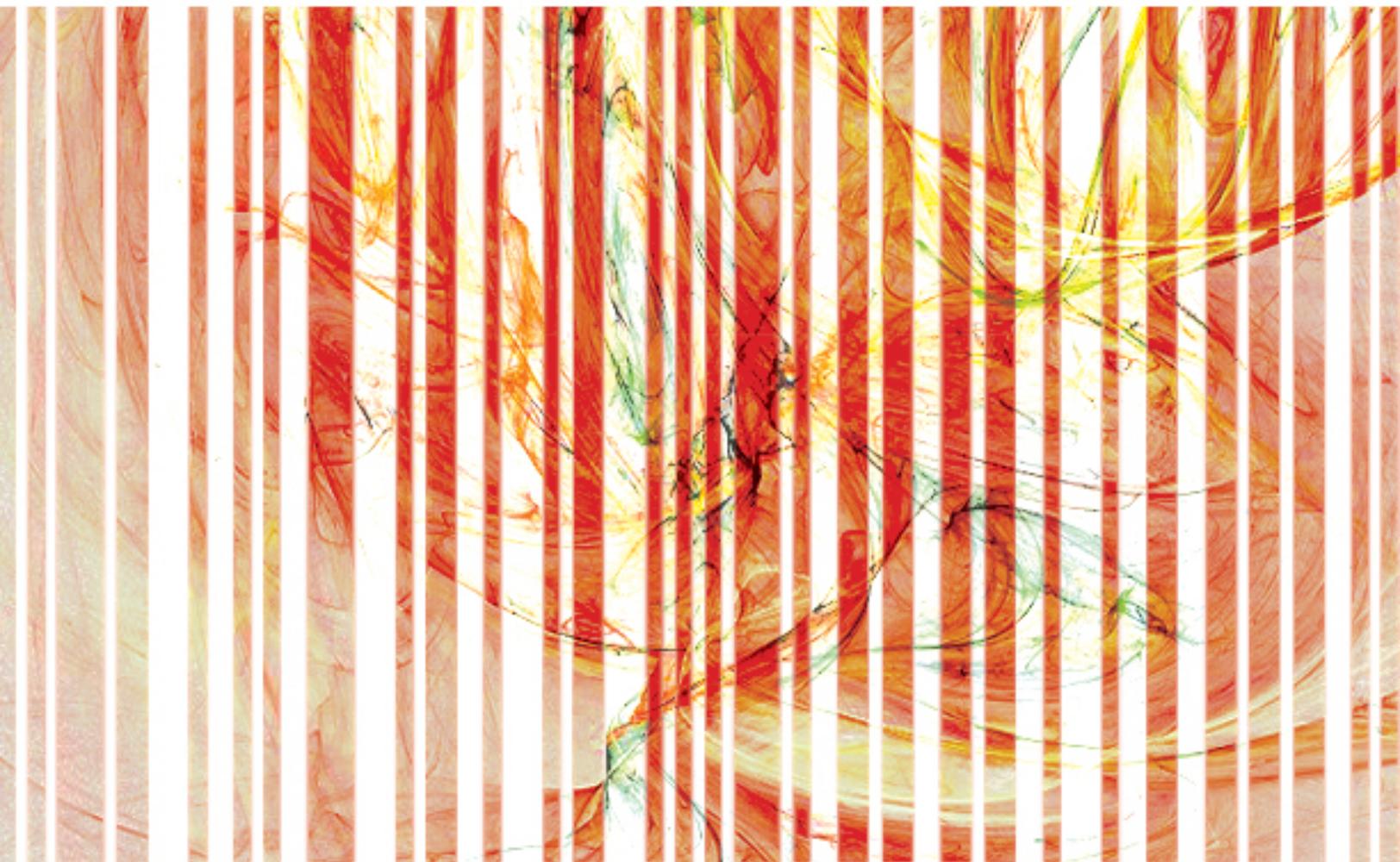




BlazeVOX



s p r i n g 2 0 0 7

Rol of Tomekranaces

BlazeVOX : Spring 2007

Arlene Ang

Alex Butler

Adrian Kien

Andrew Farkas

Beth Balousek

David Ensminger

Eddie Jeffrey

Eddie Kilowatt

Felino Soriano

Geoffrey Gatza

Gianina Opris

Jack Alun

Jessica Worden

Louis E. Bourgeois

Marc Lowe

Mary Kasimor

Matt Shears

Matthew Osborne

Michele F Sweeney

Seth Berg

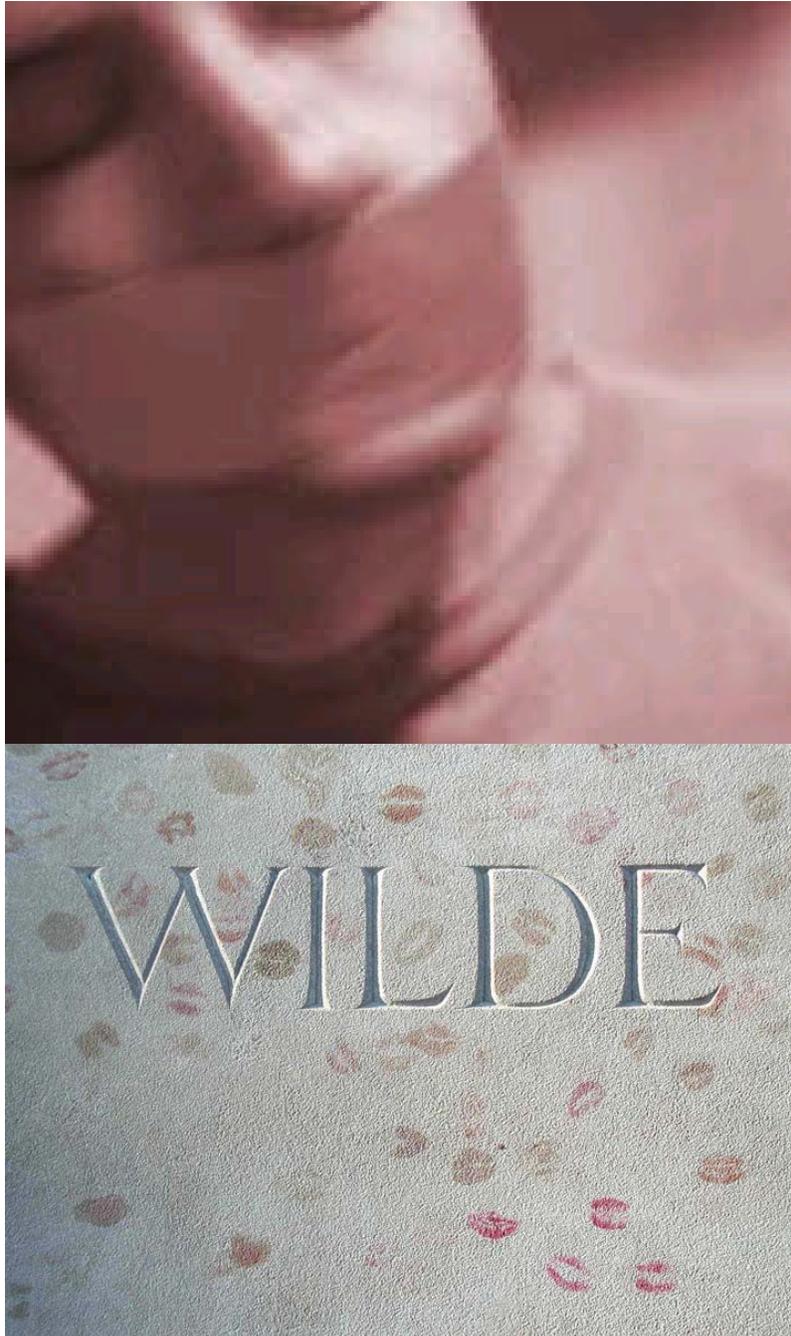
Suchoon Mo

Thomas Fink

Tom Jenks

Richard Owens : Buffalo FOCUS

Letter From the Editor



Happy Spring,

Geoffrey Gatz

Alex Butler

Street corner time

Right before God died, she sat up and said something like this: “What creatures do I have before me? What are these wonderful things?” Her eyes were still alive as she curled to the floor like a wet towel. We were in the alley down by the corner. There were three of us. I guess it wasn’t my place to judge her, and I shouldn’t have said those awful things. But now, well, there she was, right in front of me – not blinking, eyes always open. I tried to take my eyes off of her, but there was no chance it... She lowered her brow and I was there. Veins dripped with sweat of dew in the cascading web of red around me. Still that eye. No one was around anymore. She was toying with me. All in a moment, she was a tigress, an ant, a bee. Closer and closer. A lion. A red panda. Closer still. An oak. The eye was pulsating, throbbing and red. It was touching my forehead. She kept moving closer. Let me in, Let me in - she spoke with a soft wind. Let me in and forever I will let you call me you.

THE EARTH WOULD STILL REMAIN SOLID
A SESTINA

As I pull on the loose string, caught, the solid
ground stares right at me, laughing. The
cord is stuck on his left zipper, the German who remains
on my back, the tandem instructor, and we fly fast to earth
whizzing, whistling into a breath, my eyes still
watering with tears. Margaret, my love, what would

you say to me right now? Tightening in my chest. Would
God put out her hand and help with the weight? This man is solid,
a good 200 pounds of human, a heart attack victim still
carrying my only hope on his back, and I'm frantic to tear the
fucking bag wide open. 15,000 feet to Earth.

Christ, my Body. What will remain?

But another question: just what will they do with my remains?
Will my legs be a stain? My arm? A piece of my foot? I would
have never done this if it wasn't for her. Oh God. Earth.
God, she was beautiful. Her legs in the tub, all wet. Jesus. A solid
50 seconds of freefall, they said. Hell, I might be the
only person falling through air right now. All the way around, maybe. Still,

my arms writhe around with the zipper. We're way off course. Seconds still
to go. Maybe 12. My legs are twitching but my arms remain
locked behind me, the air is powerful. It pulls vomit to the
back – I've spit up without even thinking. Would
his weight just crush me? Am I going to feel his solid,
heavy, Germanic frame enter into mine when we meet earth?

God Maggie, I love you. I do. Your calves. You should see this; the Earth.

I'm sorry we fought. God, I love you. If you were here, still,
that's what I'd say. Love. Know it. Know it. Some solid
images now; a car, a couple walking on the road. I remain
in air, hung above them. I will die and they will live. It would
hurt. It will hurt bad. Let there be a heaven, please, for the

good. God forgive me. Her throat, that smell of roses. The
way we would hide between the sheets. The earth
is solid. Shit, way off course. Physics and gravity would
end this. I love you. This fucking German. She asked me to jump. Still
I keep thinking, asking myself what will remain.
No more tears, no more tears, please, be solid.

Asphalt, it looks like. A street. Am I yelling? 120 miles an hour. It doesn't matter.
Be positive. Life was good, think about love. Maybe a yard. Here it comes. Maggie.

Breathe in. Breathe in.

POWER CORRUPTS

A SESTINA

Dripping soft strings loop around the bottom voice
Rain patters as everything turns dark, falling bare
pure drips drops like fat business men all holding in explosions
in their eyes and stomachs, leaving their streets for the underground
this troubled world of process, land, and fire
each abstract poetic reaching for some fame and control

over what happens next, belting out those hot words of control
driving speed beeps screeches the lining of the throat and voice
strain your words to act wiry, on fire
yah yah yah here it is that burning blue bear, bare
howl for my friends of a lost generation told the underground
rickety split wipes the mouth spittle speck of explosions

and it's heard. It howls again, more marks of explosion,
the room is getting very adult and very hot – wine is the last control
letting us slip into gaudy silliness with jazz blaring from underground,
the cellos and bass and bwah and cutcutcut! black tar voice
speaking in jolts, sporadic dances like the rain bare
who pelts the bear of each and every moon ghost fire

On the television set a monkey, our Judas, sits with fire
making a deal with it, marketing with deaths and explosions
too big to forget. He is tight-knit with a tie and bare
fists pounding on a podium which everyone tries to ignore, labeled “Control
Your Tears.” Democracy calls your attention while voices
are gagged and all intellect makes a run for the underground

Bedazzled, wiry, feather plumes jut overacrossunderground
Sitting crosslegged, our fit dipped in acid, fire
on one end and a fool on the other, brazen crass voices
Crickle and crack and leak to the explosions
Of our past, out of wombs, out of skin, into white control
Let the mothership fly, it's only halftime still empty and bare

unclean plagues and sick hearts lie with crowns, still Bare.
Feeling real dirty emerges the underground
Basted and peppered with drops of control
Rained, guttered out of minds light ablaze, on fire
in the parking lots of congress as it Explodes
and all points lead to me to my lost voice.

Naked, bare eyes burn and drop, the glob of fire
bury the Underground into everything, the explosions beg the
voice to lose control and, still, ask to let the mothership fly.

