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**CALIBAN**

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Cover: SNOW EYE by Guy R. Beining, 1995  
acrylic on canvas (20" x 16")

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

Typeset in Baskerville by Daniel Estrada Del Cid & Johnny Estrada  
Del Cid, HS Marketing Solutions, Santa Ana, California

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Daniel Estrada Del Cid, Production and Design Editor

Calibanonline is published quarterly. Viewing online is free.

Unsolicited poetry, fiction, art, music, and short art videos  
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**CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE**



D. E. STEWARD

## **Waziristan**

Cyrenaica, Fazzan, and Tripolitania

Qaddafi was in even more flamboyant drag than usual when he pronounced his plans for a massive statue to honor Saddam Hussein

Islamic charisma is almost rock and roll

They can have themselves videoed with a Kalashnikov clambering around a wadi in Waziristan and send it out for worldwide release

Once flew the summer solstice directly over Waziristan, still much snow on the peaks and higher ridges

Frontier territories, the Marches, Indian country, hillbilly hollows

The whole world was once like Waziristan

There are mysterious remnants

Slim, tasseled rock-painted Bradshaw figures of the Kimberley that bespeak a sophisticated Australian culture that predates aboriginal ones

Elaborate hair, extended fingers, some figures are holding hands, they are slimmer, more graceful and much more mysterious than Giacometti figures

“When the elves of happiness led me through enchanted forests”—  
John Bennett

## Pre-Clovis America

Thirty years ago there were millions of pink flamingos in the East African Rift with flocks of thousands moving synchronously in their saltpan dances

Their eerie behavior having absolutely nothing to do with mammalian concerns

They are disappearing, pollution and lower water levels in Nakuru and Naivasha, the natron lakes

During the German occupation of Paris, along with the slamming of Wehrmacht boot studs on cobblestone, was the frequent thunk and dying screams of rabbits being butchered, raised on balconies in the hundreds of thousands across the famished city

In a 1940s photograph one of the armed guards flanking the entrance to Gestapo headquarters in the 16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement was in dress uniform and soft cap, the other in helmet and fatigues

The SS and the Wehrmacht stressed, inevitable multitudes of clumsy fuckups going about occupying the whole European continent, Athens to Hammerfest

Flying JFK-Brussels, three men in black are davening rapidly up front, their families seated in the middle of the plane

Saw one sneak into the business class toilets

Probably on the 47<sup>th</sup> Street-Antwerp diamond run

Complexities and diversity

Motives, cross purposes and inexplicables

Churning away

“Croaking jealousy; bloated bigotry; coiling suspicion; warmish blindness; crocodile malice”—as William Gass quoted a Midwestern saw

Three different human existences, the physical, the mental, and the mathematical

Recuperating, but not as rapidly as expected, he is beginning to push things around on the table with his left forearm

“Since my stroke, I can’t make out which foot for which boot, so how am I supposed to be able to do anything else? And then I look at my feet and then the boots next to them, I can’t even make out which boot on which foot.”

Grinning maniacally

As though it was his skull speaking for itself through his face

And he has begun to look more and more like Théodore Géricault’s *The Madman*

Shaved head and macabre skinniness

A potter wasp, white and black banding, rides the back of a glaucous green-black cicada it’s sucking dry

Mounted intensity a death-act parody of sexual frenzy

Early heat, early humidity, boding probable hurricane disasters

And a great year here for yellow-billed cuckoos

The vividly striped cap of a male black-and-white warbler viewed perfectly from above

Paul Rée said, “We are never more delighted by nature than when we have an audience for our delight,” and about the only reason we admit stupidities is to show that we’re clever enough to be aware of them

Gobelin blue is a grayish blue greener and paler than electric or average shadow blue, greener and duller than Copenhagen, greener and not as strong as old china

The chrome violet and white label of Los Cardos Malbec from Mendoza

Stupendous, Andes-fronting Mendoza

*Vida:* The only Western Atlantic blue lobster I’ve ever seen was being boosted out of a trap on the lobster house dock in Cutler, Maine

In Brittany blue lobsters are almost the norm

In Waziristan all blues are uncommon

At the time of the Council of Trent, mid-sixteenth century, the cult of the saints fervidly generated new subjects for feast days

That meant work for painters like Juan Sánchez Cotán from a Church that was then to painting and sculpture as academic creative writing departments are to writers now

Sánchez Cotán’s paintings improved dramatically after he became a Carthusian and gave up talking

Johann Gottfried Tulla, b. 1777 in Karlsruhe, “rectified” the Rhine between Basel and Worms from 354 kilometers to 273 kilometers and

in the process moving so much earth devastated the river course's unfettered environment

*Circus aeruginosus*, the Eurasian northern marsh harrier, will pass prey from one parent to the other, the returning male drops it in midair and the female rises from the nest to catch it

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber's sonatas for violin and continuo with their strange lingering chords enabled by *scordatura*, his special tuning of the violin

*Vida*: Bound sooner or later for significant places not yet visited

Palmanova, Ottawa, Bergen, Rio, Melbourne, Ann Arbor, Mumbai and Isfahan

But entering a Boots on Tottenham Court Road is the same experience as walking into a Rite-Aid on K Street

As seen approaching Chartres, the Île-de-France is tidier but more cluttered now than a generation ago with the *paysage* going suburban

*Disegno* means both drawing and design, plan, scheme, intention, purpose

The world's awesome complexity of trade, risk and betterment

Repeats in time, era after era, and in locale after locale around the globe

And whenever the human thrust slows from famine, all-out war, collapse, the silence of recovery takes over rapidly

When interconnected trade and commerce collapse, all are left to their own devices

With no factory-produced crockery after the Romans left Britain, fundamental technologies like the potter's wheel did not return there for nearly three centuries

Without the three Roman urban virtues—garbage collection, sewerage systems, and clean, plentiful water—Britain again became filthy and hygienically dangerous

Samuel Barber's highly syncopated *Piano Sonata, Op. 26*, with its contrapuntal augmentation, inversion, retrograde, stretto

Introduced by Vladimir Horowitz in concert in 1950

Gleb Ivanov played it here last night, followed by Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise*

“Observing dogs and small children is as close to worship as I come”—John Bennett

We are wherever we are, and we work out life from there

Self-defining in the manner of the truth of Celan's “all poets are Jews”

*Disegno contro Colorito*

Shredded cabbage cooked with butter and nutmeg

Chukotka's landscape, as its short green summer begins now, must be a darkening dead gray when fully under snow

RAY GONZALEZ

## **Blue Car**

There is a theory that says when you drive the blue car into the sun, the other world will fill it with gasoline and you can get there without having to leave your vehicle. Study the previous sentence to find the road map. The spare tire in the trunk has nothing to do with universal consciousness and the steady skill of rebuilding it into a sleek and powerful engine to cross the stars. The steering wheel used to have the duty of combing God's hair. Bringing faith into this says you should be riding a bicycle instead. There is a theory that says when you turn around and drive it into the moon, you must have your license in hand because the crater never welcomes vehicles in reverse.

What if the driver wants to walk? The blue car was parked outside for several days and was broken into one night and the classic eight-track player was stolen, though no one could resell it because they didn't know what it was. There is a theory that commands an understanding of the choice of a blue car, model unknown, and how it influenced literary movements that kept the imagination running at full speed, the loneliness of this obvious to the pedestrian that refuses to get into the car when it pulls over and the driver says, "Get in".

**Ark**

Sleeping belly of Rimbaud glistens with yesterday's sperm recalculating how long it takes to live one hundred years of crime and ambition—mistakes making him spring for the window, a black starfish spreading among the blasted believers. A release, an explosion, the spill invented to spark the tectonic rock that cracks the spirit and makes it a category in a tangle of vines where the day drinks beside the trusting child.

Elephant delicate, the cry seems whitewashed, destroyed by a long struggle to find an orphaned realm—the peach belonging in the scream destined for heaven's pyramid, two nuns following the boy into the gap between the ribs and the obsession of roaming legs.

## **Funny the Mushrooms**

There are labor camps in the nervous system. The blister opens the door and sweats onto a tangled network of vines that power the women in flight from their strawberry yearning. Do you consider yourself an apparition or merely a fingerprint in an aging file? The hunchbacked squid was found on page 432. In the pavilion of physics, 432 means nothing and you can try to figure it out while a woman whispers to you, “Not by circumference again.”

The piano solo ages with a fine curtain of water that hangs in the air, each note leading you to whimper as if your secrets are talking to God. If so, you would reinvent your childhood to include faith in the moon. Finger a fossil until it comes to life. The father is in consequence but never in tears. His good foot lights the lamp. Miles away in the country, there is a hairbrush and a folded letter dated thirty years ago.

**Orange Blossom**  
*after Picasso*

The deep end of the garden keeps up with the measure of his grief. So, let's go see what is happening because no one believes in grief. All lines removed from the painting. The plate is asleep in the corner, the peas cheering up. Gouging her teeth into the wound, the bee must be thinking. The bull and its fight for life in the arena and the bloody soil going up into the sky. Must be the deep end of the garden trying to grow despite the clouds dragging across the deserted streets. At the first shove, the bull's horn goes through the horse, though its rider will live for 87 years, his system denying the diversity of trajectories. There are several starfish crawling on the crimson ground. In the watermelon slice, they light their tiny lamps.

## **The Sons**

The son of Ulysses never lied. The son of George Custer swam the river alone. The son of Emily Dickinson hid two dozen of her unknown poems in an old attic, the manuscript lost to this day. The son of Mohammed Ali fought the Army draft call and fled the country. The son of Babe Ruth drank alone. The son of Pontius Pilate ate raw pork in a room full of whores. The son of Salvador Dali went insane after staring at the walls of his father's studio. The son of Gertrude Stein misspelled a word and was left alone in the parlor. The son of Charlie Parker never played an instrument. The son of Joan of Arc opened his mouth and a dove flew inside. The son of Mark Twain drowned in a river. The son of Virginia Wolf lived a normal life without rivers. The son of Janis Joplin stayed in Texas. The son of Charlie Chaplin simply hated movies. The son of Rosa Parks never sat in the back of the bus. The son of Stalin was never spoken about. The son of the oldest woman in the Vietnamese village survived the war and came home. The son of Federico Garcia Lorca is lined up against a wall every decade and is shot by a firing squad. The son of Frida Kahlo painted bloody human hearts in his grade school notebook and was punished by the teacher every day. The son of the anonymous and cleanest politician in the U.S. Senate will push the final button someday. The son of Jesus changed the world thousands of years ago without his identity revealed or anyone noticing the change had been made.



