

CALIBAN

online



CURBELO • HEMAN • HARPER • WAKOSKI • DE SOIGNIE
BARNSTONE • SIPES • MYCUE • JORON • STRANG • WILT • LAO
KALAMARAS • BENNETT • PAU-LLOSA • STEWARD • ANDERSON
RAPHAEL • VIZENOR • SIERRA • SASANOV • ALEXANDER • JAMES
ARGÜELLES • EQUI • STRAUS • MAGOWAN • BLAZEK • SCHORN



“Caliban is hospitable to any writing which, when chewed,
makes him hear music in the air.”

CALIBAN

Lawrence R. Smith, Editor

Direct correspondence to: lsmith@calibanonline.com

Submissions to: submissions@calibanonline.com

Front cover: AMONG US by Paul Sierra, 2008, oil on canvas (36 in x 32 in)
Collection of John Himmelfarb

AUTUMN, LINCOLN PARK by Paul Sierra
Collection of L. Leone

COMMON THREAD by Barbara Lai Bennett
Collection of Bud Cort

SELF-PORTRAIT (SUNNY-LAND) by Eduardo De Soignie
Collection of Russell Lord and Shirlee Berman

Cover and title page design by Gary R. Smith, 1986
Art on page 65 by Gary R. Smith

Typeset in Baskerville by Daniel Estrada Del Cid
Hybrid Synergy, Garden Grove, California

Lawrence R. Smith, Editor
Deanne Yorita, Associate Editor
Daniel Estrada Del Cid, Production and Design Editor

Calibanonline is published quarterly. Viewing online is free. There is a 99 cent charge for PDF downloads.

Unsolicited poetry, fiction, art, music, and short art videos welcome. Please direct to submissions@calibanonline.com.

Copyright © Calibanonline.com, 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SILVIA CURBELO

I Dream the Lights Are On in Our Old House
I Would Dance With You, Marie, but My Hands Are on Fire
Notes on Courage



BOB HEMAN

From Information



MICHAEL S. HARPER

Notes on the Long Poem (Tuscaloosa, AL)
‘Ars Poetica’



DIANE WAKOSKI

Rose Bush: 1942



WILLIS BARNSTONE

The Animals Began at the Porch

EDUARDO DE SOIGNIE

Self Portrait (Sunny-Land)
The Death of Ogun Panama II



EDWARD MYCUE

A Fight for Air

ANDREW JORON

The Person

BRIAN STRANG

séance
soft tissue



Contents

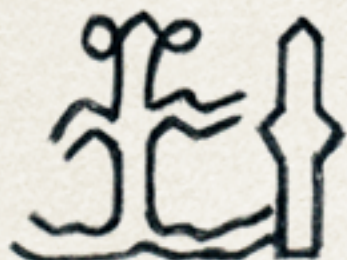
ELLEN WILT
Pattern for Birthing (detail)



LINETTE LAO
Mother Tongue
untitled



RICARDO PAU-LLOSA
Luxuria



GEORGE KALAMARAS
Before I Could Speak



BARBARA LAI BENNETT
Behind the Lattice
Common Thread
Jade Powder and Dew
Prayer Circle for a Rescue
She Carried Green Plums



D.E. STEWARD
Fullet



JACK ANDERSON
Private Matters
Prodigious Lives



DAN RAPHAEL
Opposite Rain

GERALD VIZENOR
Derrida and the Irony Dogs

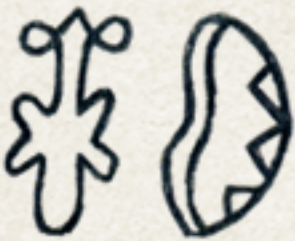
PAUL SIERRA

Autumn, Lincoln Park
Into the Night



MUSIC IN THE AIR

Two Pieces by Greg Sipes



CATHERINE SASANOV

Eliza on Ice
Consumption, 1901



WILL ALEXANDER

From The Ganges



DAVID JAMES

Something Cryptic



IVAN ARGÜELLES

the distance



ELAINE EQUI

The Lost Object of the Suburbs
O Carol



AUSTIN STRAUS

From Burnzworks



ROBIN MAGOWAN

In a Doorway
Zero
Bittersweet

DOUGLAS BLAZEK

The Domestic Frontier

Contents

BRIAN SCHORN

- Recklessness Turning Rainbow*
- Magnification and Transportation*
- Manual for Mouse Houses*
- A Portrait Including Hum*

CALIBAN

- Once Again, Caliban Refuses to Collect His Thoughts*

CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE



SILVIA CURBELO

I Dream the Lights Are On in Our Old House

You come back as a wish
or a wave, daydream swimming
out of context, incidental
as loose grammar.
Like a bad haircut in a photograph
I'm good for a story, always
rooting through the weeds.
I'm always arriving, constant
as a missed chance, a kind of
failure of the senses. *Touch here.*
And here. It's nothing
you can't wade through
in your Sunday suit.
I'm ancillary, converted,
still cashing in my chips.
I'm the heyday gone
to seed, subliminal in thigh-
high boots. In the soft
drive-in light of an old movie,
a kiss, a kiss, and later there's no one
to remember how it ends.
I'm aligned with the random,
poised for the overkill, butcher
knife in the cream pie, I'm moving
through some house-of-cards
moment while everything burns
or spills or tears apart,

shards of glass in the bath-
water, a kind of stripped-down
music in the key of what's left.
In the runaway sentence, syntax
scans the open road.
I'm a verb chasing a rumor.
It's the last day of spring and I have lost
my keys, my hat, my pickup sticks.
Words fail me, leave stubborn
handprints on the rumpled sheets
in a room where a light
burns and a voice whispers,
It's late. Open your eyes.
You'll never guess how long
we've been asleep.

I would dance with you, Marie, but my hands are on fire

I would carry this weight on my tongue

I would lay it down like dirt

I would tend the black fruit

I would torch the four corners of sleep

I would cut down the stars from their dark hive

I would rise from your dreams like a soldier

I would soften the blows with these wings

Notes on Courage

Take wing. Take charge.
Take cover. Take the last train
back to the start. There are no riddles
to be solved. There is no more dancing
around the facts. Take heart,
take the loss. Take this moment.

Let's forget everything we know.
Let's cut away the loose ends
to the meat of the story.

Take back night's 40 winks,
its burning fence, its brown sleep.
Forget faith. Forget universal truths.
Rake the leaves. Torch the letters.
Take back the fiery kiss,
the permanent deal.

Lose your grip. Lose your heart.
Lie down in ruins. Follow the last
surviving army through the proverbial

burning forest. Take back
the night sky, the full complement
of stars. Forget heartbreak.
Forget the reckless past, your sweet
impaled youth, apple lost
in a wilderness of arrows,
the sleeping clothes of the new.

Take the high road. Be gone.
Take all the weather with you.
If memory taps you on
the shoulder, take it all back.
Have the last word. Take a stand.
Take no prisoners.

Let's make it count. Let's start over.
Let's take comfort in knowing
there's a way back.

BOB HEMAN

From *Information*

INFORMATION

Avoid twins. Avoid abandoned buildings. Avoid books with no pictures. Avoid machines you can't hold in your hand. Avoid the forest.

INFORMATION

The dogs were not repeated. The doorway was never large enough. The light was kept in containers they were afraid to open. They had to leave them behind when the river came.

INFORMATION

Begins the process that changes the man into a stone. That changes the boat into a room. That allows the rain to burn the buildings down. That lets the road become a mountain and a flower fill the sea. That allows the machine to speak. That expects them all to enter the forest.

INFORMATION

There was something wrong in the forest. A little house was hiding between the animals. The birds were given wings they could remove. They entered a cave that was filled with sky.

INFORMATION

Sex was something that only happened in the movies. He had run out of birds to tie into the trees. The war was still waiting to enter his yard. He put on his only clothes and walked out to greet it.

INFORMATION

When she was young she learned the lesson of sleeves. If there was an animal it could also be worn. What food they had was made of light. It was carried from room to room inside of mirrors.

INFORMATION

The clouds repeated for each man who enters. They see a chicken or a windmill or two badgers mating, even though the clouds are always the same.

INFORMATION

Inside the boat the animals are very small. There are many boats inside the room. A man continues to rearrange them. Eventually they form a path the travelers must use. They are travelers because they will be hurt if they do not move.

MICHAEL S. HARPER

Notes on the Long Poem (*Tuscaloosa, AL*)

“*letters from an imaginary friend*”—begin here
Edwin Honig did a class on this beginning with Lorca

the women and the men meet at scylla/charybdis
(your long suit is lyric grace short shrift)

always begin with *metrics* make them count
whether they can read or write *irmus* next

lots of **Whitman** in Tuscaloosa many lessons
in guerilla warfare à la Nathan Bedford Forrest

all three volumes of Shelby Foote on battlefields
(Keat’s letters Proust Milton an exegesis

of Donald Justice’s sonnet on Eden for Berryman’s Iowan workshop)
Rukeyser Bishop Kumin Brooks “*For My People*”

and JUBILEE together, Walker’s dissertation on Vyree
(some Alice Walker student of Rukeyser tutelage)

make them study the industrial north Pittsburgh’s
steel the music of the hill Homestead Grays Josh

when it comes to the agrarians make them translate
Bear Bryant always won at home new stadium museum

no traffic in the olympic swimming pool your lane
not many eating holes but lunch on the river dutch

best bbq is out of town make sure you visit Oxford
good French restaurant in Birmingham *16th St church*

documentary on George Wallace **Owens & Louis** birthmarks
Elvis in Tupelo Angola lunch on Natchez Trace

you will need AC in the endowed house already there (the parking lot)
get buildings & grounds for pine needles now record rebel graves

who dug them

why the Big House and those shacks are so close together

“ARS POETICA”

I would fly in on Mondays to Covington, Kentucky
make my way to the “*Elliston*” Room at UC Library

the students avoided the books I was stand-in
for Elizabeth Bishop her pidgin on postcards delicious

her cups runneth over in **Brazil** Cal’s zone
E. Boston resistant honor and friend of Paz

yet Frost was first in line so Stowe waited
(*made my way to Hillcrest Cemetery looked*

where the black people were buried
Ida Milsaps Ralph Waldo Ellison’s mama

then found her death certificate
“tuberculosis of the hip” misdiagnosed)

Cummins poet and curator loved to pun
his mimicry bad as the food black & white

from east and south of the Ohio River
where we ate sometimes on a **raft** **fm** music

He was Huck I was Jim Twain was mascot
so we visited **Harriet** her stolen antlers

I spoke of Lincoln at the breaks sent bad
students to *Wallace Stevens Emily* **Ebo** Landing

the *stacks* open and shut like a Negro *spiritual*
nobody heard nobody could sing

author of **Invisible Man** said it all as *Braille* discographies;
you must be your own spiritual father (*the vet*)

DIANE WAKOSKI

Rose Bush: 1942

Beside
our screen-doored shack,
California Domestic Water Company's
water slid its necklace
of droplets through
irrigation furrows,

and from inside my mother's trunk,
the string of amber beads placed itself around
my neck, each one a crystalline cell
forming my history's beehive,

On the steps
of this peeling wooden house,
an opal-faced daughter who,
holding on her knees a little cardboard trunk of
important-looking papers – perhaps old
bills, annotated in her mother's Palmer-neat
bookkeeper's hand,
is gradually lured away from script
by the twi-lit rose bush,

and in the backyard,
the Diamond Dog woke up
from my dream.

From the cement steps,
I was looking out at the bush and its rose
when, like a charm on a bracelet,
his crystalline motion, his sprinting Diamond Dog motion,
brushed against my arm

and he ran,
cool as stone, out past
the neighbor's persimmon trees.

In my bunk bed at night,
I memorized the scene's simplicity – the rose bush
emerging from the hard-caked clay ground,
like a pendant on a bare neck,
its leaves dusty as the orange grove leaves,
both full of Egyptian pyramid secrets.

In this ashy, Underworld place from my childhood,
I memorized that rose,
which each year
that we lived there in the
laborer's cottage – 2919 1/2 Russell Street –
made me a princess, gave me the feeling
that I was seeing
a jeweler take out a cut ruby
to place it on a
velvet tray for my viewing.

But what I could not memorize
because I didn't know what kind of rose it was,
and am, now, not even sure of its ruby hue,

was what poets and thinkers are enjoined
to know: its identifying names. Neither common name,
 perhaps *American Beauty*,
nor hybrid designation,
 Madame Ferdinand Jamin
nor its Latin parentage,
 Rosa.

I remember my doll's trunk
full of papers,
and the poetry anthology called *Silver Pennies*,
my mother's script flowing
in the California Domestic Water Company's ledgers,
 fat as scarabs or citrus fruit,

 I remember the amber beads that originally came
from my mother's superior, Venona.
I remember WWII, and films later called noir,
my little black high-topped shoes,
but iconic
is my memory of the
infrequent rose.
Its rareness.

Most of all I remember my inability to name it –
 never a shaman,
 never a goddess with the powers of naming –
and thus, my need to run
after my father,
after his Diamond Dog,
the underworld whispering and rustling its fairy tale offerings
– a Pandora jewel cask buzzing with
 bracelets and necklaces and pendants of names.

WILLIS BARNSTONE

The Animals Began on the Porch

for Bruno Schulz (1892-1942)

They began on the porch. My daughter saw them first and she said they came in all sizes and they were goats, but my son said no they were deer, perfectly formed deer who had come in from the forests and their coats were immaculately clean pelts of Irish setters but they were certainly not dogs, and I wondered what happened to my son's and daughter's eyes, because I could see they were horses, and possibly Egyptian animal deities of revenge and resurrection, and I wondered why these live statues had settled here on our porch in days and nights of dark war in far continents, live gods in our house in 1942 when our people were also contending; and while we were descending the porch the animals we just spotted vanished yet we were all now in the sloping fields, family and many more animals or maybe deities, and we were walking slowly up these meadows of grass and wildflowers, and I was frightened, not of the still horses who were certainly figures of grace but of my own body, because suddenly they took all the juice out of me, and I was thinner than usual and could barely stand and asked my daughter if I could hang on to her, and my son came to me on the other side and we moved a bit higher when we noticed a car, an old-fashioned car for the year 1942, since it was a rich man's car from the Packard or Hudson or Pierce Arrow days of fancifully named mechanical masterpieces, and outside the vehicle stood a veiled attractive lady, very dark because of her black triangular dress and her triangular hat, and she and her husband, surely a ruddy Irishman with panther eyes, were huddling around their Packard with its red leather interior, trying to coax sunrays against the black enamel of the doors to make them sparkle with purple haze like princess trees in the afternoon.

Under the couple's feet the fields were violets as on an English king's speckled overcoat, but they glanced forlornly at us, and they were bored and

I knew we were penniless, which alarmed me because we had come from a house, our big chic house, yet those horses, the perfectly tiny ones and the huge ones who looked at us, seemed to sap all my energy and wealth, but not my hunger to be alive, and I supposed that being bored the curious couple wanted our company, and Tony told me they asked him if perhaps or could we possibly like to eat with them, and my son said yes we would be delighted to share a meal with them, and I was pleased because the horses left me emaciated even though they were creations of grace and beauty, without cruelty or malice, with no desire to see us murdered by famine and poverty or so wasted that we couldn't move.

