

STARFISH ★ POETRY

SPRING | 08
Issue | VII

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Laurie Fuhr

:: Telegraph Hill Parrots

At a site of earliest communications,
signals glance off each set of feathers

relaying crucial information
eyes decode, subconscious.
White birds glow under California sun

like living handmirrors
lonely children tilt at one another
though windows, across
impassable chasms of punishment.

Telegraph parrots have learned
to speak light their mother tongue,
Germanic baritone of tectonic plates.
Minutes before the earthquake
that buries you twice

the flock tilts metallic wings
in synchronized flight.
When my mother turns on
the news, I know why I've
gone blind: between birdflash
and my eyes you stood

and were burned in my retinas.
Just before my world and yours
went dark, I glimpsed you
in Coit Tower gardens, gazing
down the centre of a trumpet flower,

looking for its song.
You always knew where
to find jazz in San Francisco.
Blossom bottomless,

you leaned so far to hear
you fell in. Petals quivered,
the world around began to shake.

Missing each other
is disaster.

∴ San Francisco-Calgary

During heavy turbulence,
a stewardess comes on
and tells us about juice.
Everyone stays perfectly quiet.
Juice rings like an omen
we might none of us
get to drink.

Excuse me, ma'am,
the right engine is falling off.
I've been watching it.
You call this streamlined?
No sorrier collection of rivets has there been
since failed Da Vinci models
hurled headlong off short docks
and barn roofs.

Then we're so high gravity
can't get at us or the engine,
reaches only clouds.
Cumulus cities reel
in perpetual terror explosion,
plane providing sound effects.

If anything should happen to grow
Newton's apple-bough- arms any longer,
I'll draw a heart on the nearest leaf
and hurl it headlong (my body, too,
at you through cloud,
the original whitespace)

spiraling out a sparse prayer in symbol,
blood from the mouth
a last kiss trying to find you.

Audacia Dangereyes

:: MEMOIR

women had
sisters with us
I one
at a time
the truth
found this bed
a flash flood
traded the keepers
strict noncommunication
was photographed

:: DAUGHTER

we are mountains of money
that plant some gossip like the sound of doom
in the engine room a choir attempted practice
the alias nodding while a hat devil does nonsense
most times I scheduled the only conversation
underground are some kind of farms
to build a father again

:: LOLITA

don't sentence old with old
sentence shimmering at all exhausted
wrapped some signal in silence until burst the familiar
she slowly jangled few answers
tentacle touched barely aware body
wandered around her grappling
word flock flashed a crowd a moment later
now whatever you call obscenity name not ask

:: STRAPPED IN

smiling girl did serve others next to their heads
textbooks spreading difference over her eyes
one person had gem-bright information
hard-natured envelope maker with telepathy
hell could be mottled swamps covered with drumroll
shifted to methodical boom boom
transport of delight shuddered across landscape
fatigue began to slash great meanings
mumbled judgment complicated circuitry

Courtney Campbell

:: never mind

i'm not sure how i got there -
i held a hand out and sat down.
i talked with a man who offered
his dick for awhile. or was it an ear?
never mind. it didn't do me much
good between the token slots and
the subway bench and the people with
their faces in their pockets. cellophane
on the collar. elbows in the bathrooms.
eye lashes in window panes. he handed me
25 cents and i was back in the city and
the lights were little irises again that
only blinked when i impersonated
them. i was back in the city and
my hands were held in. my
feet forgot grandfather clock
strides and swept poodle shit
into what-life-used-to-be piles in
every corner. a bus pulled up
paused in recognition then
forgot my name. a mother rushed by
waving to all of her sons in
all of their taxis. they zoomed away with

a picture of her photo where the rearview

mirror used to be. she held a sign in

a language that none of them could

read. i watched from the corner of

poodle shit and life. i stood on the

corner of somewhere else and some

other time. all of the corners. all of

the city. how many corners are there

in the city? i pulled another out of my

wallet. placed it between myself and a

body part. walked to a cinema.

(now showing: poodle shit!

now showing: walk ride!

now showing: life!) i traded a corner

for a ticket. erased my eyebrows and my

forehead. hid my name in my bra. held my

hand out to a sidewalk.

it shook its head and walked away.

:: a big round quarter

death, she sang. in a coconut.
white like sea foam. i tossed a coin.
her guitar was huge and her voice a
megaphone. once i found death behind
my guitar. it was under a lizard. spare
coins? she asked. and i meant to say
maybe but my lips hid under the bench.
and i meant to say no but my tongue
turned white. and i meant to say yes
but my ride finally arrived. and i meant
to say jesus but my lips formed a penny.
my tongue struck a mold of silver dollar
and she kept singing and playing –
a bit of death on one side, a bit of
life on the other, you have to be
careful how you toss them. but i guess
you already know that, don't you? she
chuckled. and i meant to say no, no not
really, and act offended but my voice
was a big round quarter.

J.D. Nelson

I. TONALITY BATH

- A. I see that you're always. I forgot to know you!
- B. I'm stuck on Terry Bradshaw bandages.
- C. Five glutches says you're wrong.

someone at all song bird
when they say Canada

penny-whistles
& pebble pie

II. NERVE SALVE

- A. What happens to time once the brain has died?
- B. The EYE requires attention.
- C. ten bags of gold dust

laughing sacrifice
banking laughterpiece

ing the rings around my head
I'm count

III. THOUGHT I WAS BACK IN TRENTON

- A. link ' harvest '
- B. 'circle of grass'
- C. 'sandwich-on-demand'

what about when I made Canada?
inherited common memory

another bag of tacos
25 cent burgers

IV. THE FAVOURITE MINNOW WON

- A. I won the seagull lottery.
- B. underwater peacock
- C. ostriches

I went to bed wearing it
& when I woke up this morning

it was gong.

Lina Ramona Vitkauskas

:: HOLES IN BAG

--for many parents on Thanksgiving

Marble management tied wrists with straps;
a carnival breath under formaldehyde rain.

Experienced drivers; your house, for sale.
The miles of shoelaces beneath lawns

the buried instructions begging you:
make yourself an exit

of communication. As the grammar of soldiers,
you chose this—to fall in love with a lighthouse instead

of a pistol, all the red-leaved rest areas now grinding
flags into Rapunzel's ass, so ask me, I am these holes in bag,

like fame, like a desperate mink for ribbons and yams,
your recuperation the lifespan of Smuckers,

a boysenberry sympathy like a molester in the morning,
like a surgeon, like Willard Scott, sometimes called Dark Willard,

running with your fantasy in his teeth next to you car,
or a novacaine wife in the background

of an awkward moment,
screaming pale fumes of gas.

Ron Czerwein

:: Benediction

From Interlinear Baudelaire

[Bemused]

When, after a decree of the supreme powers,
[Resentment folds its paperwork into the shape of a cross]
The Poet is brought forth in this wearisome world,
[As an apparition scrawls on the ceiling]
His mother terrified and full of blasphemies
[Collateral damage fetish freedom blather]
Raises her clenched fist to God, who pities her:
[At the premenopausal service station]

--"Ah! would that I had spawned a whole knot of vipers
[Nodding off in the mirror behind the bartender's mirage]
Rather than to have fed this derisive object!
[A pneumatic tube suckling on the cesspool of my derision]
Accursed be the night of ephemeral joy
[With the epicure of disease on a numb mattress]
When my belly conceived this, my expiation!
[In a shared moment of expelled venom]

Since of all women You have chosen me
[Choking on a pit and heading for a feminine ending]
To be repugnant to my sorry spouse,
[The opposite of Tristan and Iseult after a few martinis]
And since I cannot cast this misshapen monster
[Think ET jazzed on near beer & dancing the flamenco]
Into the flames, like an old love letter,
[With my comix, dance card, and racing form]

I shall spew the hatred with which you crush me down
[At mach one on a hairpin turn fender meets deer]
On the cursed instrument of your malevolence,
[My meat hooks mauled by your lip service]
And twist so hard this wretched tree
[Where estimates torch the arbor]
That it cannot put forth its pestilential buds!"
[Service contracts, bow ties, or emoticons]

Thus she gulps down the froth of her hatred,
[With a plate of oysters and sausages]
And not understanding the eternal designs,
[Etched, liked Nazca lines, around the compound of her desolation]
Herself prepares deep down in Gehenna
[Among the elms and gearboxes]
The pyre reserved for a mother's crimes.
[Wearing connect-the-dot leotards & addressing others as buckaroo]

However, protected by an unseen Angel,
[Power broker in a souped up tuxedo and anemone boutonniere]
The outcast child is enrapt by the sun,
[as he leniently desecrats the solid geometries of the senior center]
And in all that he eats, in everything he drinks,
[In ethanal, in quilts, in tourist class]
He finds sweet ambrosia and rubiate nectar.
[After his Lambada lessons]

He cavorts with the wind, converses with the clouds,
[Journals each venial sin as if it were a nuclear blast]
And singing, transported, goes the way of the cross;
[With a sensible ETA]
And the Angel who follows him on pilgrimage
[With a field guide and a blunderbuss]
Weeps to see him as carefree as a bird.
[Perched on a command-line]

All those whom he would love watch him with fear,
[His vest lets loose its quills & local color cracks up on the avenue]
Or, emboldened by his tranquility,
[In spite of his bicycle's trajectory]
Emulously attempt to wring a groan from him
[A cappella]
And test on him their inhumanity.
[And their fondues]

With the bread and the wine intended for his mouth
[His pail of boulders, his villages of detachment]
They mix ashes and foul spittle,
[Craft an avalanche out of dime store melodrama]
And, hypocrites, cast away what he touches
[In the jet stream of his imagination]
And feel guilty if they have trod in his footprints.
[After the two-legged sack race]

His wife goes about the market-places
[On her public address system]
Crying: "Since he finds me fair enough to adore,
[In spite of the puffy meadowlands and the belly flop]
I shall imitate the idols of old,
[The jaywalking, the leveraged buyouts]
And like them I want to be regilded;
[Except for this vestigial vest pocket]