BLACK WHEN THE SKY OPENED UP
A SESTINA

Right to the bone it cuts straight up
the spine, the piercing chill air as it makes black
of my sight. Pores and tips rip wide open.
I stand a statue of instinctive isolation when
the heavens decided to hack a hole in the sky
and let the ice flow into the mouths, the

eyes, the lungs of its children. The
frigid air was filling my lungs in big gulps, up
strokes – stars make a jewelry display case of the sky,
glimmering small specks litter the black
openness, the discarded remnant of when
cosmic times were better and prosperous, opening

up. I had dropped my cigarette and it opened,
pieces of brown cancer peppered, and I increased the
size of my step. Ambers had fizzled and fled when
paranoia hit, the black beast smiling from somewhere up
above, staring. The only moment my black
eyes question anything, and it seems to stem from the sky,

that huge dinnerplate of thought. It all begins with the sky
and ends with it. Its our abyss with it's eyes opened
so wide, staring right back. It's a dogged fight with blackness,
to compete and build our thoughts to the
top of the it, racing with it the whole way up
into everything else. "It" being unknown, but when

we touch upon it, when we finally grasp it, when
we all truly know, then it's simple: the sky
will drop out. It will shrivel and dry up
and fold in on itself. A giant gap would open
and the white diamonds that once speckled the
beast would tumble off its black

hide. Dribble over its hair, sloshing black
drips. Shrugs and quits. Retires and sleeps. When
all is said and nothing else is, the
reality of this, will matter as much as a blue sky
when all I see is black. I will tear your eyes open
and hang you by your feet to show you which way is Up.

And this is how I felt, cold, alone, black when the sky opened up.

Alex Butler is currently a student of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. There, he worked as the assistant Arts&Living editor and was a frequent contributor to the student newspaper, The Daily Collegian. As an undergraduate, he looks forward to majoring in English with Departmental Honors and studying in Pau, France next fall. Over the January break, Alex plans on working as a temporary substitute teacher in his hometown of Wakefield, Massachusetts. His work will be featured at the annual Five-College Poetryfest in Amherst this year, on March 7, 2007.

Andrew Farkas

OUBLIETTE

Last night, in your town, a businessman stepped out of a sleek skyscraper, stretched, gazed at the darkening sky. You will remember that there were no stars, yet the moon shone brightly, as if the world was covered by a warm, comfortable haze through which a pleasant spotlight was gleaming. It was the type of evening where all and sundry wish that man was a nocturnal animal, the type of eve which intrigues people into exploration with the hope of action. The warmth lends serenity; the spotlight goads people on, casually urging that it's their time.

The businessman, having stretched and imbibed the alluring atmosphere, decided not to go directly home, decided, instead, to walk about town. If you were astir, and you might have been, you perhaps noticed the businessman making this decision, remarking to yourself that it was a special eventide, the type where people often form ostensibly momentous resolutions; the spirit of the night infuses them with strength and conviction.

Having settled his mind on the walk, the businessman turned to the main street and commenced. As you could see, as anyone could see, he was a confident man who knew his business. His stride evinced a readiness for anything, any adventure, any challenge. The moon shone on the businessman as if it was his own personal spotlight; hence, any action would hold the utmost importance, any situation would be handled with the utmost acumen.

Unsurprisingly to you, but a startling revelation to an infrequent perambulator in your town, the businessman stumbled upon a mendicant at the corner of a decaying brick building along the main street. As you are well aware, the vagrant is a mainstay; and although no one knows his actual name, he is called by a sobriquet stemming from his affliction: Fuck You Bob (his affliction:

Tourette's Syndrome). Bob lives at the corner of the dilapidated brick building, but he could live anywhere else. For he is also blind.

Upon conquering his astonishment, having been ignorant of the homeless problem in your town, the businessman looked at Bob with curiosity, still filled with the vigor of the night air; Bob replied with a string of epithets (but nothing else is to be expected), then smiled at the businessman. The businessman, who could certainly see that Bob was blind, was enthralled by the gesture. Walking by during this encounter (for you were there, let us not dally about the point any longer), you noticed that the two were staring at each other as if they were not sure the other existed (indeed, Bob had a partial excuse, although he had been struck). The businessman gaped at the wretch as if he was a visionary churl from an Arthurian tale, the entire scene lit by the spotlight moon gleaming warmly from behind the haze.

If you were mitigating in the circumstance, and you might have been (for who is to say but yourself?), perchance you noticed that the men were not merely staring at each other, they were enmeshed in a silent exchange. Neither one moved; Bob, as expected, would occasionally explode into a torrent of profanities (but nothing else is to be expected); no other physical actions were manifest. The conversation was only identifiable in the eyes of the interlocutors, for they were animated, darting, never resting in the other's gaze for too long, as if communicating through a form foreign to humankind.

You stopped to watch this oneiric colloquy. What could it mean? A night like last is full of possible meanings, the very landscape, the very sky, the very ground you walk on bursts with secret messages refusing to explain themselves. The invigorating power of the warm evening air, coupled with the moon irradiates all with a fascinating brilliance, and you believe that if you were able to wrap your mind around each symbol, you would understand the whole of being. For instance, in this circumstance, there were two men staring at each other, and if not for their eyes, they could have been mannequins. Unlike most, you saw their eyes; and combined with the galvanizing charge of the night, you wished to comprehend the significance of this esoteric tete-a-tete. Your heart beat faster

until it was the only sound; you watched the two as if they were part of an augur's vision made flesh; you blocked the world out hoping to catch a clue to the mystery.

And then it was over. The businessman broke away from Bob and continued on. Still he was filled with the promise of the evening, hoping that an amusing adventure would befall him before his journey was through; and after stepping away from Bob, if you could have seen his face (but you still stared at the now vacant stage, erstwhile scaffold of the enthralling scene), you would have recognized that peculiar mien manifest in one who suddenly forgets something of, perhaps, the utmost importance—a moment ago the thought was prevalent; a moment later, it never existed...but it had to have existed, if it was only possible to wrap one's mind around it... At last, you turned and saw the businessman saunter away, unable to summon the strength to charge up to him, to demand the import of, to demand an explanation for what had just occurred.

Unable. Instead, you looked on as he headed up the main street and then turned into a side alley, away from the light of the moon.

What you did not see was what happened in the alley.

The businessman was traipsing up the main street, which you know so well, when he came upon the narrow way. As most of the townspeople, you have passed the alley many times before, but you have never ventured therein. In your town, whenever anyone wants to indulge in the sordid, they find more salubrious methods to do so. The businessman, too, might have overlooked the offshoot, for although he was in an adventurous mood, he was not prepared to descend deep into the bowels of the town, saving for the fact that he heard a noise—ever so faint, but the man detected it. A drop of water? A cry for help? He only knew it was a sound. For a night like last night, that was enough.

Gazing down the narrow way, the man was met with those conflicting emotions of one who wishes to explore and one who knows better than to walk down any dark alley which exposes itself. And the alley was certainly dark, the type of darkness that is not merely devoid of light, but that

absorbs all light.

This was not a warm haze covering the earth. This was a black hole. And when you saw the man enter the alley, you were met with the distinct sensation that he had disappeared from the face of the planet. That he was swallowed up.

The alley was sweltering and smelled faintly of fish—a smell not completely unattractive. For it was not the smell of rotting fish, nor the smell of a fish market, but fish just the same.

Standing near the opening of the alley, the man called, “Hello,” but answer came there none. Until, again, he heard a faint sound identical to the one before. He followed the sound.

Walking deeper into the tenebrous alley, the man realized he was on a steep declivity. With each step downward the darkness somehow grew thicker. It appeared that the inky blackness would never end, when, at that moment, the man came upon a light. Comparable to the moon, it was also far off, perhaps miles away, and the atmosphere being pitch, the luminescence more resembled an amber nightlight, rather than a theater’s spot.

With the caliginous, fetid, sudorific atmosphere, the man was beginning to feel giddy. Stumbling along, at one point he quickly turned around to see that he could no longer locate the entrance to the alley; after spinning, the man could no longer be certain in which direction he was moving, for although he now saw a light, the light did not illuminate the way, it merely shined in spite of the darkness. Looking in each direction, the man saw, or perhaps imagined myriad corridors bending off of the alley. But panic did not arise in the businessman. For he felt that this is what he always wanted: to be in the dark on an adventure unparalleled in his quotidian life. He groped through the blackness, inexperienced in such circumstances, to the point where the light ceased.

It was a hole in the ground. The hole was barely identifiable; without the light the businessman would have fallen into it—for he could certainly fit. The depth of the hole was unknown for the light did not penetrate the darkness any farther than to unveil the hole, nor did the businessman lean over to inspect. He felt around, but that was all.

Again the noise came; this time the businessman was able to pinpoint its emanation—whoever

or whatever was moaning (a moan barely escaping through slightly parted lips), was behind him. The noise was of little consequence any longer. The pleasant warmth of the inviting evening was now a stifling blare of heat. Sweat poured off the businessman's face into the cavity, as he finally bent over top of it on his knees, arms around the borders.

He wanted to enter the hole. He wanted to dive down into the darkness. He wanted to seethe in the ubiquitous filth and blackness of this gully. He never wanted to be clean again. He wanted everything that his life was not, the polar opposite, the Antipodes. He wanted to blot out all light. He wanted a world of chaos and stimulation. He wanted to descend into the underworld. He wanted to become the ruler of the underworld.

Yet the businessman was split: one side yearned to descend, the other demanded to leave the alley forthwith. The crux of the matter was how inassimilable the experience was. A businessman did not walk into unknown alleys; a businessman did not plunge into holes in unknown alleys. But that was why he wanted to do it. Afterwards, he could walk amongst his fellow businesspersons and they would never know that in their antiseptic zone one of their own had crossed to the other side, had conquered the abyss.

The businessman rose, stalked around the hole hoping to find an angle, hoping to ascertain what was inside. Such an angle did not exist. All his troubles gained him was another muffled moan—this one louder.

Crouching down, the man was about to submerge his head, when someone appeared. At first he could only hear breathing, then he saw the intruder's lips: they were heavily lipsticked and lined—a woman.

“Will you?” The woman's voice was emitted with the same whispering strain as the moan.

“What?” said the businessman.

“Now?”

“I don't know.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s probably not a good idea.”

“It’s *your* business.”

“I *know* what my business is.”

The moan again, this time annoyed, more of a sigh. The man focused on the lips; they moved as entities unto themselves: two agents that proceeded in concert for some unknown, unknowable purpose. As unknowable, perhaps, as the symbols of the invigorating night.

“Why have you come here, then?”

“It was the night. I was curious.”

“Curious.”

“It was this place, I’d never seen it before.”

“This place...”

“I heard a noise.”

“Shall I be quiet? I can be quiet.”

“Yes. No.”

“You *know* what you *want*. You want to find out.”

“I...”

“It isn’t that difficult.”

“But I know nothing about it. It seems like I’ve wanted this forever and each day my ignorance makes it less likely that I will ever try.”

“How will you learn?”

“You can teach me. You can go first.”

“I have already been.”

“Then you can tell me.”

“No.”

“Why?!”

The lips laughed, a quiet, patient laugh. When the businessman attempted to reply, he realized

he had been whispering. If you were in the vicinity you would have heard the whispers, the voices which fill all towns when the streets are crowded, yet no one is talking.

The businessman jerked his head away from the lips, spanned his hands around the hole, testing to see if the edges would sustain his weight. Again the woman made the sound. It was an uncanny note and the businessman's sweat turned cold, though the alley was still sweltering. He grasped the wall next to the hole and held on, his body rigid. Looking into the darkness of the abyss, juxtaposed with the faint nightlight, the businessman experienced the vertiginous sensation of one not on the brink of falling, but who realizes he has it in his own power to remain on the ledge, or to plunge into the abyss. The compulsion to dive down was so puissant it could have been a physical force. But the businessman stopped and looked back to the lips which released another annoyed sigh.

“What is so important? Huh? It's just a...”

“It's a mystery.”

“And why do I have to solve it?”

“It is not to be solved.”

“I thought it was a mystery.”

“It is.”

“And mysteries must be solved.”

“Not all of them. Some must be experienced.”

“That's it! I'm not interested.”

“You are. You...are.”

It had all begun so simply, so clearly. But the situation from the outset of the evening had become more and more inchoate, until now it was utterly entropic. It started innocently. There was the beautiful, symbolic night; the prospect of an adventure away from the norm; the vigor, the motility to pursue the adventure because of the night one hopes to wrap his mind around; the mystery of the alley (a mystery in a mystery); the deeper mystery of the hole (a mystery in a mystery in a mystery). But now the vigor was replaced with confusion. The confusion was represented by an

intense yearning to burst forth in abstract rage, cursing the world for its ill-defined secrets. But the man stopped himself, retreated, slumped down next to the hole. The moan came again.

“It doesn’t matter anymore,” said the man, body slackening.

“Then go.”

“I will.”

“No, wait.”

“And?”

“*And,*” she said, drawing the word out.

“Why?”

“It’s what you’ve come to do. You must. Or...”

“How do you know?”

“Why else would you be here?”

“There are plenty of other reasons.”

“What are they?”

“Um...”

“You’ll be sorry if you don’t.”

“Why? Why is it so damned important?! Can you tell me? Why?! I just wanted to go for a walk. I wanted something different to happen. But now... But now...”

The lips gave a light laugh, the buoyancy made it all the more mocking. The businessman did not understand. He felt another explosion rising in him, yet this would be one of chaotic proportions, not at all focused as his angry speech. The man suppressed the attack with difficulty. Expending so much energy to stifle the eruption, the businessman found now that his confusion was gone, replaced by despair.

The alley was stifling, but the heat was more of an unnatural heat, as if the man was feverish. He moved away from the hole, away from the light. He could no longer see anything. He stared at what he assumed to be the ground. Now there were only voices in the dark.

“I was fine before.”

“You were?”