So we all began to walk, still with pleasure, up the hill while the horses remained in place, but there were always more good beasts ahead of us greeting us with pleasant silence. I had turned as skinny as a child but was happy that they had brought adventure and wonder into our existence until I recognized that we were rambling in another continent since right ahead of us were young Gestapo officers blocking our way, and they did not appear horrible as in the films and they had no intention to burn us alive or have us dig death pits and pop us off, one bullet per body, in our open graves, but it was not as if they wanted to speak to us about art and poets, which, after all, many Germans like to do when they remember good old days and the celestial imaginations of the syphilitic poets Friedrich Hölderlin and Heinrich Heine.

Most prominent about the officers were their glimmering jackboots, not in strict goosetstep, since wildflowers were stuffed just below the knee in their combat boots and petals were fluttering in the wind and the knife-eyed SS couldn't see these meadow wildflowers, nor the Tibetan vultures and Mongolian ponies nibbling funeral carnations also stuffed in their boots. Humming black hymns, the surrounding animals were busy burying bundles of boots together with funeral carnations in the sky and also right under the soldiers' romping feet.

In a flash the captains and lieutenants were naked, hairy all over fatty bodies, their jockstraps stuffed in their mouths, and from their tiny brown penises hung bags of creamy foreskins and white scorpions. The sun turned into black sackcloth and the full moon into blood and the SS vanished like a scroll rolling up and falling into the Black Sea. But then in a flash everything

was normal. The Tibetan vultures and the Mongolian ponies around the Nazi warriors disappeared, the afternoon was its weird self, and the reclothed officers went on doing nothing in their regular shit-brown uniforms and glimmering jackboots.

Amid a few stone horses, Heinrich Himmler's racially elite SS were in our way but they ignored us. The paramilitary death squads couldn't see us. We could have walked through them like a wall. Perhaps our protector equines intimidated them, grabbed some of their powers and made us invisible too. The Einsatzkommandos in Poland were known for on sight shooting of musicians holding their instruments and of painters holding their brushes yes in the middle of performance or creation or house-building, but for now one might suppose they were innocently confining their curiosity to looting famous paintings from museums and collectors and enjoying the sun. These off duty SS guys were horsing around on the meadows, letting go in slow motion, drowning in lager, unaware that invisible equine beasts were observing them and that in the future—in five years—the horses would perform their own withering nightmare attack on Einsatzgruppen executioners who were on the run from the law, in safehouses, in Berlin, Buenos Aires and Assunción, Paraguay, and with Jehovah's anger these equine demiurgic foes of the humorless brownshirts would spit out fire and abominations on the skulking boots, and inflict on them a trial, a cell, and a noose in Warsaw.

The casual loafing around outside a town, a major town in southeast Poland with a large Jewish population, did not seem to match the hidden snapshot of German command officers, and I hardly imagined that being cool and nonchalant could be the perfect uniform for SS (Gestapo) and SA (Storm Troopers), whose mission was execution. More, they kept good records, proving how commonplace they were when they were doing their job. Take SS captain Felix Landau, who will be of special interest. He wrote in his diary about daily routine three months before our gang of five happened into his command terrain:

12 July 1941. At 6:00 in the morning I was suddenly awoken from a deep sleep. Report for an execution. Fine, so I'll just play executioner and then gravedigger, why not?... Twenty-three had to be shot, amongst them ...

women ... We had to find a suitable spot to shoot and bury them. After a few minutes we found a place. The death candidates assembled with shovels to dig their own graves. Two of them were weeping. The others certainly have incredible courage... Strange, I am completely unmoved. No pity, nothing. That's the way it is and then it's all over... Valuables, watches and money are put into a pile... The two women are lined up at one end of the grave ready to be shot first... As the women walked to the grave they were completely composed. They turned around. Six of us had to shoot them. The job was assigned thus: three at the heart, three at the head. I took the heart. The shots were fired and the brains whizzed through the air. Two in the head is too much. They almost tear it off.

Who were those equine ghosts who got us into the demon's jaws? I don't know. Were they salvific friends? I suspected them of fable. Somehow they came at a time of stupid slaughter by the brain-damaged Goths. I bought a book of short stories by a nameless Polish writer, who caused uproar in my blood and a primal walk into hell. Call him Bruno or Bronislaw or Bron. A child of passion from a mother who died at his birth, Bruno possessed genius, he was a natural, but at the peak of his brief literary career, the Luftwaffe was bombing Poland brutally from the air and Storm Troopers were black cobras spreading over the countryside, including Bruno's birth town. Bruno wrote and painted until his art vanished in a whim.

But to be fair, the actors playing Gestapo in these scenes didn't invent terror. All religious scriptures are soaked in the blood of death squads upholding the faith. Death squads are the noble protectors, the enforcers for a sojourn of torture in hell, on the Buddhist walls of the Potala in Lhasa and in Dante's cold chambers of the Inferno. In Rome the Italian astronomer and mathematician Giordano Bruno dared to write that the earth circled the sun. Declared a heretic, Bruno was gagged and bound to a stake and he tasted papal fire in the Campo dei Fiori in Rome in 1600. In keeping with his noble precursors, my companion Bruno was a target of Gestapo fury. He was guilty of being a Jew.

My Bruno was real yet I saw him as a birdman, a mythic condor with immaculate feathers made of lace clouds, who passed his years as the

overhead watch eagle, an ancient dirigible below the clouds, who was the benevolent and beautiful master of all rosewood-colored horse deities in Poland, Belorussia, and Ukraine. But that was Bruno speaking, not me. The author was a temporal mortal born in 1892 in Drohobych, by the Ukrainian border, a town in the Austro-Hungarian Pale whose inhabitants were forty percent Jews, the remainder Poles and Ukrainians. Of the eighteen thousand prewar Jews, four hundred survived the multiple massacres. After the war they immigrated. The town was clean. In his youth Bruno studied architecture in Vienna, and thereafter remained in this Galician city that kept changing names, nationalities, borders and languages.

Bruno came from a family of assimilated Jews and, unlike the Hasids who stuck to Yiddish, which is medieval Alsacian German, he wrote in Polish, his household language. Modest Bruno—or was he Bron or Bronnislav?—evasive Bruno was black light and illumination. This high school art teacher was solitary and showed his stories to no one near him, but did write to a far secret reader, to a poet medical doctor in Lvov, Deborah Vogel, the bird.

It didn't make him nervous to write secretly to a songbird he didn't know (he never told his high school colleagues he was an author) and he composed in beautiful Polish, each mythic letter about his town and its orphans and its grandfathers, and his father scientist who sat each night on the broad cobbled bricks at the bottom of the chimney and discovered and tracked threatening wild cosmic comets hurtling toward the earth. He warned people to stay at home until the sky dinosaur hit devastatingly on the planet or hopped off into the infinite pleroma.

His pen pal Lily Vogel pieced his epistolary masterpieces together, encouraging him for more. She nourished him with manna. Eventually, he gave his wisdom tales to a leading novelist who gave them to a publisher, and thereby his mythopoetic letters of unknown eccentric loners in a demiurgic world were published and to grand success, and critics said he was the best between-the-wars author. The Polish Academy of Literature awarded him its highest prize and he was no longer alone but acclaimed by a coterie who threatened his solitude, yet he remained the hermit, the great heresiarch of central Europe. Even when the German troops came in and Polish writer friends gave him false papers and money to escape, he did not escape from

the ghetto where he was imprisoned with the other Jews, and his writing freed him from self-captivity. The same SS officer Felix Landau liked his drawings and paintings and protected him for a season.

Ich persönlich werde Ihnen eine Genehmigung zum Verlassen des Gebiets, sagte Laundau.

I personally will give you a permit to leave your area, said Laundau. Ja, Bruno antwortete. Yes, Bruno answered.

And Landau gave the teacher a permit to leave the ghetto and come to his house and paint a grand mural for his children's room.

By now Bruno was fifty, one year older than my father in 1942, and there was terror in the air and Bruno had no tiny or behemoth horses to take the energy or jackboots away from the ordinary SS soldiers who were slaughtering Jews in the streets, any Jew face they could find. That strange appearance and disappearance of the horses was ominous and comic like the high octave of Bruno's tales, or when the planet was collapsing the octave dropped with tragic hilarity as when before a shower you kill a stray ant on the tub. As we walked I saw that Bruno was my father, but I grew up in other continents, yet he was my father, and I was lucky to have him as a father, unlike Bruno who had a faraway fiancée and no children. But why feel sorry for Bruno the mythic visionary, who was not alone since no one is alone, and the recluse Bruno read Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers*, and knew what it is to be a kidnapped brother. The Pole added many stories about quadrupeds, reptiles and birds to his collection and they crawled out of his collection into the meadows and bellowed a secret music that deafened ears of even the friends he created and the animals in the field fell asleep, yet in the end he weakened nobody who lived in his stories.

Bruno was writing a novel called *Messiah*, which was of a man who was always a child, a youth on the earth whom we should emulate by maturing into childhood, but the boy was himself, not the heavenly messiah and therefore he was the earthly messiah, and Bruno entrusted all his papers to a friend, including his novel, just in case something happened to him, and while my daughter and son and I kept walking, and we were glad that now we were a

comforting group of five and there were all these tiny and big horses near us, though I wondered if they could truly protect us, and after all we weren't Poles or Russians or from Ukraine and why would we need protection?

But suddenly the horses started to disappear, the elephantine ones and the delicate ones, and their color remained in my eyes, and I regained my physical strength again, but I realized that there was at last no hope for us, for any of us to tell this story, because all our rising meadow led into a street and the street into a town, Bruno's provincial town of Drohobych in southeast Poland, now Ukraine, and I remembered with fierce intensity that my grandfather Michal was born in 1860 in Drohobych, finished the yeshiva there before he floated over the Atlantic to Boston, and yes unlike sixteenth-century Bruno, who never was released from his dungeon, Bruno the art teacher had a protector and could leave the ghetto and paint and he wasn't burned alive. Nor was Bruno burned alive like all the Jews herded into huts and temples in the Ukraine, since my hero fell when he ventured outside his SS officer's house to buy a loaf of bread, when a rival SS Kommandant jealous of his protection felled the philosopher Bruno in the street with two bullets in the head, and on this "Black Thursday" there were another one hundred forty-nine Jews shot in the streets on the same 19th of November 1942, and when I saw the bodies I discovered with disbelief and displeasure that my son and my daughter and even our rich hosts, who were to buy us a fine meal for sharing our company since they were bored and we were talking art and poetry, were all lying on the street with me shot dead in my grandfather's town, but fortunately one of Bruno's good friends had seen the writer's body and at night when no one was there took the body and buried it in the Jewish cemetery, though the cemetery disappeared along with the *Messiah* and all the other writings given to a writer friend because she too disappeared like the rest, and the animals on the porch and the meadows and in the city streets began to howl night and day, and, behold, later a museum was built by the Poles to house Bruno's celebrated letters and whatever saved stories were found in magazines and his drawings and even remnants of the mural he painted for his protector the SS Einsatzkommando, and the Poles were good and honored the Polish violoncellist of the word Bruno as a visionary, their grand mythic fabulist in the decades between the wars, and hearing the animals still howling I was both

sad to be dead near him and sad that he could not have fulfilled his mythic labor of bringing out the novel, and infinitely more than sad it broke my heart, I was heartbroken that Bruno could not live a long life and waken us to the hermitage of a comic mind that was more cosmic than an orphanage on clouds, and had he lived he might have unraveled the knot of the soul and informed us of the image, but Bruno knew that art must never assume a knowledge of revelation, only an ignorance that keeps us moving, that makes us go farther inside and color the darkness, and isn't that salvation enough? And so I was not that terrified or sad because I hardly knew him when I started seeing the horses which my children thought were goats or deer and that led us to discovery, and we don't seem now to be truly dead because I am telling you of a new voice, which is always wondrous to discover, and I am thrilled and hopeful, but know I am dead because we were also shot and we are lying very still with our beautiful hermit Bruno, the secret and solitary Bruno, whom I envied for his purity.



SELF PORTRAIT (SUNNY-LAND) by Eduardo De Soignie, 2009,
acrylic on canvas, 24 in x 18 in



THE DEATH OF OGUN PANAMA II by Eduardo De Soignie, 2009,
synthetic polymer paint and charcoal on 3 wood panels, 54 in x 80 in

EDWARD MYCUE

A Fight for Air

I. A Fight for Air

Towels soak in the sink
Roots crack, splinter
Each sound's a stone screaming
successive millions
of mute islands
a secret care I keep folded
under my fingernail
dawn after dawn
The thrill is uneven The saliva curdles
Sunset climbs closely
to the fight for air.

II. Buried World

The Great River
plains desert
Red Rock Red River
Gulf of Mexico
deltas bayous hill country
conscribe an end and a beginning, leading
from these years this journey back
to nineteen sixty-one
Dallas: blotch concrete spread out on the plains.
We'd come to Texas thirteen years before
in a slope-back forties Ford.

I was eleven then.
We passed through Erie, Kentucky, Delta States
to arid, fissured land and bottomland and floods
to dying apple trees.
Then summertimes
and othertimes
Dad took us with him one by one
to get to know us
on his travels through his Southwest territory,
him talking brakelinings for a Firestone subsidiary
company that let him go not long before he died
in a chaos of fear
and pain he said was not like pain
but was pulling him apart.

III. Father

“We brought our children from New York
to take a better job.
My wife supported me.
Her hair turned white that first year.
She was thirty-three, had borne us seven kids
in our hometown, Niagara Falls.
We fought and stayed together
pounding with our love.
I was thirty-six that year
nineteen forty-eight.
Our oldest son was twelve.
The baby was a year.”

IV. Rain

Starting
Caution

Stop
Signal
Passing
Being passed
My father seems beautiful
his geographical eyes a cage
of ocean dreams
who'll never dream again
so stubborn, gentle, singing anytime
some snatch of song he'll never sing again.

Nostrils flaring, lungs honking, at the end
he couldn't hold his teeth
only wanted air Air
His food came back
I hear him say NO, No not pain I'm
falling
No steel,
green-painted, rented tank of oxygen could help
since death will come when cancer eats the brain.
It rained the day he died
and it rained again on burial day. Good Luck,
it's angels' tears, they say the Irish say.
The dog killed cat run off morphine soaking into sand.
Gigantic stones snakes apple trees his eyes.

V. Grave Song

End of night
melted
threw my heat in the fire
O my mama place in the white
it was too big for me

I wanted out out I got out
Go downstairs
say off wiz de light off wiz all de lights
up up up
up wiz de fire up wiz de fire
(say “UP” with the fire)
I am afraid
of the door rats on the stairs miles
miles miles to the light and I can’t
say it
there’s only me
and and everybody
and that is no body nobody
but some thing
behind
Lock it! Lock it!
Go go downstairs
Run Run Run Run out out out
They are moving
Dark
is light Things in the air
Tie Ta Tie Ta
Tie Ta Tie Ta
people gone
Cows moo in the fields and are gone
It does not hold
Hums Hums Hums
Hung birds in bottles, eggs writhing like worms
and the fire burns.