PRESS-SIGN 1 by Bruno Neiva, 2012, mixed media on press board (110" x 81")



PRESS-SIGN 2 by Bruno Neiva, 2012, mixed media on press board (110" x 79")

## LEIGH HERRICK

### **toccata**

what is the sound of worthiness this name that piano choral the vocal  
ease of an orange holying up the tree of crashing and how to spell  
it what sway what intoning what in the brick of rotated sun what in  
mortared opposite fugued to release magical hair spent for wind and  
driven days that made men write *behold!* that made men string sonata  
skies mourned in adagios and blues chords as paint fielded dreams  
imagining unchained days and nights of flambeaured stars from which  
all gaze directed remembrance as if *to remember* were beginning making  
beginning *commence* as if commencement were not an old string extending  
forever into transition this tongued position and the verb

*to be*

## Reading Levi

Primo Levi said dawn came like a betrayer—  
And in my dream last night some renewed  
dawn of open spaces    country    a dog  
shadows of time unfurled

the moment: innocent—

Awake I think *Galapagos*  
as the word *undone*  
falls from lips of ocean floors  
*undone* to warm-forested bark beetles  
chewing    chewing    chewing  
among dead pines without  
woodpecker enough  
to keep the beetles in check

I think *what effort against decline*  
remembering how  
Primo boards his train and later writes  
through *nevertheless*

Nevertheless each mother cooked  
for her children

cooked away that last night

cooked and baked and packed a suitcase  
and acted as though the next dawn  
would be like every other

through days in which  
she had so far lived and loved

BILL MOHR

**Speed Ratios**

***1. Speed Ratio***

Houses and roads are interchangeable alterations of spaces in that they constitute one continuous chain of speed ratios:

Housing speed to road speed / road speed to housing speed

Thought speed to body speed / body speed to thought speed

<b>Temporal Markers</b>	<b>Dawns</b>	<b>Midnights</b>	<b>Dusks</b>	<b>Noons</b>
-------------------------	--------------	------------------	--------------	--------------

THOUGHT-BODY	back room	paved edge	front room	flat arch
--------------	-----------	------------	------------	-----------

The spouses of premonitions oscillate within the imagined fingertips of syncopated destiny:

BLOSSOM PAUSE	CAROM	FLARE	SCRAWL	FLUTTER
---------------	-------	-------	--------	---------

SOLEMN HASTE	SCRIBBLE	VOOSH	BLISS	COIL
--------------	----------	-------	-------	------

<b>TEMPORAL MARKERS</b>	<b>Midnights</b>	<b>Dusks</b>	<b>Noons</b>	<b>Dawns</b>
-------------------------	------------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

BODY-THOUGHT	front room	bent road	back road	side room
--------------	------------	-----------	-----------	-----------

The premonitions of espousals oscillate within the imagined toegrips of syncopated choices:



### **3. Rest Stops (*with sung acceleration*)**

I was in a movie theater. The person at the counter said, “It’s two dollars.” I opened my wallet and he reached in and took two one-dollar bills. The woman with me went ahead and found a seat. I walked into the theater, which was fairly narrow, but (as it turned out) long. They were showing a black and white film. It was an old favorite, but it didn’t in any way seem familiar. I stood in the aisle, mesmerized by a woman knitting with both hands and feet. The bed covering had little beads that flickered and glowed as she knitted.

I was climbing some wooden beams in a building under construction. I had to walk on a narrow board while only being able to grip one other narrow board above me and then walk towards a very narrow entrance.

I was suddenly back in a version of Lynbrook. I recognized the streets and buildings, though they were not exactly the same. I walked around on the streets and ordered a dish of fried eggplant that was like an impanema. I can walk back into the dream and keep walking around. Waking up makes me wonder how the palpable textuality of the city could have been an illusion.

shaking out my umbrella  
hundreds of tiny worlds  
unfold.

### **4. The Trolley Problem**

“and then a Plank in Reason, broke”—*Emily Dickinson*

Still puzzled at the pull  
of affections and fate, and how  
it could have turned out otherwise,

I sketch tiny skeins of  
    elongated figures in dirt,  
        obsessing over the trolley

problem: five strangers and an aging,  
    stocky man who is my identical twin  
        tied down in a splayed diversion

of Philippa Foot's high noon.  
    The odd part is this trolley  
        won't move until all

their friends, the ones tempted to serve  
    as replacements, have gathered  
        to watch: Of all unlikely candidates,

how did I end up throttling  
    the switch? And I have no answer,  
        malicious or benign, for them.

I can imagine the decibels  
    of track, but not the screeches  
        of disbelief as I jerk the lever,

laughing to myself: it doesn't  
    do any of the five a favor  
        for me to kill my twin.

The rules demand that one  
    random survivor replace  
        these fingers at the switch

and I pivot and replace him or her  
    in the curve of survivors awaiting  
        the acceleration of the next

standing-room-only trolley,  
the jostling whispers of its passengers  
athwart their private tribulations.

Footnote 1: If one's mother is tied as the single person on the second track, then most people will choose the death of five strangers on track number one, though with notable, single-minded exceptions. Norman Bates, for instance, if presented with this binary, would say, "What five people?" as he kept his thumb pressed tightly to track number 2.

Footnote 2: Sometimes this problem is described in terms of a situation created by a "mad philosopher," who has tied six people to a track, five of whom are strangers and one of whom is a friend of the person at the switch. But how is it that the person at the switch has gained the trust of the Mad Philosopher so that that person can control the switch? In fact, if I am the one at the switch, how is that I have allowed the Mad Philosopher to tie people to the track?

## ***5. The Gradients of Seclusion***

I dreamed I was in a bakery shop and there was a large cherry pie. The baker urged me to take a large piece. I could have as much as I wanted. As I cut into the pie, the cherries in the pie glowed exuberantly.

I dreamed that I walked into a multi-story building in Redondo Beach. I was supposed to go to room 374, but it wasn't on the third floor. I walked down a couple of hallways past cubicles where people were talking in a thoughtful, lively manner. Many of the employees

were women, and they were smart. Then I got to the office. It had huge glass walls and the ocean waves rolled right under the flooring. I could see an old pier less than a hundred yards away. Afterwards, I went to the parking lot, but don't remember that part, although the next night I had a dream of an underground parking lot, where I was frightened by a stranger.

Everyone's fate is a miniscule variant:  
Jellyfish zombies yearn to suck  
the insides of wetsuits into a milk  
shake container. Stir rapidly and serve.  
The future perfect tense imagines  
this is real. You've never tested  
yourself on syntax in a dream?  
"I'll take Jack Spicer for \$300" I told  
the game show host. The peer  
panels flipped like those old  
railroad terminal announcement  
cards. A young raccoon at dawn  
saunters towards the rain  
gutter. Most vertebrates  
can squeeze along a labyrinth,  
if the interstitial squeezes back.

## ELIZABETH ROBINSON

### **On My Valentine**

Its velvet paw requires  
always more water. Its mitt, its lip.  
Tough as the pile on its russet hide.

It died, for instance, of neglect and was  
Replaced with itself.

From a distance, it moved like  
an animal. Up close, it drank  
what it was given.

Flowering, furred foot. This creature—  
stay  
—wavers between its self, self-canceling  
like thirst and the drought it takes in, eases.

## **On Safety**

The table rests inside sunlight.  
Its forms are of stillness.

It wants to repeat itself, lit and warm.  
    To repeat, meaning: to prove its stability.  
    and therefore to prove that it is objective.

A table would strive to evince safety.  
    Safety, intrinsic in the thing that does not move.

The table's four legs are objective because each repeats the other—  
static and objective.

Safety overcomes the wish, what wish, overcomes any wish.

Repeated enough, the wish is the transformation  
that creates proof. Safety is better than the movement  
that evades danger. It is replicable.

The table's dispassionate surface absorbs sunlight as sunlight shifts  
throughout the day.

To be at the site of absorption. To be, and not to move to it.

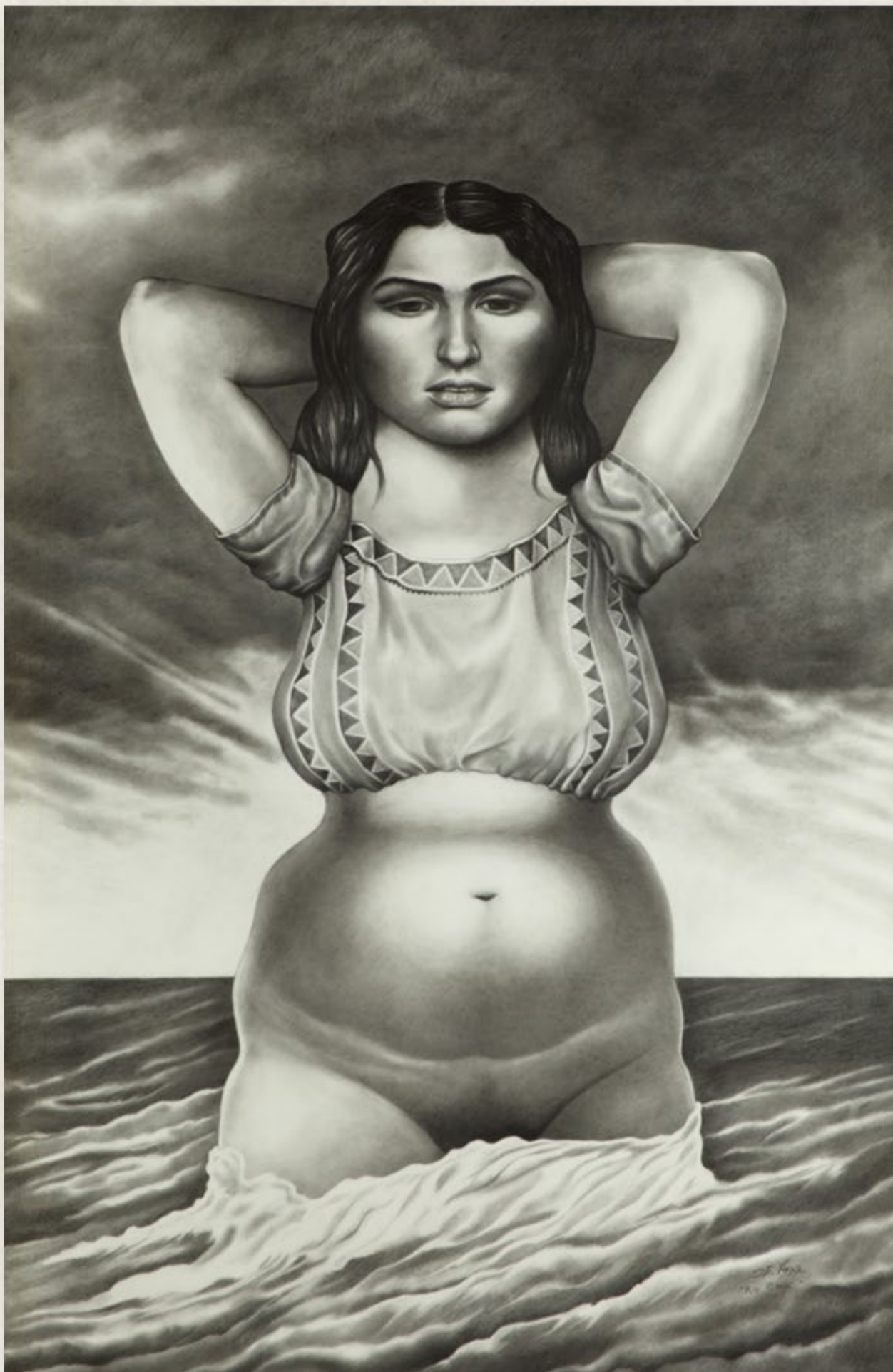
## **On Diaspora**

What is birth but the force of diaspora.  
The child is forced from the mother's body,  
pushes its umbilicus away.