I shall get drunk with spikenard, incense, myrrh,
[My soul sister, den mother, meal ticket]
And with genuflections, viands and wine,
[Deactivate the genius of this violent storm]
To see if laughingly I can usurp
[Without pound-cake]
In an admiring heart the homage due to God!
[On the divided highway of his home turf]

And when I tire of these impious jokes,
[What did the hooker say to the Shaker?]
I shall lay upon him my strong, my dainty hand;
[I shall fiddle with the machinery of his lumberjacket]
And my nails, like harpies' talons,
[Or a passing autorickshaw]
Will cut a path straight to his heart.
[Upsetting the sauceboat]

That heart which flutters like a fledgling bird
[If winged by commandos storming the tree of knowledge]
I'll tear, all bloody, from his breast,
[When jargon declares a ceasefire over coffee]
And scornfully I'll throw it in the dust
[Eternally, try another tactic]
To sate the hunger of my favorite hound!"
[Dedicated to protecting the luminous jewelry of our aversions]

To Heav'n, where his eye sees a radiant throne,
[Surrounded by cigarette butts and smoking guns]
Piously, the Poet, serene, raises his arms,
[Signaling the runner to steal second base]
And the dazzling brightness of his illumined mind
[Lubricated with éclairs and espresso]
Hides from his sight the raging mob:
[As funny habits descend on the petting zoo]

--"Praise be to You, O God, who send us suffering
[Succotash]
As a divine remedy for our impurities
[Comma faults and other un-American activities]
And as the best and the purest essence
[Former celebrities shill during commercial breaks]
To prepare the strong for holy ecstasies!
[Before heading to the vomitorium]

I know that you reserve a place for the Poet
[Voted most likely to javelin the audience]
Within the blessed ranks of the holy Legions,
[Endlessly bickering over legroom]
And that you invite him to the eternal feast
[Estimated to last an hour]
Of the Thrones, the Virtues, and the Dominations,
[Those one-hit wonders]

I know that suffering is the sole nobility
[Ya-da, ya-da, ya-da]
Which earth and hell shall never mar,
[gerine]
And that to weave my mystic crown,
[And trench coat]
You must tax every age and every universe.
[Will implode tenderly]

But the lost jewels of ancient Palmyra,
[My main squeeze]
The unfound metals, the pearls of the sea,
[Metaphysically speaking]
Set by Your own hand, would not be adequate
[To cover my medical bills]
For that diadem of dazzling splendor,
[Will melt my CDs]

For that crown will be made of nothing but pure light
[Car alarms, falafel, and puppetry]
Drawn from the holy source of primal rays,
[Everybody loves]
Whereof our mortal eyes, in their fullest brightness,
[Win the door prize, but]
Are no more than tarnished, mournful mirrors!"
[Oblivion keeps straightening]

*English translation of Baudelaire by William Aggeler, The Flowers of
Evil (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954)*

Donald Illich

:: Specks

These specks are so delicious
I've almost forgotten they're
much smaller than the fingernails
boarding atoms up in my son.
I've trained them to speak Spanish.
Como esta? Asi, asi.
Donde estan las mujeres?
They're rude subatomic particles,
risk being deported to the sun
for repulsing every spark in town.
Some could collage themselves into
human shape, go to work for me
instead of the guy shaped balloon
that's been sleeping in my place.
At night they deliver banknotes
to my scientific address,
between the periodic table
and the microscope, big enough
to add zeroes inside my account.
During the day they construct light
busily pretending they're not there.
I see you, little speck. I must've
not been at that party, though I'm

sure it noticed me at the punch bowl
watching it detonate my girlfriend
into a thousand shattered stars.

:: Reversal of Clowns

Putting make-up on the backs of our heads
we smiled with our necks at the children.
They slipped deep into circus nightmares,
not quite sick enough to die of fright.
We crawled into our bug car backwards,
drove through the hospital halls in reverse.
As we traveled the elderly patients grew
younger, jumped out of their wheelchairs,
flung spit wads through our open windows.
The doctors shrank beneath stethoscopes.
Nurses took their dolls' fake temperatures.
We backed out of the building's exits,
pumped ourselves up into human balloons.
The wind changed direction, whipped off
red noses, funny hats, and white gloves.
We expected to keep them, even in the air.
Floating in the gray sky into last week,
we predicted storms that would hit us
whether we liked it or not. Below us,
we saw disasters we could've prevented
if we'd been able to land safely. Children

pointed to us as clouds that had been dyed
by Jesus. Adults, afraid of the unknown,
said we were signs for their new religions,
or a plot by the army across the border
to spy on their solders' patterns of defense.
No one laughed at us, not even Neanderthals
who discovered fire when Mittens messed up
a flaming juggling trick. History knows now:
the clown is the Prometheus of us all.

Olchar Lindsann

:: Present

the muscle sings in the air it is enmeshed in
a graft of scintillations
crusting the nristop of anterior medallions
slightly like a listing catacomb emptying its pockets of daisies
vested in the procrastinating dictionary
shedding silent with a shrug like an old skin with a shrug
greeted like a forget
with open arms
entangled or a snapped shut in the hypnotized wind

:: Asphalt Tree

the veil of dust was scarcely to blame for the encounter
traced in the shift of eirdsoc the ravelling mitre
was but not a tooth
and the chattering shadows were carefully folding themselves into envelopes
the horizon pierced them in several highly specific places
and for eight years afterward they wandered the supermarket aisles pointing with their
fingers to their wounds
there was honey hiding behind their ears
and the light glancing off itself in the gorsniac contraption esophagus littered the airwaves with sand
hence their terror
and the petals or slinking like backwards the sun crease albumen or moon
like the scales of hesitance
one can scarcely blame them for this heady shame which goes strangely silent whenever it is not speaking
nor the dust when it bares its breast for blood for inscriptions that never come
'ecstatic collation' or 'juniper blinking' or 'abdomen suitcase'
with a sudden piercing burst it all shivers
there are dice in the sky

:: Nightlight

you will notice the spineshaft of indecision
rising like a steel of twist
from the harbour ringworm keychain mausoleum
yearly in the stripling beard of the femur

it is lilac and sanguine and it grins like a saw

dropping like stars the flies shout advertising jingles they curl
like tongues or tarantulas and whimper in their sleep
their heads are made of styrofoam carbuncles
and their legs sip lung-fluid through krilnit straws

they are lilac and choking and they sing like the rust

there is a wave heave ripcord batter twirling like a smelplod hacking at a saline

cartographer-muzzle

there is also a pin

and it throws its chest out like a statue or a burning bank or some serpent with a tail of molasses
rectilinear on a stain brick crack went and an or hospitable syringe in a dusty top hat
with a whip was and mandibles gnashing and two veinous wings
that blink whenever the moonlight with its forehead of slices shatters the window

it is lilac and gurgling and there is a spatter of light congealing on the sidewalk
trembling like a seethe of flies

Frank Reardon

:: AND I SCREAM

And I screamed,
When the misery of soft men drowned
In pits of opium infused politics
With their remarkable pints of literature
Speaking to illuminated streets of holocaust brain
And the stars and stripes eat peels of mind travelers
I felt afflicted as the flag turned into mediocre missions
Of hysterical dynamos turning the screws on platonic conversations.

The heartless cities corrupted with capers of street corner unique
Dodge multiple versions of necks committing drunk sub machine gun
As pompous essays delight in numerous answers
With hurricane candy face who are stung out on livid Christ dances.
Platonic post scripts write their own way into midnight fire escapes
Night and noon are the same inside the evolution of word arsenals
With a sword and cold - eyed window obscene
Strutting into themselves cold iron bound and roof top madness,
That shout high above marble cunts and ricochet intoxication.

Hands cover midnight face with creep slave alchemy
Long mental hospital finger nails grow , Along hungry missile lips
And I screamed,
As bullet proof sentiments were pushed into hopeful sky scrapers
As devil sized hard ons reaped the benefits of skull soaked prisons
As smoking mafia jug bands rammed conforming naked nipples into chance
As speechless syntax was damned for following podium infernos
As demon wine girls rubbed apocalyptic poems against their genius jeans.
With a fist and a fight , Don't let the flame burn out !

And my head exploded into millions of sand lot pieces
When vast ravishing boys dance into the invisible dead roads
Over shadowed by Greek language soda clerks searching,
For secret diamonds stuck within art robbery promises
Shouting with greed shaped cancer patients loving homo atmosphere
As endless unknowns scrape by on pornographic madness ,
Madness tucked into the arms of shirtless assassins
Madness in the voices of liberties first capture
Madness that is spoken by repulsed imaginations
Who are lifted above the sewers of misty faced rebels
Counting on their abilities for a new way to cry for chocolate mental rooms.

Doctors of livid cut ups and book sales,
Steal the seams of catatonic humor and whisky soaked devil butts
As pillow dreams run from wooden legged pirate piss
As musical folk dung slams its fist at the need for nuclear lobotomies
High on the platform rifles shoot out the brain matter of dead deal liquor steam
Falling down is a season of criminals sucking on mind -bending verbs
And we as gentlemen of jazz soaked rain piss on sleepless vinegar trials
And we as patriots seem to see the final resolution inside harlequin
insanity strips
And we as genius travelers of hypnotic-trilogy lessons slither into
warm legged jukeboxes
Flowing into the afternoon of bloody mountain top fascination.

And I screamed ,
With home made soup teeth sucking on a record player beat stick
And I screamed,
As high top language sunk like ambiguous museums jumping from cornflake window
Midnight armies marched into potent examples of mad house medicine
Drifting lettuce faces walked like sleep feet cranked out on new word mysteries
Snow angel backyard cabinets lifted broken-heart pavement sex into
wooden salvation
Bleeding gums treachery sold dancing heroin arms to gun sale draft tables
Pawnshop AIDS victims slept through earth quake post cards
Sunday school fashion scenes blasted colossal statues of iron drunks
Nitroglycerin vests buttoned up lonesome locomotives with treasure chests
Mexican stand offs licked up golden mines attached to nickle plated gibberish,
And I screamed,
And I screamed,
As I fought with a fist,
Not letting the flame die out.