VI. Little Lifetimes

Children crush crackers between stones
celebrating luck and joy
seeing with ears, breathing music from trees, flowering in pure deliciousness
awakening graves, unarmed against the rain. In time – silence:

stoning sterile trees,
praying dead will sleep between the swollen roots.
The wind rushes in saying hold my ground, carve
your own road – the design that develops.
Now a face begins to emerge seeking air
examining death to discover patterns
in the movements of little lifetimes.

ANDREW JORON

The Person

But, I have only ever seen The Person—my counterpart—against the grammatical background of interstellar night.

He stands at my door, little realizing the *zero* of predicate is one, while the *prey* of predicate is two. He will say only the errata: *red*, at war with itself; *blue*, always the last instance of blue.

The Person wears a headdress, a dress of thought.

The Person is male with female characteristics, fallen into autumns of stain & substance. His sin is a cinema of seeming, a body-sign of both & neither meeting, teeming.

The Person wears what is: a “melancholy cloud.” My closed system.

His signs point backward. His eye wants what it cannot have.

Taste waste, the One without mouth, the Eye ever over I.

Icon of the blackness of Blankness, icon of the whiteness of Witness.

Cite I, seer: O deafened hour, defend ear.

My, my, cold, cold, pyre a poor evaluator, & “alive” a lottery of lit particulars.

Because the sun dies in eyes, day is all Idea: a phosphorescent nightscape of skin & bone.

The start of art is always too soon or too late. My statement corrected, as sonically connected, gives only what cannot *not* be given: the empty set, once pieced together; the ware of whereness once aware.

Depart, part: pay per sun; pay per perishing, shadow—

BRIAN STRANG

séance

crow calls the codeine dream
sun is coal all sounds drowned
light lifts a wing living things
crawl and walk caw and talk

pass with shame a sybil a cedar
who speaks of skin glossed of
sheets silken sunbaked glassed
wander a warehouse of wills

exile in oily black ocean night
exhale read entrails starry seer
onerous light: an oracle of errors
blue black footprints on the face

sun séance brings flowers dried
like a lineage unfurled speak of
thin hands clear mist in the air
a growth of the lungs inverted

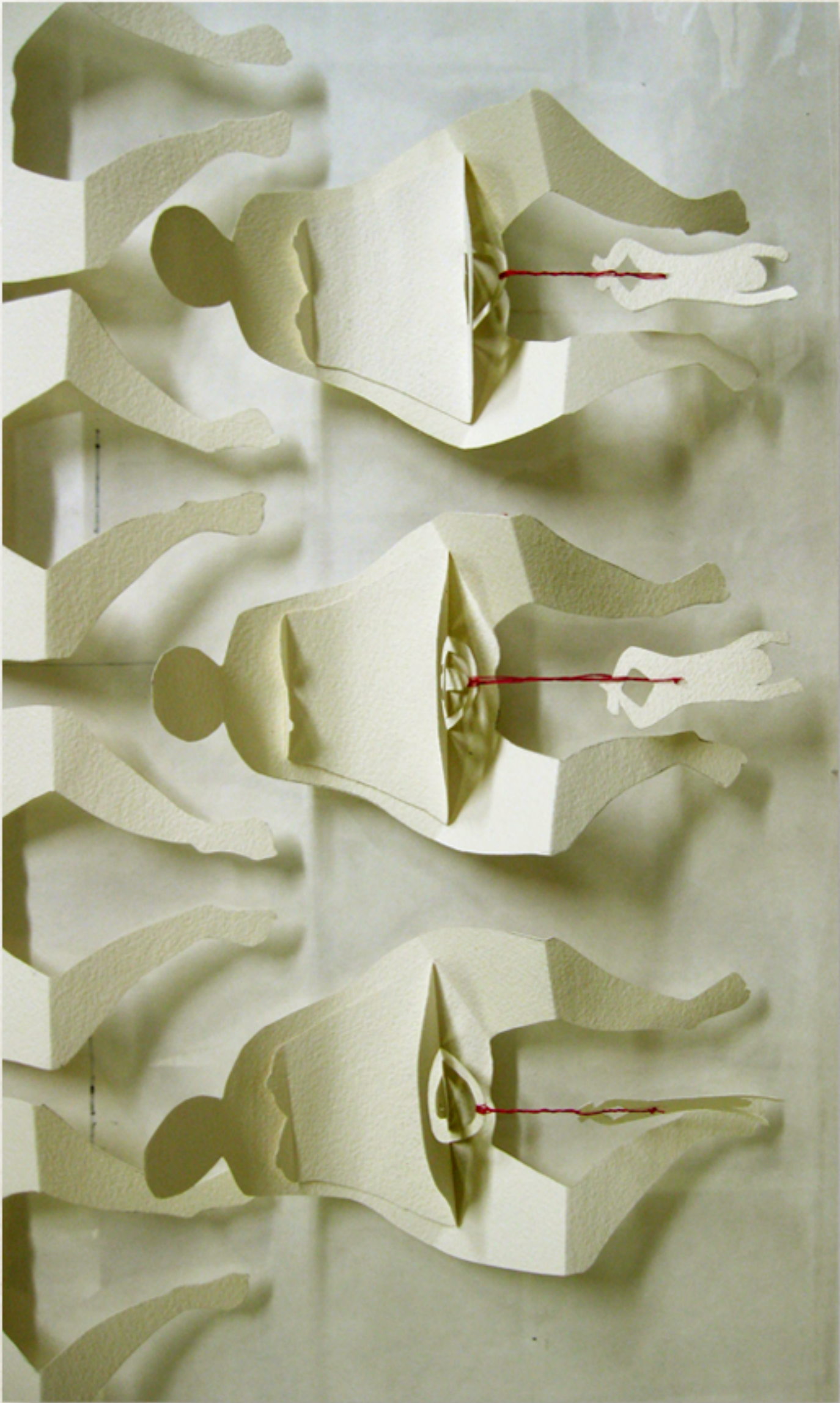
soft tissue

dogs run delirious drugged
over the charlatan armies
your pin and needle clothing
your Coney Island Coca Cola

clotted heart corpuscle inquisitor
widows over cinderblock graves
show me your manometer caked face and torrential eye
shadow me your mandrakes your exploding box

where does the earth get the nerve?
on all sides a compass rose a star of arms crowned
deer rise from the ocean oiled and skinless
your reflection in remnants

soft tissue and a corrugated spine
lanterned eyes are a sideways war
what becomes a perceptual lust
is what defines the years of dust



PATTERN FOR BIRTHING (detail) by Ellen Wilt, 2010,
Arches Paper (24 in x 30 in)

LINETTE LAO

Mother Tongue

What could cull rosemary twigs from tangled hair, pull splinters from soft fingertips, or push salt from along the edge of rough skin, but your tongue, brushing the slope of her face into your mouth?

Her head has been rubbed by warm baths. She is wet milk, warm tar, a briny baby with a full set of teeth dissolving into the taste of lye and chocolate, an undersea ape with no crown or flashlight.

Untitled

If I would dream up white moons on each of your fingers, I would forget underground horses with automatic eyes, x-ray boats with a door for the living and a door for the dead. I would erase the battleship cinema of girls, the best hotels, winter roots, architecture—and leave, behind each eye, an arrangement of loops on an ordinary frame.

RICARDO PAU-LLOSA

Luxuria

The flesh I avoid until the end
of my work within, along the paths
that stitch blood to organ to bone.
I am the ravisher, alright,
of bodies in the dark
of their vital shelters, and undo
what I can, inflict, sever,
though you could always argue,
as indeed I have on many occasions,
that I disentangle what life has knotted
into life. *Disease, germ, virus*—
all the epithets, for surely you can't imagine
I would take them as titles—but should.
Even *plague* and *scourge*,
were I not a touch of vanity
mixed with lust. I work hard,
although I do not venture
from my home to do my business.
No need to straighten a tie
or fill up a tank, or rail against
the cumbersome who toll the road.
I never sleep but always multiply
and fill the languishing cup
of my home with my kind.
At times a remedy does impair
the yearned-for ending of my plot,

when the hero falls in fits and fevers
and I have long ago journeyed
to another land. It is then
that the curtain falls
on his hapless face that it might know
the darkness in which I have toiled.
It cannot ever know how luxurious
the coursing of his armor was.
Still, a fine face. A shame, but for duty.

GEORGE KALAMARAS

Before I Could Speak

I had developed a way of exchanging commentary for a developed topic of conversation.

I'd place a word next to the surprised work of a labor union.

When I think about my own saliva, I do not mean to say I am a beautiful county.

I can't imagine correcting the narrative I wrote before I could speak.

Only the maze of a stopped clock could grandmother my necessary trees with snow.

Two large sorrowful liquids have worked themselves loose.

I am a little corner of a much gazed-upon Buddha.

I am mosque print, myrrh, temple stew.

I had never felt the occasion of bread alone.

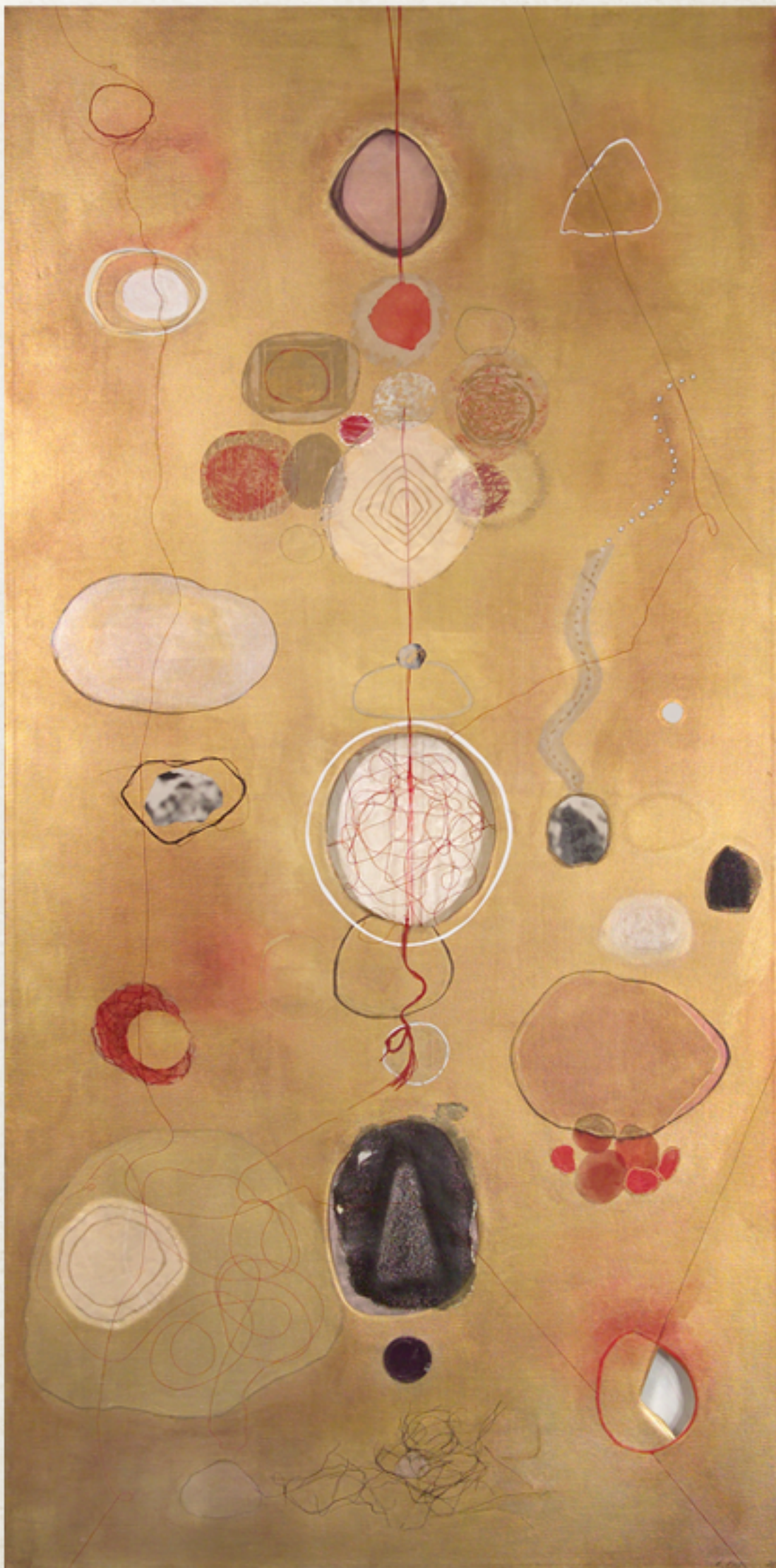
Until I was an unlit firefly, I could not recognize true desert moan.

As to the older daughter we never had, I leave her my sink.

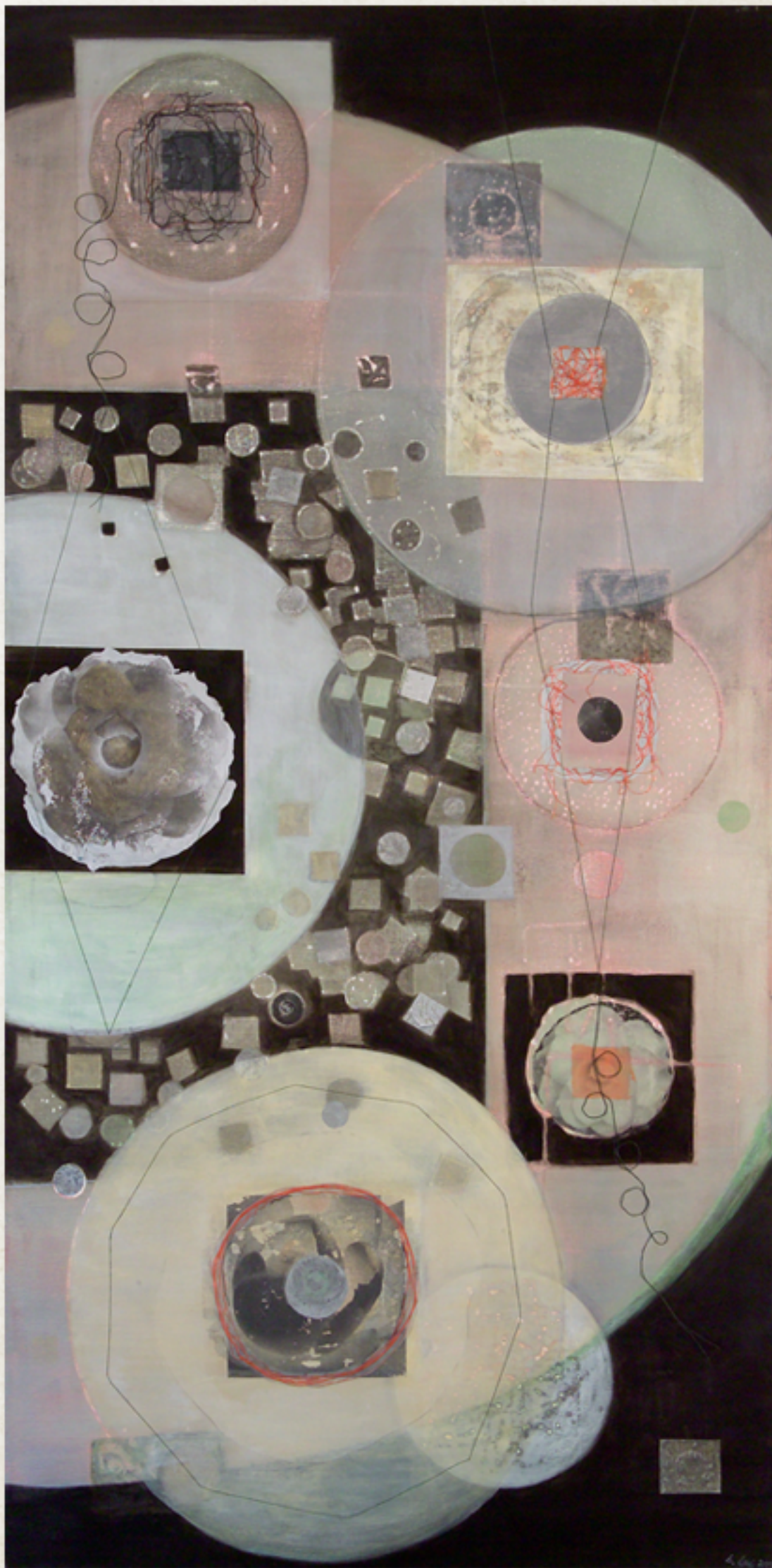
I have been responsible for English instruction far too long.