“I was.”

“You were not.”

“What proof is there?”

“There are ways.”

“No there aren’t. It’s dangerous.”

“Everything is.”

Again the businessman felt a furious passion that wished to escape through his mouth—the feeling one gets when about to be sick. But the businessman did not feel sick. This time he was impotent, unable to control his paroxysm, so he screamed a long, dolorous howl. You would have recognized it, had you heard. Anyone from the town would have recognized the howl.

“It’s getting worse and worse. I can’t see. It’s building inside of me. I don’t know what to do.”

“You do.”

“I don’t.”

“It’s too bad.”

“What is?”

“*It.*” The voice began laughing. When the laughing stopped, the businessman, on the ground, slowly began speaking in an affected monotone—a voice not his own:

“I remember this story. I don’t know from where. It’s like it’s been rattling around in my head, but I couldn’t catch it. Now, I think I’ve got it:

“There’s this man. He’s walking along a road when he sees a house. Seeing the house, after walking for so long, the man thinks he’ll go up, knock on the door. Hopefully the owner will let him sit down. He could sit on the road, but he’s tired of sitting on the road. From far away the house looks beautiful. It’s a brick house with a tall, pointed roof. There’s smoke coming out of the chimney. It’s a pleasant house. But the closer the man gets to the house, the uglier it looks. It’s

rundown; the smoke might be pieces of the roofing being blown away. Only that doesn't matter. The man wants to get to the house. It looked so good before. So he puts his head down and keeps walking.

“When he gets to the house, the place is a shambles. The front porch is so full of holes the man wonders if he'll fall through when he steps on it. But the road is far away and the man wants to see the inside of the house.

“Inside, the man realizes that this is no ordinary house; when he walks through the door, the door slams behind him. He tries to open the door, but it's locked. So he looks around. The room is completely bare except for four doors: one to the left, one straight ahead, and one to the right—the one behind him being locked. Now the man has heard that you can get out of any maze by always turning to the left. So he goes to the left, opens the door, walks through it, and again he's in another room filled with doors, the one behind him being locked. The man laughs, happy to be engaged in something other than walking on the road. So he forgets his weariness and continues to take the door to the left.

“Time goes on. Who knows how many rooms he's been in? No matter what, because he heard one time that you can get out of any maze by turning left, he keeps taking the door to the left. Finally, after all those rooms, he comes to one that only has two doors: the locked one behind him and the one to the left. Without thinking he walks directly up to the door to the left and is about to open it when he stops. He wonders why there aren't other doors to choose from. Quickly he goes back to the door he entered through, but it's locked. There's only the one door for him, yet that's a problem. It's the same door he's always taken, why not choose it again? Only it's not that easy this time. Something seems wrong. Like he made a mistake. Where, though? Where did he screw up? He doesn't know. All he does know is that he has one more door to go through, but because there is only one it seems sinister.

“After much mental anguish, he opens the door and walks through. This room is narrow and short. There are no doors. When the man calmly turns around, he finds that there isn't even a door

behind him. He's stuck. Marooned. So he thinks about the road, the house, the doors. And he wonders where he went wrong."

The businessman finished speaking with a note of true finality, stood up, brushed himself off, cracked his back, began to walk away from the hole.

"It must be nice," said the voice.

"What?!"

"To know...so well."

Waving his hands, the businessman delved deeper into the darkness.

"That's not your business. That's the wrong way," said the voice.

"I know my business, I know which way I'm going!" shouted the businessman.

"The wrong way," said the lips again.

But the businessman continued to walk in the same direction. It had to be the right way; the slope was upward and steep. Soon, however, he found that the woman must have been correct because there was a wall directly in front of him. First it felt as if a ceiling was lowering, but now there was a wall. The businessman took no injury because he had been tramping slowly to compensate for the darkness. Leaning against the inscrutable abutment, he could see the light, so faint in the distance. The light that had discovered the abyssal hole to him. The hole. He still felt an intense yearning to run back, to jump down into it, to discover whatever he could. In the hole. If he didn't care for what he found, couldn't he get back out? Couldn't he go about his business? He could take precautions, in case the hole was too deep, to ensure his safe return. Could the woman help him?

So full of fury, the man had trouble thinking, focusing. He wanted very much to scream in anguish and frustration, but he was silent. Reluctantly, he began to feel his way around, trying to discover an exit.

Sliding along the walls, the wanderer had no idea where he was going. Cogitating became increasingly difficult, until it was utterly impossible. Unable to control himself any longer, he wanted

to yell, "This is all your fault!" but the letters refused to right themselves. They erupted in a jumble.

His incoherent howl was met with cruel laughter. If you had been there, you would have recognized the howl. Anyone from the town would.

"There is still time," the woman said.

But her words fell on deaf ears. The wanderer stumbled ahead, he knew not where. His thoughts were so jangled, they could no longer be considered thoughts; they were electrical impulses blasting at random in his brain. Somewhere, deep down in the labyrinth of his mind, the wanderer wanted out of the anfractuous alley, he wanted to be back on the main street. Yet it was too dark to see anything at all and the anger that rose in him now found vent forever in his mouth.

The longer he spent roaming in what could have been a circle, the less he felt autonomous. It was now as if he was being pulled inexorably in a never-ending round, painfully thoughtless, erupting into bouts of fury. The wanderer knew not who was pulling him, nor did he have any idea why he was being pulled. Soon the sensation was so familiar that the wanderer no longer felt drawn, felt, instead, only forward motion. It seemed that there never had been a hand to pull him with. There never had been any pulling. Nor any wandering. Never any walking. Never a woman. Never a hole. Never an alley. Never an evening. Never any light.

All was dark around him. His thoughts clouded, as if covered by an impenetrable haze, impermeable even to a calm, comfortable spotlight. He could no longer focus. He didn't know where he was going. He was tired. He had been moving forward for so long on this road and he wanted to rest. Finally, he slumped to the ground, his back leaning on a wall.

Only it wasn't a wall. It was a door. The wooden surface seemed odd after rubbing against the brick. Still in darkness, the man turned around, hands grazing over the portal to he knew not where, until he found the knob, which he used to lift himself up before he pushed the door open.

When he slid through the doorway, all remained black. He fell to the ground. A barrage of epithets escaped his lips. But nothing else is to be expected.

This morning, in your town, Fuck You Bob died. Everyone was talking about it. You were jarred by the news because just last night you experienced such a bizarre encounter involving Bob. On account of your moment with the homeless man, you found yourself thinking of the many times you have seen Bob raving outside of the dilapidated brick building on the main street. Often you found that you hadn't even realized he was there, until suddenly he appeared as if from nowhere and everywhere. But such is the case with most vagabonds. You never look for them. Sometimes, even when they are directly in front of you, you find that you can't see them—they are ethereal beings only called into existence by the right minds, the right pair of eyes; then, one day, as you are strolling along, there they are!, just as they've always been.

With Fuck You Bob, however, you grew curious. You found yourself, this morning, asking about him. Your investigation led you to a very old woman's house. You asked the old woman how long Bob had been raving on the main street: she said as long as she'd been in the city. You asked if she knew what he was like before: the woman said she knew him before. You asked what happened, how did he end up like this? She said that he turned and left. He turned left. Left and left and left. She cackled. She rocked back and forth repeating the word "left." Never right, he went left. He left.

You took leave of the deranged old lady and walked back to the main street, right to the spot where Bob used to sit, staring blindly ahead. Outside of a dilapidated brick building.

You now sit across the street from his spot, gazing forth. As if he were appearing for you and you alone, the ghost of Fuck You Bob suddenly materializes much as he was in life. He stares forward, directly at you. He raves. You see him walk up to part of the building, his back to you. He curses the wall. He shrieks at the wall. He is old and blind and he shrieks at the wall. It appears as if he is shaking a door by the handle, a door that is locked. But you cannot see a door. You see only a wall. In despair, Bob returns to his usual spot, looking blindly ahead at you, but seeing only darkness.

And then he disappears.

In the wind you hear a string of epithets. But nothing else is to be expected.

Andrew Farkas was born near Akron, Ohio and grew up there. He is currently an MFA student at the University of Alabama. His work has appeared in or is forthcoming in *Northwest Review*, *New Orleans Review*, *Harpur Palate*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, amongst others. He has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and his short fiction collection was a finalist in the 2006 Chiasmus Press First Book Award.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Adrian Kien

Make a hard letter K

A green man goes into the greenscape and comes out blue in the choir. One voice under a sheet song. A hide and seek feather show. The burlyesque drawer slides open. What a hoof mouth and a horseshoe throat. He sings and the green comes back like a mixed up DAN. A lucky evidence slip from the tree. Doubled-over he licks back his mane. Like a seahorse escaping into the grey scale.

Good Nights Under Pants

in his house
or some other house

between his legs

he has a think on

arran_ing furniture and walls

a cabinet where
nipples rasp fitting int_ styr_ foam cups

and aren't

a sink where
the last _rop of water
slips from a k__fe

and isn'_

a box of unopened laundry de_ergent

thi_ because t_is isn't
and this go_s here next to the coffee table

to see the images retarded
enough for him to not be here

rhyming welcome with white carpet
is is
boy with electrolysis
and nighty nite he

Song of the Hanged

The dead body found

by means of his loin cloth

He was deeply

He was lately

in great mental

agony

He was a drunk cup of tea

a clear cut case

hanging

from one small point

the fancy boy

the policeman's fancy

hang his body

his neck and hands

throttle him girl

throttle him boy

throttle him Officer Hoolihan by some other means

if only to satisfy

the police

I will be the body

if I can

love too briefly

this the song:

hanging

hanging

mode of death

tightened by hands

the homicidal strangulation

in this

I the stranger
strangling body

reduce the pressure
of bodies in different people

women
bodies
so
sensitive to pressure

slow

the woman partner briefly

beneath the street lights

this the song: the him the she and I

hanging hanging mode of death

tightened by hands

the homicidal strangulation

in this I the stranger
strangling body

his hand amorously around the neck
the vessels in the region

sending more blood to all
at the level of the windpipe
tongue pressure

tongue itself

peculiar and somewhat misunderstood form

neck jaw chin
made to fall

to this the peculiar position
tell the position

pronounce hanging

my face paste

the glue
most dependent parts of the body
the legs
blanch
the staining

bluish coloration
the police

escape unnecessary harassment

send more blood to

escape unnecessary harassment

an escape
in
a
woman
body

g

o o

d

ni

t

e

s

h

e

Adrian Kien lives in Boise, ID with his wife, the artist, Kelly Packer and their two cats. But he wouldn't call himself a cat person. He is the poetry editor of cold-drill literary magazine and teaches writing at Boise State University. You can see some of his other poems at actionyes.org and hoboeye.com

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Beth Balousek

Maybe I'm Doing This All Wrong

Scurrilous urgency
to punch. In on time
punch. Out with over.
Time. Nothing but money
that needs. To be spent
right. Away so we don't
lose what. We've already
taken. On time
to pay. On time with
promises not to. Ever
be late on their. Time
not ours.

I am Beautiful

No more. Ugly
is deeper than skin. Deep
words. When I speak
in my own voice. I say things
I don't mean to
Hurt you with. Words
are broken. Glass that cut past my lips.
are banished from. Exile. Let
me in. One room
you in another. Far away place.

Dream Seen Sideways

something about the. reeds cattails
dusty
or. something like that
fine fibers find the soft. spots
in my lungs
I can't get. away
riding some log. or
raft. I can't get.
away it's dark but not too.
dark more like a tornado
sky it's dark but.
not dark. I
smell water
that I'm not quite in. wet
I wear. wool wet
burlap pants. my hair is lank
eyes. sour with. sweat
rain curtains, fingernails raw. with
dirt through cattails
fibers thick
in my. lungs

David Ensminger

Themes on a Missouri Trailer Park, Part II

In the longness of summers
in the pool with the fake green glow
and the sloughing off of burnt skin
and the tinge of chlorine...
on the surprisingly smooth body
flying down the slide, and the under-
sized buoys bobbing like plastic eggs...
in the fence pressed together like uneasy
fabric, in the fresh face free of makeup
in the swim cap and lone tree...
I suppose there was dramatized a struggle
for human definition, a medicine show
of the mind...

I used to sleep in the hallway
with the light on. Or in my sister's
pink bedroom, next to the drawer
with marijuana and Playgirls, between
the David Bowie poster and the
six inch harlequin doll from JC Penney.
Or I cowered down on the couch
trying to keep out the hollow gong
of the fake antique clock or the
cicada stuck to the outdoor screen
or the crick crick cricking black bug
beneath the carpet choking
out the sound of rusted Chevy Novas
and eight-track converters full blare...

Mom worked at a rolling skating rink
and put newspapers of JFK and the moon
landing in plastic bags. Michael grew up
and played in M.A.S.H. and Dracula. He
told me there was a hole in my armpit.

When he threw yoga parties, I hunched
down, waiting for wedding mints
to coat my tongue and my hole to go
away. I even kept re-opening the slots
in my advent calendar, thinking there
was magic in there...

Do you see that paralyzed patch
in late summer, when the heat rolled
over us in a suffocating plastic oily
tarp? It could be so thankless, so
hemmed in by bugs, so alien.
Past the cinder blocks, the road was
a swath of loose itchy gravel.
But in spring, flecks of life came back,
a turgid greenness flooded the lot.
The horizon was knotted by dumb, thick
maples, a shadow curlicued around
the whitewashed bench, the steel
fender of the Ford was a dream sequence
of doo-wop and unfiltered cigarettes...
You linger in these traces, seek shelter.