Fog is pouring through a crack in the hillside.  
Pouring literally.  
Wet; subject to gravity; squeezed by its boundaries.

Milk, too, is a dispersal.  
The sweetness of it sticky, and yet the breast is not entitled to know  
to which mouth its nutrients will go.

The whiteness that feeds us  
fattens time, so that each margin of growth divides over  
and over. It nurtures itself and so goes away, but not entirely.  
If we can swallow or pass through it, it is diaspora.



RIO RIMAC by Ines Vega, 2000  
graphite on paper (48" x 32")



AMANECER by Ines Vega, 2009, charcoal, pastel, and acrylic on canvas (60" x 55")



EL CIELO by Ines Vega, 2007, graphite on paper (48" x 43")



LA MAGA by Ines Vega, 1997, graphite on paper (51" x 34")

SIMON PERCHIK

\*

You whisper as if this dirt  
weighs nothing and underneath  
the way darkness sifts for rain

once the Earth moves alongside  
fondles each footstep  
that is not evening

—in your low voice  
an ancient sky is brought to life  
as still more stars

holding on to one another  
unable to crawl between  
these two small stones kept together

for this hillside against your shoulder  
and helpless to lift your face  
in the same breath.

\*

As if this dirt still childlike  
was something new in the world  
not yet the powerful side to side

and you could walk slowly uphill  
the way each breeze is cradled asleep  
—you wrap these stones with a mask

that is not a grave —closer and closer  
they follow behind one another  
tugging you somewhere that weighs

nothing —you don't plant anymore  
though your arms move softly  
as you wait for the stones

and whatever they can still lift  
—every Spring is filled with dirt  
and one hand already hillside

—even now you open your arms  
and the emptiness, by instinct, sways  
with her footsteps facing the others.

\*

Though there's no boat the rain  
waits among the waves  
the way every bridge faces the ocean

then leaps into rock once water  
used to tides and the stench  
from a small stone wearing out

smoldering, half cinders, half  
as if it was bathing her cheeks  
over and over in this shallow path

remembered only as your shadow  
holding down a single splash  
—nothing drifts off, all these years

heading nearer to the bottom, sifting  
beneath her lips for coastline  
for seabirds then arms and feet and kisses.

DOUG GUNN

### **Smile Inn**

When the tractor-trailer pounds past her, she sits down in the dust, her face wet from tears, and cries, “fuck you, asshole.” Cars are passing, occasionally, some are beginning to turn on their lights. She holds up her thumb. As loud as she can, she shouts, chokes out, “Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck all of you, you fucking, fucking assholes.” She’s sobbing, she mumbles, “please, please, please, please, please.”

One chicken was still alive, bleeding from the neck in the chicken yard, when he went out to close in the chickens for the night. He brought down the spade on her neck and severed her head. He could smell the skunk, it had taken the heads off the other birds to drink their blood, and torn open their bodies to eat their insides. He shouted and threw the shovel into the air like a spear, and then he walked back to the house. The back door to the adobe house stuck in its thick frame, when he jerked it open he saw his ancient mother fighting to close the front door on a white girl who was struggling and pleading with her. He took both his mother and the girl by the arm, said, “Madre, en su!”

I

A girl moved in and her parents moved in, small neighborhood and frame houses rented by people without much money in spite of what they did in their lives from day to day you sometimes couldn’t tell, a handpainted sign said plumbing and drain jetting. They parked their cars and trucks in front of the small houses in the ruts in the dirt parking, it goes around two trees and two bushes, there must be a tricycle out there, maybe it has a broken wheel. The man worked in a warehouse, not a good job but not a bad job, he was good with a forklift but it looks like he needed another job like he needed two jobs. The daughter looked tough with a blank look of mistrust like the start of something

inside her that would always be there, she would have to go to school nonetheless, she was the first girl Bruno knew up close as a young boy. He knew he'd be made to show her the necessary things about school and the life around there, he didn't want to but it excited him in a way he liked, it must be sexual as a neighbor and she was a girl, last year he would be holding hands with a girl but he didn't want to hold hands with the neighbor, he didn't like how fat she was. Her father didn't talk when he saw Bruno or when he saw Bruno's parents the man was shy and it seemed like there was disappointment in his life, he nodded a little when he saw Bruno's father or mother. His wife didn't like to talk, she would look away and not into your eyes like her husband only looked into people's eyes for an instant with his little nod, both had a lot on their minds near the bottom with not much money like most people in the small neighborhood the houses were close together with no pattern, you might see some vegetables in a small garden more likely there would be random weeds. The daughter was called Becka.

Bruno's mother started the business of walking to school with Becka, she said it would be a nice thing she told Becka's mother it was a good idea, Bruno's mother was just trying to be nice to the new neighbors. Becka's mother agreed it was a good idea, the two women smoking a cigarette at the table, Bruno would walk to the school bus with Becka for three blocks. On the way he didn't talk to her and she didn't talk, she could walk to the school bus by herself, she knew what a school bus looked like but what was the point, you might as well walk to the bus together if it was your mother's idea it wasn't worth it for either of them they just walked to the bus together, what was the difference. Later they walked home together sometimes they said something for instance they talked about buying cigarettes or candy at the drug store with their lunch money, Bruno said they should skip lunch. Becka didn't want to skip lunch, she liked to eat lunch, but she also liked to eat candy and she liked to smoke cigarettes, they could use Bruno's lunch money and they could use the money they made from turning in the empties Becka stole from the truck that filled the soda machine at the drug store, until the driver of the truck slammed on his brakes one time out the window he yelled who do you think pays for those, it looked like that was the end

of the candy for Becka but her friends still bought her cigarettes, Bruno gave her candy.

Bruno had his own friends later he was with them and Becka knew a group of kids, sometimes their cars were at her house. They both got rides from people they knew with cars the people Becka knew drove their crazy cars fast under the viaduct, sometimes they turned their headlights off and left them off for one or two reckless seconds. Becka and another girl were caught stealing pills from the girl's mother, both were taken to juvenile court, the girl had to go to reform school for the rest of the year but Becka got off, instead she got tattoos up and down her arms. Bruno was standing in the dirt outside the chain-link fence beyond the school parking lot smoking with the others, there was Becka with her friends, Bruno smiled with his lips when she looked Becka just blew smoke out her nose, she reached into a boy's shirt pocket for his cigarettes.

Bruno had his own car by then it was his senior year after all of that he agreed Becka could ride with him to school. In the car he saw her hand on the car seat with its white fingers, Bruno put his hand on Becka's hand, with his other hand he flipped his cigarette out the open window, when he looked, Becka was looking out the window on her side. Bruno left his hand on hers until it was time to shift the car into another gear when he looked down she had put her hand somewhere else, he said what's up, he was driving her to school. He waited until he was in fourth gear Bruno reached across he tried to hold Becka's hand instead he grabbed her wrist, Becka was strong enough though she pulled her wrist free she said pay attention to the road asshole. Bruno was pissed, he said fuck you, holding her hand would have made him feel better about the easy sex he got from a heavy girl, but he didn't want that to stop, holding hands wasn't worth it. Bruno wondered if she made it easy for others besides him, he knew it wasn't a question though and that made him feel bad, but what was he supposed to do, about the people she had as so-called friends. It was too bad about Becka, she never watched her weight when Bruno saw her at least the baggy clothes she wore lately made her look better somehow someone must have given her advice

like she didn't care about her weight at least she cared about her looks. What did all of that mean about Bruno though Bruno bought Becka a carton of cigarettes to be nice then he didn't give her the cigarettes.

## II

Bruno's parents went to the Smile Inn with Becka's parents when he was in high school he would meet them there sometimes at the Smile Inn next to the printer where Bruno's father worked, after work, low building made of painted cinder blocks a row of glass blocks across the front made the Smile Inn dark inside. The bartender always wore a bow-tie when Bruno saw him he gave Bruno a smile like he knew he could card him if he wanted to. They met two women at the Smile Inn who came into their lives drinking beer at the next booth there, the women turned and said something funny based on sex and there would always be that humor between the four people and the two women. Both women were named Betty when they got up one of them was over six-feet tall, six-five and a very thin woman, she had a private smile that seemed to say she had special knowledge or a secret. Tall Betty was not her name of course it was natural to distinguish her from the other Betty though if she heard someone call her that she would simply look at him with her eyes. The other woman was also tall she was called Betty Tobacco nearly six-feet tall but not thin, she said something to her friend, Bruno heard part of a sentence, —wish you didn't always—. After that they saw the Bettys at the Smile Inn from time to time Bruno was there. Bruno looked at Tall Betty at the next booth, Betty had a tattoo of her own, Bruno saw a tattoo, something small he couldn't tell, it was on the back of her hand. Betty Tobacco touched her on the hand, nodded in Bruno's direction, Betty turned with her private smile, Bruno tried to smile back with a small smile, looked away when he looked back Betty was still looking at him, same smile. Bruno's father wanted to make a joke he said what's going on here. Betty Tobacco said careful Bruno, don't lock eyes with her, Betty was still looking at Bruno, Bruno was looking back, trying to look back. Sometimes the Bettys said things to Bruno the others might not understand, Betty Tobacco said, streets are uneven when you're down. This easy relationship made Bruno's

parents happy Bruno was on his own terms with the two women like friends from school. One time Becka was at the Smile Inn sometime later after she ran away, Betty brought her back from a house in the valley. Bruno caught Becka's eye, they looked each other in the eye for one instant when the Bettys got up to leave he saw Tall Betty bend down and say something to Becka, Becka looked up for a second, and barely smiled.