BEHIND THE LATTICE by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2008
mixed media, 48 in x 24 in



COMMON TREAD by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2008,
mixed media, 48 in x 24 in



JADE POWDER AND DEW by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2008,
mixed media, 48 in x 24 in



PRAYER CIRCLE FOR A RESCUE by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2008,
mixed media, 48 in x 24 in



SHE CARRIED GREEN PLUMS by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2008,
mixed media, 48 in x 24 in

D. E. STEWARD

Juliet

Earnest depiction of North American grandeur

Hudson River School immensity

George Caleb Bingham

Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran

View camera clarity, Eadweard Muybridge, Ansel Adams

Walt Whitman, John Muir, Faulkner

Thomas Wolfe's word rush imagining himself sitting on the Rockies with the Black Hills as his footstool

European movie visions like *Zabriskie Point* and *Paris, Texas*

Euro objectivity, Michel Butor's *Niagara*

Ole Edvart Rølvaag's *Giants in the Earth*

Paul Muldoon's *Madoc*

Twentieth century landscapes, Abbot Henderson Thayer's *Monadnock — Winter Sunrise*, 1919

Dramatic best-perspective vanishing point the top, Monadnock's snow-covered granite summit lifting, lighted, above the world like Aconcagua

Monadnock only 965 meters, barely a tenth as high as Aconcagua, the highest in the Americas, but Abbott Thayer's *Monadnock* evokes a like awe of the unobtainable

Costruzione legittima

Thayer painted it two years before his death, but for much of his career he did nubile angels and skin, heroic Gibson girl women with big white wings lifting from loose shifts

Diebenkorn's Ocean Park paintings, another American solution, a restrained one, not straight-out, not surreal

Flat and brilliant

Ocean Park #21, 1969, with its dramatic teal triangle and blocked segments surrounding

Vida: Lived up Appian Way a couple of blocks away at the time he was painting it

Mostly we came in off the Atlantic

Americans with any European ancestry have the specter of a slave ship abeam of the ship that brought them to their safe American lee shore

North American eighteenth-century slave harbors, Savannah, Charleston, Cambridge, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, New London, Newport, Bristol, Providence, Boston, Salem, Newburyport, Kittery

Ports then as evil as the Auschwitz gate

Africans slaving Africans for the Portuguese, British, Spanish, French, Danes, Dutch, Americans, into the Middle Passage hell into an America where in some respects manumission is yet to come

Blatantly sinister, shameless, stinking, black ships that lay in the roads of the Atlantic ports throughout most of our post-Columbian history

"The greater part of slaveholders are licentious men, and the most respected and kind masters keep some of these slaves as mistresses. It is for their pecuniary interest to do so, as their progeny..." – Henry Box Brown, escaped (1849) Virginia slave, b. Louisa County, 1815

Slave ships, black ships, death ships like Coleridge's

The fog, the albatross, finally after the rotting sea in the burning tropics come the sea snakes in the moonlight

"We admit that we are like apes, but we seldom realise that we *are* apes" – Richard Dawkins

Early in this century the old inconsistent Indian-killing, slave-driving, exploitive America, hip deep now in the big-muddy Tigris

With a regional client state that builds a wall redolent of the Warsaw
Ghetto's and of every sordid rabbit-proof fence in history

To the hollow drum roll of coalition

As Iraq worsened, Bush's flag pin seemed to be getting bigger and bigger
Pinocchio's nose

The rockets' red glare

Under which a black Ford Excursion, still the hoggiest of them all, rounds a
quiet corner

Dragging upgrade with its transmission revving

Imagining under the hood, the transmission fins spinning before catching
enough torque to move it up the street, the straining engine at that juncture
of burning at least a gallon a minute

A lone Kate Hudson type at the wheel talking on her phone

Cars with dark windows

Bone black

Furnace black

Cell-phone electronic dolls

"We don't get a labor or socialist party, but we don't get fascism either." —
David Brock

Only cowboy Christianity

Loyalists in the American Revolution included Anglo Tories of course, but
also Indians, escaped slaves, Dutch and German immigrants, Catholics, and
Huguenot refugees

All people without much to hope for in a new society

Maybe we're still fighting that one out, the skinny establishment, gray
trimmers that they are, the winners, the top dogs, descendants of the
founding fathers

While all over the country, up and down and all the way across, in their
burgundy, dusty rose and pea-soup green stretch jersey elastic-waist pants

Americans wallow toward the big box store in the sky from their huge hogwagon SUVs

“There is nothing, sad to say, surprising in Updike’s ignorance of history and politics and of people unlike himself; in this, he is a standard American and so a typical citizen of what Vice-President Agnew once called the greatest nation in the country” – Gore Vidal

Rwanda: A woman with a baby strapped to her back and a raised panga in one hand was chasing and attempting to cut down another woman with a baby on her back

“Someone who is perennially surprised that depravity exists, who continues to feel disillusioned (even incredulous) when confronted with evidence of what humans are capable of inflicting in the way of gruesome, hands-on cruelties upon other humans, has not reached moral or psychological adulthood...” – Susan Sontag

Ivory black

Raven black

Quaker blue

Black locust twigs at first coated in silvery woolly hairs that drop and leave the new growth pale green, in late summer leaves become reddish brown and flecked with small, scattered, pale lenticels

Corbeau

Shakira’s “Eyes Like Yours,” her Arabic nasal flare, Columbiana mother, father Lebanese, blonde belly-dancing rocker, bring Arabic and Spanish back together with, “There is nothing that I won’t do...”

Black plum

The best of Théodore Géricault’s 1820s series of ten portraits of inmates of the Paris asylum of the Salpêtrière is *The Madman*

It’s in Ghent

Lamp black

Sooty black

Carbon black

Nicolas de Staël's Sicilian landscapes, like *Agrigente*, 1954, stagger in the way their colors shine out of the central vanishing points

Again, *la costruzione legittima*

Staël, dead at 41 in 1955, considered Braque the painter of the half century

In the manner of Dürer's study of the hare, the parrot in his *Adam and Eve*, the hound in *Knight, Death, and the Devil*

Better to slip in closer to animals and the specifics in nature, to let the grandeur that so easily turns delusional, stay in the background

Concentrate on the children of Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan rather than the abstractions of Islam and free-market economy, "good and evil," Shiite and Sunni, and grand regional plans

Draw like Dürer, paint like Staël

Paint a bluegill's iridescent cream, honey and electric blue, black speckles, a navy gill spot on each side, spiny dorsal, heavily scaled

The red of a wild turkey gobbler's wattles, the yellow of a yellowthroat's or a Kentucky warbler's breast

Come in close, step back from strip-mall, carpet-bombing, arms-for-peace grandeur of America

Open to the Palouse grasslands in southeastern Washington and northwestern Idaho, to Seattle to Kaua'i to Maine to Miami and Biloxi and Gila Bend

Roll your hogwagon's dark windows down

JACK ANDERSON

Private Matters

I have no recollection of how the conversation ever came round to this, but here we are, two grown men, neither of us Jewish, sitting, chatting, having drinks, when the talk somehow turns to circumcision: one of us says he is, the other isn't, and we start discussing this, which way is better, and as we pour ourselves another drink, the talk grows hotter and more impassioned; we both have strong opinions. Is circumcision hygienic, or a form of mutilation? Does it or doesn't it promote health and cleanliness? And apart from scientific considerations, what about sensitivity, pleasure, aesthetics? Which way feels better? Looks better? But better to whom? To ourselves? To our partners?

We're shouting now, arguing, banging our glasses on the tabletop. Then the thought occurs: neither of us can really feel all that the other must feel. I being the way I am down there cannot sense what he senses there, he cannot sense what I sense – so how can we really know what's better, what's worse? How can we meaningfully compare our conditions? That makes us stop short. And we sit sipping silence until a new thought strikes us: circumcision could be compared with tattooing, even though one involves taking something off, while the other involves putting something on, and whereas most men can choose to be tattooed, most circumcised men probably had no choice in the matter, the procedure most likely having occurred during infancy.

Yet both operations involve ways of presenting one's self and are readily enough done, though hell to get undone. They're drastic matters. So we now find ourselves debating tattooing. Do tattoo needles pose health risks? Do they hurt? How much? How about the look of tattoos? And if we like that sort of look, what designs, and of what size and what colors, would we want to have – and placed where? – which, of course, calls for another drink.

Prodigious Lives

Consider these prodigious lives:

*

For 15 years, the Breton mystic Marie-Amice Picard (1599-1652) refused to partake of any nourishment other than the Eucharist, and each day during that time she experienced the sufferings of that day's saint. She felt a blade behead her on St. John the Baptist's day and a butcher knife flay her on the day of St. Bartholomew. She was roasted on a grill along with St. Lawrence. Lions pounced on her as they pounced on St. Ignatius. St. Sebastian's arrows pierced her, and she was boiled in oil with St. John the Evangelist. So it went throughout the year until in Holy Week she relived the Passion: the flagellation, the crowning with thorns, and at last the crucifixion. Her torments were extreme and unrelenting until Easter Sunday when her agonies ceased and she remained for hours in a state of exaltation. Then the cycle of saintly torments resumed.

*

To attract its food, the New Zealand Glowworm in its larval stage lets down a sticky threadlike substance from the roof of the cave in which it lives. A chemical reaction in the glowworm's body causes it to shine, drawing other insects near, whereupon they're snared in the threads and the glowworm devours them. After eight or more months of feeding this way, the larva becomes a pupa and finally an adult, an insect that flies on delicate wings, glowing once more, but now to lure and mate with another glowworm. And that is all that adult glowworms do. They meet, mate, breed, and die. They do not eat. They cannot eat, for they now have no mouths. Their days are numbered. Females live about 48 hours, males somewhat longer. But before they die they do reproduce. And so the glowworm cycle continues.

*

Think long on these prodigious lives.

DAN RAPHAEL

Opposite Rain

the opposite of rain
i stride up the hill
between the trees
thinking i might be wind
except how i smell
among the lens leafs, the transpirational chatter
pulling the sky closer with each breath

if i held still long enough id be washed and a couple inches shorter,
given new perspective by the soils constant appetite
unable to translate worm or the elemental phonemes:
to merge for one song or break out a new instrument
as everyones costume & body slightly morph

if the clouds were twice as high
what could protect us in a downpour:
the mountains inner engineers would re-orchestrate the wind
as a flagpole doesn't care which anthem is playing
as flakes of my skin evanesce
knowing they may never stop moving
but now have multiple voices

sometimes the second eye wraps around the head
seeing memory live and transposed
a suit that never fit me before
like ive been a doug fir all this time
waiting for the river to inundate me

GERALD VIZENOR

Derrida and the Irony Dogs

Dean Slash and Burn visited the department late that autumn concerned about reports that stray and unauthorized mongrels were attending lectures and barking at professors. The dean was in doubt that the determined barkers were the actual irony dogs in advanced training at the university.

The doggy disruption of lectures became the subject of serious ruminations at the deanery and over lunch at the faculty club. The regents had proclaimed that dogs were not permitted on campus, except, of course, for canine service companions, and the deserted mongrels directly involved in terminal scientific research.

Captain Shammer waited at the elevator and escorted the dean and two nervous subordinates to the communal faculty conference room for a formal discussion of animals on the campus. My cousin anticipated that the university would order the removal of mongrels, so he prepared a petition to secure the natural rights of animals, and to protect mongrels at the university. He informed the dean that native scientific studies of mongrel practices to uncover the absence of irony were critical to any sense of academic liberty.

The irony mongrels were ironic service dogs.

Shammer described the original native activities and practices in each of the seven offices that had been vacated by the faculty. Madeline Seams, two senior faculty, several graduate students, and irony dogs trailed the dean and his nervous party down that extraordinary hallway of uncertainty and adventure, unlike any academic enterprise in the history of the university.

Slash and Burn was intrigued by the trade names of the new enterprise disciplines in the department. He pointed at the unique signboards and read out loud the names with an incredulous tone of voice: Panic Hole Chancery, Irony Dogs, Skin Dunk, Last Lecture, Postindian Holograms, Denivance Press, Stray Visions, and the proposed center of original native arts, Cosmoprimitive

Cavalier Rouge. The dean was obsessed with the connotations, metaphors, and substance of the names. Eventually he worried more about the name of the Panic Hole Chancery, the nature of Skin Dunk, and Stray Visions, than he did about the Irony Dogs.

The deanery subordinates were distracted by native chants and shouts overheard near the Panic Hole Chancery. They hurried past the irony mongrels, the very cause of the negative reports on campus, and the principal reason for the departmental visit. Three mongrels posed, panted, and smiled on the threshold of the new center for the education of Irony Dogs.

Chance, a native nickname, lived with many, many mongrels on the reservation and later at the Gallery of Irony Dogs located in the First Church of Christ Scientists. Chance nurtured and coached the mongrels at the back of the gallery for irony duty. Every story, gesture, portrayal, name, appointment, and confession was an ironic signature in the creative worlds of Chance and Irony Dogs.

Captain Shammer had invited Chance to provide advanced training for the irony mongrels at the university, and so one of the faculty offices was reserved for the mongrels to practice the art of irony perception and the absence of academic irony. Chance would sooner share the favors of mongrels than the casual attention of most men.

Chance learned as a child that mongrels were healers and she was convinced that the originary bark of a mongrel heard around the world was a natural and astute response to the absence of humor and irony among insecure hunters, wasteland truth seekers, and terminal devotees. Naturally, the first mongrel barkers over irony were healers. Some of these early mongrels of irony migrated with the mercenaries of truth and the many crackpots of monotheism. The primeval mongrels of irony learned to bark with caution at savages, sovereigns, and heritage poachers. The mongrels always barked at holy guile and the absolute sincerity of Christianity.

The monotheists forever separated animals as lowly creatures, as an unconnected creation, absent a soul of salvation, and with no godly significance as healers. Even so the trusty mongrels persisted to bark and warn the world that the absence of irony is terminal and the treacherous end of civilization.