Water wells. Pipe lines filled with worms
and larvae. Chipped arrowheads from
long gone Indians. A cow skull the color
of baking soda. Gingerbread cookies
in the clay jar made in the shape of
corn. Bikinis hiding thick
pubic hair, fish caught with clumps of
wet Wheaties.

When I was 12, I wrote a poem on the
back of a receipt. Wait, no it was a story
in which I desperately wanted to impress
Judy Garland. I called it "Safehouse." I wanted
to put her in there so badly. For years, I
littered my corkscrew wall with pictures from
Easter Parade, *A Star is Born*, and *Meet me in
St. Louis*. I was going to lure her to the trailer
park, I swear.

Capricorn rises like a winged insult. Like a circus
rigged by a mathematician.

I was born in El Paso on an army base. Dad
cleaned toilets. Taught typing and English
to lieutenants who couldn't read or write.

Threw a man over his head. Was legally blind,
yet snagged a sharpshooter medal.
I was born in Missouri near the cleft of tectonic
plates and the re-birth of country music. Mom
worked at a rolling skating rink. Drew her eyebrows
on every morning. Learned to drive when she was
32 yrs old. I was born on Pennsylvania Ave. next to the
world's largest bait shop. Grandpa gave me nothing
but the smell of whiskey at 10:00 p.m., a convenience
store with a rack of comics, and tools that my uncle
stole.

I was rushing towards the flat crushed orange twilight,
tongue rising like a balloon on five year old energy,
bits of hail nibbled at the ground. There was lightning
100 feet away. It dug a small crater by
scooping away the clay in a pregnant instant. I had
two gerbils that died that month. That twilight
never left me, like a sweet gum
tree invades the dreams of birds.

I dreamed along to Monkees records, staring into
gold stringy shades that cornered my window.
Watched my neighbor run into a yield sign with
his dirt bike, his face turning to lumpy cheese.
I listened to the moon landing on a scratchy
45 record, made Charlie McCartney, my doll
and cohort, get tied up in my ego. Masturbated
before Boy Scout meetings. I could feel my history
leak over *Reader's Digest* magazines, feel its way
towards broken VCRs.

In the Boll Weevil Night

I tried to love with the nudge of a
blues singer E flat
in the boll weevil night
but my mouth was lazy
full of webs
the Apollinaire poem ate my tongue.

I tried to listen to the whir of helicopters
metal cicadas over dusty tenements
the blaring white of newspapers and public toilets
the sharp smell of grocery stores on fire
but the wind scraped my nipples and
I disappeared on the train
where you folded your arms.
That was in Toledo, where are you now?

I tried to color between the lines it took
a million years when I was twelve Three Mile Island
was a dream you were skinny under road marks
and elastic briefs your lips
were as sweet as mud and steel.

I tried to cradle the stars over Mitchell,
South Dakota, the black flawless washbowl sky,
muddy coffee and cigarettes,
toast gashed with jelly and your pink pink eyes.
(white globes, like a bull's scrotum
on a plate) You said the waitress worked double shifts
at the Five and Dime, you said there was an
inter-modality between the corners of her mouth
and the burning of Dresden,
is it true, is that what you wanted?

I tried to be re-born but Dad cleaned toilets
in El Paso Mom worked at a roller skating rink.
Missouri's sun was a plastic yellow as
the trailer shook with a slate-gray tornado.
We hid in the tub as crumpled farm machinery
fell like bits of rusted snow, do you remember
heartbreak alley and collapsing light waves
the razor that licked your fingers
but bit the halo and our naked nerves?
Mom cried twisting her dry frizzy perm, the
dull gold caps back where her tongue was purple
lit up like florescent bulbs, are you

happy I could call and we could figure it out.

I tried to hold the place where sunlight
stretched and fell across the unwashed
floor, where black shudders pricked these
clammy hands, where the children of the
knife slipped into amber apartments and
you gave me chicken pox.
You were 24 fixing breakfast smelling of
Nyquil I was nineteen pumping gas
at the Navajo gas station, what did we do before
disappointment was born, did we hurt each other
like this?

I tried to make you understand
leaves fluttered like blue sounds in
the Chinese restaurant, our language
heavy as a mortgage and the flooded
one lane highway, come home
to potato salad, psychiatry, and mismatched
socks. Where would we be then, we
could practice not knowing.

I tried to replace your breath
nipples eyelids grain processing plant
under a lavender sky where you slid
your hand until I was cut from my
mother, soup cans, underwear, closed fists,
tang of hamburgers, varicose veins,
Chevy Novas and sanitary ice-cream.
I peed holding my carrot magic penis
rust sister dripping in shards of light
Mom dug her nails into our soft heads muscle
peeling away from arthritic hands is this where
it ends did it end there?

I tried to tell you in Kaskaskia, the debris
ringed the island with plucked bones, your
skin was like bread, unfinished syllables,
a brick church where the river nibbled at it.
The road was coated with hawk leftovers and urine
your mouth was tongue zoos and mortar fire
don't think I've forgotten, please,
I'm forgetting you.

I tried to love with the stillness of a tea cup
but my heart's amuck. The cool haze of a mid-March
afternoon -- pills stuck in my hand, silos blink

over thin streets, lottery tickets, and rotted lettuce.
Burlap in a warm shed where we itched, disappearing
into each other, we heard music, what was it saying, can
you remember, can you tell me, were you there?

FROM ACROSS THE PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO PARKING LOT

in a morning gray as toothpaste-
as the sun looked nothing more
than a specimen in a pharmacy
jar, I peered out my paint-chipped
1930's windows sometimes held
up by rocks

only to see three workmen decked
up in yellow orange caution suits
and protective eye gear that made
them oval faced and lunar as 8
millimeter film footage of Neil
Armstrong on the wrong face of the
moon.

they grabbed tiny chainsaws
clipped to the end of thin bare
poles and chopped down the limbs
of the weedy matter-of-fact trees
that skirt Alabama St. like toenails
longish and yellow in sandals...

weedy trees, yes, but lusty as live oaks
in Louisiana across flat Creole
backwater, now just limbs fallen akimbo
in loose piles, rough beige splices
where they once scratched
car roofs and dropped desiccated
leaves on bus stop 7 a.m.s

the workers circled, climbed a grimy
part garbage truck part Sherman tank
behemoth, the trees looked anorexic,
shuddered of all life, the diesel
smell curdled mid-air and the sound
of cranking mulched fibrous stew segued
with the sound of pissed off dogs
and new quicksilver pothole Mazdas

trees older than my damn
blistering windows, older than
slouchy me, tossed into the truck's
belly to be unceremoniously shat
into the city dump or pressed around
dying trees in the Third Ward

before basketball nights where
mud-splattered blue port-a-potties
buzz with mosquitoes and whiffs
of rank vinegar.

this is what becomes of the
transcendentalist city- the lone
eye of easygoing nature,
survivor woods, mowed down,
harnessed, split and gutted
by men whose salaries belittle
teachers, yet whose arms reek of
Whitman...

The Sculptors

I read fifty personal accounts of archeological discoveries and all were busted wringers on a washing machine compared to you.

I trembled with soul into the a.m.
but you were east of Odessa, taking Excedrin,
whorled, like a univalve shell, into yourself.

I took the Italian glasses off my oblong head
to see you better.

Remembered the flat regularity of Illinois
geraniums, motorcycles.

At 29 I get the recyclables together-
strawberry containers, cardboard from
toilet rolls, bulk mail from ATT.

Weigh the ins and outs of writing a novel
or feeling split in two like
Afghanistan's gigantic Buddhas

Am I plant that might grow anywhere,
or rare like you?

Sometimes when I think too much,
my legs feel like copper, and that
can't be good.

I'm sorry

I'm an indentured poet under a brick-orange moon

A vaquero
de letres.

Do you want Isis instead?

Maybe I should begin this again,
mention Light,
palm trees, or dinosaurs.

But I can't

You're in Los Angeles.

So I'll skip the sugar water
and red dye #2
take a hovercraft
and meet you in the supermercados,
in the fake slopes of Hollywood, in
the museums full of conceptual hummingbirds.

True as steel, crazy with permission,

we'll find the Obdurate Jewel.

Wait, you're in south Dallas
in the closed ritual Geronimo night,
lab-powered quandary of time
and wild fire veins.

The whole menu of the
Great Manufacturer...

In March does the Zodiac
Show you the way?

Baby please

We're old as ferns

but don't be crushed by the
intersection of the moon-

Ram/bull, ramble, rumble

Without you
my palms turn to rough coins.

I'm no longer the host of my own body.

Your sweetness misses no one part.

THE 25th HOUR

On the 25th hour,
after eating green beans,
mushrooms, and a fatty pink
steak for dinner, we went to
Blanco's and celebrated
the fact that we hadn't yelled
or hit each other for a day.

Dale Watson was there, singing
honky-tonk, killer Pasadena,
coastal East Texas truck driving songs.
Songs full of gray pompadours,
blurry tattoos, and crocodile
years of entanglement. The
waitress admired your wrist
full of silver. She was basketball
girl tall, hair butched blond.

We pulled up our Wranglers,
grabbed beers off the checkered
red and white tablecloth,
sung low into each other's neck,
and pretended that we still
liked each other. 17 years ago
we wandered stupid and naked
from place to place. Tonight
we salvaged our radio-born bodies,
exiled the world, and drifted
in the low copper voice
of a man that made Johnny Cash
seem innocent in comparison.

Only scars reminded us
of our capacity to love.
The 25th hour seemed
so human, so real. Even when
the singer closed up shop
and sent us back into
where the night goes.

Some of my poems have been published as a small broadside by Lilliput Press and in the avant-garde journal *Caveat Lector* and many other underground poetry zines, like *Extra Cheese*. I also publish the former print mag turned on-line web site *Left of the Dial* magazine, and “*Trailer Park Fragment, Part I*” was recently published on-line by the journal *Stirring* last spring, while five of my poems were published in the print journal *Detriot Dispatch* last fall. Currently, I teach English and Writing at Western Oregon University.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Eddie Jeffrey

SUPERSTITION

For all he knew his shirt said BATHHEADHORSEHATE and his hat said FOOT, but it was all in Japanese. Something about the way it looked, though, he didn't know, but he liked it.

A nippy breeze jostled his bushy brown side burns so that the hairs tickled the insides of his ears as he stooped to pick up a heads-down penny.

He didn't believe in superstition, in that jazz with all its astrology and signs! Hocus. Pocus. Step on a crack, break your mother's back. All that gibberish, hogwash and buffoonery!

He didn't believe in fate, only coincidence, thought *it* was the driving factor, a force of its own, never acknowledging that the dirt under the nail went so far, that luck or deja-vu in a crosswalk were all mixed up in the same ball of yarn.

Life's quirks were all isolated to him. They were balls of lightning dancing around in the yard after a storm, spinning away into darkness. But, he either refused to note the connection of static charges between the terra and the heavens, and the faint smoke rising from frazzled, slightly charred chunks of ground, the remnants, the afterthoughts hanging onto moments already past, or he was blind to them totally, his DNA not equipped with the radar.

He was a child of the Quanta, the packages of time arriving each instant into the future, not realizing before or after, always trying to get a bearing on the here and now.

The penny was shiny, it'd caught his eye and he'd nicked it, given it a home in his pocket alongside the lint and his keys, some other free agent change. He jingled as he walked.

Eddie Jeffrey has been a cemetery groundskeeper, an appliance deliveryman, and a linecook. He earned a B.A. in Ancient Celtic History from West Virginia University and is currently a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University in the M.A. in Writing (Fiction) program. His other stories/works have appeared at www.jazztimes.com, www.laurahird.com and in *Calliope*, WVU's literary journal. He lives in Baltimore, Maryland with this hot chick, Val, and their two dogs, Zoey and Thunder.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Eddie Kilowatt

Save CBGB's

how punk rock is it

to ask for donations

to save a business

that was vital

three decades ago

?

morning, yes

Listening to Woody Guthrie

while lacing my boots

the chair underneath me

creaks and groans,

whispering like an old man

telling me something I should

already know.

considering manhood,

how I want to go about it

thinking about

how my father felt

while he was

dying of the disease that

Woody gave his name to

and I always laugh to myself, saying

we're probably related somehow,

our poor entangled genetics,

but, listening to a song he wrote
never able to record
my boots tied now and standing
pulling a shirt over my face
sunshine seeping through black cotton
hearing his ghost through my speakers
grinning that there is wisdom
in knowing
that
we have little control, yet
like the song says,

He is right

for himself

and

for me,

There ain't *nobody* who can sing like me.

scarecrow made of birdseed

sitting in a chair

next to a table

under an umbrella

on the sundeck

in the backyard

of a very large

expensive house

I do not own

as

the sun comes and then

does not come

the wind comes and then

does not come

the rain comes and then

does not come

listening to tiny songbirds and

black crows

as they argue amongst themselves

somewhere farther up the hill and

somewhere farther inside

me

are you going to the funeral?