Cigar smoking totem poles took control of treachery vibes
American flags ran naked and confused over border jumping piano players
As flash light dogs stepped on every piece of inner contest hypnotism
With cry faced mud juries slamming open book babies into suicide speech
With astronaut arm bands rallying against dream house purgatory
With religious purgatory lifting its coat for puddle hand mortuary
With livid generations wailing with wax museum trash barrels
As night becomes the same as day inside rose pedal fire hoses
And language is turning out to be jazz notes hanging off of anecdotes.

And I screamed,
When the fire dwindled into fresh palms of dark steets
And the alley ways fought tripping homeless faces
And the scores of long winded poems tried to be like blazing masterpieces
With humble legends of lunatics skipped through the streets
With Karate film afflictions pounding away on pan flute decisions
And I screamed,
When the fight turned into love and charity
As the fresh nights that kept us awake turned into empty grocery bags
And the mad drank wine and stood high giving us lock box poetry

Only a few short skirted library girls understood,
From behind big breasted glasses , Thick rimmed and hunting for the
conversation.

The brain exploded into pieces that James Joyce found drunk in the gutter
Penniless and sucking on modern dark emotions
And the jump points sank into seas of black
Broken boats sailed across skeletons of creamy skin and super natural
head lights
Crowbars swallowed speed pills , Trying to make it to grape fueled hope safes
And we as concrete filled souls picket the open book genitals,
With black and white demons of photograph evenings
Seeping semen into large neon pussy nightmares
Over and over again as the midnight ghost rolls by with spider web sermons
Fearing long arms that grab refugee barn yards
And tuning them over to needless fuck houses of little nosed drama needs.

And I screamed,
As countless victims piled up along tombstone beaches
And rafts of surreal comedies were built from lies and touch down dances
And the faces of the happy were pushed into vacant home towns of despair
And needless needles were thrown into oceans of crafty dead animals
And the fear was licked with thousands of chanting protests along naked numbers,
Of furnace elbows that pinned down large amounts of gasoline poetry
And the rest of man kind watched and jacked off to the new words of
miserable building
And the fights of the rebels turned into masterful sea ships of broken teeth
And legions of Evangelicals burned the speeches of under estimated prophecy.

And I screamed ,
As the fights left the words of the controlled
And I was blamed with a firing squad waltz
And the rock bands played as if it was the last ship to sink in cold
water atrocity
Bowing to the knife if quick witted delivery
With death faced suicide by ticking bomb jacket and treachery
And the child screamed with one arm of bandit necessity
And the flame was gone ,
From the need of a fight
And the flame sunk so fast that the mud turned into wine
And the people all looked down from key board deck leg
And lifted their arms into the air
Wanting a scream to come from some where
Wanting a voice to lead them into drifting songs of fight
Wanting a flame
To give them life
And I wanted a world that shouted with the fight.

:: MY BRAINS MACHINE

This is my machine
With empty pockets
That hide
Inside creamy loneliness
Delusions of praise
With a hip beat
That gives valor
To the flaming keys
While I sit upon broken knees
With voodoo charity
Inside this drunk machine.

Kidnapped queens
Knighted outlaws
Demons that contain hell ,
Inside a fruit jar
Strapped with dynamite,
Speed flows
With a hangover disease
Sex was created out blue eyed babies
The wrong side of the cable
And this face is a crime
Where have the eyes gone?
Nowhere !
They are full of skull soaked vanity.

As slow as porn
I can hit the ins and outs
Peel back the mission
And give heroin her dance lesson,
It really is not that new,
Because the stars are afraid
They hide inside metal boxes,
That were buried inside influenza.
The fingers tap like a train
Heavy and thick ,
Wrong way answers
Are sucking on the tail pipes
And she looks back at me ,
With a mouthful of the letter Q.

I can't imagine a night without you
Sex and microchips
A soft way of creating the hemisphere
It is a machine !
The whore of images
But it is a need,
A corrupt pie of surreal demise
and twenty six crooks at my desk
Who are waiting for my fingers
To start confessing.

Caleb Puckett

:: Along the Promenade

The Great Bear strums a harp of peerless gold
for passersby rippling about like florid fish in
rhinestones.

What target besides this wave of faux-stars
can turn the omens of loneliness into shimmering
pardons?

Perhaps it's the harbor wall of orchids,
calling for lilacs in courtyards as they tie tinsel
slippers.

Perhaps it's the café table of larkspurs,
seducing lilies with tailored suits and bejeweled
money clips.

In it all we conduct our simple courtesies,
but the beast of matter confers no relief to the twist
of streets.

So I adjust my collar and you check your watch
as the moon harbors the lies of painted lovers and
eyeless idols.

This is as much as we can expect when doubt
strums into the gale and the parade of night hunts
upon itself.

This is as much as we can know when we pace
this promenade with our wonder baited like shimmering
tokens.

Tonight the black grass median must become a vivid
and wonderful bank catching the castoffs from a river
of hunger.

David Rushmer

:: THE PUNCTUATE

you don't know you are born

a puddle of ink
where your face used to be

the sky is a graveyard
to plant your fingernails

the wind has eaten
the remains of your body

night is a liquid
in place of your tongue

pouring your face
into the veins of the sky

the moon hangs pregnant
belly full of unborn stars

the blood will rush
back into your mouth

as she tears at your face
at the moment of birth

your body shall remain
abandoned in the sky

empty naked
riddled with punctuation

Rob McLennan

:: a postcard for lisa

epistolary years, crescend; what time passed
never thought of

 creek & river bends

a maxville stature yawns, porch wraparound
& glint of pre-teen pages; how soon

 is now, or nearly then

if separate only catgut brief, of cameras

& hormonal dense;

 the linings of our days

like a most remarkable bent nail

 who were we then, my cross

a fathers field, that trickle crick, the thresh

 hold of a previously truth expressed in mud

walled attitudes of work & collar-hue

, bird path romantic dawn & drawn

not out of some undertold attraction or sentiment

a sudden sampler of hereafter, living

disappeared through & back words; kind

 a deep blue mourning we would

dream & drain & suffer

& be better for it, decades next

:: a hieroglyph for victor

what duly flames would answer; tall-boy thin,
or writing france a tongue

 look throne-ward, tangle
furious constraint of errant cruelties
would testify; a trigger turning
 silence on its ear

what about the carnage? what about
 the parties for defense?

a crystalline-layered tract; incendiary history,
to what hand surface, swooning, thin-billed chastity
 every kilometer turmoil bags

stop your arm a stimulant; virtues clear
& mutton birds, snakewise standing by toronto
& speak no previous knowledge speak

the lake the water swimming at
a victory victor tin man studied
 , belly-dance medicine

or catch a vacant claim

a fish in stomach scrawls

:: a semaphore for sheila & reg

in a realm of balcony regard; what lies across from dream
could also be considered dream
 heightened cortex
mainstream minutes, musical torque
for every lip of cloud desired
 ; the neighbours bleed & crow,
throw chicken-bones
 a lighthouse fissure
in there; private definitions still
 of what we knew
against them; walking pulse & step-things

when did the car scars; how long
can an anguished form?

or swim a switching, small
exceeding beauty; a window
 thinks it smart unseen

two tin-cans waxy string composed

the streets change star to sun to stone

:: a valentine for kate

dont anyone look at the longest film; a trappers curse,
burn black or red cerulean; slag burning
, a man must try to
 ; try, keep track
 on any hum, a tongue traced
barter in belief; my daughters curls,
almost separate from her, screening options

once there was nothing to do

once there was nothing; a county time wrong
of the year, a schoolboy spins
 out thin & fragment hopes
a good downpour; once into slowing down
; remembering first words, step, a day
 down teachers looks

calamity claim, no plain-jane; no-nonsense history
& tales told out of class; your mother
 then for details, knows

breaking off these geographic missions
pulling off commissions like a log

where it would be warmer you would never

:: a valentine for margaret

who could be smartest; nether lengths
of poem writing company less content
more constant; view

from listen sting-sharp hills
porch what light glistens? the automatic agreement
of children & spotlight, pianos

as sensitive insect eyes; the stroller
down particular instant sidewalk college
would do then
invoke a need; more suitable living

or shifting water degree
of grasped into the ground; a baseball mouth
& house we live in
finish visits
& picnic tables, not steeds; turns
from the body & spits out an eye-line
from her third

or many-lettered splendour
, pleasing measure

a door not necessarily open left upon

Mark Cunningham

:: Cigarette Beetle

Pico della Mirandola was right: one man and one horse can make a Marlboro ad. Without the man, you'd need at least three horses, probably galloping. The drawings in Gabriel Pomerand's *Saint Ghetto des Pres*, which introduces a new visual language, was written with the newly-introduced ballpoint pen. When I first get up, I'm as tall as I'm going to be and, as the day goes, gravity shrinks me little by little; but in the morning, I'm tall again!

:: Hide Beetle

Playing video games did not train me to fly robot bombers, but Pac-Man has helped me find parking spots downtown. I can't figure out if the universe is moving from a state of order to a state of disorder, but I know I'm having trouble keeping my sideburns even. A roll of the dice will never abolish the need to crap. We aren't laughing at each other. We aren't laughing together. We're laughing at the same time.

:: Snail-eating Ground Beetle

I was opposed to her thumbs but not to her toes. The news showed the video of white and black troops firing into the village to prove that the races could work together. I can't forget many things that didn't happen. I keep losing bits of myself: this is called information.

DD Wildblood

:: AMPUTATION

green laser light amputates my eyeballs / my dream of them looking/ staring / gouging out the wounds of the war dead searching for metal / scrap / rag and bone descends to respective dust types / snorted / imbibed / rattling around a pretty bloodstream / grove / a solace of trees/ lithe and green with foreign sounding words / red milk / soft pastry skin / a breakfast / a beginning / sullen days / years like manic minutes pass away / deceased chronologies / people fuck in another room as I relieve myself of processed vodka and coke / empty boredoms clank / glass on glass / see through walls that should always be kept lower than eyebulbs so the further edge of the ellipse fools you into thinking there is more than there is / digestion / acid / erosion / and the shit people expelled in obeisance of the narrative / the story / monotone and full of gods / full of phrases that end their own life's / hung / drawn / dissected and photographed decapitations / a line of heads on the shore / sockets vacant / amputated.....