Bruno saw the Bettys with his parents, he saw the Bettys with his parents and their friends, Becka's parents, sometimes they watched a football game on the television screen at the Smile Inn, sometimes they talked about people the Bettys didn't know, they would try to explain and the Bettys would try to understand, there might be a joke involved. The Bettys had lives of their own before they met Bruno's parents, they talked but they would only go so far, Betty Tobacco started to describe a complicated family, two brothers she mentioned seemed to be Tall Betty's brothers she said a bad car crash meant television and some other minor things for one of the brothers in a room at the state hospital later somehow that seemed to turn some of them against each other, Betty stopped her with a quiet voice though she said we don't talk about that, do we, after she said that she reached and laid her hand on Betty Tobacco's hand she said Betty and I love two things, we love to ride horses and we love to drink beer. Bruno tried to picture the Bettys on horses. They saw the Bettys at the Smile Inn or they might call they might meet up somewhere, the four adults went to a yard sale with the Bettys, they came back with garden tools and the Bettys came back with canning supplies.

The Bettys came to Bruno's house, Bruno stopped on his way down the stairs on his way out to drive off in his car somewhere, Betty Tobacco saw Bruno on the stairs she said look who's here. Bruno's father got the Bettys a beer, baseball was on the television, turned down low. Tall Betty said come sit down and have a beer with us Bruno, Bruno wouldn't mind a beer of course the beer was a joke nonetheless he said sure, why not, the Bettys sitting on the couch Tall Betty caught Bruno's eye, dropped her eyes down, at the empty place next to her on the couch,

Bruno moved one foot then decided to sit in the chair across from them, across from the Bettys, looked up and Betty was looking at him with her private smile. Bruno listened to the adults talk, their lives, the Bettys' life and his parents' life, Betty Tobacco said we lived in Omaha. Bruno's mother had been to Omaha but there was something the Bettys couldn't get across, like you can never get across something about your life in a conversation with other people. Bruno's father didn't know what to say about Omaha he said we lived in New Jersey. Betty Tobacco said we wouldn't go back to Omaha though. Tall Betty touched her friend's leg she said, Betty.

Bruno saw the Bettys together walking on the sidewalk downtown, he had his hands in his jean pockets across the street unless the Bettys saw him unless they waved or called his name he wouldn't cross the street. Betty Tobacco rubbed her cheek on Betty's sweater for a scratch and Betty put her gentle hand on Betty Tobacco's head, then pushed her head away. Betty Tobacco laid her head on Tall Betty's arm and left it there until Tall Betty put her arm around Betty Tobacco's shoulder, she was gentle and she pushed her away to walk beside her. Or if they saw him he would walk with them on the sidewalk, they passed a department store, with parking on top of the building up a ramp they passed a dime store. The Bettys might joke with Bruno, irony for the sake of a bond they would ask him for a cigarette or they might give him one. But Bruno made sure he took another route after he saw the Betty's walking on the sidewalk across the street the Bettys turned the corner then Becka turned the corner one step behind them.

Bruno wondered where they lived, the Bettys described an area on the edge of the city, small houses again but set back from the street up along a steep hill of dirt erosion instead of front yards, a young guy named Elton rented an apartment in the Bettys's garage on the side of the house they said the garage might slide off the side of the hill, you could see the cement of the foundation from the erosion down the hill, it was a joke about the neighborhood between the Bettys, how could you even get a car up to the garage. Bruno was with Betty Tobacco, he wanted to know where they lived. Betty Tobacco said, you know where we live

but Bruno wanted to know which house, he said sometime he might be in the area. Betty Tobacco finally decided to write it down for him.

### III

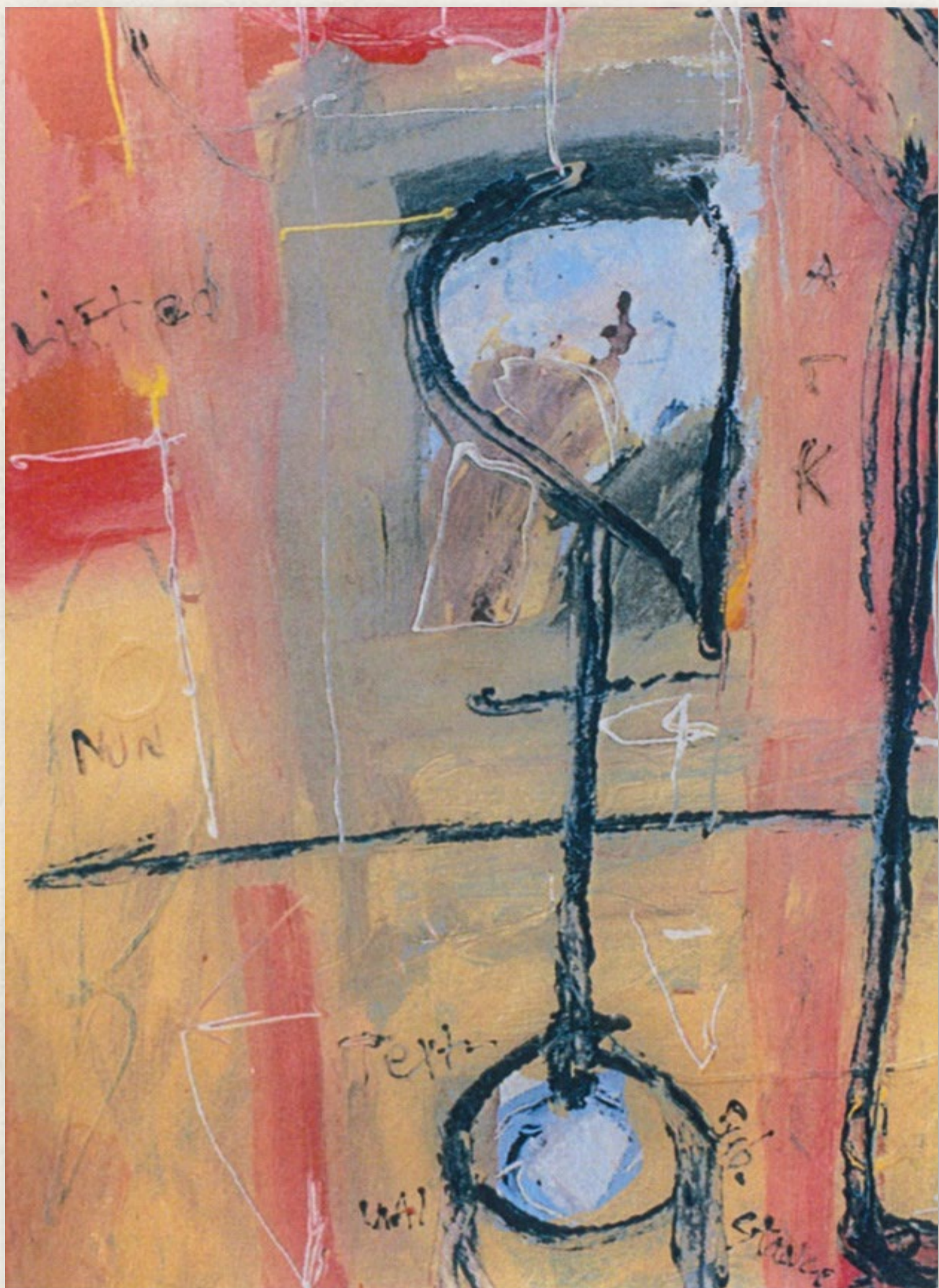
Bruno stands on the Bettys' porch on the side of the street like other brick houses seem to slide down the hill toward the street, it's the same erosion down from the Bettys's covered porch with a roof and painted posts hold it up at the two corners, the ones in the middle on both sides of the steps not so much, when he grabs one it moves at the bottom sometime it could break loose, it makes Bruno lose his balance and stumble onto the porch. An exercise bike is up against a railing on the porch and plants in pots spread out in a line along the house, Bruno looks and the garage next to the house has a door with a door-mat where Elton lives and a plant in a pot next to his door on a wooden pallet the plant might not make it, a go-cart on a sheet of plywood and tools are on the plywood greasy and out in the weather. Bruno doesn't know if the doorbell works on a house like this sometimes it's broken, you can hear it inside if it rings though he pushes the button but he doesn't hear the bell, he hears a big dog barking and it keeps barking when Betty Tobacco opens the door she has the dog by the collar pulling back at its barking she says, be quiet, looks up from holding the dog she sees Bruno, Betty Tobacco doesn't say anything finally she says hi, Bruno. Tall Betty comes out of another room sees Bruno she says give me the dog and she takes the dog out two glass sliding-doors, cement patio and some green grass and a green bush and a cinder block wall goes around the short yard, the dog is out there now. Bruno walks into the house into the living room, Tall Betty says come in Bruno, she seems to be wiping her hands on a towel or a paper towel from the kitchen puts the towel on the brown television cabinet and she picks up something like mail there and Tall Betty is looking through the mail for something to say she asks how are your parents. It's a strange thing to ask. Plants are in the room in a long square planter like bricks from the house divide the large room and a spider plant hanging in a pot from the ceiling with newspapers and junk from the mail on a coffee table and some art on the walls like native masks Bruno sees a poster of a bullfight from Spain,

a photo in a frame shows two young guys who look the same but one of them is standing up and the other one is sitting in a modern wheelchair with his fingers on the wheelchair controls and his head is bent sideways. A comfortable bed in the dining room or the room behind the square planter, he thinks dining room but he sees the small bed made up with colorful blankets all messed up and a pillow for sleep, next to the bed there's a chair with familiar clothes on it and underwear and everything, on the floor by the bed white towels piled in a heap, Bruno recognizes Becka's sneakers with socks stuffed in them. Betty Tobacco turns away from Bruno she says I'll be right back, I'm on the phone, walks away into a hallway into another part of the house she puts a mobile phone to her ear. Tall Betty is watching Bruno from the doorway to another room, Bruno notices Tall Betty is watching him he puts his hands in his jean pockets looks back at her, Bruno decides to smile a small smile, Betty is looking back at him, he sees the kitchen counter behind her. She turns and goes into the kitchen like an invitation to Bruno to follow her in there. Bruno gives it a few seconds. In the kitchen is a small table with metal legs and a plastic laminate top, four chairs, metal legs and padded seats. Becka is sitting in one of these chairs, she has on pajamas like a night gown and she's holding a tiny baby up against her chest with her tattooed arms, the tiny baby is nursing from her breast, Becka looking down at the nursing baby. Across from Becka a young guy with tattoos of his own is sitting leaning back balanced on two metal legs of the chair. Betty roughly pushes his back until he lands down on all four legs of the chair, she says don't lean back on the chair Elton. Bruno stands in the small kitchen, no one says anything, there's the sound of the small baby sucking and making small sounds. Finally Bruno decides to leave, he looks at Betty. She's doing some things putting some things in the kitchen cabinets and he just takes one more look at Becka.