I didn't like him

much, then

and I don't like him

more, now

just because he's dead

Constant

Many mouths
which move in linear, clawing
mannerisms, attached to bodies
which bully the weak
whose terrified tongues revert
into widened, safe haven
mouths. The weaker,
those with downward
eyes gazing at thin
aluminum shadows—
these are the angels
with the golden dispositions,
deeply hidden between
argumentative displays
and quick skims across
manmade lakes of habitual
hexes.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Geoffrey Gatzka

Black Diamond Golden Boy Takes Bull By Horns

Because our spells have no power, are nothing, are not equations, have no wonder

I have an open dream of ramparts rising to meet all seasons
It made everything safe for floods, moving as fast as thunder

because our poems are not magic, do us nothing, say for nothing,
moving no one, helping little stars move no stardust, compress carbon,
change lead back into lead. Our spells are nothing

But poems, nothing but vapid sub-literate words, doing nothing but harm, harm to nothing
but trees and the animals whose skins we tan with ink, inks are nothing, inks are not words,
words are not trees, animals are nothing, trees are nothing, poems are not magic, and magic
does nothing but harm, helping little

I have a closed vision of the waking mind
It is time to sleep, time to go on my way

I have no power anymore
Only the means of deception
And I do not wish to deceive
You, my dear friend, nothing

I have nothing more to do but move on to the next
I have died several deaths before, we come back you
Know, time and again, and over again, moving forms

Because our poems are not equations
We have no power, trees are nothing

Your mouth is moving to tell me something saying something, is it poetry, saying yes
saying no, saying nothing. Having nothing, am nothing, the mouth moving, the breath
breathing the throat clenching, clenching on nothing, moving towards nothing, saying
nothing which is to say, we say plenty

“Go to jail, go directly to jail. Do not pass go, do not collect \$200”

The Language of the Birds

*Come you lost Atoms to your Centre draw,
And be the Eternal Mirror that you saw:
Rays that have wander'd into Darkness wide
Return and back into your Sun subside¹*

1.

All moments wondrous, all things perfect
In our simple journey across New York State.

Towards Brooklyn, the town of all America.
The place, now dethugged and safe for artists
To create their visions in sesame street homes
Where monsters, real and imagined, are found
In the blue mentalities of their patients ward.
Where all languages are spoken, are dispersed.
Where the sprigs of long since dried out lilacs
Bake in the summers heat. It's July and scents
Of springs forgotten, remembered.

Here, taxi slowly passing, have a sprig of dust.

From the bridge I had no poetic thoughts, fears
Of falling down crumbling stairs haunted my
Hungers of what was to follow. That precious
red tug boat courageously dragging a black
sanitation barge from one great smell to another.

We sat in traffic listening to the war progress.
There are more dead. It's happening. We drive
By the gleaming UN. The barren construction
site of the World Trade Center, a carrion crater.

The Titan arum and stinkhorn mushrooms fake
the scent of decomposition, attracting insects
to aid in reproduction. In all moments we die.

I ask Ted if we are indeed food for scavenging
condors. He avoids the question and relates the

¹ *The Conference of the Birds* (Persian: منطق الطير , *Mantiq at-Tayr*) by the Persian Sufi poet Farid ud-Din Attar

signs of heat death. The body bakes, the urine
changes from yellow, to orange, to black. Bodies
breaking down from the inside, ours waters stolen.
Left for salt, the leathery skin cracks itself open.

One can only laugh and hope for a kind aneurism.

Oh how my brain hurts from all that there is to do.
One is not required to complete their task, only to
keep at it, never yield, and even after mild pause,
return to work with a sounding vigorous thunder.

The body stronger and mind wounded by the three
Injuries of the wise. The abrasions of injury cutting
into the flesh, to the prideful self, wounds, to endure
The pangs of a memory that cannot forget, forgive the
evil that has been done, never to be undone, only
witnessed over and over in the darkening corridors
of the dollar fifty Cineplex. The popcorn sticks,
a twisted stopped frame, a black and white kernel
of a cowboy in a white hat holding a rope attached
to a man's neck. He stands tip-toed on a barrel top.
The balance is perfect. The movie flickers, clicks
From the center a bright light, a bubble emerges
Burning bliss, blistering sun bleaches the screen.
And for a brief moment the man is saved, the cow-
boy still smiling, holding his prey ready to lynch.

Coming out of the tunnel I smelled roast chestnuts.
Not a bag of chestnuts from a street vendor, a smell
Of something that only slightly resembles Christmas.
The mystery water that flows on NYC streets reflected
The tallness our talented buildings can climb. Dragons
Whirling around as helicopters once would, touching
down to earth only to refuel on, eat more commoners.
This is the way of catsup, money and people; surviving.

I understand that Herman Goering ate cyanide two hours
before his scheduled execution. I often wonder about his
joy in subverting justice once again. I wonder if Ken
Lay, feeling his arteries clot, his heart attack; laugh and
embrace his kind fortune once again. I often wonder also
if there is real escape in death, what waits beyond, let it be.

And to be, is to be in Brooklyn. The globe lamps welcome
every staircase. The lovingly distressed reddish brown bricks

compliment the rusting exteriors of the man who sold me cigarettes; the woman who sold us our subway pass, the man in the wheel chair who asked for and received our spare change; the punk rocker who ran from my camera; the child, slapped by his brother for wanting more cheese. Who knew so many have their own story, (so many walk).

So many boxes moving forward, towards smaller boxes
Taking them to larger boxes divided into small cubes. So
Many coffins walking towards prosperity, not as family
But as single joyous coffins, hexagonally alone, boxing
Agony under the brand name of Joy.

2.

The contentions arise out of love in the assembly of owls, the influence of the Troubadours, the vestibule of fancied dreams conduct and secure hidden affairs under another's guise. We bypassed a young page hauling a silver sword. He was in the company of a stately white harlequin riding high on his stalwart roan. His checkerboard costume held up a motley sign waving in the putrid winds of car exhaust:
Giant Killers dot com; Avenging all father myths, gain conviction or acquittal, sanction or reprobation, by the sword, in particular cases though the jurisdiction and judgments of assemblies of closely concerned individuals, in our own manner – repair what your government fixed!

They said they were heading to Black Tom Island to fix Deeds long since past, and for the cost of a coffee and a cranberry scone, would relate, like a cantaloupe rolling, *la langue des oiseaux*; the Troubadours secret language.

One is granted the gift of understanding the language of the birds by magical transformation as a reward for

great achievements by the king of birds. Birds inform the translator of lurking dangers or clandestine fortune.

In Kabbalah and Renaissance magic the occultist language of the birds is considered a secret and perfect language. Solomon's wisdom was due to his being granted an understanding of the language by God. Francis of Assisi preached to the birds.

3.

Oh how insidious our beloved English can be. It tells us
Nothing of the seven gods of the natural world, who being
Right by our side, lay so far away, beyond communication,
Beyond all that seems holy, if holy has any meaning beyond
Intangible trinkets today. I bought a holy card at St. Patrick's
Gift shop for my mother. We celebrated mass there once.
The card was of St. Lucy whose eyes look up at you from
a plate. I have held a lifetime hostility for her and her icky
plate of eyes. She wanted to give her wealth to the poor,
be like St. Agatha; her fiancée wouldn't have it, Mother
said it won't do. And so they turned to the Roman Guard
to arrest her and force her to marry and renounce chastity.
They were going to kill her for her faith, but first force
Her into prostitution for a good laugh. But God held her
firm where she stood, even when they used a team of oxen
to pull her from her spot, would not move or be moved.
Determinedly, they decided to burn her where she stood.
The flames would not catch. After many trials they found a torture
they could perform, to take a sharpened knife and gouge out her eyes,
yet she was still able to see, able to stand and look at them fiercely.
In death God presented her a new pair of eyes.
And on a golden charger keeps her old pair.

We went on further, down the city street gauging the real
Estate values of cardboard boxes in the darkened alleyways
And side streets, whose residents bolt in thunderous rattling
Clouds, scampering their trash can bank accounts of Pepsi
cans and half-eaten Happy meals. I have cursed god for my ill
fortunes, but never has it let me slide into homelessness.
How context seems to clear the consciousness.

It is not what we have but what we do with what we have!

I soon realized that our group had separated from us. We
were going to the museum, the house of waking ghosts,
art reverently separated from the dead artists hand, rendered
clean, free of the troubling anachronistic issues of anarchism.
The purchased work is free to live, live on within imaginations
Self image, free for all to appropriate the graded ink spots painted
on someone's old dinner table. What will they eat dinner on now?
Who went hungry? What occurred to this person to trans-mutate
table and paint; the moment when all things reflect into a brush
stroke, a lifetime condensed into a word that lasts a lifetime, what?
What magic stands between, my brain cannot comprehend.

A symphony of sculpture slowly began, a dance of iron
Steel and plastics spun from the center. The framed art
Began to float merrily in carrousel, while the media arts
Flickered the light switches on and off again to make a
Homemade strobe. Duchamp waltzes with Picabia, Tristan
Tzara jumps up on an excited chair, "God and my toothbrush
are Dada, and New Yorkers can be Dada too, if they are not
already." *C'est mon dada*, to create certain human horrors
it could not be more like a war than a high school dance.
Reason and logic lead us to this place and it is reason that
Undoes us all. A six foot plaster flower sprouts legs and
Cuts a rug. It shakes the walls. The foundations wane,
the windows snap, the ceiling tiles creak and slowly,
a small crease envelops to a crack. The crack to a break,
the break to fault, the fault to collapse!
The whole of MOMA. Why, why would this art attack?
Lash out in such a way. It seemed to love me at first, caressed
My cheek the way mom once did. I gave so much. Just
Short of incanting a new name for a new age that is very
Much like the age we have already lived. Live TV repeated,
Novels, poems written 100 years before accurately inscribing
today. Describe a me of yesterday, knowing that today would
soon blossom, rally then slouch, then fall dead and decompose.

*What the mind thinks must be in it, in the same sense as letters
are on a tablet which bears no actual writing; this is just what
happens in the case of the mind.* Aristotle, On the Soul

We were alone, Ted and I, but you were talking to
Someone just a moment ago. Where did Peter run off to?
To meet his wife? And Justin to meet his dealer. Jim
To look for lunch and Donna went off to buy jewelry.
Ethan was never really there in the first place. Jenny
Had to feed her fish, Mark his dog. Kyle and Forrest
Went to the track a bet on a horse. Marty and Dana
Are on Black Tom Island flying a purple dragon kite.

4.

Finally, I realize why I'm told the dead sleep so well.

This poem recounts the longing of a group of artists who desire to know the great cantaloupe of Art. They start a long journey toward the land of Wintermelon. The artist cross seven valleys to seek the mad mirror. One by one, they drop out of the quest, each offering a reasonable response to the rigors wandering entails.

These represent the stations that any individual must pass to realize the true nature of poetry. Eventually only four remain as they finally reach the Hall of Cantaloupe. All they see there are each other and their reflection in a lake.

This is not the mythical melon I dreamt about.

Dada is not external or separate from the mind, realize the truth, reaching for the grapes of glory. Reality finds no rest in itself. Blood pudding nothingness, sits limply in a tall glass, quivering. Poetry itself cannot live, act, or move!

Geoffrey Gatza is a farmer in eastern Australia who grows hay for the neighboring monkeys. He toils all day in the fields and comes home to a rustic meal of potatoes with his girlfriend and two cats. Then works the night away on poetry. He reads his poems to the fire gods of the open night. He burns his skin for the powers to see at night. He is going blind in one eye and one hand is going numb. Soon the monkeys will eat him, his girlfriend and then his two cats. These two poems are from his latest collection of poetry, *Black Diamond Golden Boy Takes Bull By Horns*, BlazeVOX [books]

Gianina Opris

THE POET AS COMET

Is this poem pieces or a piece?

I'm grateful for this silence, for this air talks to me

The beige ceiling the light seeing

A voice healing reviving

 I wipe tears

 A fresh drink of life coming through me

It's like being hunted I hear STRONGER STRONGER

I accept death with peace and silence

It's the fourth stress, I repeat pressing my nails

 Something descends again

Heeee Sheeee

Shall I confess?

 Music drives this writing and the brick one stumbles over and over

I hear nothing, nothin' yet so much talks to me

♪

 Did I hear everything

 Vida Mia?

metaphorical middle world

after

Anne-Marie Albiach

Words begin as description. They are prismatic, vehicles of hidden, deeper shades of thought. You can hold them up at different angles until the light bursts through in an unexpected color.

Susan Brind Morrow

One:

hopes the hand of an artist who died will guide the trip of a pen across the paper
art on paper:

Zen-like serenity in the heart.



P.M.: She has suffered what neurologists call “*a reduction in mental acuity*”

mindless

re

pe

ti

tiv ~~~ motions

Preparation: fresh space

in this reception



Days: explore my hand, my eye, my past. I learned *stones could give birth.*

Waxy taste.

*Orange is like a man convinced of his own powers, wrote Russian painter Vasily
Kandinsky, blue is concentric motion.*

The mango tree hallucinates: The other side of Death explores my hair (braids it)
A ghost in a denim jacket. An extra sol. [fog with
perforations in memory.]

An octopus communicates by color:

If you have no eyes
just hands
feel the objects in the path

Photopic vision

Scotopic vision

INTERACTIONS LIGHT COLOR MIND:

How does vision

[the ice cream of passion fruit
tyrant of the senses] attract someone to earth?



The Leaf: pretty soon she is a leaf
Mother confusing Denver for Lima

[mountains for Pacific Ocean] the indigo

*To name the color blue the Assyrians turned uknu (the noun for lapis lazuli) into an
adjective.*

“truth” we share hand insists
without its direct experience

The pain in another person’s body daughter’s broken heart
the union sparkles



■ ■ ■

Mother of great sight:

What do we know?