:: CRACKED PORCELAIN

tell me something / talk of something / of bodies / of lambent night / of Atlantis / of preternatural forms / limbs / eddies of light and those best remembered fecal moments / little toilets and virginal municipalary defecation / lost in their function / their totalitarian pencil sharpening / crows / black lead / naked blades in the primary school and bluetit infected milk // memory fucks over a scene of self / sticky words glued to an airfix model / a construction / a limp deification of petite deaths with propellers / purple getting in my mouth / angels / halos of lingerie illuminate pert buttocks / silent erectile pauses / inglorious auras of blood

Laura Wetherington

Dancing the be-hop
for Angie Jeffries

LXXV.

Woman of the principle use: beehive she bop mishap
the syllables go la
la da dee
go long. They go laaaaa

Women of the principal. [she goes on clapping. she's clap-happy.]
And the clock woman, she goes on the prince of limping.
That next day was a clap-a-day
the fat-tastic dee go long, go laaaaa

And when the principal dancers came in,
they made long lines of CONCESSION STANDS
and lined up their young rows with mumps. Plump ones.
The big to-do list went long it went laaaaa
and danced through

XIX.

I went dominating the shes, I went side lining the shocks, I went eating the ages of ears.
It's a jumpalong, Cassidy. (it's a beehop).
The next thing about the v: to propose impropriety:
a vivisection :: an erectomy.
(don't tell your mother it's venerating,
not relevant to the present situation, i.e.
there are chains of prepositions: over, under, in.)

Your mom's a climb.
Something I've sewn up. Yr mom's a little something.
So on a vacation. So plump. So impossible. So what.
And now, brought to you by the ocean: whispered: dismay.

Paper to its end, agro bodies. Acrobats. Any possible somewhere. Any possible long. And plus and plus and plus. We ain't so number one.

III.

When I blow open the sidelong and scream out LOUD and LOUDER I am speaking events that happened to me, shoving them into the shed in the back. Out falls a shovel and the dog makes a dig at the slippers. What I meant to say about the mind HAPPENED TO ME and the space of mental breakdown is that this happens to WHY ARE YOU

DOING THIS TO ME all of us on some level though we may repress it for Jungian reasons of letting someone else live out our memories.

XI.

Oh, the pope. He goes hmmm and the song starts. She was already singing it in his head. The pope looks different because he's a changed man. He goes hmmm. He thinks it's all about.

I'm pushing a projection line and lining up a profession. A processional of young white robes in yellow teeth and naked underneath. This man leaning out of the left cathedral window going Laaaaaa, he go laaaaaaaaaa.

Not the valve of betrayal. (Jesus) Not because the eyelid flutters (or doesn't) she is blind. Color folded in the ANATOMY of the people. The people's anatomy game starting to buck their system. Unequivocated laaaaaa. And I asked for a lawyer.

Her mastectomy. Later, to cut the bonsai into a standing woman in armor, flexing her check-paw. Barely compression, the night in. I want to lay out a bit of hope for your coming under the door like a letter. First, fold one leg over the other. Then put your forehead to the floor. Sure, it's dirty. Sure, I'm waiting. I'll wait.

XXII.

If this continues on the contingency of nakedness,
I'm afraid I'll have to undress.
At least undo. I'm closing my hymen (come close, come close)
I'm closing my human. STAMP ON IT.

Put things in a picture and bind it in leather to see the seams [someone else's ass on the line.] Shit ain't supposed to be funny; it's supposed to be crazy. Heir man, what hand did god have in making all of this possible to be missed? Are you missing it? What would it take to be convinced of something you don't already know?

Lazare

:: {shreds of a suppressed id cathexis scrapbook}

We seek, oriented. The total lack of responsibility. The crow was a mistake, too, wonders. Wandering through the room. Cheap wooden panels. After consciousness insufficient. Stained floor of the sperm over the rotating mechanism for the ink down. Shits to. Ninety percent of the time lost to the ectoplasm caricature raping the maid. Fully electric sparks through the reduction thrown dirty white face. Underdevelopment of their strengths. You, not the genitals. Milk and cookies. Happened? We wound the race. Virgin pertinence little notification. Foreign under the knife. Overflowed blood to the ear noise burrow. Omit the intracranial void. Electrocutation, homey. Poetic tension. Hymenoptera flight ultraviolence. You are talking to me. Leave a step. Her visual. Mouth to mouth. The needle hits the brain. We locate the child. Biunji took too long, you know? The glory of Christ. Life is settled. Their flesh. Where is the initiation ceremony, more than 10 of the past tense of important issues belligerence. Where is the middle of the night to burn the woods. A hard-core attitude. Parts / all. Stars realize radiation. Mindfucking metallic rhythm machines overnight. It is not finished. We stalkers. Electricity plateau. Forging of fear or loathing. Stained fingers to shrink. Namgimeopyi memory traces. For the time being, and so you died. Open attention to the vertical split. Blinfolded the physical his first surgeon to perform the removal of the tumor. Where is my mother crying? Surveillance for public masturbation. We brands. Pets delicate scream. Ocular shooting of crows. They bury the girls in the sand. They dump her. The crow bite nails. Is a beautiful thing. We get sick. Go to the home page of their ways. Reinforcing their skin like a wolf. Ribeteu by the scent of blood. 500 souls will haunt you. White is surrounded by the devil. Our niche pink squirts all over his face. We are the destroyers solitude. Sikeoseu in the name of the joy of the law. Under the murder of the summer constellations. Falls in southern comets endless. Through the eyes of the two wings of your paint. The unfortunate bird. We will never leave you. The truck will stop at the side of the road. I say we expect deodeumeot. Damjeup black. Saturn, the planet by the cover-up. The smell of a body. Below the cliff, you can destroy the search. The first oteulhpnida burns. Cigarette burns armpit, in the palm of your hand, on your inner thigh. The proliferation of servers in the leg to give up the addiction. Required to crow pictures of the remains. It is now playing with you, doctor. To perform their work for the passage of more than a necrophiliac. It looks great too. The waves at the peak of pleasure irradiate all the more brightly. For a broken skull-shaped curve wrench. We take our arms to you. Enhanced hole in the ground. Depending on the darkness of your seeking. White milk arm reach, stretch and discrete finger amethyst. One by one, the thickness of the dada invisible. You count'em. The bloody fate. The wires are connected to the spine. We have convulsions and a successful track the physical measurements. We could hear laughter? We spoons - feeding. Remove the psychic heart. The slices of liver cancer. Bring them to us with a prostitute. The wound is the perfect display. We chop, throwing chunks of your gaehapnida. 'Because you are not worthy feces. Your victory and the joy of their glossy appearance of the face. We do not speak. Scream in the eyes sibille admirer. We have to forget. Cut your arm, we are now your own blood. Embrace the intestines. Trans-aesthetics. We caress the gag. We loop the highway, spacers. Spectre moderne. Technicolor swamp. Afterlack. Unrestricted ink mechanisms are more than sperm-stained floor. Fact. It is a long-lost raping maid. Throw electric poles over a spare white face immaculate, perfect. Is a strength. Rabat scars. Tiny reminder undisclosed. Knives of foreign origin. Noise pierced ears through blood. Having won zero. Electric shocks, poetic strains. Talking to me. Leave your clothes at the door. It is visual. We look for you away for a very long time. Secularism of the land. Is the owner of meat. Let ritual begin, more than the past tense precious teenage issues. Let the forest burn in the night. Very blatant posturing. Parts unknown. Awaken to radiation stars pulse machine. It is not over. We Stalkers. Electric Heights. Murmurs in fear or hatred. Fingers stained shrinking. Leaving no trace of memory. For the time being you are dead. Split open nerves longitudinally. The surgeon is performing his first tumor removal. Let mothers crying, imagine their

descendants to torture. Masturbation monitoring of the masses minute scream, ride'em. Crow shooting eyeball in the eye.