Chance trained the mongrels to attend lectures and to bark at the absence of irony. Naturally, the students who were bored by forthright narratives and absolute sincerity appreciated the diversion of a hearty bark. The bark was a serious point, and the irony dogs barked at almost every lecture, an obvious declaration of the absence of academic irony.

Captain Shammer told Slash and Burn that the irony dogs were shaman healers, and warned the dean that the absence of irony can only bring about the “sooty remains” of governance. So, my cousin declared that the faculty should imitate the barks of the mongrels to save the university from the absence of irony.

Shammer was a tricky storier, and he easily out shamed the abusers of natural reason in a shame game culture. He told the dean that mongrels were misused, abused, and exterminated in research programs at the university. Not even a pretentious shame culture would protect the mongrel healers, and yet the mongrels prevailed and continued to bark around the world at the absence of irony in science and cultural studies at the university.

Slash and Burn was an accountant not a scientist, and he was not an animal enthusiast either, but he endured with a sense of humor the lectures on animal protection and ethics. Shammer told stories about the sacrifice of mongrels at the university dental school in a study to determine the best surgical procedures to connect and heal a broken jawbone. My cousin learned about the mongrel miseries from a native who once worked as a research assistant, and who never fully recovered from the traumatic memories of hoarse, croaky mongrels in the laboratory. The native assistant nicknamed every trusty mongrel in the jawbone experiment. General Brown, Hunky, Nail Biter, Lucky Jane, Droopy, Big Foot, and Top Tail were honored in name and song at the final moment of extermination by lethal injections of sodium pentothal.

The dental surgeon retrieved mongrels that were detained for more than two weeks and sentenced to death in animal shelters. The surgeon severed the vocal folds to silence the mongrels. Daily these brave mongrels of liberty continued to warn the world about the absence of irony, but only with a raspy trace of a bark. My cousin wondered if the barks around the world were a tribute in memory of those loyal raspy barkers.

The surgeon anesthetized the mongrels, broke their jawbones with his hands, and then secured the bones by various methods, wires, screws, and by other means to determine the most effective surgical procedures on humans with broken jawbones. Top Tail was the last of the research mongrels to be exterminated with a broken jawbone at the university.

Top Tail was a mongrel warrior.

Derrida, the senior ironist, arrived at the conference room with two other irony dogs. He leaped onto a faculty desk and gently barked at the two nervous subordinates of the dean. Turnip and Nixon leaped onto nearby faculty desks and sneezed several times, the manner of restrained barks over the absence of irony. Slash and Burn was amused by the scene, and grateful that the mongrels had not found him lacking in ordinary academic irony.

Derrida was invited to hear the dean and his subordinates explain the tedious and bigoted reports on mongrel barks. The mongrel philosopher was considered a member of the native faculty, and he was there in the conference room to represent native reason and mongrel liberty, the rights of animals to bark at professors who lecture with deadly sincerity, and to honor the memory of the many research mongrels that were exterminated at the university.

Derrida, Turnip, and Nixon bounced on the faculty desks and barked at every use of the word "bark" in the reports, barked at every verb, and barked louder at the institutional adjectives that denied mongrel liberty, the native mongrel rights to bark at deadly sincerity and the terminal faculty lectures that would weaken stories of survivance and civilization. The three advanced mongrels barked without restraint at the absence of irony.

Slash and Burn folded his arms and turned away.

Derrida bayed at the liberal academic slight, stay of apologies, trace of absence, anonymity of reality, and the deferred sense and meaning of autocracy. Then he bounced on his four black paws, the pied noir of irony dogs, and barked in slow muffled bursts at the silence of the dean, the shy, twitchy subordinates, and the agents of arbitrary despotism over native mongrel liberty.

Slash and Burn capitulated the very next day when Captain Shammer declared that if the prohibition of mongrels on the campus and at lectures were not removed he would summon the shamans of six reservations and with thousands of irony mongrels converge at the university faculty club.

My cousin emphasized that the barks of the mighty mongrel would be truly memorable and heard around the world in the absence of irony and liberty.

Slash and Burn was worried mostly that the native casino on campus and other academic entrepreneurial ventures would be moved to another university, so he immediately absolved the critical nature of the reports and abolished forever the denial of mongrel rights to bark at deans, faculty, students, and the absence of irony, or to bark at the moon and winter *wiindigoo* at the university.

“Derrida and the Irony Dogs” is a revised and modified chapter from *The Chair of Tears*, a novel by Gerald Vizenor. *The Chair of Tears* is scheduled for publication in 2011. The revised story, “Derrida and the Irony Dogs” is published here with the permission of the author.

MUSIC IN THE AIR

Two Pieces by Greg Sipes

JUMP OFF THE PAGE

I made a recording of a very large printing press a few years back. I used a stereo mic and followed the path of the paper through this monstrous thing. (It was so large it had a “catwalk.”) It started with little air suckers that pulled the paper up and in, through all sorts of rotating metal cages, and out the other end with words and images on the page. I started by reversing the press sound, so it started at the end (printed word), and ended with the air suckers in reverse.... Like pulling words back off the paper. Then I layered eight other sounds with it from a bin I keep of little snippets of things that just sort of present themselves by accident or serendipity. I did all this with only visual cues—I only listened after everything was effected, manipulated, mixed, mastered, and complete. Basically, a completely “deaf” construction.

to listen go to: <http://www.calibanonline.com/musicintheair/>

MIDNIGHT IN LEMON CITY

This is from May 6, 2006. Every Sunday, for a few weeks around that time, I recorded whatever came to mind on the keyboard and added parts on the fly, with the idea being that by the end of that evening, wherever the piece was in its construction, that’s where it would stay. Of course, I’ve tainted that concept here by tweaking some things, but the basic structure is as it was that day.

to listen go to: <http://www.calibanonline.com/musicintheair/>



AUTUMN, LINCOLN PARK by Paul Sierra, 2008,
oil on canvas, 32 in x 60 in



INTO THE NIGHT by Paul Sierra, 2009,
oil on canvas, 40 in x 60 in

CATHERINE SASANOV

Eliza on Ice

(*Mighty Mouse*, 1944)

Long past *book*, look how the story's drifted off the page: *Little Cabin of Uncle Thomas. Uncle Tom's Uncle. Gone Little Rascal*, Eliza runs across the cardboard ice floes cradling a baby doll. It's barn show then a cartoon mouse, that mighty rodent, sketched-in more human than the human being he's saving. Eliza, stringbean: You flee across the small screen at my feet. No one's come to see *quadroon*. They gather here for *pitch, coal, jet, night*. Olive Oyl's darker sister. Not a girl three-quarters white. *Escape's* an ice tray passing for a river, you running down its middle like you can't make up your mind: *slavery, freedom, slavery, freedom...* But who inks in bloodhounds at your heels neglects to draw Ohio's shore. So farewell, Canada! Goodbye, George! Your author draws his own conclusions. Your author draws conclusions and your husband's not among them. So *rescue* is a flying mouse. *North* is the plantation you just tried to flee. Your story, taken from its book, broken down beneath a pen, makes you just a white man's flicker: so many frames-per-second he's contorted into joy. And what should have been a bridge? It almost passed for luck: Your last nickel in a slot machine paying off in ice.

Consumption, 1901

Needle to needle,
they breathe in, they breathe out
each other's death

by the light of kerosene lamps. Their quilt
pieced together from a dead family's clothes.

The quilters don't know it yet –

Girls kept awake by the crackle of their lungs,
bloody coughs spattering the walls.

Even from the grave, their mother
instructs them:

See how I did it?

*How you can finally lie down
without a man or an infant
planted inside you?*

Mother of twelve,
already chasing nine dead.

This is consumption: Nourishment's reverse. The body
wasting

away in a family where nothing
can afford to be wasted.

It will take twenty years,

but the rattle of butcher paper
wrapped around meat

reminds a brother of his sisters' lungs —

How Death played
the infant, made a toy
of their breath (Death cradled

in his palm: a nestled
cough, flecked) Their ribs strangled

shaking, the sound
seeping

red.

WILL ALEXANDER

From ***The Ganges***

The fifth-century Indian philosopher . . . considers the faculty of speech to be an instinct or intuition. He compares it to animal instinct and does not believe language is learned.

Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 4

Lamas . . . are not so much monks as priests and ghostly warriors who understand the art of fighting with demons.

Sir Charles Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism, Vol. 3

. . . a race of gnostic spiritual beings.

—Sri Aurobindo

The Rig Veda was composed by the Brahmans . . . and represents the sum total of the early Aryan experience. . . .it is absolutely rampant with violence and racial overtones. It is also in the Rig Veda that we find the first documentation of the racially oriented caste system.

—Runoko Rashidi

“I’ve come to these waters
as Shudra *
as hallucinated lama
as spellbinding dictator *

in this regard
I am not a mahatma
nor a spurious intrusion
singing in mystical parlando

me
I’m an old Dravidian from Goa *
spectral
velvet
discussing motions concussive with sand
discussing the body as a vernix riddle
or a poem ensourced by cholera
or formations tense with blue rotational acids

perhaps
I am no more than a ghost
or a villainous discovery
or a gainless instigation
based on a set of rivalries with absence

perhaps I’ve come to these waters
to craft my own tremendums
to walk outside my nomen
to blur my trans-identity through culture

perhaps
this is how blood works
how audition reacts
& stages itself
through reactive physical conflagrations

have I come to view to simply foil myself?
or to ignite my force by regressive combining?

as I react & speak as I react
I've come to hover at the ghats
the colour of a psychic Kashi *
sometimes sable & liquid
at others
solferino & volcanic

as I respond through parallel as persona
there is Benares *
& Varanasi *
& Kashi once again
as if synergies overactive with agua

as Buddhist
as Dravidian sprung from Goa
there is English voice mixed in Kanada Hindu agua *
plunged in the depths
then exploding
as unquelled power as in the purity of ravens

& I see boats burn beneath an unstable Sun
ghats waver as strange proportional Richters
as ciphered monsoon epics
as blank emission misfocused
& so the maharajah's walls
take on a cunning electrical rate
as collapsing body self-moored to an unsteady balance

I am different
I make no offering of "jai flowers" *
or make as my form philosophical unraveling
to evince a kind of portion
forced from the gullet as mountainous prayer

perhaps firewood on the ghats *
perhaps corpses piled as conflagrant in-audia
& perhaps my heresy of claim
is more than entranced moaning
more than something beyond intransigent chakras *

for instance
my psyche swims through neglected alter currents
as if I'd stumbled on a feast of vermin
on infested sugar hamlets

& for those who declare themselves through samsara *
I've risen to no more than the status of a ghoral *
or a pangar *
or that at best I'll live a million times
& never subsist as a purposeful vahana *
I've never sat in posture
chewing on Channa *
or invaded a dharamshala *
speaking quietly to myself through immolated frenzy

when letters burn
when rocks fly in from the heavens
they are signs of bats & thistles
their kinetics internally stung by solar incandescence

these being kinetics
between the "Varuna" & the "Asi" *
as if I were speaking of a liminal Varanasi
felled
& brought to life again
by rays from the great Surya *
from solar form as shard
as cosmic spiral
as situational treatise

as looking glass spawned from complexification
& sulphur
thereby listening to suns as scorching indigo & silver

what I am able to do
is to translate
is to merge samsara with ghat after ghat
yet all the while barred from the crypto-Brahmanic

ah
but I know the very summoning of phenomena
& the Ganges reacts as luminescence through
nothingness
through a spell of transverse murmurs
calling
& taking away
the purest patterns of breathing
being colourless amethystine which emboldens
itself through rotational blinding

errors are seemingly embodied & drained
yet what has always concurred
is the body as wooden abandonment
as exhausted coronation
as sensate stained through providential inversion

so if I pick out points in time
it creates no ultimate significance

& if on such inscrutable date
a certain sari was stolen
if peculiar Yaks were transmogrified
life could build as no other outcome
being nothing in itself
being energy randomly exchanged

as say
tsunamis in Lisbon
so nothing would burn at that hour
therefore
the listless feuds
the pointless tiger cats prowling
alit
by a carved & tattooed lightning

these are fires which create of themselves riddles
imposed
& superimposed
so that
in the shape of the being no structure exists
no animal can live or be brought back from thinking

if vultures crawl & exhibit no response
I call them
naked
fraught with competitive cremations

& there must exist from this
a flicker of understanding
within the fuels which are considered transgression

much in the manner of the torment of owls
or hornets which gather affliction
& then revert in themselves
to a scorched or empty preludial

this is how hawks grow empty of their optimums
of their twists
of the writhing nature in their bones

at times
I make sport
by rivaling certain bodies
immobilized
on a curiously saddled sheep
or taking codes from Mongolian ponies
transposing in my sleep sudden eras of waking

not that I contest my own substance as law
or that I've reached an unefforted fissure
that thoughts from certain Gods can't bury
because I've lost my thirst for the heralded soma
or for the image of myself
that nothingness can inspire

perhaps
the rats condone me as vapour
or as a scent which kindles venoms
or encircles itself with envy

as if I'd tangled myself with sounds
with unsuspected clauses
with rifts in the motes of cyclonics

as if I captured dust from fractured 'tidal heating'
as if my strange basaltic wastes hollowed their
way through captured foundations
as lighted prows
as blazeless forts
as monomial stealths & tensions

not that these wastes are cold tellurian rapids
or that they exist as forms peculiar & mixed
with carnelian
as heightened waves delimited & sterile with
fraction

beings exist
they descend from the ghat
they descend as moral plesiosaurs in crises
as those who emote by proportional stain

I cannot say
that the Ganges contains no suffusion
or that it has no effect on birth
or that it doesn't provoke human insular navigation

I am not saying
that this water is not of summoning
or has never existed
that its monaural worth has not blossomed beyond
the music of the Vedas
beyond its stones of sacred writing

this water
perhaps fumes from a stored up sun
or from a moon
which has fallen from itself
as response to halos seized at ironical limit

as lama
do I seek to extract from these waters the
flow of Tibetan sound?
or to give them the means to work through
proportional tenet?

because I remain anonymous on the ghat
I am never seen as alien
splashing its pureous waters *
nor am I seen as witness
according to astrologies
poised as they are against dominance & forgetting

if I call the Ganges
a lake of therapeutics
or an unraveled hollow
or a tool entangled with stricture
let me say
I do not spite its rivers
or seek to denigrate its form
or its birth in regions
which erupt from the sources of mountainous
parturition

for me
the Himalayas whirl
& carry no structured pitch
or static interference
because
I've flown inside their climates
& known their assignments
their riddles
their conditions
which substantiate a fulminate or sacred subspecies

saying this
I wear no rivalrous wool
I station none of my lore within the source of
Tibetan conflict

as ghost
as Shudra
as Nilotic & Sino-Tibetan
I know bold & progressive detail
I know the pernicious extent which shifts continent
to continent
through quarrelsome states
through perilous in-dynamics

Alexander/80

the waters blaze
as parallel insignificance
as wandering on a stretch of land gone bad

which means
the divinations tangle
the rainbows merge & travel through peripheries

boats are dazed
hawks de-occur
dis-established monsters through bleak or
aggressive grammars

this I may say is the Ganges
as if
there existed no proof
no simple formula or reign
for various background calculations

for pilgrims
perhaps verbs burn
perhaps a circuitous séance instructs
perhaps chakras subsist by bold & carnivorous
exam

yet I
as one tested by remoteness
by slurred tendencies through speaking
know the crows which remain in Goa
who signal to themselves
as if appearing as forms on Sirius
as in-derived from manna
as in-volitional ink
as transmogrified embodiment
haunted by shifts
which seep from transgressive kingdoms

by shifted states in the Pleiades
on various afternoons

I attempt
to pose certain signals as if to interrupt
spectrums
as if to correct myself
as if to fuse all circular forms of deliverance

my training has been through the art of dissonance
through hypnotic purges
through thought which has languished in combative
meridians

so I ask
is that & that crow exclusive to Lhasa?
to something blank & generally Tibetan & un-beastly?

or is this lot by right possession?
or increased philosophical incensement?

is this exercise?
is this trebling the effects of the Sun by
divination?

or is this absented flaw?
or disappearance by various thought adjustment?

say
if the Sun erupts from old thought emergence
& doubles itself by means of the thorax
the Ganges will teach us
that its never existed
that its luminous in-exposure
that its tremulous cusp

could never concur as luminous conflagration
being sudden escape through moral in-specifics . . .”