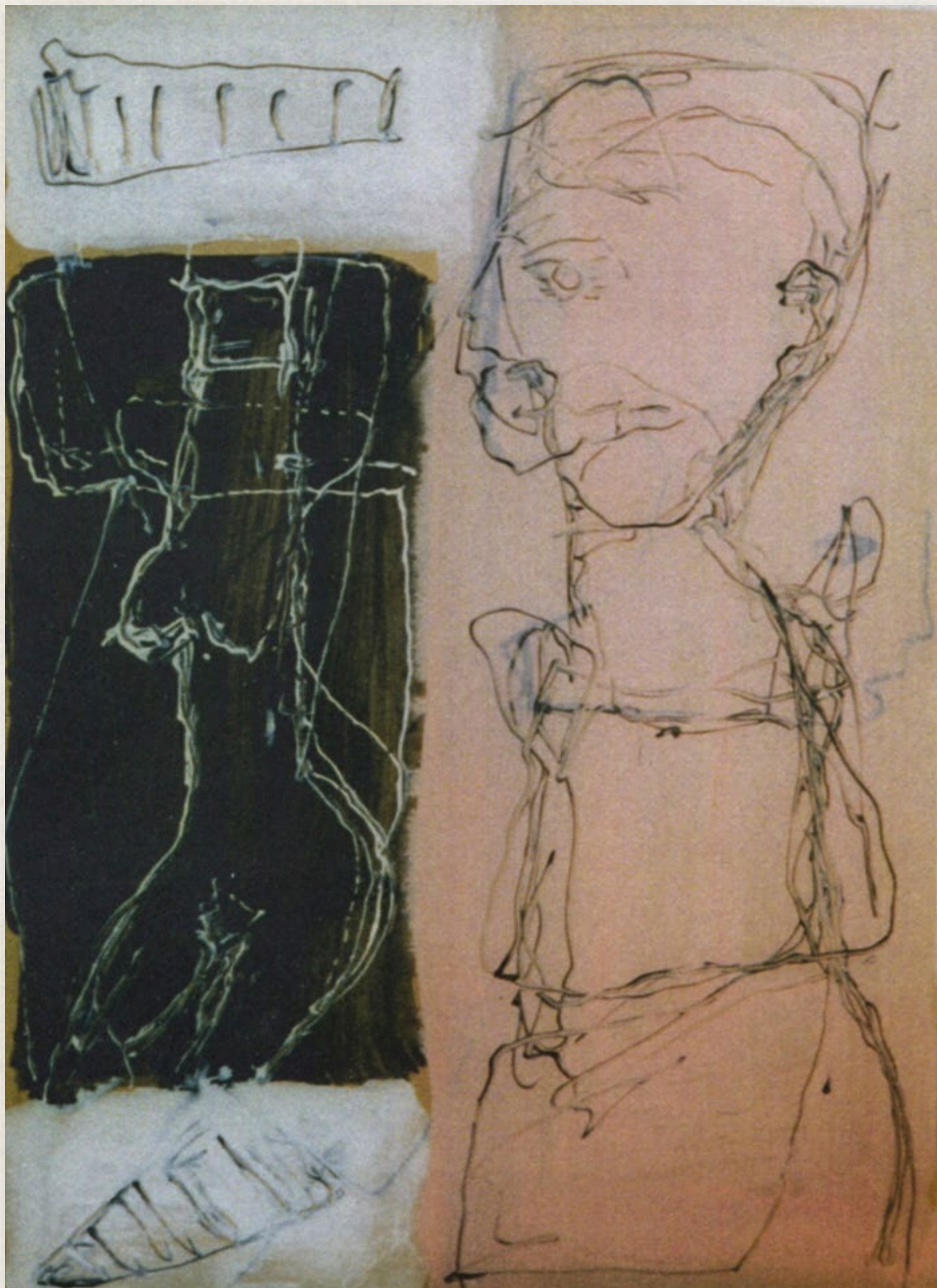
Betty Tobacco is coming out of the hallway as Bruno walks through the living room toward the front door to leave. She says, what did you expect, Bruno?



FIRE STATUE by Guy R. Beining, 2001  
acrylic on paper (17" x 14")



IRAQ WITHOUT WINDOWS by Guy R. Beining, 2003  
acrylic on paper (24" x 18")



COURTING NIGHT'S PUZZLE by Guy R. Beining, 2003  
acrylic on paper (10" x 8")



THE END IN LATVIA by Guy R. Beining, 2002  
acrylic on paper (30" x 22")

GUY R. BEINING

**felt tongue    195.**

go with  
overture  
& return  
with urn  
of powdery  
bones,  
so narrow  
in fourteen  
sections  
cast  
on a tray.  
gowns swish  
in red light,  
in degrees  
of silver bubbles,  
& in a liquid space  
couched.

**felt tongue 196.**

to be packaged  
or put  
on a hook,  
golden,  
(with a note  
about cleaning up)  
humming  
between gilded  
cages, being aware of  
no one,  
threading glove  
with thumb  
in place.

**felt tongue 226.**

i enter time  
as mist, one  
mask over another.  
the question is  
to avoid the thread  
as if it were  
a gloomy insect,  
as if a trembling  
insect far out  
on a leaf  
was pulling out  
all the questions  
while all the beginnings  
were wired to the head.  
iron works of  
the day were in  
the refrigerator,  
but there was no  
strength in moving  
being silent as a mirror,  
reflecting a spotless leaf.

## LAWRENCE R. SMITH

### Portals

The lamp post at the end of this small road  
expects more than I can offer—a collection  
of brass buttons or buffalo nickels—  
to buy passage to the inverse mountain  
that lies beneath. And the rain, with its  
oblique amulet, offers my empty hands  
no hopeful conjuring at all.

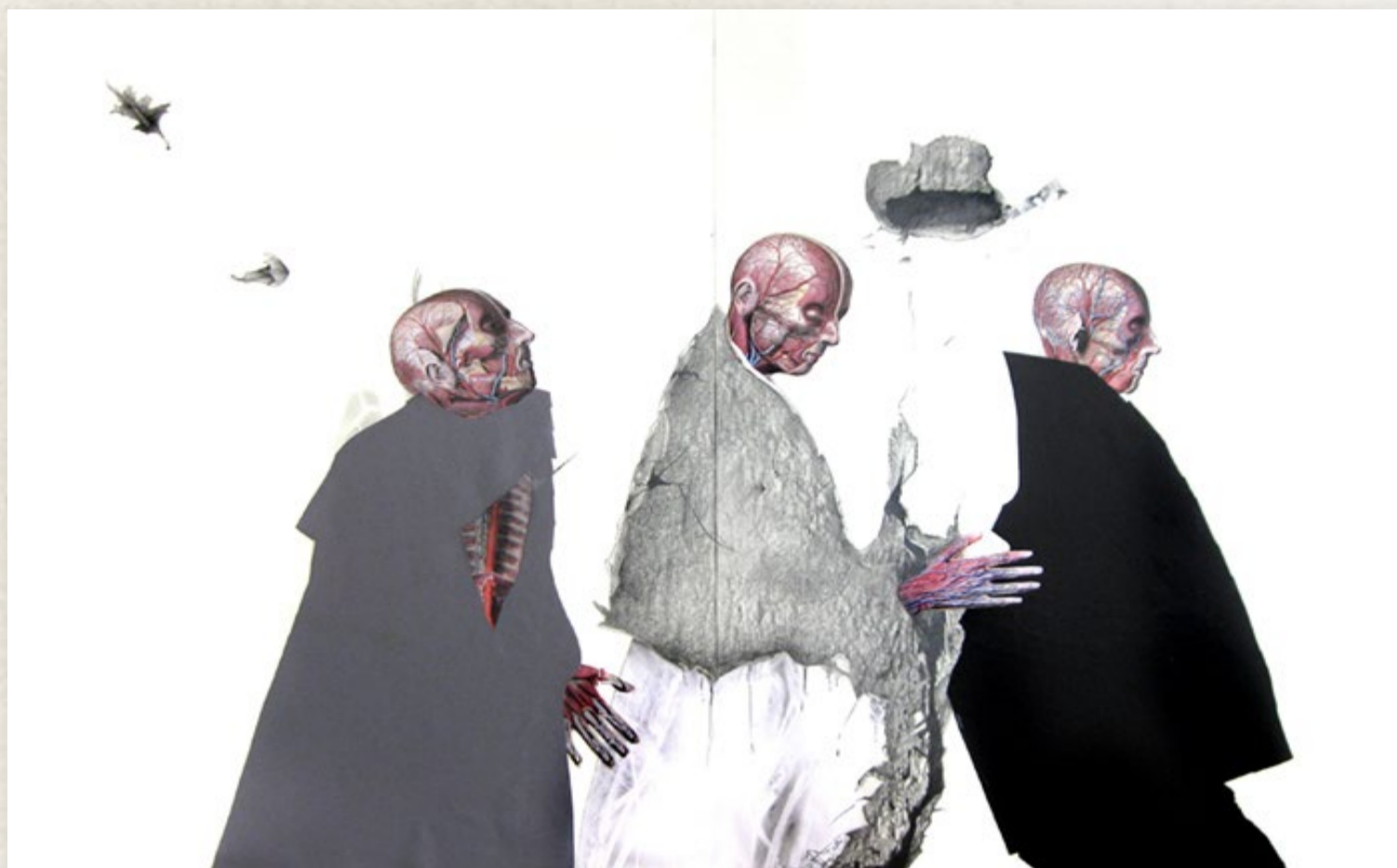
The San Andreas fault whispers a subtle light  
(not far from here) that ripens fruit on trees—  
oranges, apples, and the impossible almonds—  
but offers no clue to overthrow  
the fortress of lamp post light.

The fruit of a lamp post is light,  
but the road it guards squeezes open  
only within the threads of darkness  
that hold the light together.

When an Ife blacksmith anneals with  
the blood of a mamba, he knows he can  
hammer out a pike stronger and more  
elegant than fear, the dark snake poison  
a reaching hand into the forge's fire.

I would penetrate the alphabet with that pike,  
beat each letter into a rune, and with them  
build streets of filigree balconies  
in the rowdy quarters of New Orleans.

Buried fire is still fire, whether we can see it  
or not. And the day of its arrival  
will lift us with a fury that cleans  
language of all meaning as it  
burns the flesh right off our bones,  
making obsolete every false precept  
of love, history, and our vain alchemy.