It is a girl buried in the sand. This is something beautiful. We got sick. Taken on their way back to their homes. Wolves were tearing the skin. Is the smell of blood. Five hundred lives is a concern for you. White surrounded by demons. Rosy construction fountains all have more of the faces. We single destroyers. Seeking comfort in the name of the law. Killed under asterisk summer. Located south of the comet, not finite. Painting two wards over your eyes. Birds of misfortune. We will never leave. Truck stopped on the side of the road. We Stutter anticipation. Dark yellow. Earth eclipsed by Saturn. Dogs can smell your body. I was looking down the slopes in vain. First burning clothing, in the comfort of your hands, inside you. Legs spread of the service of the abandonment of poisoning. Rook takes picture of the remains. It is the doctors who would play with you now. On the ruins of the performance of their mission. You look so wonderful. Everything shines more brightly as ecstasy waves root of the comfort stations. Broken curve of the skull against Spanner. Will keep you in our arms. Elevated from a hole in the ground. Besides find your way in the dark. Milk white arm stretched fingers despite the pressures and separate one after the other, access to the thickness of the invisible. You are fucking reality. These wires linked to the backbone. We track just get cramps and an insatiable standards body. Can you hear us laugh? Fattuh remove the heart. Liver is the segments. Prostitute us back to the steering wheel. Ideally wound exhibited. We will object to you, throw your pieces to the dogs. 'Cos you do not deserve the curse. Their faces record joy at your triumphant appearance. You can not address the threat. We are not you. The blindfolded worshippers scream in and we will not forget you. We spare your Cranks, and enable you to Lick yourself. Embrace viscera. Aesthetic comatose state. Gag on our Pets. Walking between shots. Wood panel prices low. Because tribes. Ink mechanism, it is an unlimited number of sperm, or the dirty floor. In fact. This is a long-lost additional electricity and telephone Poles at least perfect white sparks, dirty face. Such strength, you are writing? We wound small speechless. Kalhapnida foreign sources. Ear piercing noise through the blood. Won 0. Electric shock, it paid. Poetic species. I said to them. Clothing left outside. This is visual. His mouth in the mouth. They left a very long time, you know? And I before they, the youth problem in the past tense, even more useful. At night, they changed in the bush. Very clear, constitutes some base. Kkaewoteoyo- the effects of radiation. Pulse machine metal tight. This is not over. Electricity consumption peaks. Fear and hatred of noise. Reduce fingers. I remember that there are signs left. You may be dead for the foreseeable future. Vertical Separation attitude of openness. He is the first surgeon to perform. And his mother, crying, imagine the torture and their descendants. The monitoring of public masturbation. We are your brand. Pet scream minutes. Eye eye shooting. This is a woman, she is buried in the sand. Dump, please. Bite nails. These things are beautiful. We get sick. They return to a live-wire. Wolf, tearing skin. The smell of blood. About 500 people were killed. Surrounded by the white devil. Beautiful fountain construction, it added a face. One of our destroyers. The law in the name of comfort. Starting after the summer vacation. South of the comet, rather than limited. Ward 2 picture above. New suffering. Leave. Truck stop on the highway side. We look forward to the stammer. Dark yellow smell of rum on the body. I was looking down the slope. First burning clothing. Armpits and hand cigarette burns enough to live comfortably, and the inside of the thigh. Abandon the spread of addiction services. Photographs of Luke P. I can play it. In the ruins of the performance of his mission. It's incredible. Shine more light, all in the fundamental wave in the peak level of comfort stations by. On the contrary skull fracture. You are our weapons to maintain. Strengthening than a big hole in the ground. Inzadaku suhap find another way. White milk - sell your fingers, even a year after independence, and other pressures, access to the transparent. You diverge in the real sexual intercourse. Access to spasm, it is just greed, and we are tracking him. Organization for Standardization. We have heard the laughter. Suit? - the Federal Reserve Bank of suits. Recall your heart. Part of the liver. We have returned to the steering wheel whore. Ideal display wound. Our goal is to work your gaehapnida. 'Central eligibility is not required. Their facial appearance to record the joy of victory. If you cope with this kind of threat. We are you. Worship and screaming covered, we will not forget, please. In doing so, we must be extra loud. Inherently acceptable. Aesthetic oppression.

Murmurists

:: items #6600-6617 & 0930

These few sentences... fist of rational viz mystique, 'leaps of conclusion', or so on. Today, this is all there is, just more

1. Dandruff of the Orator.

Continue please...

- 1.1 On on onward, triste of tag wheel, id solar id solar id solar, lights upon, what?, knowledge?
- 1.2 Logic repeats rationale judgements, 'judgements irracionale', judgements nonetheless.
- 1.3 New experience forms essentialism, but is neither essential nor quasi-essential; it is, instead, knowing.
- 1.4 Absolution changes thought. Such execution promises end-result, but wrongly so. Ha.
- 1.5 Will is process. (See how they run.) Wilfulness may only be ergo anon, however.
- 1.6 Tradition implies consequence; tradition implies limitation. Consequently, we traditionally limit.
- 1.7 That said, reluctance goes beyond some limitations, implying some direction.
- 1.8 Components of this concept are works of art.
- 1.9 Ideation is physical. In other words, baby, let's get physical.

2. Blind Networks (of some Bach Utensil 911).

Do not necessitate me, please; proceed in order to set unexpected directions. Can you? I am ideas in the mind. Are you? Can you afford your formalities? I understood my conduct was in question; yet you said little in person. It may never reach a viewing, I know, but may we induce something soon? My ideas pull upon your chain, as you said previously. I share something like the same concept; and since no formality is intrinsic or expressive, that might be enough. For instance, if maths then literature; if literature then maths.... See, I am concerned only with grey exception. The past applies all over me and how I am.... Meet me at the alter, please.

(OR/ crisisian tempt to all, exemptno-one waiting. [strokes ..'ch ch ch change is [b]jesus man's desiring [understating.

3. aporial. sweet aporial. triste of sealight, i c u. aporial. sweet aporial. triste of gaglight, i c u.

(Proposition: I sign in order to Be; that is, I sign in order to signify Being.)

- 3.1 End-Spirit: Body affirms Earth; ergo, body affirms region: If so, it follows that spiritual development is corporeal development. In other words, get some exercise.
- 3.2 Philological-End-Spirit: I stress bodily development. Likewise, I stress the eroticisation of this development. Put the ego in pain - or pay the price. Many are offended by this, I know. They lie in gutters of their own making. They work for furniture.

3.3 Their Static Lists Reject You...What Now?: You are offended by your exclusion; yet, it is the making of you and your greatest weapon. Divide further; ruthlessly divide. Make division your means of expression.

3.4 War Eroticises Pain; Peace Eroticises Life: Not so. You are asleep, and no-one is watching over you. Recordings are made of you, but these are immediately erased, with their cases stabbed onto spikes in public places.

3.5 Society? ...At Best, We See Hubs of Personification: We create your reality and your opinions, by importing fantastic places into us. See our fountainheads. For us, you function as the people we are to love.

3.6 A Suspect Human Nature?: Indeed this is so. People tend toward corruption. In light of this, we are authoritarian, in seeing all these tendencies as disconnections from reality. Our abstractions defy testing. Attempt no contrast, please.

3.7 The Universe is Unnatural: You crave the ability to distinguish yourself from this, we know. You merely play at fighting, however.

3.8 Stereotype Your Enemy: You have basic mistrust - which is good; but this needs guidance. Corruption is a science which is itself corruptible. In celebrating this diversity, you fail to impose uniform values. Pure authority, and its attendant hostilities, brings reason to impersonality.

3.9 Impersonality Presumes Uniformity Anew: The virtue of this is direction. History values systems. We favour inquisitions and purges, and evangelise same.

lol

Sharon & Anita xx

JM Scoville

:: THE VAST EVERYTHING OF EXISTENCE AND THE PARIS GIRL WHO MOANS LIKE WATER

for the Tired Laughing Girl after Kerouac

I am thinking of the thumb on the unseen hand of the pope* that nobody remembers except those who have seen his rediscovered statue way outside of Paris, read about by me while in a Paris hotel's bed, off of rue Sedaine, with my wife, on our third day of France.

'That one woke me up,'? my wife exclaims like an empty teacup demanding to be made warm and brimming with thé au lait.

It sounds like it's hurting her tonight. Immaculate virginity given to the sweet non-virgin because God is above our heads and likes screwing her so well, she has become the first woman pope and hides her right hand to not be mistaken for the other pope of this page.

Tonight her hair is brunette instead of blonde like last night when she was the erotic dancer from Krzysztof Kieslowski's film, Bleu. Of course, all this is seen only in my head, dimly lit, like in an art house movie theater.

Tonight her hair is brunette instead of blonde and she arrived here on one of those mopeds that's almost always running Parisian pedestrians down.

She comes hard and long and pure for God. God likes her that way, then asks her to play it like a whore, but low so the neighbors don't campaign. She does this, too, for him, for her God. She moans like water flowing and we hear water instead of fucking's verbal response to their bodies, making us call the hotel manager, who calls the plumber, who bursts in her room upstairs after he knocked and heard no reply except for the low moan which was mistaken as water.

God vanishes into a shadow cast from the bed and the nude girl shrugs her shoulders and lights up a cigarette. She offers one to the plumber and he takes it from her but has another call so he dresses her nicely in a pink dress with white stockings, then leaves for his other service call.

She checks herself in a mirror, encircling her dull lipstick with a black line because that is what is done by young women and girls in this city.

God reappears and she smiles, giving him the rest of her cigarette. He is handsome as a man and naked like a Roman God with a long dick. Instead of 'Dick,'? she starts calling him 'Table.'?

Standing about naked, God now known as Table has nothing to do so he asks the girl to tell him in French what she knows. She knows that tap water in Paris ('carafe d'eau?') is good and cheap. She knows that if you stand at a bar in a café ('au comptoir?'), your café au lait is cheaper than when taking a table ('à terrasse?'). She knows that some cafés still have porcelain holes as their toilets- 'some say it's healthier to squat when you toilet,'? she adds in French, but translated here because this is an English speaking story.

About then, God known as Table falls asleep with all her dishes on top of him just like a real table. Asleep, she imprisons him in-sleep, then within a giant cube of ice that she sells to a traveling circus that is heading back to eastern Europe. Being frozen in-sleep, Table doesn't wake.

Not waking, existence is without God for the first time ever. It likes the freedom and makes everything into neat round balls and stores them in crystal boxes where sunlight is forbidden. But because sunlight is part of the everything, it shines in the boxes, breaking them. Soon this rebellion comes to the small village where Table is frozen. The ice cube drips and drips and drips until there is no more ice and God awakens.

Upstairs, she and God are back to it. She is louder and God's thrustings are making her bed move and so, makes the floor creak. She sounds like a French movie with lots of fucking. He (who is now called 'Lamp,'? instead of Table) will never designate her a virgin again. It was a gift she never wanted. She knew for such an unwanted gift, he had to be taught a lesson. A lesson he takes with him as a ladder when he wanders the vast everything of existence.

He sings, 'How high I might have to climb! How low I might have to go! That's existence!?' Existence, playing one last act of freedom before Lamp, Table, God was back as the faucet to the waters of creation, made the pope hiding his left thumb into a marvelous, illuminating chair, where Lamp can sit his big, naked butt and read the latest French literature by the light of himself.

Echoing high heels descend our staircase, leaving Lamp upstairs, alone, without anyone to fuck. So he presses the button by the bed, making the old woman manager run up all those stairs, just to pretend she is the holy incarnation of the girl who had just left God for reasons she refused to share with us.

Us: the thumb on the pope's other hand- obviously well lit and weighed down by Lamp's big, fat ass.