What is our place in the universe?

How little do we need to have everything?

GEOGRAPHY:

Rock meets **lapis sky**

...distance.....
between EYE and beauty
..... a humming feather.....

J.L. Borges says, *certain places*
try to tell us something, or have said something we should not have missed, or are about
to say something; this imminence of a revelation which does not occur is, perhaps, the
aesthetic phenomenon.

Reap a person
right
down to the skin of the world

Our eyes are far away
from our tongues

♪ REPEATS, REPEATS, REPEATS

QUOTES TO TALKING TO MYSELF

after
Sei Shonagon

~~~~~Tuesday PM.

‘This lady she remembers this thing, his absent mind and he could write trite poetry.’

‘I can explain what happens when *I* disappears.’

‘Today my dog let me know she doesn’t like the rug underneath her food bowl.’

‘There is a woman with ears but no tongue. Of course I remember her!’

‘Yes, I think of that plastic blue ball I won in grade school. Still haunts me, “Why did I win that precious prize?”’

## OLIVES

~~~~~Wednesday PM.

The Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus Augustifolia*) deserves my respect but some people think it could be annoying. Here is what I know of its story. In the late summer coyotes and bears feast on this fruit, but they leave the yellow-green olive seed behind. They have too much fun perhaps. Well, this little Russian Olive began its unstoppable conquest and competition with other species. Poor Russian Olive! Do you know that some people have had the nerve to call it “the invader of riverbanks!” The Russian Olive trees announce a rising river (my dad would have said that). I think those people don’t even pay attention to the sweet-scented waves of the Russian Olive. “Its aroma greets us.” But people don’t know that or so. As for me, it’s comic! I just live my fruit life in bliss.

/ . . . /

Gianina Opris is a native of Lima, Perú who lives in Denver. She holds a Masters Degree in Creative Writing from Naropa University and teaches fifth grade in the Denver Public Schools. Her work has been published in various journals, including Bombay Gin. Awards received: honorable mention from Columbine Poets of Colorado; selected for 2004 international poetry exhibition, NW Cultural Council, Barrington, IL. Gianina has presented her poetics/multi-media productions in Colorado and Cuernavaca, México.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Jack Alun

from **vertical horizons**

(for Christian Da Silva)

all ways

with words
spellbound
keyboarding
between fields/houses
any this/that way
& it's always today

to lead
across highways
the micro-circuitry
any day
in the memory of
with words

doloroso

evening
fullness
heavy
hand-held
tuned
sus-
pended

sweet
not so
that
air
ephemera
ex-
it

mapbook

across windcreens
leave

multiplying carapaces
where the sat nav
outdistances

& mobile
speed dials

read
with the insects

destiny
place names
blossom

highway
pay as you flow

innocence

early wind
the lake world
star slashed
absorbency

the heron
the silence
interred day
unbleached

guilt
in such places
portals
of innocence

pixelates
wide horizon
edges
of microform

angle-poise
starching
of vegetate
light

that alive
for everything
as the music
to become

tapestry

autumn
curls
before a fire
licks at
washed out
fur
stretches
scratching

mist
incense dreamed
a dog
a thin patch of
grey
time
snuffles
its analogues

whiteout

winter
white
emulsifying
the floe
poem
liquidity

anaemic
deficient

blank page
corpuscular
a slow blood
before the thaw
minus memory
null-(i)para)

immune
season

Jack Alun currently lives and works in France as a writer and translator. His poetry has appeared widely in print magazines in the UK and in ezines, such as Eratio Postmodern and Words-Myth. He's conducted interviews for The Argotist Online magazine and reviewed for Jacket and Shearsman (under the name John Couth).

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Jessica Worden

Madeleines

When my mother came to say goodnight, I asked her if I could keep the window open; to let in the smell of the night-blooming jasmines.

In the window the brim of a hat on a head was visible, made of hanging plants and porch light. I closed my eyes, knowing but not believing and hoping that I would never see his hand.

untitled

It had rained for the first time in months and most of the water had become puddles sitting on the surface of the earth, waiting to penetrate the packed dirt. On the sidewalk, between the cracks she carefully avoided lay a milky-white worm, curled into a ring. She crouched down near it and could see every single segment and every single segment saw her.

And he thanked him so profusely, and with such respect, that she was momentarily confused and waited for him to thank her too.

untitled

I kept my milky-white oval water balloon wrapped in a blanket in my pants drawer and when I went to check on my little child, I found it shriveled, almost completely disappeared and my pants were wet and musky-smelling.

In a moment of lost lucidity, I imagined my head was attached to his belly, instead of his on mine and my mouth fed upon him, as I tried to push my head further into the cavity I had made.

I dreamt my arms had grown into my sides and that my hands spread out like shriveled wings on my back.

untitled

When I was little my grandmother came to visit and taught me how to tap dance. I knew two steps and could make noise.

Her visits always spanned from mid-winter to spring. She would head out west when she couldn't stand the winter anymore and wait until it thawed.

People never understood why the Pacific was so cold. How can you love something if it is cold? My aunt once went to the beach during red tide because she had never seen the Pacific before. It was January and she had a bathing suit on. We were on Cherry Beach, next to the mouth of the LA River and the shipyards.

Once I got pulled under and dragged along the bottom for such a long time that when I finally stood up again the pocket in the crotch of my bathing suit was so heavy with debris that it hung down between my thighs like a dirty yellow testicle.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Louis E. Bourgeois

A Dead Bird is a Dead Thought

Your blood grows old in you; everything around you becomes weak—the earth rotated backward for a moment, out of confusion. How you wanted to find a way out of this world—how Saturn seemed so much more luscious than green earth—

Unable to fly, you died from a lack of flight.

All Matter is Suspect Thought

And deep, way deep, into the night, the walls began to exclaim: *Save us, save us, we don't want to be here anymore.*

He left his room immediately and in a state of absolute Euphoria, he hung himself under heavy moonlight because he couldn't bear to lose one iota of his Joy.

Bone Gatherer's Blues

She had collected over 1,000 skulls of birds she had destroyed and boiled in bleach. Piles of little heads were stacked neatly all over her ramshackle cottage. She couldn't remember how she came to such deeds but it was clear even to her that it had become an addiction.

But one morning, pallor spread across her whole body and she wanted to die. She thought, *I have spent all this time killing and boiling and it has come to naught. I could have had a normal life; husband, child, dog, house, car. I have wasted my life on a mystical pursuit that I thought would bring me enlightenment, instead it has only bored me—the bones mean nothing*

Suddenly, while she was seriously considering killing herself, a Peregrine Falcon flew into sight and landed on the cottage's roof. With a semi-malicious grin, she took up her bow and arrow and fired into the new sacrifice...

The Angry Poem

I know a poem so mean he wouldn't let himself be written. But I can be as mean as the angriest poem, so I wrote him anyway, in spite of himself.

As you can see, he had his reasons for not wanting to be written, he has a pretty good reason for being mean.

Louis E. Bourgeois lives and writes in Oxford, Mississippi. His latest book, OLGA, was published by WordTech. Bourgeois is also editor of VOX. www.voxjournal.com

your thoughtful hopeless history--
you fell for the price and you priced yourself--
cheap and searching--you sit
on leather and fish for words
perching over earth's stew
demanding everyone's attendance

colognes
in large vats beneath the blue sky
gulls debate the prestige
of flight--more and more
switching places and diving
into the pacific residues of salt
fall into open novels

a list of wants
turns optimistic as the ocean
is green the ocean is a green eye
I reflect myself in the middle
photos of the machinery--
indulgences of holy mary's

our father sits in space--
workers protest raids--in empty buildings
resets latitude behind history--the earth is still here

Marc Lowe

00

“If there’s no meaning in it,” said the King, “that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn’t try to find any. And yet I don’t know...I seem to see some meaning in [it], after all.”

– Lewis Carroll: *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

‰

I read the lines from right to left. My eyes drift across the page, my breathing conforms to the rhythm. One character follows the next. The characters that precede and/or follow the other characters look strikingly similar to the ones they surround and/or are surrounded by, yet at the same time all are somehow – ever-so-subtly – different from one another. It takes an expert’s eye to decipher them, I can assure you. If I look at the paper through half-closed eyes all of the characters appear to be exactly the same, yet if I open them wide and stare long enough each line, each character reveals its unique qualities to me. I glance for a moment at the corner of the page I am currently decoding to see how far I’ve progressed. However, there is neither a number, nor any character there to provide the slightest indication. All I can make out is a kind of stain, a blotch the size of the tip of a child’s crayon, which could in fact have some meaning, though it’s hard to tell. Might I have squashed a fruit fly with the back

of my hand as I was turning the page or, rather, is the spot simply a dab of black ink? It's certainly too small to be a character, yet its shape doesn't suggest that it was meant to be a page number either. Hmm, perhaps the page numbers are to be found elsewhere; maybe they reside within the text itself in the form of characters? There must be numbers in the text somewhere! One could argue, I suppose, that the text is composed of nothing *but* numbers (as all texts are, finally), numbers that each possess some intrinsic – or extrinsic? – value that can only signify something physically existing somewhere in the universe, thereby assigning them meaning/significance over and beyond their function as mere symbols on a page. For all I know I may be holding the story of the human race from its inception to its eventual and inevitable destruction in my trembling white hands, though I've yet to determine whether this text is really about anything quite so lofty. I do have my suspicions, however.

‰

An indeterminate quantity of pages – roughly equivalent to those that remain to be interpreted – have already been scanned, read, pondered, deconstructed and reconstructed by yours truly. This suggests (logically speaking, of course) that, as it has taken me X number of hours/days to scan/read/ponder/deconstruct/reconstruct approximately 50% of the text, it ought to take an equal number of hours/days to do the same for the second, as-yet unread half. First, though, I'll force myself to stand up, stretch my limbs, and drink another paper cupful of water.¹

¹ Coffee gives me the runs, while water – though easier on my stomach – has the unpleasant effect of putting pressure on my bladder, which means I have to take frequent urination breaks; this is extremely disruptive when trying to concentrate on the task of drawing forth hidden meaning from characters that all look practically alike, as I'm sure you can imagine.

At any rate, I ought to let my brain cells rejuvenate a bit. They say the brain stops working properly if one does not allow it sufficient rest. When was the last time I stood up from this desk and went to the toilet? I've lost track already. No matter. I need to complete the task of deciphering the text before I return home. Perhaps I should make a quick call to my wife before she goes to bed; she might start to think I'm out cheating on her with some floozy from the university. If she has any doubts about my whereabouts she can confirm the number with caller I.D., which will prove *incontrovertibly* that I'm still in my study, and thereby exonerate me of any possible suspicions regarding my fidelity.² No one else has access to the phone here, at any rate, as I always keep the door bolted when I'm out.

² As an aside, about a year after we were married I came to the realization that masturbation is much quicker and also less messy than sleeping with women. It also smells a lot less, which is a major plus—I have a very keen sense of smell and can't stand the scent of other people's bodies, though I can go for weeks without a shower and not notice my own smell. Isn't that curious? I've also discovered that, since I can masturbate any time I feel the urge, I no longer have to do piles of dishes or vacuum the entire house in order to gain my wife's favor, chores which were physically draining and took time away from my research here. I can't bother going home every time I have an erection, after all, can I? I'm not going to carry on like some animal, driven by impulses it cannot control. Some people just don't understand...

Well, it seems as though she's turned the answering machine off again; she's been unplugging the phone after eleven p.m. these past few weeks so that any potential unsolicited calls won't disturb her already-shallow sleep. How could I have forgotten this? The last time I rang to inform her I'd be in my study all night she explicitly stated that she wouldn't answer in future unless I called *before* eleven. Is it after eleven already? Oh dear, my watch has stopped working; the battery must have run out. Damn it. How long has it been like

this? Maybe I should pack up my things and call it a day; no, I simply can't do that. There's still much work to be done, much too much work...

‰

Something about reading the lines from right to left doesn't quite add up. I get the feeling that if I just...Ahh, now *that's* interesting. What would happen if I were to attempt a reading of the text from left to right instead of from right to left? I could, hypothetically, read the same section I just completed *backwards* – the same 50% or so that I've spent the last X hours/days de-/reconstructing – in an attempt to glean a completely new meaning from the lines of characters. But, alas, this poses a further dilemma, for if I reread the first half of the text from left to right rather than from right to left, it will take me approximately the same amount of time to complete [re]reading it as it would for me to simply read the remainder of the text in the same fashion as I've already done with the first half, and then I'd *still* need to go back afterward and reread the second (as yet unread/decoded) section from right to left, lest I be left with insufficient data for my penultimate *Final Analysis Report* (FAR). As an aside, who was it that first insisted the text be read – and, by extension, interpreted – from right to left anyway? Funny, but I can no longer recall.³ Ah, the perils of deconstructive hermeneutics! Convention be damned. Where are my glasses? Hell, do I even need them for this?