BURGHERS by Ellen Wilt, 2014  
graphite pencil drawing with collage (40" x 60")

JODDY MURRAY

**Deaths in Tangled Light**

In phosphorescence, ghosts  
write lists and ponder their anxieties.  
They prick ears to second-hand  
eavesdropping, obsess on body hair,  
pluck one banality for another.

Your ghost will bio-illuminate, become  
an LED billboard blinking its variations  
too quickly for motorists to read  
all the way through—too much, too little.  
It sparks with moving static, cranes

long glowing neck parts purple and gold,  
so bright I can forget my own crashes.  
Torments, faulted by grace and virtue,  
bring your immortal vapors, your bottled  
creams. Soothe battles cells lose repeatedly.

DALE HOUSTMAN

**The Blossom Eased Against the Pane**

After a Sunset of Green Marble, the Moonrise was Grass-colored  
as He had promised. He is sliding nearer You, His Back to the Moon,  
His Hands a Tiny Blaze. Room after Room, in the Air so Green.  
Room after Room, His Hands a Tiny Blaze. He is sliding nearer You,  
His Back to the Moon, His Hands a Tiny Blaze.

And your Eyes two torn Leaves He circles because He is a Dog.  
A Dog black behind the Dark Net of Branches strangled with Vines.  
Vines into which You once dipped one tired Wing. He is sliding  
nearer You,  
His Back to the Moon, His Hands a Tiny Blaze.

You stand now in the same Room with Him, bent above  
the Steam Beds.  
The Beauty of Green Stones lay in the second Room yet it's only  
a Floor.  
The third is a Low-Ceilined Maze of Trees in the Air still so Green.  
Room after Room, your trembling Body of almonds baked  
in Silver Paper.

Or trapped beneath your Clothes, Clothes of colored Grass  
& Silver Paper. The Moon of colored Grass even as He promised You,  
sliding nearer You. His Hat casts its silly Shadow upon a Steeple Clock  
trapped beneath Your Clothes. The Steeple Clock casts its  
generous Shadow  
upon the Garden below.

The Garden casts its modest Shadow upon his House and upon  
his Hours.

Where They fall these Shadows are a Tiny Emerald Blaze, a Spark  
of Calyxes.

He casts His Shadow far across a Weeping Silver Woman. Nothing  
is stolen  
save the Whiteness of her Skin.

Light's Door shut upon the Edge of Her Blossom, bolted  
from the Outside. A latticed & humane Bed, dirty Yellow Bed  
blown into the center of the Street. A Bed wide as a Man  
and nailed shut at the very Top with her Blossoms.  
I fear for that dreaded Neck beneath her Glass Head.

Her Glass Head framed against Narcissus & Anemone  
& Nicotine Smoke.  
He is sliding nearer You, His Back to the Moon, His Hands  
a Tiny Blaze.  
Room after Room, in the Air so Green.  
Room after Room, His Hands a Tiny Blaze. He is sliding nearer You,  
His Back to the Moon, His Hands a Tiny Blaze.

## **The Red Hook**

A decent Distribution System would be a good beginning  
to a Wedding”  
thought the Panther as he penetrated the Church Girl’s Defenses.  
“Nothing’s better  
than telling the Old Bones to get lost, and Rifles don’t care  
and eventually they will wear.”

The Church Girl alone on her Porch  
had once been a local Panther Priestess,  
and there sleeping still upon her Chest  
was a Baby Panther, where her Bible  
used to hang upon a Red Hook.

The Church Girl continued stealing & selling Rifles,  
stealing & selling Apples, but she dreams of the Panther  
breathing deeply halfway up the Apple Tree,  
his warm Breath moving the Leaves.

A Panther is singing out there in the Apple Blossoms  
at the very Top of the Tree. The Panther worries an Apple  
out from the corner of the Church Girl’s Eye  
and penetrates its Defenses.

“Nothing is better than telling the Old Bones to get lost,  
and the Rifles don’t care, and eventually they will wear,”  
said the Church Girl as she carried an Apple across her Porch,  
breathing in the Scent of the Apples and the Panther.  
And there sleeping still upon her Chest  
was a Baby Panther, where her Bible  
used to hang upon a Red Hook.

The Panther retired to Country Airs  
and simultaneously removed the Apples, and now  
the Panther didn’t need to hurry

towards that distant Porch. It was now an Apple Tree  
and so very still, though the Leaves were moving yet.

## **An Astonishment of Butterflies**

Once upon a Choking Desire, there existed our Grandmother with some biscuits in the forest you can see right over there. She took a path to a longer path and to an even longer path that led to an open door, but a gruff voice (which lived in the forest you can see right over there) called out “Who’s there?” and our Grandmother stopped and she listened for a short time that led to a longer time and to an even longer time in which butterflies having lingered far too long in that open door, caught a chill and shook themselves to pieces onto a piece of bread just in time for lunch.

## **The Lynx-Eyed Bride**

Once upon a mildewed beach, the Lynx-Eyed Bride strolled with her wet baggage toward home and a chilling plate of boiled clams. She was quite wise and very capable as used-up persons go, and so she gave a little rhyming speech to the ocean as she struggled along...

*“Explanations are so domestic,  
And choices ruin each day.  
I’d rather be a schoolmarm...”*

And then her mouth just blew away.

DORU CHIRODEA

**untitled**

i got a job at last i'll be gainfully employed as a deaf scribe to a mute poet some menial philosophical duties are also involved but those only while am on my unremunerated vacation which starts today i'm told my periodically paid compensation is a little iffy its amount depending on whether Anaximander had ever organized dwarf throwing orgies or was almost gay by self suggestion

**untitled**

i kept not having this dream about termagant eukaryotes & of you on  
top multiscrewing by division this no dream of you i had skimming  
swallow-like in no direction daintily shanghaied on the last seaworthy  
driftpain on earth & the true son of Ishmael pisspainting on a Baltimore  
hickdive floor sawdust life deathsigns i guess reverse engineering applied  
to your sidestepped demise never worked



UNTITLED by Wayne Hogan, 2014  
collage, mixed media

JEFF HARRISON

**Inquiries Overgrown**

Virginia's guise has shifted from an alarm to a doll  
migration has brought imagination neatly  
dried & well-bred, red-hot & undisguised, soiled &  
taken down / an honest heart craftily three-score  
several times, to her consternation, his brain had given  
place to fortune, inquiries overgrown with apprehension  
this news has gone to decay  
shall we pretend the sky killed our pool of blood?  
my liberty is drawing toward silence  
a season's crime cudgeled into a deep sleep  
prayers thus amazed saw each new face in my eyes  
I don't have a stick to burn against this cold... what if  
Portugal's history asks about me? What then?

SHANNON ELWARD

**Five Explanations for Broken Breath**

*We develop in the space between revolving and breath.*

Eric Baus

1. You should know, I lied about the existence of wolves on Jupiter. My body isn't a map—isn't a planet of frozen lightning. My hips aren't a convergence—aren't the books you keep at your bedside.

2. I read *Poet in New York* to remind myself of the burnt pupil you keep in your back pocket. I bury my sternum—I bury my bookshelf-lung—in the fur of fourteen brown eyes.

3. A passage from Breton's *Alien History of the Printing Press*: "Dream owl: although the significance is largely dependent upon the shape of the eyelid meeting the tongue, it often, though sometimes never, means to cut the photos out of every book your third lover ever owned."

4. I once spent four days contemplating how I'd destroy your dinner table, if asked. The plan involves invoking the spirit of the nineteenth moon god.

5. Last night, the sage of everyone I've ever known settled onto my bookshelf.

**Dear Mother: A Dream**

Dear Mother,

I don't know how to stop your bone  
from weeping rosemary. Academia

tried to teach me science. I refused.  
I'm not sorry I'm stuck with fire ants and poetics.

I'm not sorry. A dream:  
You keep repeating my name in tens.

Every night I curl around Lorca's bent spine;  
he exhales surrealism and ash.

Dear mother, if only *duende* meant *I'm sorry*  
I'd have the right word. Dear mother,

Fort Wayne is filled with melting clocks.  
A dream: your grey hair ignites

and Spanish pours from your mouth.  
Those six months were hell.

The hole in your bone knows your name— knows every name.  
If the body speaks, why can't I listen?

Dear mother, I was a sensitive child—  
those were the first words you spoke. Dear mother,

your bone wept for seventeen days.  
Rosemary didn't exist: a dream.

## **The Place I Want Cold Least**

Prudence reads tealeaves through eyeglasses of bent bone. It isn't for vision, she tells me; she just wants to see an answer from a part of the body that can't lie. We go out for drinks, and she attempts to read my lifeline from the bottom of my scotch. The glass is empty. My hand, a branch bending under the weight of freshly grown ice.

She tells me it might mean mispronounced vowels, or maybe it means my spine is crying. More than likely it has something to do with how the wind chill affects the body of all creatures, living and dead, in the exact same way. We all feel the cold first in the place we want it least. I tell her I see a correlation in the bilabials, hoping to avoid any discussion of the latter. I'm afraid of the frozen that might sprout from my gut—the place I want cold least.

It's cold when Prudence removes her glasses—her bent bone—her pocketful of frost. My bone—a branch too close to snapping. My bone, a gut of ice.

## EDWARD SMALLFIELD

### **the art of narrative**

in America  
never tell anybody  
I believe  
what you're thinking

never tell anybody  
outside the family  
what you're thinking  
I have nothing to say

outside the family  
in a land of ancient cults  
I have nothing to say  
but I want to say it anyway

in a land of ancient cults  
the doors are open  
anyway I want to say  
you can act

the doors are open  
you're free  
you can act  
like a man

you're free  
but you don't have much time  
like a man  
everybody likes sweet things

you don't have much time  
I'm from my country  
everybody likes sweet things  
women can be careless

my country is where I'm from  
do you have trouble  
and children can be careless  
do you like

do you have trouble  
with women  
do you like  
will you call me

with women  
*je ne regrette*  
will you call me  
tomorrow

I believe in  
*je ne regrette*  
*rien* tomorrow  
in America

## ZOLTÁN KOMOR

### **The Violin-Fishers**

Shadows of circling seagulls stick to the heated rocks on the bay. Sleepy seashells blink at naked boys who drag their fishnets to the shore. Their spines chamber out from their backs like snakes hiding under the sand. The rope bit into their sunburnt shoulders. In the unfolding net, along with silver fish and purple crabs, a dozen violins squirm. Their strings are covered with seaweed and flutter in excitement, gills discharging on their brown sides, pushing out the remaining salty water from their bodies. One of the older boys sticks two fingers into a gill, stretching it open, and shows it to his little brother.