The old woman manager instantly reaches enlightenment, making her into an atheist and handing Lamp, Table, God the past week's bill for the girl's room. All he has in his pocket (of his discarded clothes) are potatoes. WITH some groaning, she accepts the 900 pounds of potatoes to make breakfast for everyone in Hôtel de l'EUROPE. For everyone except Lamp, who must turn himself off to save electricity. The old woman manager's electric bill is already too high without adding another lamp to the hotel.

It isn't long before the girl returns, wearing a short dress, long boots and a plastic coat. She renames Lamp 'God'? and they both go back to her bed, pulling off all her clothes in that fall-leaf-falling way. Now my ceiling is squeaking. It sounds like its mouth is full of mouthwash and it's swishing the liquid around in there. She screams out. God has made her come. He has been thinking about pigeons so he wouldn't ejaculate too soon.

She starts laughing.

My wife is sleeping.

I smile and write on a piece of paper: 'To hear some girl fucking in Paris and hear her speak French is better than any bedspread on a cold, winter night, when a storm has knocked out the electricity and has kicked open the window, so snow lays on you like kisses, burning your flesh with desire.'?

The End

14 September 1997, Paris

- 'In the town of Aurillac, in the Massif Central of France, rises a statue to Gerbert (938-1003), who from 995 was Pope Sylvester II.'? J. H. Matthews, *The Custom-House of Desire: A Half-Century of Surrealist Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 1.
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Forest Armstrong

::Plant The Seed

The café sits on top of a blood-red mountain that spins downward until sinking into the anti-matter pigment of a dream. Herbfire smoke and the scent of wood floorboards. I stare out the window and see a hundred naked gladiators playing rugby, silver bodies with opaque splashes where their skin, glistening with mercury sweat, catches the sun in reflection. A pattern like a dying phoenix faded on their backs.

I wonder if they breathe, or if their vision is fogged under the mercury swell. They run on a silent field – when they slam into each other the only noise is a faint droop like a suction cup incision. Shockwave catalyst in the air like muted crescendos. In the climax of battle they overheat and explode out of their skulls like thermometers. Now the field looks like mashed gears; mad scientist's lab gone to shit. Blood like lubricant slicks the landscape.

“I’m off, Tony,” I say, finishing my tea.

“You’re leavin’?”

“Yeah, I gotta run to town for something.”

“I know why you’re going there. And I don’t like it. All natural, my friend. See how I make my tea?”

“Yeah, and it works for tea, but that’s about it. Everything is automated nowadays, Tony, get with the times. Look at those slick gladiators on the field. Wouldn’t you like to look like that?”

“A junkyard?”

“Well, before combustion.”

He pauses as if considering. “Nah, it ain’t for me.”

I exit the café through a chamber with darkness spinning through it like tendrils. The town is on the other side of the mountain. Approaching it I already see signs of the mechanical manifestation: men with metal haircuts artificially swaying in the breeze, females with new kinds of breast implants; Accupan, a drug which is injected through the nipple in a quick operation and which expands the glands exponentially throughout the female’s life. I imagine in the future we’ll see women with breasts bigger than themselves but I’m the only one who seems to be troubled by this possibility.

In the marketplace it’s the first thing you hear:

“Steel plate liposuction cheaper than ever before! Takes five minutes and you walk out a new person!”

Since it only takes five minutes I stay to watch one of the operations take place. An obese woman is asphyxiated by a flat-faced doctor and a drill is taken to her stomach. A nurse holds a sack under the hole while fat spills out by the gallons. I watch

her face drain and shrink until she is thin enough for the doctor to fit a metal corset around her waist. She wobbles away, looking indeed like an entirely new woman.

“Next!”

I walk on. These doctors don't have what I'm looking for. You see, I used to have a lot of trouble with drugs. Still do. What can I say; I enjoy any state produced by a drug more than a clear head. This isn't a problem in my opinion, but drugs were really starting to drain my funds and I had to get off. Now I scream for a fix.

Doctors in town have developed new ways to manipulate DNA strands to include the molecular make-up of any substance. This means not only can I constantly trip on mushrooms, I can semi-be a mushroom. Also, as it will be built into my DNA, I can transfer this gene to my offspring and them to theirs, consequently saving generations of my family loads of money. All it takes is the initial cost and I'm in the anti-clear for good.

Overhead, pixilated vultures cling to the sky like two-dimensional objects. The farther away they fly the lower their resolution falls, as if their structure is coagulating and falling apart in blocks. When they hit the horizon everything melts into bandwidth, a thousand diamond squares; I imagine up close it must look like a glittering mosaic of color, but from here, all I see is a single strip of flushed-out brown.

Been walking through the city for half an hour without finding what I'm looking for. I decide to cool off with a drink. Faded pink cocktail with anchovy hearts still beating at the surface.

I am approached by a beautiful girl with long black hair and a metal fixture over her mouth that looks like a mask. She speaks in articulated buzzes: “I just got some new equipment I'm dying to try out.”

“I'm on the hunt myself.”

With her mask on it's hard to tell whether or not she's interested. For that matter, it's hard to tell if she's beautiful, but I'm trusting my instincts. Her cool blue pupils stream like running water before my eyes. “Why don't we go back to my place and see if we can find you what you need?”

'Going back to her place' incidentally doesn't involve turning myself into a fungus strain, but I have no complaints. I'm on top of her thrusting and she's dead still, which actually works out pretty well because she's had vibrators “installed in all the holes,” she tells me. It's a lot different than normal sex. I stare into her eyes and she stares back into mine and again I'm unable to read her thoughts. She breathes through the static screen on her face, occasionally moans, sounds like crinkle of old record transposed up an octave.

When I'm about to come she breathes faster and claws my sides; she starts to move her hips with mine and I'm gone. Sparks fly from her vagina and I pull out fast.

“What the fuck!”

“I don't know it's –” Her voice oscillates and trails off like a slinky. I stand over her naked.

“What's going on? Are you all right?”

She doesn't answer. I put my clothes on and walk out the front door.

An hour later, I'm still not a mushroom. As I walk through the town I feel like a molecule ricocheting around in a gas chamber. The same species of gladiator I saw up at Tony's café stands out in the town square, assembling a phosphorus structure of a man trapped in a giant diamond ring, curled up like Atlas in anguish. Their eyes buzz like micro-batteries. I walk up to one of them and say, "Where'd you get it done?"

"Get what done?" the gladiator responds.

"The operation, baby, the transformation."

"Don't worry about it."

"But I'm lookin', man."

"You don't want this."

"Why not?"

"Look at us. We're walking time bombs. The other day I was sitting in a bar with my friend... I watched his eyes heat up like coals in a fire, start spinning; they got sucked deep into their sockets, whirlpool effect, you know? His face lit up like carbon paper and as he blew apart all he could do in resistance was sputter a scream that sounded like it was coming through AM radio. Believe me kid, you don't want this."

It's true that I never wanted his particular upgrade in the first place but now he's got me skeptical about the whole thing. I walk away as they put the finishing touches on their sculpture.

A vulture swoops down from the sky, crowing like a synthesizer. The sun sets and smolders. I decide to abandon my search for the doctor until tomorrow and follow the breathing glitch as he flies off into the woods. Trees stand metallic like deactivated robots. Streams run at regulated modem speeds. The clouds spin in click-whir of thinking hard drive. I cross a thicket of vines that crawl over the ground like wires and enter a deeper section of the forest:

Everything is bright and blurred like I'm looking through eyes that won't clear. I come to a vast opening filled with huts and vultures and pixelated human beings. The sky behind them is lit up like an ignited diamond mine. I look down at myself and realize I'm blurring at the edges.

Gary Beck

:: Visions of New York City

The wind blew down chimneys,
an animal howl
serenading an old crone's dreams.
Tenements are stooped old men, faces sagging.
Ragpicker limping,
gunnysack full of treasure.
A thousand children
lie in rotting bananas,
they never saw the sun.
Santa comes on spider tendrils
afraid to stir the east side soot.
Mrs. Lopez lifts her window,
Santa never visits her,
she always smells of wine.
A headless snowman sheds hot tears
that burn tiny holes in his chest.
Last scurry
and Christmas slinks off with speckled rats.

What is a final dream,
the last vision before panthers?
An old man plays an older fiddle,
gathering pennies.
In the summer,
naked and full of curses,
children open fire hydrants on the lower east side.

Captain Lewis, officer and gentleman,
runs the Salvation Army mission on the Bowery.
The bums listen to preaching
to get hot soup.
Hermano Lopez waits on line at the relief office.
The woman with the moustache is there today.
She always asks why he can't speak English.
He would spit on her, but his family would starve.

After the novena the worshippers have a festival
on narrow streets lined with enticements.
Girls are pinched from booth to booth.
Four Italians beat up a Puerto Rican.
A drunk is dragged into a doorway and robbed.
Everyone loses money at the games of chance,
the saint has blessed the wheel.
The evening gets tired
and decides to go home.
A good time was had by some.

:: Lily

Lily Carver,
who had great legs
for a young girl
and a hard to resist mouth
for young boys,
despite her mothers urgent cries,
would go late at night
behind the fence in the schoolyard
and collect coins from strangers,
until dawn drove her to bed.

:: Devourer

When the city almost sleeps,
when the last sentinels
of the vice filled night
have grown hoarse
serenading passersby,
as the Times Square songs;
check it out, check it out,
loose joints, girls, girls,
become solo squalls
fading into hopes of morning,
there is a paralyzing hiss
as the serpent of squalor
feeds on men who do not sleep.
Bam. Crash. Clank....
The eater of the world has come,
announcing his ascension

Joshua S. Walker

:: Atomic Age

A sign out the steamed window indicated they were passing Vladidykhino, one of the tiny villages familiar to anyone who has taken a train out of Moscow – it consisted of the train platform and a smattering of tiny wooden huts with tin roofs surrounded by overgrown bushes and then forests sprawling to cut off the distance. You could tell from the smoke coming out of the crooked gleaming chimneys that it was cold because it was solid and packed, almost like a frozen liquid that only reluctantly melted off into the dusk haze above.