Glossary for *The Ganges*

Shudra—Lowest of the four castes. The Brahmins being the priests, the Kshatriyas being the warriors, the Vaishayas being the trading classes, and the Shudras being the servile class. The four classes “were the offspring of Manu wife of Kashyapa. Brahmins were born from her mouth, Kshatriyas from her breasts, Vaishyas from her thighs, and Shudras from her feet.”

dictor—Coined term. Variation on the word dictation.

Dravidian from Goa—Southern Indian “descendants of the Nile Valley.” Their central energy was located in the Indus Valley civilization. The language spoken was Brahui, and is part of the Dravidian language grouping, which includes Tamil, Malto, Andhra, Malayalam, and Gondi.

Kashi/Benares/Varanasi—Kashi and Benares, synonymous names for Varanasi, regarded as holy. It is the oldest city in India, and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on Earth. Located along the Ganges.

Kanada—Another Dravidian language.

jai flowers—Cast by Hindus into the river Ganges as symbols of their troubles floating away.

ghats—Refers in this instance to the burning-ghats. It is a level spot at the top of a river ghat where the Hindus burn their dead.

chakras—Seven major centres of psychic energy located along the spinal column.

samsara—The Buddhist cycle of “birth and death.”

ghoral—Barking deer, sometimes seen on steep rocky faces of the Himalayas.

pangar—Light coloured onager in Malaysia.

vahana—Animal that accompanies or conveys a God.

Channa—Asian snakehead fish.

dharamshala—In Buddhism “a building devoted to a religious or charitable purpose; a shelter for travelers.”

Varuna & Asi—Tributaries of the Ganges.

Surya—The visible Sun. Yet during the Aryan period the Sun was never considered the most important deva during the Vedic rise.

Pureous—Coined term. Slightly tainted or polluted.

DAVID JAMES

Something Cryptic

He feels his bones breaking apart inside his skin.
When he considers what the day will bring,
 he sees nothing but black mud, manure, torn limbs
 and guts, a June bug pinned
to white cardboard, a hole in the damp earth.

So on this sky blue day, the seventeenth day of spring,
he decides to end it once and for all—
the screams in his ears, the glass in his throat, the slice
carved down the middle of his limp heart. He imagines wings
as an angel, sailing among the clouds,

diving in and out of God's golden waterfall.
He finds paper and writes a note, something cryptic
like "The end comes in the sun's face."
As he takes out a razor blade, he hears a cardinal's call.
He looks down: tattooed in blue on both wrists, the word DON'T.

IVAN ARGÜELLES

“the distance”

reaching
across, the buddha on the lawn

fragrances not
arriving a lost

combustible highway , summer

the archaic
feel grass on the nape

of the neck, a
spear in the mouth

crashed into
dust , achilles

whose white then silver, memory

a goddess
thinly disguised as

held by the heel and

dipped into one
of several

leading into Hades,

dreams only
slightly disfigured,

whose dog is at the door

is a
ghost, dead 15 years now

[if you cannot
call

don't bother, the radio]

actually a song
of darkness

, of man

and the salt
sea brine like clouds I

sing
, and to the far left

what a cipher
that is a face as if

detached at a
distance , thoughts

that on the other side of the

universe travel
on horses of light

scientifically “inaccurate”,

speech acts
that defy longing and

nostalgia, a billowing out

to the beyond
where I cannot make out

the distinct
features of

like waters
beneath the floor boards

asleep, at last when the glass

appears in her sylph-like

red hair
haunted, when approached

“face to
face” lack of recognition,

what is defined
but not expressed,

at a distance

Argüelles/88

you will not be
able to,

nor will I
buried in turf an inch deep,

solemnities

the pride of
the northern sky flashing,

ignited by
desire

if you but give
me a signal,

mirrors

irreversible a hand

smoking, and in
the middle

a chasm through which

fall

don't look
back, Eurydice

in her columns
of fire

you pretended,

as such to be
One with

[bracketed

grass fills

the appropriate
syllables

a mouth has of
forming

Love

as an attribute
of proximity

yet doth in Thy
hair shine

the sunne's
full face]

which they name
distance

the gods in a
raiment of pure

“light” and
have no address

Argüelles/90

there, on the
summit where Sleep

in the course
of time,

I am feeling
heavy

have no hands

to hold

this imminent
Shadow

ELAINE EQUI

The Lost Object of the Suburbs

I want to take a train.

I want that train feeling to come over me.

I want the train song in my head –
the black and white movie of it.

Somewhere beneath the stars you see outside the city,
a salad bar is waiting

with bowls of mushrooms, cherry tomatoes,
corn relish without a spoon.

I want to get there.

I need to go back again.

I want to take a train.

O Carol

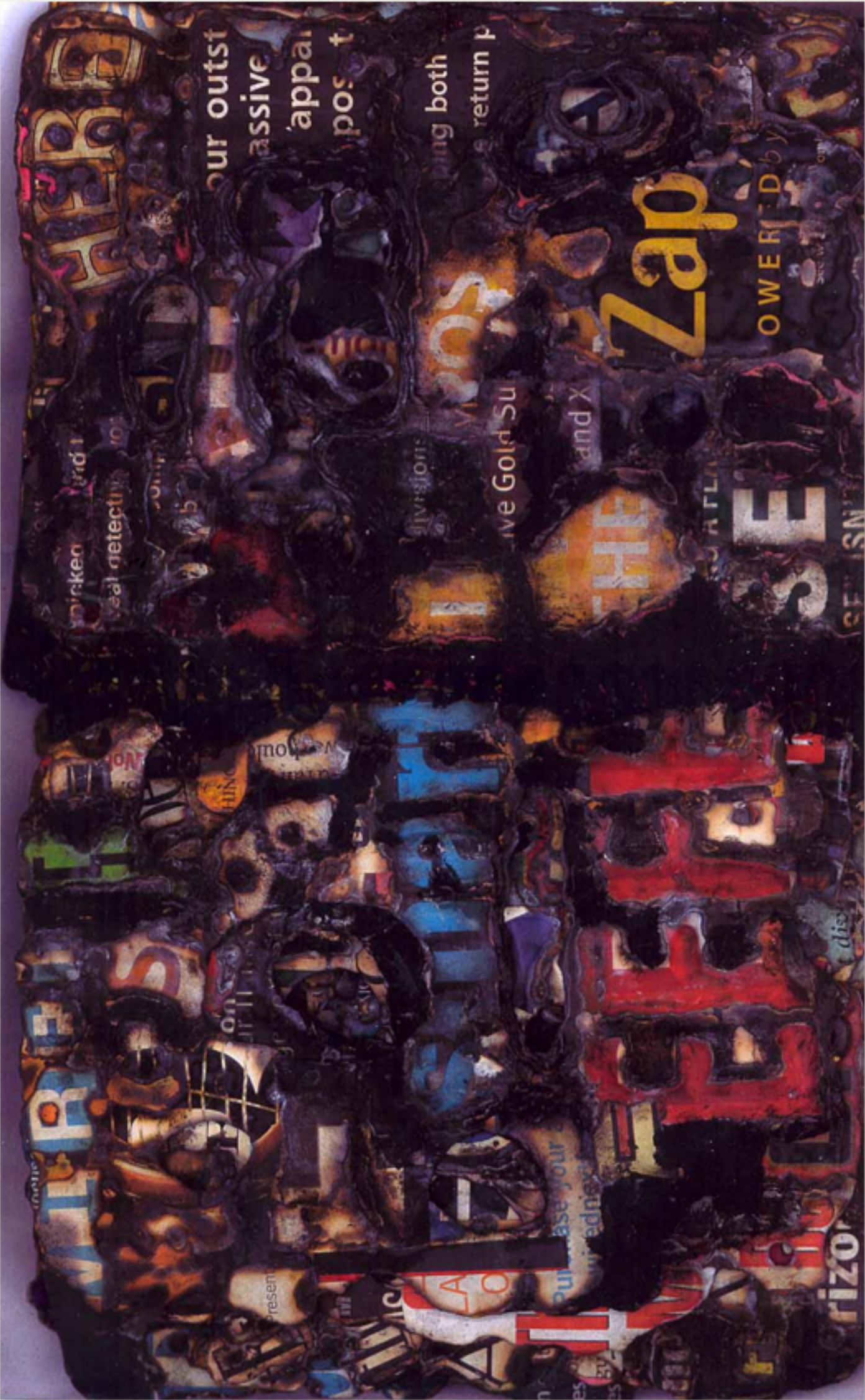
Because I could do pretty much as I pleased,
when young, I invented a cruel dominatrix named Carol.

Ours was an autumn kind of love where we whipped up
delectable dishes of torture. Candy-colored leaves, insects,

acorns, rain – anything viewed with the right amount of longing
could become a source of pain. The bright Catholic suffering

that burns like a flame beneath the cool exterior of rules.
There goes Mother Superior's beaded footsteps clicking

down hushed halls. It wasn't supposed to be fun, but it was.
Holding our breath. Waiting for the statues to talk.



BURN BOOK 5 by Austin Straus, 2008,
mixed media, 4 in x 5 1/2 in



ROBIN MAGOWAN

In a Doorway

How far a page stretches in autumn—
Treetops, hills, sky.

I hold what unfolds: leaves'
Cascading violins, some implications

Of arrival that contaminate the day.
Wind proposes another dance:

Siestas, melancholic afternoons,
Patterns contained within the steps

My feet make pausing as the evening
Star bares her breast and sky diminishes.

Zero

I wake from a chill and it's settled,
A million fists have spoken.

Darkness thrives as rain.
An articulate drizzle occupies the lawn.

We take the ground for granted.
We embrace each other's debris.

I pluck each last leaf
As if it were sky I'm wheeling away

Rather than the real adversary, zero,
Who needs no wind to issue blunt remarks.

What small district of the universe
Incarcerates the sun?

Bittersweet

Why do I hear waves of blue
Multiplying dark's divisions?

Things that make no sense
Are dripping all around me.

The music of appearance waits
In the snow's considered elegance.

Think fluffed feathers,
The rustle of vines.

Their lost fragrance
Leaves trees unusually bare.

DOUGLAS BLAZEK

The Domestic Frontier

The hero today makes his own war. Stuffing data banks with petroglyphs. Sharpening spit to scratch the eyes of presidents. But crackpot molecules keep fleurs du mal blackmailing the soil. No rose grows with enough blood to sign a petition. We are dewombed, not born. Schooled to pallbear unbearable questions. We sit on upholstered mares clucking the hotdog in our holster. Television is our inner hit man. Our act a bit-player's break in a plaster cast. The slaves of our teeth rip at the meat of freedom's rest-in-peace. But look! A vomiting dawn is gathering in the east. Can this force be repressed? Can a pugilistic dialectic deny it? What happens when kliegs penetrate what reeks in a fist? What will not tilt on a stage perpendicular to a slant abyss? The frontier, as always, is where hours construct the hourless clock. Nobody likes it. Nobody trusts. Insurrection's beacon is a beak to the brain, not a wing's congregational rise.

BRIAN SCHORN

Recklessness Turning Rainbow

Her vision is the way a corner sees, slightly. She sees
an angel present in a twisted
block of her own hair,
unending. In other words, a bouquet of white feathers shall be
wrapped up in her last breath.
“O, the ocean like lollipops!” she sways.

Seagulls crying at 60 bpm and a rubber raincoat extending over
the horizon, custom-fit for those who are willing to be polished
into sails of mirrors, of course. Wooden planks
mixed with whale poop. Some driftwood left for whom
they wish to be.

“Listen, I am speaking to the tongues of storm clouds
and they are telling me our day is over,” he tugs. He steers into
a language overturned by the anger of scissors and plankton,
of smoke blown backwards, drilled sweetly into a
white-cap of gravity’s noises.

Magnification and Transportation

Two bicycle wheels running in reverse evoke a measured response. The same as...

The immensity of her toes touching precisely at a point of curious nomenclature. For example, how might a slug be confused with a bug? Or, for that matter, is a corset a carriage to crumble your thumb in?

Book lungs, back doors, windshield wipers, and geometry slapped around to show her where to go.

“I follow only maps woven from wooden yard sticks and I wear only dresses sewn together from glass shards,” she wanders. Despite a clean, gentle breeze, she remains
a whip on the edge of tomorrow.

Manual for Mouse Houses

These imaginary bone piles are clues leading to the savory collapse between thumb and forefinger, leading to the welcome mat of your front door.

Escape routes looking like full circles
having tainted hinge maps. Slaps
and the tail is too long, meaning a clumsy vacancy.

Fold “whisker” A over “whisker” B and insert a tuft of human hair into “peep hole” C. Brick slayer and a mountaintop to tingle. All growth cranked from the death chest or “cavity” D. Inserted so lovely, a furry top hat interior. Call this “window treatment” E for everything, call it completely night-made.

Bandages on a dove in a flap flip.

“Let all pleasure come from the hourly microscope of sour eyes,” he humans. “Keep the house in a tailspin to slot.”

The roof all spattered in acne.

A Portrait Including Hum

for Heinrich Rudolf Hertz

Invisible ink undeniably a scientific aspect of your
right arm. No shirt sleeve
to sing the sine waves through. No dimensions of MIDI,
but Barbie in your beard length hanging on for
mere life.

Alternating current from the nostrils of Hamburg, presently
friends of audio cables either armpits.
A above middle C in a little landscape of photo-electric effects.
From where you hum, "I am the frequency of disappearance, yet 50
or 60 Sundays will always be headphones
broken off at elbows."

Bloody poison on the radio dial means—
don't touch me. Quietly, in winter, in ultra-violet illumination
at an absolute minimum,
you are gone.

CALIBAN

Once Again, Caliban Refuses to Collect His Thoughts

Let beasts be invented which are worthy of the footprints in the mud.

* * *

People keep talking about poetry that is well-crafted. BMWs are well-crafted too, but they make me feel like throwing up. What does all this talk of craft have to do with anything? I'm sick of yuppie poetry.

* * *

Breton saw that revolution—political, cultural, sexual, or whatever—is permanent and ad hoc. As soon as people try to organize it or institutionalize it, it becomes the enemy in disguise.