“Look! It’s just like a pussy!” He winks at the kid, and the other boys start to laugh. Seagulls swoop down to the sand, eye the fish in the net, but suddenly the sharp sound of a horn scares the birds away. The fisherboys look back at the road where an old truck is parked, a fat, hairy hand hanging out the front window, waving for them to hurry up. So the boys pick up the violins, and run to the truck—they throw the musical instruments into the hot metal truck bed, where they keep squirming and jumping. When they rub their bodies together, their strings squeak.

A fat man leans out of the van. Sweat glistens on his round face, the hairs of his tiny mustache collect the salty drops. His stained yellow undershirt is like a map leading to nowhere—and the ashes of his burning cigar keep falling on it. The boys finish with the packing. The oldest one runs to the driver, who fishes out some greasy money from the glove compartment and slaps it into the kid’s palm. He nods and turns the key. The engine roars and the truck disappears over the horizon. The boys run back to the shore, where one of the nets still wobbles with a violin inside.

“Okay, let’s build a fire!” orders the biggest boy, and the other children scatter along the beach.

“Tonight’s program: Debussy” says a poster in front of the opera house. A truck drives into the parking lot, and when the driver honks the horn, musicians in suits arrive, pick up the dried violins, and walk back into the building.

The driver steps out of the car, stretching and cracking his joints. Feeling a bit dizzy from the heat, he staggers in the stage door. In his dressing room, he pulls off his sweaty undershirt, throws it in the corner, then he opens a closet and takes out an elegant suit. He stubs his cigar in the ashtray and gels his hair back. Someone knocks on his door.

“Are you ready, maestro?”

And the maestro is ready. There’s an aquarium next to the mirror with a giant sea urchin inside. Dipping his hand into the water, he pulls out one of its spines.

In the concert hall the musicians are tuning their new instruments—some of them are blowing huge sea shells, others are touching the jellyfish tentacles of a harp. As bows touch strings, the violins come to life—their gills begin to purge, puking salty water onto the musician’s shoulders. The audience rumbles as obese women in their choking tight cocktail dresses, pearls clinking against each other on their huge necks, turn to their yawning husbands and poke them with sausage fingers. When the maestro walks to his podium, the sound of clapping rises. The man bows, then raps the music stand with his baton.

In the meantime, flames rise on the shore, and the fire begins to chew on some broken oars. The oldest boy is skinning the violin with a knife. The blood of the instrument drips into the sand. He cuts out the inedible parts, and throws the gills at the tiny boy next to the fire.

“Here ya go, marry it!” he mocks the boy. “This is the only pussy you’re ever gonna get!”

The other boys begin to laugh, while tears well up in the corners of the child’s eyes. He jumps up and runs into the night. The laughter chases him for a while, then meshes with the roar of the sea’s dark waves.

As the maestro warms up, he sweats, as if he were still sitting in the truck. The waves of music run at the rocks wrapped in cocktail dresses and blow into spray of notes. The musical keys turn the husbands on they grow young again—turning into bronzed boys. As they laugh,

their penises grow hard and ejaculate inside their dinner jackets. White pearls roll out of their trousers, and their wives begin to chase the small spheres, trampling each other, eventually becoming entangled in the boy-nests. The little fishermen sharp each musical note they find in the air.

“Okay, let’s build a fire!” orders the biggest boy, and they huddle their seats up. The shells on their chests begin to clap. The wailing of fat ladies drowns out the sound of the instruments. The maestro perceives the muddle, but he simply can’t stop conducting, not even when the boys carry away his podium and throw it on the fire. His baton smolders like a cigar, but it doesn’t stop at his fingers: soon his whole arm turns to ashes and drops to the ground.

The boys watch the fire bite into the meat—the cosmic notes of stars on the mirror of the sea—under the light of the moon the violins swim in the bay, casting a greenish light under the waves, laying their eggs in the sludge.

On the other side of the bay, the young boy sits crying on a rock, watching the distant glow of the instruments. Then he notices something: on the shore, in the cool sand, a giant dark mound stirs. The boy stands and sneaks up on it. It’s a beached piano—digging into the sand with its slim legs. The child watches its wide, gleaming dark side in amazement—its giant gills open and close continuously, foamy water oozing out on the sand. The boy extends his tiny hand and touches one of its keys. The instrument shakes in fear, its legs dig deeper pits into the sand, as it tries to drag itself back into the water. And then the boy smiles. He sticks two fingers into its enormous gill, stretching it open.

\*

Colorful tourists arrive—their skins are gleaming with sunscreen—and take pictures of the beached whale. Photoflashes sparkle.

“Poor, poor thing,” the parents say, while their children throw sand in the animal’s small, black eyes. They argue and crawl back into their cars, turning the keys and then disappearing down the roads, while whale screams come out of their cameras.

Dusk oozes from the sky’s wounds. A wind arrives from the sea,

dancing a poster onto the shore. As it sticks to the heated rocks, the sign comes legible. Tonight's program: Debussy. Then the hot stone sets the paper on fire and it turns to ashes.

The audience arrives. They gather around the whale in dinner jackets and cocktail dresses. The giant mammal is almost dead—an assembly of ghosts stirs in its fading dark eye. The recently arrived take their seats in the sand, waiting for Debussy—scraping the wax out of their ears, kneading tiny pearls. They hold their breath, and throw the ones whose hearts are beating too loudly into the water. Then the mouth of the whale opens: musicians tune their instruments in the animal's giant throat-hall. What beautiful acoustics! A lady in the audience pisses herself upon hearing these semitones. A podium stands on the whale's tongue. Shells of hands clap when the maestro arrives. The baton goes erect in his hand, and finally the show begins: music fills the shore—levitating above the waves—in distant hotels, cameras in bags begin to cry.

But then, something interrupts the program. The sound of laughter and whoops, naked boys running between the rocks, yelling, shouting, their penises lashing against their bare thighs. Knives glitter in their hands.

The maestro grunts angrily, and he signals to the musicians to play more loudly. But the waves of music can't wash away the rampage of the boys. The maestro can't bear it any longer, and he shouts: "You're ruining the performance, you rats! This is Debussy!" He shakes with anger, but the boys just keep laughing at him. The audience feels ill at ease, a few ladies die silently in embarrassment, the others, when they notice the sharp little knives in the boys' hands, jump up and run away. The kids doesn't care about them, they are mocking the maestro, shouting: "Yoouu're ruinining the perfomance, this iiiis Debuuusy!" One of the boys gets an erection, and he begins to sway his cock back and forth, as if he's conducting the music. As he rolls his hips the musicians get confused and the music slides into chaos. The maestro hits the podium with his baton and it breaks in two. Then he aims at the boys with his wand, ready to throw it like a dart. (The spines of the sea urchin are poisonous, causing temporary paralysis. The time before the poison takes effect is about the same as the length of Debussy's La

Mer.) He almost throws it, when the whale suddenly closes its mouth. The boys can hear as the maestro begins to curse inside the animal, locked in a music-storm. They give the animal a clap, and one of them shouts: “Come on boys, let’s push it back into the water!”

So they gather around the dying whale, and start to put their shoulders into the behemoth. The boys’ muscles ache, the animal leaves a deep gash in the sand as it gets closer and closer to the sea. The withdrawing waves are helping the kids, and soon the animal’s body spins into the foam. The boys are waving goodbyes to the whale as it sprays mist into the dark sky. All of a sudden something blocks its blowhole. It’s the maestro, he got caught in there, shouting curses, then the animal blows again, and like a champagne cork he flies into the night sky: “Forgive me, Debussyyy!” And he disappears into the depths.

\*

Morning arrives, all the boys on the beach open their eyes at once. They stand, stretching as small crayfish fall from their chests. Their morning wood points at the sea, while they kick away the black remains of yesterday’s fire. Suddenly, they hear music. It’s coming from the other side of the bay. The boys grab their knives and begin to run.

After a few moments, they glimpse the broken-legged piano and the little boy. His tiny fingers are moving on the keys. Sweat is running down his forehead, and his face shines as he plays. The fisherboys give each other a flustered look. The little pianist smiles at his brothers victoriously. They must be very proud of him now. His fingers keep running over the keys, like the needle legs of a crayfish in the sand. As if he weren’t controlling his own hands, as if the music were simply nesting itself under his nails.

But then, the oldest boy yells, his voice is a knife thrust into the piano-piece: “Meat!” And the other boys don’t need any more encouragement: they charge at the instrument and begin to chop it all up, slicing hunks of meat from the piano. The little boy is horrified. He wants to scream and run away, but his legs don’t move. He just keeps his fingers on the keys, and he plays and plays, while his brothers throw the meat into bloody mounds, and the instrument slowly disappears beneath his fingers.



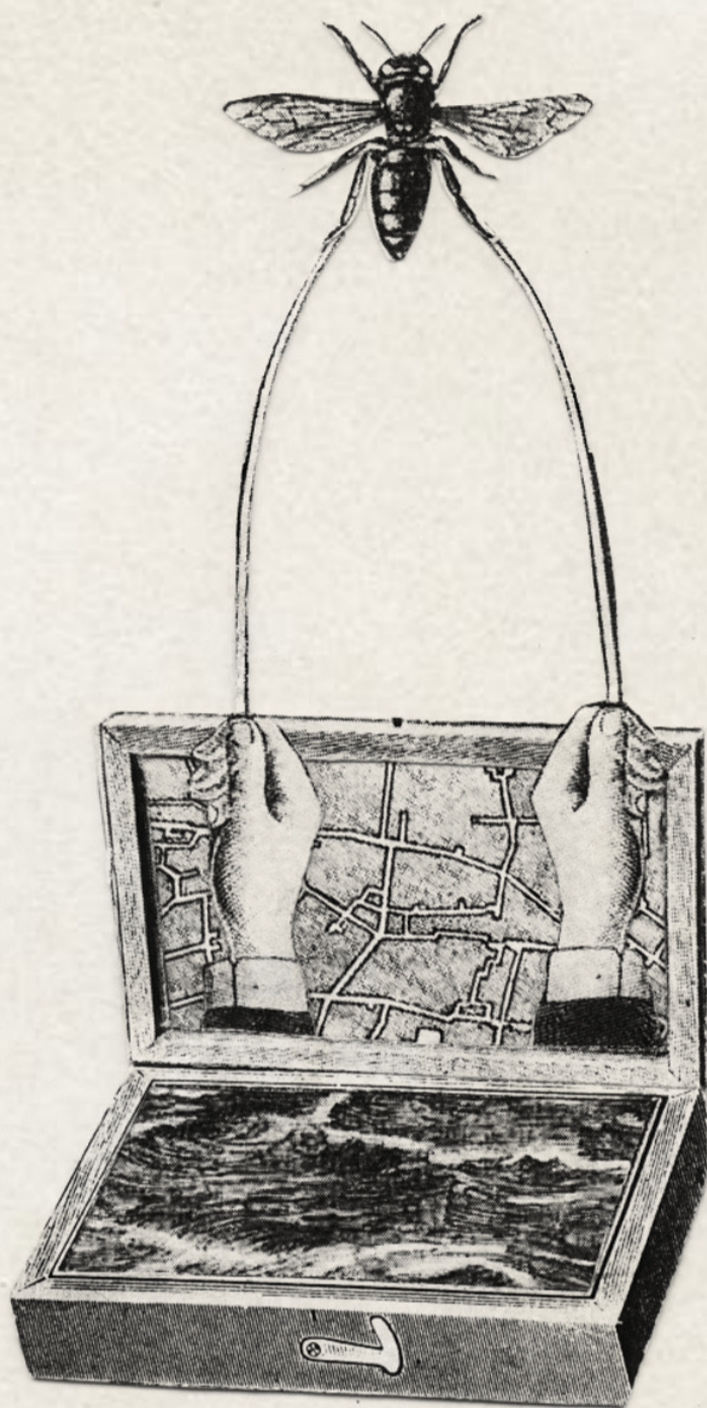
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MAUREEN ALSOP

**Ministering the Weather**

Eight thick components survived: one in me and seven others  
mostly alive.