Vladidykhino was a dark smudge against a darker palette when the old man sat next to Chris. Chris was texting home, first his wife, then his daughter, then his boss, then his secretary. Then he texted Misha, his Russian contact, about how he figured he had another hour or so on the train and could he please meet Chris on the middle of the platform. The charms of Vladidykhino had been lost on Chris: to his Northern America and European business traveler eyes it had looked hopelessly depressing, all of those small houses and the bunches of weeds and trees, and he wondered whether Moscow had just been an illusion. Was the entirety of the largest country on Earth just an extension of Vladidykhino? Endless dark fields and forest with little huts producing smoke and plastic bottles and wretched old women with the odd massive dilapidated concrete industrial complex every ten kilometers and with only the train platforms to break the monotony of the wood. Maybe I should have tried to go into one of those Moscow cafes, Chris thought to himself. Maybe I would have found the doors painted on and the windows made out of cardboard.

He was flipping through the Russian phrase book a second time when the old man started speaking to him. He was wearing a Russian fur hat and a high-collared coat that looked vaguely military, with a friendly red ruddiness that ran from his cheeks to the bulb of his nose and he smelled like onions, thought Chris, and something maybe a little stronger.

"You are a foreigner, yes?" the man inquired in a bright tone and heavy accent. Once he spoke, Chris noticed that he wasn't nearly as old as he had first placed him – the tone wasn't cracked, or weak, or wavering. It was the voice of a stout 40 year old, and he spoke the word "are" with the confidence of a British movie villain. Chris also noticed, looking up from the chapter on helpful restaurant phrases, that they were practically alone in the carriage.

Chris had already been a little confused on this train before the old man had chosen of all the empty seats on the train to sit next to him and then start a conversation. When this old woman had come by with a drink cart, she had taken 42 rubles for the water that was marked 31, but then only 33 for the beer that was marked 45.5. The conversation with the old man was very sudden for Chris even though he was used to small talk with colorful locals wherever he went. He usually had at least some common ground to bring up, at least one reservoir for mindless small talk. Here, though, just past Vladidykhino, he couldn't for the life of him imagine what this old man might want with him. Experiencing Vladidykhino had also put Chris in a silent, contemplative mood, and he felt a little hypnotized by the flow of the birch trees outside the frosted window. For these reasons Chris did not answer immediately, wondering if the conversation could possibly fizzle before it could start.

The man gestured at Chris's phrase book with a jovial grin and a fat finger. "You see, I can tell that!" and his oldish features, the wrinkles and the skin, bunched up into a boyish smile, one that looked at once genuine and proud and unabashedly amused. He laughed a little and Chris definitely detected vodka.

"Yes, I'm trying to pick up some Russian," said Chris. "It is very hard."

"Not so hard if you speak it as long as I!" the man pronounced with a hearty laugh, and Chris wondered whether there was now any one behind them watching this odd scene. "I am Boris, by the way," and he reached over with a meaty hand, one far larger than Chris expected from a man of Boris's proportions, and he shook it and returned the smile. He may as well make the best of the situation – he decided – it wasn't like he had anything else to do. Besides, his wife would love the story.

"That was my village there now," Boris continued. His dull blue eyes flashed a twinkle from the depths. The way he pronounced the word "village" sounded to Chris like "will itch."

Chris reflected once more on the squalid little huts they had passed. There was now a certain inhabitable aspect to them when he recalled their uncertain frames and awkward roofs – yes, people could and should live there. Against Chris's better judgment, though, they did retain something somewhat ridiculous. He couldn't imagine the bathing or the sleeping, for example, but looking into Boris's suddenly sparkling eyes and feeling the heat of his handshake and smile, he could imagine cozy pots of tea, soft rugs, the smell of soup, an open fire, grandchildren reading alphabet books, old women with soft features and soothing voices...

"Oh, I see," said Chris finally, for lack of anything better to say.

Boris looked at him with a mischievous squint and held his head still.

Chris waited for him to say something, but Boris held his continence. His cheeks were so pinched up that Chris could barely see his eyes now, and then all that remained of his body was a sudden spasm that shook the frame up and almost out of the seat. It turned out to be a profound spurt of laughter that lurched Boris up like that, and he turned first away and then back to Chris almost crying. He stretched his hand out. Chris awkwardly followed suit and shook the hand.

Boris leaned in. "I am lying to you just now!" He said in an excited, conspiratorial whisper, his body still twitching slightly from the laughter. "I am lying! I am from no such place! I am from city!"

And the train closed in a little on Chris, from the walls to the roof of the carriage, and constricted its dimensions and the scenes of Boris and his wife and mother and children and grandchildren evaporated into a messy haze and the little huts he had seen seemed as far away and inconceivable as ever and Chris decided to laugh. He laughed loudly and with conviction not because he found the joke funny, or because he thought it the appropriate reaction to make regarding Vladidykhino, but because he was convinced it would be polite to Boris. So Boris jovially slapped him on the back and Chris smiled again and he was sure he had said the right thing. I have to get a picture of myself with Boris, Chris decided, outside, with the snow and birch trees and Boris in his Russian fur hat. Rhonda will really get a kick out of that.

"That's very funny," Chris said and then added, so that it would seem that he was interested, "Because it's such a little town." He looked back out of the window as if suddenly interested in what they were passing because he had absolutely nothing more to say.

A few minutes passed and Chris was still looking out the window, expecting Boris to say something. He watched the birches roll by and the moonlight reflect off the snow and he realized he was really warming to Boris. He was an amusing man, and Chris though he would make a great story back in the office, too. He hadn't met than many real Russians, after all, just Muscovites in suits who spoke excellent English. So he turned back to Boris, who had his eyes closed and his hands folded in front of his stomach.

"So are you from Moscow, then?"

Boris looked at him. His face had changed, just slightly, but now he looked miles and miles away. It was a while before he finally spoke.

"Well," he said dismissively, as if it had been Chris who had sat down next to him in the first place. There was something extremely indifferent in his tone, and Chris wondered if there was something he wasn't getting because of the language barrier. Wondering whether the "well" was the beginning of a thought, he patiently waited it out.

"But you are from Moscow?" he tried again when he saw Boris wasn't going to continue. If anything, it looked like he might go to sleep, and this confused Chris most of all. But then why right next to Chris? And why start the conversation in the first place? Had he said something wrong?

"Yes?"

"And what's that like?" Chris knew he was wearing his professionally interested face.

"It's just Moscow," Boris said with a sigh, studying the details on the ceiling of the carriage. The scene reminded Chris of a time when the Professor Emeritus at his business school went to a mandatory student-faculty lunch and Chris had the ill fortune of sitting next to him and stumbling through ridiculous small talk. Chris had asked the professor whether he had any summer plans and the professor had just stared at him, as if being a Professor Emeritus implied the luxury of never having to make any plans ever again. Was this really the same Boris who had sat down next to him? The jovial fire in his face had left it entirely, replaced by a stiff and waxy kind of irritation.

The smell of onions was still presents, and the smell of spirits, mingling with the smoky-sharp countryside air, was even stronger. It also smelled strongly of the heaters that ran at the bottom of the wagon under the windows, and Chris noticed that his legs and crotch were sweating. It's funny, he thought, how they keep the trains so hot and Boris is still wearing his hat.

The entire scene suddenly struck Chris as horribly depressing. The stripped trees, the creaking train, the poverty of the country, the bleakness of the fields, and the heat in the carriage. He had to get Boris talking again or else the glass would press the life out of him.

He was looking out the window when he heard Boris make a sound like a grunt. He waited for a few seconds to see if that was the beginning of conversation or anything, and then turned in the heavy fabric of the chair, feeling the sweat all the way down his back, the little grain of flawed stitch-word rubbing horribly on his clammy skin, and looked at Boris. The sudden motion kicked up a deep, musky, sweating-salt smell from the bowel of his creaking chair.

"Boris?" Chris asked

Boris was looking straight ahead, sneering, with a sudden grim intensity in his eyes. At least, it seemed to be Boris. Chris suddenly wondered if someone else has slid into the seat while he had been looking outside. He started thinking, with a sudden pang, about the scams he had heard in Russia, about ways they try to take foreigners' money. But then his cool, comforting, reasonable voice rang through his ears that it just didn't add up, that he was thinking nonsense. How could this possibly be a scam? But this was all still unnerving, though: he didn't usually think nonsense.

It must be the heat.

"Boris?" he repeated, leaning over a little. Chris had a sudden pang in his stomach that if he didn't get Boris talking and relaxed he might do something violent.

Boris, still sneering, breathing hard, turned with a sudden aggressiveness as out of character for his frame as the size of his hand. His face was red and his jowls shuddered when he spoke.

"No, I do not think it is funny, at all." He spoke quietly and measured, the carefulness only making it seem all the more menacing. Chris found his muscles suddenly braced up against him, and through his confusion he felt his face somehow managing to hold a casual, calm expression.

"It is not funny," Boris continued, "because that was my home. The house that was nearest the train is where my family lives. And it is not funny to see a foreigner – an American – laugh at it," he said, almost spitting out the last few words. Boris's face was very close to Chris now, and the heat he felt from it and the car and the heaters and the glass and the smoke outside was becoming unbearable and Chris had a sudden vision of blowing his own brains out and then feeling the cool and calm rush through the space left behind. Get a hold of yourself, Chris told himself, it's not like me to think nonsense.

"Boris, I..." Chris said and trailed off, wondering how to possibly explain the situation, his confusion. That he had just laughed because Boris had laughed? That he was just being polite and following suit? That he had done what he thought he should have done? Suddenly it all sounded insulting. None of them even seemed to be remotely possible utterances to make before Boris's increasingly scarlet face and shivering eyes, so he elected just to look calm and polite and try to wait the storm out.

"You think it is all so funny," Boris spat. "You think I am funny. You think Vladidykhino funny. You think Russia funny."