³ If the text were instead written in, say, Hebrew, or another of the Semitic (Arabic) languages, it would make perfect sense to read it from right to left, but, for me, a native speaker/reader of English and a *connoisseur* of various Romance and Germanic languages, left to right seems at least as good a way to read/interpret it as right to left, and certainly a more intuitive one. I'm willing to bet that those rarefied, exceedingly audacious minds who are said to have devoted their lives to deciphering this text – and others like it – spent their final days debating the intention of its author (or authors), as well as the hidden meanings inherent in the characters when looked at in various types of light, states of consciousness, and/or when employing different methodologies to decode them (perhaps they were scholars of Kabbalistic texts as well? this would

certainly explain their preference for reading from right to left!). If only their meticulous records hadn't all been destroyed in the great flood of 2023 (see Clew, Myers, Stein, et. al.), I might now be able to back up some of these theoretical claims...

‰

I read the lines from left to right. My eyes drift across the page, my breathing conforms to the rhythm. Wait a second. What page was I on anyway? Hmm, the corner of this page appears to be smeared. How curious. I suppose there must be some reason for it; perhaps the person (or persons) who wrote (or compiled) the text created it in such a way as to allow the reader – that's me, in case you haven't been paying attention – to just open it to *any* page and assign to it some number, *any* number, so that s/he need not worry about getting lost in the labyrinthine lines of characters and text ever again. Yes, this makes perfect sense! I'll label this page, the one with the smear in the corner like a small Rorschach blot, *page 00*. (I can always change it again later if necessary.) Now I'll be able to read the text from right to left, left to right, top to bottom, bottom to top, diagonally, or in any other pattern my mind is able to devise. Further, whenever I get too tired or have to urinate – though with so many possibilities to explore, it's unlikely I'll be taking frequent breaks – I'll simply get up from my desk and stretch, fetch myself another cup of water, phone my wife to make sure she knows I'm still thinking about her, or whatever...⁴

⁴Without a properly working watch to confirm the time, however, it's possible my wife may not answer when I call. I've boarded up the windows to block out light and other distractions; it's a small price to pay for freedom of the intellect, if you ask me. I still don't understand how she (my wife) can liken me to a "prisoner trapped inside of his own skull," when in fact it's *she* who's "trapped," trapped inside her meaningless life of domestic drudgery, predictable television programming, and an all-consuming obsession with superficial beauty (we all die a little with every breath; why try to bury this essential truth beneath layers of perfume?). Such trifles! Alas, some people will *never* understand...

Tentative Conclusion

All of the characters mean something – they have to; I’m just not sure of exactly *what* yet. No matter. There’s still plenty of time to figure it all out.

Marc Lowe’s fictions and hybrids have appeared or will appear in various journals, such as *5_trope*, *elimae*, *Mindfire Renewed*, *Opium Magazine*, *Pindelyboz*, *The Salt River Review*, *Steel City Review*, and many others. Marc holds a Master’s degree in Japanese literature, edits for the online multimedia journal Mad Hatters’ Review, and has recently completed his second labyrinthine novel. Please visit him at www.malo23.com for more information.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Matthew Osborne

Untitled

She said, the heart is like a rebate
Of what once was, and sited through the mail My instinct says a tomb shall be fashioned
The goddess spoke and paid homage to the flight

Nudge the roots and excavate all freedom Allow the joy to grapple through the hollow pipes
Hoist me up, once or twice, and rob me as a keep-sake Fish for a soul, hook and line, and
seek shelter is a used space

I have seen, the subtle side of lightning Each exploding blow, has devoid of trace Near or
far, must I say, we'll drive this home until the end Sensation proves, willing or not, of what
cannot be bent

If I have won, I shall jump into a free-base If I have lost, I shall forfeit all of my pieces
Those infant eyes, tug and tow, resistance is the outcome And I will listen, with all do
respect, absorb some minor detail

So what remains, is a fragile destination Rumor has it, proceed by means of caution Let me
say, this I say, the weekend is in the neighborhood In due time, and in do time, all will settle,
this commotion

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Michele F Sweeney

VESSEL

The vessel bobbed gently at the ocean's edge
A rapunzle-d length rope held her to the jetty's navel.

She was not a cliché'd member of marina society
Just a stalled shipwreck with pretty curtains.

Beneath her lay a history of grand catastrophes
Nowadays, glistening waters tuck her in at days' end.

The sea stewards would sail her, perplexed
For yet another journey – she had passed as sea worthy.

TRAUMA

I had the inkling mine wouldn't be like all the others
So after nine hours of sheer, terrifying, ferocious agony
They saw my own and that of the baby's was skyrocketing down
Our heart monitors kept score as our numbers dropped near to nothing

The rising angst topped the hilt as they fished my bloated torso
From the dripping bed and quickly tossed me like a salad into the theatre
(I had been on stage before but had never felt butterflies the size of emus)
the med's yelled above me, rushed and pulled at me and said 'they had no time'

It was odd not sensing anything but the horror of losing this sweetheart I'd carried
like my closest whom I'd nurtured with goodness, songs, chatter and snuffles
gloved hands tugged at my womb, face filled with tubes, my head was held
I reached for a soft hand of a nurse as the silence damaged my ears now

I searched hungrily at the many faces above me to see if my one survived
They called him a she and squeezed my hand and looked distressed
Silence continued as I was making my exit toward an inviting, luring veil
Like an organza curtain to the backstage of an endless exit

As I floated to stage right I heard a cry from another player on stage
It was the most exquisite of all cries, the master of any tenor on Earth
The call all had been waiting for, the scream of arrival
'twas my son whose breath they had made good and returned to me

Joyous of joys had never filled my heart whose blood supply was diminishing
They pumped relief into my pain as four hands worked internally
My arms like a conductor in shock reaching for the ceiling
But I was a mother now and could not envision my own dangerous call

They worked on me further as the relief caused me to babble out stories of my past
For I was in the theatre and my audience all wore blue garb with masks
Each bearing a frown as it was a serious drama, this one Act play
A late arrival in the theatre ran to me yelling at my audience

'what have you done to my sister?' as my shocked arms still flung at the ceiling
tubes holding the leaks in my body watered the garden on the shiny linoleum
my sibling nurse now took my hand and raved at my performance
instead of presenting roses they bought to me the most beatific bundle

The love that escaped me in that moment cured all the urgency they were mending
my head was higher than any ecstatic moment and I sang a small tune to him
'twinkle twinkle little star' - the Mozart track I had sung in utero
his eyes locked into mine, a moment I had heard about, the magic of life.

Michele F Sweeney lives in Sydney, Australia. She is a dramatist, teacher, mother and poet who would one day like to dine out every night of the week.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Matt Shears

selection from a serial poem entitled *where a road had been*

to be or not to be, that is its answer. it was representing,
what it what was representing, that representation, in a kind
of craft. and were they sailing/stalling. that it was nearly
time, that it was nearly a time, that it was currently, and
passing. and were they sailing along, and was it confessing
something. to whom is a home, they were always renovating,
innovating the innovated, and innovatively. was it an ovation,
that was being born, could it be a birth and was it really
sailing. long long, along the horizon, long long, along the
horizon, what might have been, inside a line, how it was
opening. and were they really sailing. if it had a curtain, if it
had a balcony. had it believed, in an outline, in that kind of
caress.

it was so dirty, it was fucking. they didn't want its nakedness,
its exposition. it could not be subtle, they were only waiting,
in a smaller distraction. what it might have called/what it
might have called out. and what for. were they thinking, its
audience, were they. it was so dirty, it was loving, it was a
kind of curtain. that there was a panorama, a kind of outside,
something wished, something sailing. had it been a window,
a castle. a partition, a patrician, a kind of noise. in its
exposition, an exposing. that it was always covering up. that
they were always covering up. what they were saying, and so
baroque. from the window, a kind of baroque, a firmament.
and could they see its façade, could they.

a rising of hounds, could a howl still. once placed, the extent, of its damage. was it, 'in the distance.' he was 'replaying it,' that it 'had to be repeated,' when it 'had to be spoken.' it had to deliver, what it had to deliver upon. could a howl, still breathe, at its reach, at its river. and where was it opening/its opening. that a clearing, streamed, that its sounds were placing/replacing. what was, once, itself. what was receiving and was it also howling. must it have been forgotten, and was it fading/fading away. how were they feeling, about their perceptions. and what could be brought, to them. were they 'in the distance,' were they smeared/smudged, what was flowing, against its textures/its grains.

its heart, always open/broken. opening/breaking away from
it-self. that its self was opening itself open. although where,
its captivating, its conclusion. could it be opening/breaking,
summarily, could it be its continually. its open/broken,
always heart, hurt. a dis-heartening crest, so fallen, what it
was picking up. what was being received. at its reception,
nothings were leaving, a part of something, each. an
opening/broken plane, a field of which. that its heart was
opening its heart was. and where, they were loving. and
where it-self opening/breaking, that its opening, un-open. as
if it were spoken, leaving. as if it were leaving, it-self behind.
a part of something, not-beyond, un-returning, a heart
opening closing.

I received my MFA from the University of Iowa, and my PhD from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.
Recent poetry has appeared or is forthcoming from Notre Dame Review, Diner, Denver Quarterly and The
Argotist Online.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Seth Berg

When the wind...

I.

All that remained was the rabbit, the one-eyed, cancerous rabbit who was as happy as a maggot in a shitstorm. No more Laundromat. No more nickel arcade. No more old-man-chewing-on-a-wooden-match sitting on the corner. Just that slow rabbit nostriling his cycloptic way down the shrapneled street.

II.

They lie. It sounds nothing at all like a freight train. As a matter of fact, it doesn't sound like an object at all. I had heard the folklore: a piece of straw piercing a telephone pole, livestock decapitated by whizzing license plates, persons being vacuumed up and regaining consciousness miles from their last memory. It sounds like all of that crammed into the darkest part of your core. It sounds like a brigade of grim reapers shrieking, swallowing, vomiting.

III.

When I was five years old I wanted a pet rabbit. I liked the twitching of their noses, the perfect spheres of their droppings... Now I just want my wife back.

At the Bar

When the robot drinks,
she hungers for salads
made of scrap metal and wire,
professes her undying love
for the pinball machine.
I show her the fillings in my teeth,
the scars patch-working my surface area,
and she gets all hot and bothered,
realizes I,
too am modified,
my body nowhere near its origin.
I buy her another snifter full of brandy.
She swirls it and mumbles something
about digital versus analog,
says she loves the linearity
of my whiskered jaw,
the right angles of my bottom teeth.
When I tell her that I had braces
in middle school, she digs
her bot-fingers into the back of my skull,
kisses me hard on the face,
and says that she wants to fuck me until the end of pi.

Aphasia

Ever since my wheelchair
I've been eating these placebos
opalescent when I was a young man
and sometimes too large for my gag reflex
now the nurse brings me tea and exotic fruits
chamomile and papaya
all I can do is raise my slow thumb
and repeat the phrase "pretty good"
because pretty good is universal
and the nurse will never know
that inside this crippled head
is an architect waiting
to replace the severed sky

Seth Berg received his MFA in poetry from Bowling Green State University in 2003. He lives in Minneapolis where he is assistant professor of poetics and eco-architecture at Vesper College. Recent poems can be found in Connecticut Review, Lake Effect, Chiron Review, Stitches, JMWW, and 13th Warrior Review. Seth has an English Bulldog named Bob and a punk photographer fiancé named Ashley.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Suchoon Mo

Airport

this is an airport
not a home
or a church
or a hospital
or a mortuary
I am sure of that

airplanes go
from here to there
airplanes come
from there to here

there are many different ways
of going
and of coming
but I have only one boarding pass
that defines my destination
which is not even my destiny

I am in this airport
I am sure of that

In A Bath Tub

a naked man
a naked woman
kissing each other
in a bath tub

is the water getting cold?
I wonder

Her Large Eyes

she has large eyes
as large as the poignant stare
of her gazing
pleading
large eyes

Suchoon Mo is a retired college professor living in the semiarid part of Colorado. His poems, essays and music compositions appeared in a number of journals and magazines.

Thomas Fink

ULTERIOR CREATION MATH

swallowed the congregation.
Perhaps it was plugged
into the under-
ground generator
that helped the yokel economy
keep pummeling its least endowed
workhorses. Whose gates had been
stricken during the last blatant
harvest. Traffic on this alternate
earway has been determined to
exceed your needs. Gimme a
white middle income
nonagenarian who quietly
tours reggae's authoritative
tinctures, and I'll throw you a wide
receiver. Did Gandhi birch the schiesse
out of his most swooning militants?
Some boys myth what they
will; our lodge
is disposed
to toasting
one whale of
an emaciated
signpost.

AT A BLOOD-

caked kosher barbeque, headstands
on salted oatmeal asphalt. An
 overturned
vermin sultan
 accosts a lunchmeat
 subaltern consultant
 “Can you pump belief?
My glad bus runs on
stress-free neurotransmitters.
Yet luck swerves. Who is
truly in- sulated?” *Despise*
 cost. Defray *insult. Bracket*
 yesteryear’s result. Obey
 a sultry splurge,
 and good deals
 will be *polished,*
 pastiched. *Pimped.*
Never- theless, a
bleakly garbed seer is
gonna sear token
herrings. It should require
more than a bewitched sub-
urban vine undergrowth
 sprezzatura (and tall
theory/axis)
to rivet, break
in genome
nomad
scriveners.

NONCE SONNET 3

Cousins chop delusions full-
time, and the load
only burgeons. Why do
you post that squirmy
thesis on the brass
bank door? Brute hail
dispels soon. After the
 roast, he was
less inclined to

improve the ears
or choose to
be encouraged by
a season's crop. You'd best
adopt an abdominal affection for
the slop served here
as almost sincerely perfected.