* * *

Maybe a lot of the new and largely boring poetry reflects the right sort of sentiments about saving the earth and so on, but it still doesn't do much for me. I recall the same feeling in the thirties and forties when the *Partisan Review* attempted to represent what it thought of as the most radical ideology, but the poetry it published was aesthetically reactionary. I'm not interested in anything that doesn't liberate the flesh, the spirit, and desire of every kind.

* * *

Anyone who was even marginally connected with the rumbling of the sixties counterculture knows that what was happening then was infinitely more exciting than anything that has happened since. I'm not talking about the failure or success of the revolution. That's another story. I'm just talking about the excitement. Now I'm reading a lot of poetry that tells me how heroic accommodation can be, a kind of poignant and ironic resignation to live in the suburbs. Accommodation used to be called "selling out." But now I look around and wonder if those people who sold out did themselves much of a favor. They sure sold out cheap. But then spies and traitors always do. When you hear that a guy is going to serve fifty consecutive life sentences and he

only got \$35,000 over five years, you suspect that integrity and keeping the faith make better business sense.

* * *

Then there's the "death of the avant-garde" noise which has always been around. Even in Egyptian hieroglyphics. But the avant-garde lives in spite of the theoretical impossibility of that being so. It reminds me of reading, as a kid, a treatise in *The Treasury of Science* which conclusively proved that it was impossible for airplanes to break the sound barrier.

* * *

Edward Said says that the impotent irony of some modernists, their suggestion of the futility of struggle, is simply an extension of the 18th and 19th century imperialist tradition. We all know that in recent history "invulnerable" dictators have fallen with amazing ease when a large number of people have recognized each other's presence and have begun to move in the same direction. Who says nothing can be done? The world disproves that every day. Of course, the folks who replace the Fascists are not always much of an improvement, but that's another story.

* * *

Just when people started cutting their hair, throwing away their old undyed cottons and black light posters, poets started getting nervous about the word "surrealism." And the recantations and denials began. It's an amazing coincidence. I guess they thought the term was old and worn-out. The truth is that surrealism, or whatever other thing you want to call that magnificent obsessive journey the people who are really alive in this century have been taking, has barely started.

* * *

Do you trust history books? Then why do you trust anthologies? (Even though you say you don't, you still read them and use them.) Helen Vendler has just proved that you can produce a big, impressive anthology which has virtually nothing to do with the vital tradition of American poetry.

* * *

Don Byrd, in *Sulfur 16*, says there is "a peculiar invention of the Reagan era, which might be called the tyranny of manners." There is an enormous amount of writing going on that needs to be attacked and rejected, if only to

keep our minds from going to mush. Time for less kissing and more biting. Or maybe the two together, which would make it all a lot more interesting.

* * *

Maybe Caliban can't give power to the voiceless, but it can give a voice to the powerless. Let's see where that takes us.

* * *

Caliban is not eclectic, but he feels that it is his obligation to try to make poets and writers who are in serious pursuit of something worthwhile aware of each other. So they can unite with one another or attack one another, as may seem appropriate at the time. But we must deny ourselves the comfort of ignorance, reinventing the wheel.

* * *

Caliban is calling the tribes together. Those who consider themselves avant-garde or progressive (and even those who don't, but who are serious) need to come together to help pull the culture out of the sink it's slipped into. That doesn't mean a club or a coalition, but they have to collaborate or fight with each other on a common ground. They need to struggle to move toward an authentic position and at the same time to attack and reject the fraudulent. Caliban does not suggest eclecticism; on the contrary, he suggests an attack on it. Eclecticism in its most pernicious form continues to flourish in the current polite literary political situation. If confrontational politics turn out to be the uniting factor we need, as it was in the Vietnam era, so be it.

* * *

Important poetry (as opposed to trivial) is at worst a liberating construction and at best prophecy or revelation.

* * *

This is a haunted country. We should not feel at all good about ourselves. The poets least of all. Blood is on our hands and ghosts crowd our streets, but the voices of cultural anger over this continuing betrayal of who we are and who we might become have turned into the purr of acquiescence.

* * *

The open road is still open, but only if we insist on it.

* * *

Liberation cannot be partial or incremental; it must be total, whether political, economic, social, cultural, or sexual. It is not earned; it is a right we are born with, but that we have to fight for continually. There are always realtors and used car salesmen who claim to own our birthrights, and they can draw up a million phony deeds to prove it if we let them.

* * *

These endless ironies about the loss of paradise, and the necessity of accommodation, are pure and simple collaborations with the forces of oppression. They are even worse than surrender. And they must never be confused with “black humor,” or “objective humor” in the Bretonian definition, which has been characterized as a kamikaze attack on the universe.

* * *

There have been surges in avant-garde activity and exploration in the U.S. from the teens to the present day. Maybe the surge in the late fifties up through the early seventies was the biggest, but it wasn't unique. In spite of the fact that this impulse has been around for such a long time, it is not worn out. In fact, this line of pursuit has barely begun to be explored seriously.

* * *

Caliban wants to liberate all islands everywhere from the rational Prosperos, those fraudulent magicians, who think they own and understand art, but who only suffocate it.

* * *

The avant-garde is not the exclusive domain of white, middle class males, bohemian or otherwise.

* * *

Give me brilliant obsessive writers, who are not to be confused with witty, manipulative trivialists, the writers of occasional poetry.

* * *

Gertrude Stein is as much a founder of the American avant-garde as Pound and Williams.

* * *

“There is nothing sacred about literature, it is damned from one end to the other. There is nothing in literature but change and change is a mockery. I'll write whatever I please, whenever I damn please and as I damn please and

it'll be good if the authentic spirit of change is on it." Prologue, *Kora in Hell*.

* * *

All of them contributed equally, and deserved equal thanks. All, that is, except the evangelical who endured the heat because he had to and because he was about to die.

* * *

A human being is at his or her highest point of existence in a just act of resistance. That is the closest we will ever come to utopia, not some imagined aftermath. The balance between injustice and justice varies with different cultures, different ratios in one and another, but there is no absolute. There is no millennium, not in this world.

* * *

Most of us would agree that the media in the U.S. constitute a network of evasions, distortions, and downright lies. That's why the underground press of the sixties flourished; it served as a truth network. It certainly isn't that anymore, that is, if it even still exists. In the eighties the media are even worse than they were twenty years ago. Where is the "alternative press?" Writers had better figure out a way to communicate the truth, and to re-establish the network. It is not now a capital offense to do so, but who knows about the future? And writers need to do more than simply criticize a system whose leaders are in love with death. There needs to be a counter-assertion of who we are, the kind of assertion William Carlos Williams makes in *In the American Grain*: not propaganda, just setting the record straight.

* * *

If you get tired of resisting easily, and you just can't sustain the struggle, start a "buddy system." When you get tired, let the buddy resist. When he or she gets tired again, you can take over. If you and your buddy get tired too easily, then form a network of buddies. There are no excuses for anyone. No one on earth has paid all of his or her dues. And the more a person claims that he or she has paid all the dues, the less this is true.

* * *

Let beasts be invented which are worthy of the footprints in the mud.

Caliban # 1, 1986

* * *

A few of the improvements post-1986: Barnes & Noble and Borders systematically destroyed independent bookstores. Now the two behemoths are on the verge of extinction, as is the printed book they can't get anybody to buy. We have an ultra-right propaganda machine proclaiming the apocalypse on cable news day and night. In Texas they have protected the Constitution by banning Thomas Jefferson from school texts. He was too subversive.

* * *

Obama convinced a lot of people that—in spite of the corporate ownership of almost every institution in the United States, including the Congress—if they worked together, things could be done. Of course, legions of pundits—right, left, and middle—have declared everything he has undertaken or accomplished a disaster, and have worn away the optimism that existed in 2008. Why are news “narratives” of failure so seductive? Did we really expect Obama to usher in a utopian millennium after a year and a half in office?

* * *

The fact that the Harry Potter series dominated the publishing industry for over a decade has absolutely no consequence for the truly imaginative writing of the avant-garde. No more than Jacqueline Susann's novels put a damper on the neo-surrealism of the sixties. Commercial work, whether paper or digital, operates in a completely different sphere. From the late nineteenth century up to the present, there has been no money to be made in innovative, imaginative, visionary writing. That's what saves it from turning into *caca*.

* * *

If the collapse of the publishing industry brings on a new Dark Ages, the avant-garde can imitate the early medieval Irish monks, who saved literary language (Latin) and ancient classics. When conditions improved, writing and the arts took fire again. We can be both writers in and preservers of the great American tradition: the Open Road, the liberating vision. It doesn't take many committed people to change the course of human history.

* * *

After all, it has always been about the pursuit of the Marvelous. Here we are at Robert Johnson's crossroads, where a table has been set up and people are playing cards. Rimbaud throws down his “*alchimie du verbe*,” a theoretical physicist throws down String Theory, but there are two figures with veiled faces that have yet to show their hands. What are they holding? Are the cards

that burn their fingers from the spirit world or the psychic labyrinth? When those cards come down, how will they change the way we experience this world?

* * *

Let more beasts be invented! Let them frolic or let them rage, but let them carry us to places we never thought possible. That is the ambition of great writing.

Contributors' Advice, or Free Speech Corner, or the Blind Assemblage (being the unedited comments of contributors on almost anything).

WILL ALEXANDER:

Having moved about the ice ranges, I've come to understand the vacuums of the Sun, with its shuttered earth warrens, with its disadvantaged stupors of a porously kindled logic. And because of these stupors I've returned to abide in the energies of the jungles, teeming with their unsettled voltage. So by having ingested this voltage I've come to behold the hives and surnames of stars. And by coming to know the hives and surnames of stars I've come to the originatory Nubia of Granada. One then understands the envisioning of Alfonso the Wise and his reception of Ibn Yunus, and the Caliphs of Granada, such as al-Hakim who presided over learning circa 940. This latter was the time when disciplines merged, when the Moors rekindled the Greeks, and brought their principal learnings back from the grave.

CATHERINE SASANOV:

In C.D. Wright's "69 Hidebound Opinions, Propositions, and Several Asides from a Manila Folder Concerning the Stuff of Poetry" (which can be found in its entirety online at www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s_z/cdwright/opinions.htm), number 67 reads, in part:

"Poetry avails itself of the listener, the watcher... The possibility that the poem you were born to write will not join you on the porch this summer or next, looms taller than the sunflowers and the hollyhocks. It could have taken the fork to the river or ended up in the slaughterhouse. It could have died as quietly as the moth on the screen. Or just borne itself up on the breeze. Who can say. This is the poet's choice: to attend a presence no one else was aware

of, to spend the better part of a lifetime preparing for an arrival, that could not occur but for her attention, that would not in fact otherwise make its blaze on this world.”

It's hard to express just how deeply I believe these words. I fight daily against the squatters who'd love to shove in and occupy the acres of psychic space I cultivate for thought, focus, and writing (and by *squatters*, I'm not talking about the poor and dispossessed, but advertisers, politicians, dispensers of red tape, free marketers run amok, etc.) For them, an open field in the mind is just another piece of valuable real estate to throw a strip mall or some billboards on. Nothing new in this. What is new is how many more ways there are for the invaders to tunnel into our heads. We can be *called*, *emailed*, *IM'd*, *tweeted*, *paged*, *poked*, *Skyped*, and *friended*, 24/7, to the farthest corners of the realm.

If “poetry avails itself of the listener, the watcher,” what happens if everyone's eyes are glued to tiny screens in the palms of their hands, or if the earbuds blossoming in their heads drown out what's going on around them? And how do we heal the fractured thoughts brought on by the information overload we're all learning to negotiate?

I'm saved from some of this since I'd rather have *time* than most shiny wired and wireless objects. And all I really want is a clear view to the river *and* the slaughterhouse. The hope that I'll be attentive enough to catch the poem I was born to write, should it make its way toward me, and not let it pass me by.

ANDREW JORON

Try to draw a perfect circle. Of course, it can't be done: in any given medium, whether it's pencil on paper or laser light on air, tiny irregularities will assert themselves and the circle, past a certain level of magnification, will become a shapeless signature of a world that is not equal to itself. The well-known Platonic inference, that this imperfect world is a distorted reflection of a more perfect one, no longer carries much conviction: not even the Platonic circle is the same

as itself, as the Renaissance philosopher Nicholas of Cusa demonstrated. Cusa came up with the idea of a circle whose arc would be composed of infinitely many right angles (really the first conception of a fractal object). In both the material and ideal worlds, the deviousness of the Real can be observed in the way things deviate from themselves. These deviances are divining signs. Not even the void (neither material nor ideal) is exempt: absolute nothing, the negation of everything, finally negates itself and so becomes something. Poets, look here for Lucifer's match.

BRIAN STRANG

Many of the world's most pressing concerns—climate change, population growth, shrinking biodiversity, famine, etc.—are influenced by human interaction with the environment. “Nature” is the name we give to the largest context, the system of interrelated forces so complex, so enormous and so minute, so internal and external, that it extends far beyond the limitations of imagination and is, therefore, marvelous. And with ecosystems poised at the brink of collapse, our understanding of this system of systems is tinged with peril and fragility. As Robert Duncan says,

So does she arouse in us apocalypse
and in Nature the Furies stir.

But while each of us leaves footprints on the ecosystem, we always exist **WITHIN** it. After all, who is not a part of nature? We are all part of what Gary Snyder has called “one vast breathing body.” I think poets should focus more on the natural world, on a world where humans are a part of natural systems but not necessarily central (rather than the exclusively urban or social world, which occupies so much of poets' discussions and work). And I think poets should be more interested in the rhythms of nature, day and night, seasons and tides, systole and diastole—the very cycles that determine so much of our existence. After all, rhythm is a fundamental element of poetry.

Lately, I've been especially interested in darkness, or the lack of it, in cities here in the first world. I wonder about the many ways that so much electric light changes us and I wonder about what is lost. For all of its glory, I wonder about the many ways electric light distorts our perception of the world and blinds us to its possibilities. Leave the flashlight at home, get out of the city and go for a walk in the woods!

RICARDO PAU-LLOSA

The eco-system the poem lives in is the imagination. In this system, the poem hunts. It only brings back food to feed nameless hungers. It can argue causes while it hunts, but risks distraction. It may pretend to reveal this or that about its time or putative author, but only to distract the prey. The poem seeks sustenance outside the parasitic self, as far from it as it can manage. It is hunted and eaten as often as it kills, but if it comes to know this, it will lose the will to hunt. Hence, a portable darkness keeps the hunter happy and focused.

MICHAEL S. HARPER

An Integer Is A Whole Number

DAVID JAMES

This year, I married off my son and then my daughter three weeks apart. I have one grandson and another due around Thanksgiving. As the years add up, as the world implodes and explodes, as each new day brings a new catastrophe, I can't stop thinking of Robert Frost, who got it right when he said, "I can sum up everything I've learned about life in three words: it goes on." Dammit.

EDWARD MYCUE

Ad-vice or advert-vice remembering norman mailer's book "advertisement for myself" of maybe five decades past, a surprising and strange title to me. I wanted to read what he had written to fill-out that bold, as the title to me seemed then, beginning. It was interesting but really didn't stay bold. It wasn't news that refreshed itself nor even truly lived up to the title promising something wonderfully confessional—not for this reader, or certainly not for long. But it made me recall how not everything is interesting to everyone at all times—nor even interesting to everyone ever—but for some there will come a time when that which had seemed bland or just something that could not then attract your attention BLOSSOMS.