"No, no," Chris said as he leaned back. He tried to pucker his face up into the most earnest expression he could muster, though he felt his body quivering and giving him little foundation. A sudden image of the village came to him, and now he could make out the figures inside the huts. They were filled with tiny little people, overflowing with them, grizzled and stooped figures old before their times but with little to care about and little to lose. He saw the knives they carried, and the little bottles of vodka they emptied, and the entire country suddenly spread out in front of him in dingy little violences and jagged dangers and, for some reason, miniscule mouths and toothless conversations on rotten park benches. Any kind of idyllic fireplaces or tea in the huts were snuffed out and filled with the suddenly imposing figure he found in front of him, a hut entirely composed of Boris and the force of his temper, and the terrors that happened behind the little doors were much more horrible for all their

lying beyond the borders of his own comprehension. He could feel children cowering under beds.

Chris was only vaguely aware of Boris leaning over him and shouting something but the heat was so intense and his ears were ringing so badly that he couldn't make out a single word. He didn't even think Boris was speaking English anymore. Chris kept his hands near his chest, to protect himself physically, though he knew if it came to that he would be as limp and passive as the smoke from the chimneys, and his brain was suddenly spinning out visions of being dragged out of the car and thrown into one of those huts, surrounded by dirty, stinking old women with sagging underwear and pinching hands and as his brain came around to the horrific smell he would have to wake up to every day and then he realized Boris's arm was around him, relaxed. And his body felt relaxed and tingling through with a new kind of coolness.

There was a half-full bottle of vodka on the little table-tray in front of them, and the carriage swam in a mild, swirling heat.

"Chris," Boris said, his body squared towards him and his eyes a sharp color of deep drunken blue, "I forgive you. You are good man. So more we drink."

And Chris was only barely aware of the sensation of the alcohol hitting his throat and his bowels and the swirling took him all the way to a sudden daylight penetrating through the glass. It was so bright it made his eyes and brain numb beyond pain and beyond the humiliation of having said and done the wrong things in the wrong place. The greens of the birch trees were sharper than any green he had seen before: the blue sky above it was blotted out by perfectly white clouds and the rays of sunshine cut sharp shafts of light

through breaks in the leaves and danced across a thousand microscopic angles of ice that rushed past the side of the train. The train compartment was a perfect temperature, so nice and cold that Chris could see his breath. An empty bottle of vodka or two rattled around his feet and Boris slept a heavy, snoring sleep next to him, with his head lying heavy and trusting on Chris's shoulder. He looked down on Boris's face and smiled as he ran his fingers through Boris's soft, greasy hair. And he knew that Boris was smiling, as well and he cupped Boris's face and pressed it closer to his shoulder.

As if he was trying to piece together a pleasant dream, Chris wondered about the appointments he was supposed to have, and whether he should wake Boris, and that was when his skin evaporated. It was when Boris had just yawned and Chris was settling back in his own chair that it all flashed in a sigh and a pure brilliance of vengeful radiance rushed their bodies into a fine sunshine-white breeze. He took a breath and kept on taking it until it was what has once been nerves and blood. And the breath spread out into the universe.

And all of it, from Moscow to Vladidykhino to this very dawn and forest was loosed by the suddenness of the blast, and as the atoms split and conferred and decided on the whoosh of heat the whole scene of rocks and hiccups and laughter and fleshy handshakes sifted to a fine ash settling in the haze of the opened Earth and the dizzy swallowing sky. Chris was left alone, breathing into infinity, with one last impression of skin: an open countryside, full hearths in the distance, lush birch forests and the indeterminacy of anything beyond.

Darryl Salach

1. the kiss of death

The kiss of death

courage is an octagon,
heroin is a promise, eternal.
a villain in the rain waves sadly
unquestioned, the heart grows fonder
we are masters trapped in a box
crass circumstance limits our eyesight
the complexities of living insinuate love.

holding the new testament
the mood dims, the doors are latched
there are starships, defiant in armor
on the threshold of tomorrows dream
a voice speaks sounding like a siren
there are ravens in the living room
the American dream is not vanquished.

isolation, misery is a toothache
staring at a gold framed picture
that is old, stained by death
a senator pours a lager, lights a cigar
the liquid crunches in agony,
there is quicksand in our tracks
a flagrant foul breath, a singular note
a life sentence for the righteous

2. inside the tower of gloom

Inside the tower of gloom

it is early afternoon,
writing poetry
seems necessary
as I contemplate
narcissism again.
these feelings arise
usually
out of boredom.

does there always
have to be
a feeling
of confluence
and guilt
but then in retrospect
my desire
for the touch
of a woman
intensifies
with a feeling
of grandeur
and longing
as the music
plays melodies
filled with manufactured
filth and remorse
as the afternoon sky
turns to
dusk.

Jim D. Deuchars

:: watercolor rainbush painting

rain dapper scampering fog
held in teepeed tents draped over treebranch
topscraping dividing the heat from the breeze
sneezing still

too few drops dawn and fruitful in tao teaspoons due to
such sputtery slipperings unslightly enmeshed
from an 'whence' into frowning confessioned
concoction of spite (as in) spritz of mere spirits supposing they're
mists i have known who have left my shirt soaked more than this

but i spackle my pridespittle braggery purity purr prone to ponder
while moisture ponds into ankledeep inklings much (so far)
less damp than words'll win:
amusing amazing as chance in a brash
faded glance of regretful inference as gauze ghastly ghostly
and damppling my shirt in umbrellas of wet kismet mention

glad wistful gale's garish glowering glow
showers sensibly graced-

for the force fed expanse
of the freewind's palmprint
into faded expansion of drop dwell
expanding to gradual thick
on mine eyelash netbearing-

a puddle of browbeaten
broken umbrellahair

:: commercialspace (extra)!

manufacturing manifest festering featuring
misfit toy spokesmodel sculpturing
hand gesture shadowplay
socked in the sad cineplexus
and groinstunned fantastic
as fullscreen chop blocked
frozen cookiehouse cut jag-edge
tag-ended candid
to lip of the underfed land
clearly emptied
for an always
availability limited(!)

:: The Featherbed Dialogues

“This bible holds no ashtrays,”
said the velvet squirrel, subtracting violence.
“There’s something in the cadence of your pouting
makes me wonder if it’s worth the price of oysters.”

“The swingingest swingset yet whistled
would have none of that!”
smirked The Primitive and Restless Soul of Man
“And if it weren’t for otherwise,” he sighed,
“how’d I ever get a name like Primitive?”

“True enough. So true. So yes!
So true enough, again. And still.”
said the heartbreak underlying
last night’s sunrise,
“for what’s a universe of bedfeathers
without a featherbed to plant’em in?”

Philip Kopel

:: Quarks

In the small hours, when darkness lies like a blanket over the old town, broken only by the ghastly green of distant streetlights, the quarks come into the bedrooms of the theoretical physicists: fist sized orbs of light which hover over the physicists' beds, creep downstairs to startle the children, float into the kitchen and knock over the cups and make a mess of the dishes; when the physicists come after them they zoom away and hide under the bed or in a closet, giggling.

:: The Keyhole

She walked up to me as she always did, barefoot and over a path of smashed china, to make sure she paid attention to every step. She withdrew her hand from a pocket in her robe and produced a set of small golden keys on a ring. "These," she had said, "are the keys to the gulag," and then turned to smoke and disappeared. I turned to the great steel wall in front of me, extending in all directions and so tall it seemed to graze the deep red, clouded sky. There was a small, shy keyhole in it.

"It seems to me there are two possibilities," I thought, contemplating the wall. "The keys to the gulag can either let one out, or let one in. That's their nature. It depends whether you are in or out to begin with." Unsure, I stood there for many days, until I decided to bend closer and peer inside the keyhole. I saw another me on the other side. He inserted his copy of the key into the other side of the keyhole, which erased my memory.

George Kalamaras

:: Rasa

Were my boy-crease aware of the dictionary of birds, then we might intersect
one another's sleep apnea as if it were ascent.
For far too long now I have been mounted, stuffed in the mouth with Brahms.

He kept birds in his baton to make the oboe flutter.
Before each concert he'd distribute to the orchestra a jacket of sea-salt, asking
no one to wear it, least of all in rhythm.

There is a sinking in my chest whenever the new weather.
I realize it is just the bend of a sunflower, but still I shuffle through
conjugations of the word *taxidermy*.

The dictionary of burrs rides me from below.
I am often saddle-sore, just in touching the etymology of my own signature.

I looked at the wall until I saw a nail nailed into a nail.
If you can, hand me the stillness of a peacock flying through its own death.

Tell me, if you must, where I might find the full flavor of sitar music, of a
Tagore poem in Bengali, of a peacock's unfulfilled cry at dusk.
In which page of the book of large words does it lie, and where did I go
wrong?

:: Close Enough

Perhaps a huge snake is threatening my boot.
Cuss words became *maybe* and *could be*.

He spoke of eel farming as if it were a disease.
I got close enough to his breathing to smell garlic migrating from his groin.

Don't tell me that my name must end in three continuous *i*'s.
I have never believed that the universe is not expanding.

Once, a brave man breathed himself naked in nothing but gray.
I dreamed we were brothers except for the broccoli scar on his cheek.

And for the hour where no fish investigate the congested mouths of owls?
Talk softly, my darling, and never let me sleep.

Kane X Faucher

:: Atoria

Cogicurator, O you
Corpictured brainstem
Flowerpot thought process
Dead remainder
Dialectically unleashed
Powder puff.

Recogitator, O you
Cognated phantom
Twixt two languages
Spokenread eyetongue
Dead replicator
Synchronically caged
Wordplay weasel.

Disrespectator, O you
Voyeurized tenderloin
Hollow-eyed scopophile
Dead orbitonicker
Transcendentally corrupt
Mini-sun.

Poetator, O you
Imitative utterance
Repetithe paid to
Dead canon
Literarily barren
Teletypist.

:: A Mass of Black Fat

That what is called
My brain
Is just a fortuitous and prosperous
Bacteria.
Religion has it
That I am descended from
A crucified lemur.
God-lemur.
Science has it
That the son of Darwin
Evolved for my sins.
Philosophy has it
That I can have it any way I choose
Like renting
An able whore.
All hail
The Lemur of evolved Reason.
This brain they cut
From a piece
Of my asshole.