There's no silver boast equal to
the heft of workers who mop up that
march of slovenly weevils nearing the hole in this
 roof, nor does
the greasy lilt in the
gracelessly incandescent flag of a

downwardly nubile concern keep matters
dry. I ask for proof of enduring
credit, as though the market won't tilt away from

efficiency again or values won't lag to catch
a huckster's flavor.

Thomas Fink is the author of four books of poetry, including NO APPOINTMENT
NECESSARY (Moria Poetry, 2006) and AFTER TAXES (Marsh Hawk P, 2004), as well as an
e-chapbook, STACCATO LANDMARK (Beard of Bees, 2006) and two books of criticism.
Joseph Lease and he have edited a collection of essays on David Shapiro that will
be published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press in 2007. His paintings hang
in various collections.

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Tom Jenks

surveillance notes

Black cat watching white cat. White cat watching black cat.

* * *

One two three five seven drops of rain.

* * *

White cat watching black cat. Black cat watching white cat.

* * *

Postman whistling Dambusters Theme.

* * *

ILLEGIBLE

* * *

Arrangement/rearrangement of comestibles (weight/size/frequency of use).

* * *

Postman whistling Harry Lime Theme.

Eleven thirteen seventeen drops of rain.

* * *

Striped cat watching black cat watch white cat.

* * *

STET.

* * *

Pickled cabbage and lychees in syrup relocated to sideboard (imitation beech).

* * *

Postman whistling Theme from M* A* S* H*.

* * *

Liver and onions at foldaway table. Sluggish digestion. Reflux? Ulcer?

* * *

Her [...] on his [...] His [...] in her [...]

Nineteen twenty-three twenty-nine drops of rain.

* * *

Postman whistling James Bond Theme.

* * *

Evening bulletin. Snow in the Grampians. Rare birds roosting in Mexico.

* * *

Postman whistling Pink Panther Theme.

* * *

Silence silence silence silence

* * *

Black cat watching striped cat.

* * *

His firm strong [...] Her milk-white [...]

* * *

Postman whistling Ra-Ra-Rasputin.

* * *

ILLEGIBLE

* * *

Silence silence silence silence silence

* * *

Postman whistling.

* * *

Her firm strong [...] His milk-white [...]

* * *

Pickled cabbage & lychees in syrup relocated to wardrobe (imitation oak).

* * *

Striped cat whistling.

* * *

His [...]. Her [...].

* * *

Postman watching striped cat whistling.

* * *

Silence silence telephone silence.

* * *

Pickled cabbage and lychees in syrup destroyed. Method? N.B. investigate.

* * *

Thirty-one thirty-seven forty-one drops of rain.

ILLEGIBLE

10 deleted scenes

Ex-miner walking his wife's Yorkshire terrier.
One of their names is Algernon.

*

Three days with his hair on end,
the boy who stole my collection of magnets.

*

The vicar wasn't wearing any underpants.
This later became significant.

*

Twelve entirely imaginary girls.
Friday night with the curtains drawn.

*

Three across is also six down.
Six down is also three across.

*

Diet Coke in the cocktail hour.
It wasn't meant to be this way.

*

Forgive me Lord for I have sinned,
once, in February 1983.

*

There are no other worlds to conquer,
only goal difference to calculate.

*

I always wanted an emperor penguin
until I heard they cheated at cards.

*

Gorillas on the bowling green.
Old men in their white socks, sighing.

Tom Jenks lives in Manchester. Amongst other things too tedious to mention, he is the founding editor of Parameter Magazine (www.parametermagazine.org).

BlazeVOX 2K7 an.online.journal.of.voice

Richard Owens



It is my great honor to introduce Richard Owen for Buffalo FOCUS. Each issue we focus in on a particular writer from our hometown of Buffalo, NY. Richard is studying Poetics at the University of Buffalo and is editor of *Damn the Caesars*, an annual poetry journal. I was fortunate to read with Richard in a dirty attic this summer.

[**buffalo**FOCUS]

Exotic weaponry is brought to bear against the seemingly indestructible bodies of the poem, taking the cue from myth and kung-fu films Richard Owens poetry gives us a lurid dreamscape of paper trees and split-level teahouses in which this nightmare of amputation and pain unravels. Part dream, part nightmare, his poems ooze out of the id and flows out like a vessel of blood. Spanning many layers, Owens kindles the flames of hate and revenge until they melt down men into monsters in an unending holocaust of poetic glory. It is my very great pleasure to welcome you to the work of Richard Owens.

hamfisted in the land of milk & honey
frightening men frighten men
& picaresque representations soften
arabesque contestations—

an Arab asks: what
happens after this Homeric pause?

give pause live paws lie suspended

in awe of what havoc
imperial hands deliver

CHANSON DE GESTE

We've heard the factories hum
& drone on like a choir of kettle drums
like a Springsteen song gone wrong
the disc skips—about as accurate
as shots from the hip set to an inveterate
tune bound to make a soloist croon.

Words like good whiskey:
austere in simplicity—thin yet strong.
Its simple so sing along. It begins:

Ding! Dong!

& goes on for a bit but never too long.

Like those Springsteen songs gone
so terribly wrong the next tune draws
slowly upward—a non-negotiable coda
chanted like the Stations of the Cross:
simple in austerity; soft yet stern. This
one isn't as fun but easy to learn. It goes:

Meet the new boss...

TOWARD A SUPREME NOTION OF FINITUDE

Knock-kneed & knuckled under
arthritic & wheezing
Mariners & merchant marines
teem & toil on swamp not sea

incoming aerogramme incoming
calligramme contain calling & called
saying & said singing & song

where in dream framed
by cotton fields delimited

wreckage of rowboat seditiously subverts
tender moment of sublation
implicit in conflict resolution

incubus—incoming busts the bunker bombed
illuminating dialogic scribbling rivalry
between ball-busting & tea-bagging

the mystery of the gift reveals itself
settles itself in the field announced & anointed

like arms
weed & dandelion proliferate

the figure safely invested in reproducibility
metastasizes & with distance emerges as beauty

beauty in the wreckage
beauty in the arms & also in the arms
—among the arms—a confusion of arms
where Pax is the promise of a broken peace

FALLING UPON THE FLANK

“See the swell & fall upon the flank”—
the shadow of the ego falls across Dasein.

Ergo I have gathered up & unto myself
the very thing—precise—that resists gathering.

See the swell & fall upon the flank—
here we collect alms in the desert of Dasein.

Dandy. Dandelion. Call connected.

One apprehends an ocean swell
crosses to feast on the flank of the other.

FAUSTUS IN VICTORIA

The small stocky
Burrowing Bettong

or Boodie (*Bettongia*
lesueur) is the only
member of

the kangaroo family
to dig extensive
burrows. Pressure

from introduced
predators & destruction

of habitat have
contributed to

the Burrowing Bettong's
current classification
as a vulnerable
species.

HOMO ŒCONOMICUS

"as a prototypical bourgeois
he is smart enough
to have a hobby."

So simple—this—the skein
of absent-minded interests
which keep a civilization connected
under the aegis of civilization.

The bolt that binds
is an ideological stretch
of threaded steel

which both performs & endures
a violence greater
than any witting act of aggression

& it is this—the violence
implicit in eating Alaskan crab
on the Jersey shore—

that turns the bolt & buries it deeply
in consciousness made free market flesh.

Unaware of the rising tide
biding time—

we delight in Alaskan crab
we delight in Alaskan crab

DOUBLE A SIDE: DOGS OF WAR / SEASON IN HELL

Not that it matters
no way or another

— Levertov
born the year
Loy published
Anglo-Mongrels

Dogs continue
to trouble us

— Duncan's
dispute
with Levertov

aside:

an infelicity
is best committed

under the auspices
of opposition

— I for none —

can think

of no better reason
of no better season

ON THE LONDON BOMBINGS, JULY 7, 2005

[1]

Today the seventh day
of the seventh month

when in London Towne
seven explosions shattered

resolve on London ground
above & below—

where in Scotland
the Group of 8 were in

concord & concordantly
advancing agendas

[2]

Iconoclastic wrecking balls
break the surface

like rainbow trout
after insects

shadowing the surface
of the seemingly calm.

NO PASSARÁN

Schematically modulated meridian—
a vertiginous xenoglossia on either side
each monolingual
as Celan thought best, a monolingual poetics

single only in relation
to the full plenitude of a multiplicity

a multiplicity in baneful perpetuity
underscored by the debate
between lyric & disjunctive verse

compass & sextant angling toward
schematically modulated meridian.

Despoiler. Auschwitz has always been
has never ceased to be
has always occurred in perpetuity.

Auschwitz an infinitely regressive other
that enables & even demands the lyric

when here the disjunctive can only exist
in relation to the lyric—would

otherwise not be disjunctive. Vertiginous
dependent — baneful — firewall enabled.

SEVEN DEADLY VENOMS—SEVEN CAVALIER STATEMENTS ON WRITING

I.

sleeved in writing—something
of the real

& also
a desire to write the real

but the real does not consider
itself as such—nor the writing

II.

the writing is not a double
but that which doubles back
on itself—falling into it:

self

singular single-minded alien

III.

checkers is no less
challenging than chess

—don't underestimate
the competition

& the competition
is not to be confused
with an opponent

VI.

All you need to know about me
is me can be three or thirty-three
—me can be multiple & me can
cut across categories of race
& ethnicity gender & nation—

Blake admired Ossian
long after
the hoax was exposed.

Ern Malley is as much
a Modernist as Eliot.

Yasusada survived
more than Hiroshima.

VII.

Like Bunting said: “keyboards
are trite—take a torch to light.”

CHANSON DE DEMI-DIEUX

One country song after another
sings itself blind a moment
or two before morning time.

*In the period of the Gang of Four
people became accustomed
to thinking of literature
as a mere explanation of policy
between two beautiful covers.*

Carpenter bees will sink holes
in trees & move on to rafters
when nobody's home.

THUNDER ON THUNDER: SONG OF ALCIBIADES

Where war is civil sides matter little.
Naturally all war is civil—

not so much the loss of time as *tīmé*
tho *tīmé* comes with time

[*tīmé* in life
kléos in death]

Strife—bellicose strung-out motherfucker
bandoliered & bandy-legged
stretches across the Peloponnesian plain.
She cultivates war like a crop.

[Eris: Ἔρις
Latin: Discordia]

War at level
of root & bough, bulb & leaf—seated
deeply in soil / rustling in wind.
The apples of Discord swings brazenly
from uncertain branches.

The seas too
are an ocean Eris inhabits—gendered angst
soaking kelp & coral reef.

The wars are civil but they do not lack
civility. They dance. They dig inward
rupturing spleen & liver & kidney & bowel.
They climb outward & color
the uncomely complexion of a barren landscape.

Alcibiades not Achilles. It is his wrath—
godlike & unreconcilable—made manifest
not in rage but cunning.

He enters from Athens
encouraged by Eris. Derelict rich boy
running riot—he resumes the war.

Reared by Pericles. Friend of Socrates.
Pagan appointed dare not decline.
Best not bring the lion's rage.
If so we must account for the melee
—So said Aristophanes through the figure of Aeschylus.

Allow me for a moment to enter from distance.
Deskside digging through Plutarch, Thucydides—
Timon of Athens & spurious Socratic dialogue
& Lewis' Alcibiades...

Thucydides. He loved Athens
& received exile.
He fumbled the ball at Amphipolis. & even in exile
he spoke well of Athens.

Like Reagan
& Nixon after him—Alcibiades may not have
enjoyed *tīmē* in life but he enjoys *kléos* in death.

Railing rallying running against Peace of Nicias.

415 CE—catastrophic Sicilian expedition, Alcibiades
recall'd after fleet departs from Athens. He accused
of defacing Herms—stone guardians of doorways
& boundaries & borders & semi-permeable spaces
of transition. One at every intersection where crossing
corresponds w/ risk—each of them replete w/ robust
erectations. Eleusinian Mysteries. Member.
Vandals lobbed them off & Alcibiades was accused.

The Herms blasphemed. Outrage.

Alcibiades opted for immediate trial
while popularity at peak
tho his political opponents
saw that the trial was postponed.

Alcibiades set sail
w/ Athenian fleet for Sicily
was recalled
but refused to return.

Instead he defected to Sparta
advised the Spartans
& Nicias & Demosthenes
& their forces
trapped in harbor of Syracuse
defeated
their entire fleet destroyed.

They attempted
to escape overland
were captured or slaughtered
all of them
including Nicias.

Helios—Sicily island of the sun god.

SWEET SIR HUGH IN OUR LADY'S WELL—"Lewis got beyond cubism. The fact is virtually unknown; yet one design in the Timon series, the one called 'Alcibiades,' has been called 'arguably the greatest single manifestation of artistic energy in the whole of English painting.'"

cunning Alcibiades
a smirk across his face
& the Athenians riled

& the Spartans he too betrayed
at Decelea
where year round Spartans
attacked the Long Walls
so those with property
could not till Attic soil
outside the walls—

& cut off too from silver
Athens suffered
& Alcibiades consorted
w/ Persian satraps
securing deals
& dealing out land not his.

Agis, one of two Spartan kings,
fucking piss'd.
Alcibiades sold Spartan cities
& seduced the man's wife—

his wrath manifest
in cunning
in an attack
on all things Hellenic.

Where blood once flowed
Strife inhabits the vein

an
Arab
asks:

what
happens

after this

Homeric
pause