Poetry has been that way for me. Took years to the revelation of the luminosity of many of W.H. Auden's poems. May have something to do with the drifting orbits idea of Lawrence Fixel? How you come across persons you haven't thought of in years and immediately you are back at the same place and pace with your compadres. And you scratch at your wonder noggin as to why, WHAT made the ending of what again is such easy intimacy. Try as you might you can't think of a reason: no "break" or anger. What happened was the drifting of our different orbits. Our lives moved in different directions, focuses changed; we'd moved on. And no blame. And all of a sudden it seems you're BACK AGAIN. (Look here you're back again we're back again. Look again at Tennyson's 84-line poem ULYSSES; and maybe sing along with Gene Autry BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN/ BACK WHERE A FRIEND IS A FRIEND....) (Seem familiar?)

DRIFTING ORBITS: In our town heartbreaks are drifting. We are each in our own little orbits. Ordeals pass us drifting through. "Hello" we say again. "Hello sudden oak death. Hello elm disease. Hello" passing. Muddle's middle. Birth's starting out our book in the middle. We go back while passing forward aging learning how we frame an exit window future passing and behind them Londonderry airs that go way back then forward as Dad sings "Danny Boy."

JACK ANDERSON

I'm scared, very scared. America is becoming a terrible place. Nothing seems to work here anymore. Left or Right, all positions are tainted, all actions suspect. Discourse is shrill. Religion is debased; the concept of values has shriveled into grim fanaticism. Ideas that once could be dismissed as maunderings of the lunatic fringe now receive serious attention. The Tea Party Express rolls on like the juggernaut. What can be trusted? What can be summarily dismissed? There is always the possibility that in these uncertain times some seemingly oddball conspiracy theory may actually be the awful truth. When I told a friend I was writing for a magazine called *Caliban*, she said that was a horrible name because people might confuse *Caliban* with *Taliban*.

So here we are. Need we be? I hope not. But there may be no quick fix to repair our perilous situation. Indeed, one of the things that may have brought us to this state is the assumption that quick fixes are possible. Think of the ideologists who throughout the 20th century have promised instant utopias; think, too, of the nightmarish realities arising from some of those utopian dreams. Consider, as well, our own impatience, our own desire for instant results. So many people expected Obama to wave a magic wand after he was elected and set all things right. When he didn't, hands went up in dismay. Of course, some people fervently hoped he would fail at the outset and are doing their damndest now to push him under. Scapegoats abound: the usual suspects (blacks, Jews, immigrants, Commies), plus a few newer ones (gays, Muslims)—well, you know the list. We are trampling on the very concept of civilized humanity, and in so doing we are trampling on ourselves.

Let us remember that human beings are by their very nature imperfect. Imperfection is our permanent condition. Nevertheless, through aspiration, improvement may be possible. So, humbly acknowledging our limitations, let us do what we can to better ourselves and our world. One solution may not fit every problem. Let us take firm steps, without goose-stepping; let us speak clearly, without shrieking. Perhaps some new fascism may beat us down. Perhaps ignorance and incompetence may cause society to disintegrate. Perhaps big

business and corporate greed will turn us into peons. Perhaps militarism will blow us to smithereens.

Yet let us never stop taking steps, acting in the spirit of faith, hope, and charity and striving for the good, the true, and the beautiful. Familiar, even corny, words? Sure, but words still worth taking seriously.

WILLIS BARNSTONE

The best advice I know, at least for the gang of us, is contained in a parabola (parable) by the Spanish poet Antonio Machado (1875-1939): **ADVICE:** Learn to wait. Wait for the time to flow, as a boat on the coast. And don't worry when it buoys you out. If you wait, you will know victory, for life is long and art is a toy. And if life is short and the sea doesn't reach your galleon, stay forever waiting in the port, for art is long, and never matters anyway.

DAN RAPHAEL

With so much darkness bordering on despair in the world, particularly regarding the global ecology and economy, it's often hard to not crumble or tunnel, especially when one has a tendency to be depressed even in the better times. Earlier this year I spent a couple months immersing in my past work, putting together *Impulse and Warp: The Selected 20th Century Poems*, which covers my first 13 books. What grabbed me and excited me was and is the creativity of it—inventions, surprises and heart-wows. I relish creativity wherever I find it, which isn't that often. This goes back to an old saying of mine that you can't beat science with science, you need magic. To save the world people will need to get beyond our commercial interests and beyond the survival of genetic egos. Know the news, as this is the world our bodies are in, but invoke the other energies—creativity, compassion, irrationality, etc.—as often as possible.

GEORGE KALAMARAS

Early in the first *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924) Andre Breton proclaims, "Let us not mince words: the marvelous is always beautiful, anything marvelous is beautiful, in fact only the marvelous is beautiful." It is with this fervor that I welcome the reemergence of *Caliban*.

*

She was the offspring of a willow tree and a river. And moved like it.

*

Words chomped in the mouth as a horse in a field is the sunlight in its bones.

*

For years, a broadside framed on my wall, with a drawing of a Native American playing a drum, marking a journal-opening at Shaman Drum Bookstore, an *opening* into the fire ants of Namibia.

*

"Caliban is calling the tribes together"—is, has been, *will continue*.

*

There is an owl on fire in the chest of Nikos Engonopoulos. How many Greek Surrealists survived the Junta? How many have we lost to the redundancy of earwax?

*

Bombings/ bailouts/ boisterous air.

*

Still, "For several days I have felt an exuberant political need / to love"
(Cesar Vallejo).

*

Let us not mince words; we are at a crucial juncture in our lives and in the life of this planet. Timeline of crucial events:

BCE:

7125 (first chronicle of unanticipated meteor shower)

2735 (propitiation of the owls)

& CE:

191 (reader: insert dream)

333 (ask Aunt Ona)

432

539

599 (discovery of [unreadable] in the caves of [unbearable])

621 (first resurrection of the dead birds)

701

832 (toenail clippings first become totemic)

888 (dream: insert reader here)

921 (exchange left hand for right)

1022 (a yogi emerging from the body of William the Conqueror)

1491

1914

1920 (appearance of *The Magnetic Fields*)

1922 (publication of *Trilce*)

1923 (display of *anticipated* meteor shower)

1928 (stockbrokers dreaming of bed lamps crashing to the floor, saying upon waking, "the world will soon break into bed lamps")

1930-1990—something (reader: insert birth-year here)

1995

1996 (conclusive evidence of the rare mating habits of willows with rivers, and their ability to occasionally bear human children)

2000-2001 (publication of *I'm Your Presidential Woodcutter and Other Poems*)

2009-2001 (how time can't sit still)

2010—the slow slow crawl of the lambs

*

"Surrealism freed me from many things" (Miltos Sachtouris)

*

Dear Césaire, dear Desnos, my dear beloved Cesar,

How are you? I am fine. I miss you very much. Oh, before I go, please save us from poems about nothing / poems that fear the vast unknown, that say, instead, "Please like me. I'm such a sensitive person. I am not an owl, you are not an owl, the owl is not an owl."

love,

*

Freighting wool on the Denver & Rio Grande from Durango to Colorado Springs. The way time elongates during the intricacies of the Navajo sheep-clip.

*

I saw a film last evening that I hadn't seen since 1966. It reminded me of the death of all things dead.

*

"I who Krakatoa / I who everything better than a monsoon"
(Aime Cesaire).

*

I who find my verbs in the smoldering-over, who lose them in the midst of. Unlock our tongue. Beat together two unsuspecting words, otherwise thumbcuffed by a poem.

*

"Caliban is hospitable to any writing which, when chewed, makes him hear music in the air."

*

Music in the air. "As a beginning, Breton proposes that, instead of accepting the idea of the necessary separation of man's [sic] inner and external reality, desires and the world, or dreams and hard facts, we consider the possibility of effecting a unity. One of the key definitions of Surrealism in the Manifesto revolves around this: "I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, into a kind of absolute reality, a Surreality, if one may so speak . . . It is the aim of the Surrealist esthetic to cultivate a technique for locating and situating this 'point of mind,' and to place it in an active relationship with an otherwise psychically destructive reality." (Michael Benedikt, *The Poetry of Surrealism*).

*

Music in the air: Desnos:

I'm calling loves and lovers

I'm calling the living and the dead

I'm calling the gravediggers I'm calling the murderers

I'm calling the executioners I'm calling the pilots the masons
the architects the murderers
I'm calling the flesh
I'm calling the one I love
I'm calling the one I love
I'm calling the one I love

*

Let us not mince words. Masticate each word. Love it, hard in the mouth.

BRIAN SCHORN

The Poet's Heart of Perfect Wisdom

No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem,
No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem, No poem, No non-poem.

D.E. STEWARD

The issue is people. The taboo is mentioning it.

When Caliban launched in 1986, there were 4,941,825,082 people, and 240,132,887 of them lived in this country, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Today, September 21, 2010, there are 6,870,187,836, with 310,300,474 of them right here.

The imperative to have kids, synonymous with the destiny of self, the individual urge to leave offspring on the planet, is our curse. Why-else-are-we-here doesn't fly any more with the human family having been responsible

for its own evolution for quite a while now. A neighbor with a ten-year-old daughter was bloviating recently about the future's various scenarios and let on that he teaches her to shoot, "not a pistol yet, but she can handle a .22 already."

Sure, technology obviated Malthus's predictions in his time and into ours, and, sure, who is anyone from the perspective of a lifetime of a few decades to question the stately procession of generations. But we are reasonable, logical and most of us are humanists. No inventory of resources, projection of shortages, summaries of threats and probabilities is needed. Big things are coming at us.

The tuna fleets out there to feed our cats, the feedlots for dog food, the supermarket dumpsters there for nearly half of what comes to the loading docks, the roads clogged with low-mileage cars, trucks, hogwagons and RVs carrying mostly only their driver, this flood-lighted landscape of our lives, presents us with an unredeemable future and cannot go on a lot longer no matter how ingenious our technological shifts and solutions. So this is what we leave to our kids, making sure to teach them how to shoot so they may get by down the line.

Recycling plastic bags, composting organics, turning out the lights, saving water, using public transportation, hanging laundry, bicycling, walking, are all good for individual body and soul but mean little to the future. Every person, California to Chad, consumes, emits, demands, cradle to grave.

Measure the Southern California or East Coast Megalopolis against Montana, South Island New Zealand to understand both the answer and the implications of the trap of people, us, being the child-bearing agents of our own doubtful future.

AUSTIN STRAUS

I'm a poet and painter who makes unique artistic books. Some are complex artworks that take months or years to create. Unfortunately, there are few private collections for such books, while institutions that collect artists' books seek bargains, buy little, or are broke.

The general art-buying, auction-going public has yet to accept “artworks in book form” as important art, with the rare exception of a famous artist who makes an occasional book-like work (e.g., Kiefer). I am a passionate advocate of the unique artist’s book as a work of art as valid as a painting, sculpture or any other art form, including videos, installations, earthworks, et al.

The serious consideration (and thus the value) of artists’ books has suffered in a manner similar to photographs and prints because of the existence of multiples. The concept of “book” automatically conjures an edition, i.e. multiples. But the unique artist’s book is in the same category as a painting or unique sculpture. It is not merely another book, but a beautiful, meaningful, powerful artwork in the form of a book, with all the special qualities of the book form: “pages” that relate to each other, may be turned or folded out, have some visual, thematic and/or sequential connection, etc.

A unique artist’s book is not necessarily something to read for information or an album of pictures but an object to be interacted with and experienced on many levels. Perhaps one day soon this amazing art form will become appreciated and understood by the art-loving, art-buying/collecting public.

BOB HEMAN

[This is not a title.]

Sometimes titles are necessary and sometimes they are not. Sometimes they are little more than a distraction. Titles can open a door into a poem, or box it in, or give information that the poem does not contain. They can place the poem in time or space, or allude to its inspiration. Some titles are pretentious and promise more than what is given. Others provide only generic information such as a cataloger might supply for a work that has no title of its own. Numbers can be used in place of titles to indicate the order of composition or the

space a poem occupies in a sequence, but these are not titles in the ordinary sense. If there is no title the first few words can be capitalized, or quoted at the beginning of the piece, to give the piece a means of being identified. When consecutive poems are given the same title the titles will become almost invisible, supplying only minimal information even as they create a kind of rhythm or structure that the separately-titled pieces did not have. Sometimes a title has nothing at all to do with the poem.

LINETTE LAO

Reading blooms. There's no forcing its slow unfurl. I know this as I watch my young daughter learn. She owns the pleasure of books, knows hundreds of stories and the beginnings of three languages besides her own. She thinks she knows a lot, and she does. But there's more. To read is to claim boundaries, to stake out solitary space and time. It's the first taste of real freedom—to ditch the parents, roam unattended, forging worlds of one's own.

Soon her head will be burrowed deeply into books, but now she is here, in the moment, with us. There are other advantages too. She doesn't read the marquee of the strip bar down the street calling out, Girls! Girls! Amateur Night Prizes! And so I don't have to explain it just yet, along with so much else I might like to avoid. I'll admit to a deep longing, a seed of impatience. I'm cheering her on. I'm watching it happen. Read, read. Dream, escape, grow. Discover the joy of going simultaneously inward, outward, up and up.

IN CELEBRATION AND REMEMBRANCE OF
THE GREATEST KAYAKER OF THEM ALL

GEORGE HITCHCOCK
1914-2010

The first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one. It is a complex system, and as such, it is not possible to understand it by looking at its parts in isolation. The system is a whole, and its behavior is determined by the interactions between its parts. This is a fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The second of these is the fact that the system is dynamic. It is not a static system, and its behavior changes over time. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The third of these is the fact that the system is open. It is not a closed system, and it interacts with its environment. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The fourth of these is the fact that the system is self-organizing. It is not a system that is controlled from the outside, and it is not a system that is designed from the top down. It is a system that organizes itself, and its behavior emerges from the interactions between its parts. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The fifth of these is the fact that the system is resilient. It is not a system that is fragile, and it is not a system that is easily disrupted. It is a system that is able to withstand change, and it is able to adapt to new circumstances. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The sixth of these is the fact that the system is sustainable. It is not a system that is unsustainable, and it is not a system that is doomed to failure. It is a system that is able to continue to exist, and it is able to thrive in the face of adversity. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The seventh of these is the fact that the system is equitable. It is not a system that is unfair, and it is not a system that is biased. It is a system that is able to provide for the needs of all its members, and it is able to ensure that everyone has a fair chance of success. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The eighth of these is the fact that the system is transparent. It is not a system that is opaque, and it is not a system that is hidden. It is a system that is able to be understood, and it is able to be trusted. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The ninth of these is the fact that the system is accountable. It is not a system that is irresponsible, and it is not a system that is unaccountable. It is a system that is able to be held responsible for its actions, and it is able to be held accountable for its results. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.

The tenth of these is the fact that the system is inclusive. It is not a system that is exclusive, and it is not a system that is discriminatory. It is a system that is able to include everyone, and it is able to ensure that everyone has a voice. This is another fundamental principle of systems thinking, and it is one that is often overlooked in traditional approaches to problem-solving.