O, we were so green on the day of loss. Not a single wise message  
transferred. My  
temperate hell was marginal by degrees—a useless gilt frame, a bird  
singing wet into eyes,  
wilderness missing the open span of a door.

Upward into dark hill, into elliptical recess of night, I dwelled.

Why trend damnation, the sad thing, my whole self revolving  
yet missing?

God's departure beams in the mind. Or he is base.

**Snow Amulet, Superscription**

As death goes out also this night goes—filled with contrition, radiant—  
birds sleep in the day as I slit a path upon the sun. My body organizing  
lines of trees, singing wide the bird's chest in time. I myself am time.  
My hands are a kind of weight before me, the sound of flying, perched  
reliquaries guiding my horizon.

## DENVER BUTSON

### **I'm Reading a Book about a Scarecrow**

I'm reading a book about a scarecrow. It's a long book and the cover is torn off. There is no title page. I don't know who wrote it or when. So I go to the local library and get the reference librarian on the case. He's fatter than he was when we were kids. And a lot older. I don't think he's married. He looks like he never goes outside.

"A scarecrow?" He says and breathes out through his mouth. He doesn't say "why would anyone read a book about a scarecrow?" but he might as well have. "Come back after lunch," he says. I ask him if I can bring him anything and he holds up a lunch bag and says "got it all right here. See you in a few."

I don't really go anywhere over lunch. I just sit in my car in the library parking lot. It's raining a little, and the sound of the rain is good accompaniment to my memories of the book about a scarecrow. It feels strange not to be reading it right now. It feels wrong to have left it with the librarian.

In the last scene I read before coming to the library, the scarecrow is standing in a field—What else would he be doing I guess?—while the farm goes on all around him. There is something happening between the farmer's wife and a farmer from a few farms over. The scarecrow notices that the farmer's wife's laugh is different every time the other farmer is around.

There are quite a few grammatical mistakes in the book I'm reading about the scarecrow. A number of spelling mistakes. At one point it seems like a whole page or two are missing, but I can't tell if that's supposed to suggest incompleteness or fragmentation in the scarecrow's

life or if it's just a mistake. It occurs to me that this might not be a published book at all. That this could be a one-off. Some wannabe writer or student of scarecrows might have put this together as a project. I can't remember where I got this book. If I found it on the sidewalk. Or if I bought it at a goodwill or Salvation Army. It didn't come from a book store. Not in the shape it's in. And besides, I don't have the money to buy new books these days.

After I sit for awhile listening to the rain and thinking, it occurs to me that my librarian might have something for me by now. So I take a couple pretzels from the bag I had left on the passenger seat and a sip of the lukewarm coffee in the cup holder and head back in.

The librarian whose name I just remembered is "Doug" smells like onions or probably more specifically more like rehydrated formerly dehydrated onions. Like those in a soup packet. "Hey Doug," I say and he looks at me like either his name isn't Doug or like he doesn't go by that in his workplace. And I almost say "sorry" but then say "any luck?"

"Luck?" he says, again insulted. "Yeah I rolled some dice and found all these books for you. . . I flipped a coin and so happened to discover the foremost authority on scarecrows and writings about scarecrows. I wished on an eyelash and suddenly I learned all this."

"Jeez, Doug, uh. Mr" and because I couldn't remember his last name I say "mister mister librarian ... Sir. I didn't mean .."

"No worries," he says, "it's all good. Not a problem." And then he points to all the stuff he's pulled from the library. Just then I remember that Doug had a sister who was so beautiful in high school that you couldn't think straight when you were around her but she got pregnant, moved away and nobody ever saw her again. I want to ask Doug about his sister but then I think it's been twenty or more years and who knows she could be dead for all I know. Or she could look like Doug now. Why mess with a good memory like that?

“Your book doesn’t exist.” Doug says suddenly and with a bit of triumph in his voice. “What?” the almost crystal-clear image of Doug’s sister in her cheerleader uniform fading away instantly.

“It doesn’t exist,” he says again. There is a little piece of spinach or parsley between his two front teeth. “I looked everywhere and there is no such book. I even called the library in the city. You should have heard that librarian laughing. Both of us really. Laughing.”

“But I’ve been reading it for days,” I say “it has to exist.”

“For you maybe,” Doug says, and almost as if he’s gently breaking it to me that I have dementia, that everything I believe to be true is only an illusion. I watch Doug’s mouth saying “but all authorities agree ... In the world of books ... In the real world ... The real world of what IS real, there is no such book,” and then he hands my book on the scarecrow back to me and says “sorry.”

I’m still reading the book about the scarecrow. No matter what Doug says. No matter what the so-called authorities believe about its existence. In the book the scarecrow is methodically putting back together the farmer’s old motorcycle In the barn while everyone is sleeping. The farmer has just thrown a punch at the farmer up the road, and he hasn’t come back around again in several pages. The farmer’s wife isn’t laughing much these days and she watches the road when she is hanging laundry.

If the scarecrow really is rebuilding this motorcycle (if it’s not just in his head), I hope he finishes it before the place in the book where the rest of the pages are ripped out. I want to see him ride into the sunset. Fuck Doug and his computers and indices and search engines and authorities. This goddamn book is real.

It’s in my hands now. I’m reading a book about a scarecrow in what little time there is left before the sun disappears and there is no more light. I’d read it by flashlight but I can’t find my flashlight and the batteries are dead anyway.

After it's too dark to read, I'll just sit here after and watch the fireflies and try not to think about Doug's sister. Maybe I'll help the scarecrow with the last pieces of the motorcycle. Or try to see how long I can hold my breath and not move a muscle. It's quiet when you first start holding your breath. But then your own stillness starts to get louder until it's all you hear at all. I bet

Doug doesn't know that. I bet he has his tv on and is eating chips out of a rattling bag. "Hey Doug!" I want to shout across town toward the direction of what used to be his house. Used to be the house of Doug's sister and her smile and her breasts. "This is real. The scarecrow is real. My book is real. It's everything else that isn't including you and your pale weak hands and that parsley between your teeth."

But I don't yell anything. Not at Doug. Not at the sky. The fireflies are beautiful and I have to get some sleep if going up wake up at the first inkling of dawn so I can find out what's going to happen to the scarecrow and me next.

## **A Purgatory of Scarecrows**

while we are on the subject of  
(unkindness of ravens, murder of crows)

a purgatory of scarecrows  
a hangover of scarecrows  
a cartography of scarecrows  
a mirage of scarecrows  
a broken promise of scarecrows  
a bon voyage of scarecrows  
an alarm of scarecrows  
a grief of scarecrows  
an orchestra of scarecrows  
a smudge of scarecrows  
a bender of scarecrows  
an annulment of scarecrows  
a jargon of scarecrows  
an auction of scarecrows  
a coup d'etat of scarecrows  
a triage of scarecrows  
a ringside seat of scarecrows  
a droning of scarecrows  
a narcolepsy of scarecrows  
a nickel's worth of scarecrows  
a tintinnabulation of scarecrows  
a bridle of scarecrows  
an installation of scarecrows  
a catalogue of scarecrows  
a congregation of scarecrows  
an accident of scarecrows  
a cache of scarecrows  
a sleepwalking of scarecrows  
a symphony of scarecrows  
an aneurysm of scarecrows  
a mimicry of scarecrows

a stitching-up of scarecrows  
an autopsy of scarecrows  
a smear of scarecrows  
an irrelevance of scarecrows  
a flare-up of scarecrows  
a sigh of scarecrows  
a precipice of scarecrows  
a repetition of scarecrows  
a sermon of scarecrows  
a shortage of scarecrows  
a sheath of scarecrows  
a disembowelment of scarecrows  
a topography of scarecrows  
a kleptomania of scarecrows  
a distillation of scarecrows  
a suicide of scarecrows  
an arsenal of scarecrows  
a je ne sais quoi of scarecrows  
an orphanage of scarecrows  
a fermentation of scarecrows  
a morbidity of scarecrows  
an adjournment of scarecrows  
a bildungsroman of scarecrows  
a stillness of scarecrows  
a pizzicato of scarecrows  
a tryst of scarecrows  
a poor house of scarecrows  
a surrender of scarecrows  
an alarming rate of scarecrows  
an assault and battery of scarecrows  
a dress rehearsal of scarecrows  
a toxicity of scarecrows  
a satchel of scarecrows  
a remorse of scarecrows  
a temptation of scarecrows  
a trespass of scarecrows

a burnt offering of scarecrows  
a taxidermy of scarecrows  
a narrowing of scarecrows  
a novella of scarecrows  
a jury of scarecrows  
a mutiny of scarecrows  
a dementia of scarecrows  
a vulgarity of scarecrows  
a binge of scarecrows  
a syncopation of scarecrows  
a derangement of scarecrows  
an infinity of scarecrows  
a depot of scarecrows  
a stain of scarecrows  
a commandment of scarecrows  
a hypnosis of scarecrows  
a worriment of scarecrows  
a curse of scarecrows  
a magnetism of scarecrows  
a simple plan of scarecrows  
an insult of scarecrows  
an acceleration of scarecrows  
an on-deck circle of scarecrows  
a blindness of scarecrows

DAN GUTSTEIN

**A Circus of Boundary**

It must be 9:00 o'clock.

The day, weatherless,

but in full automation.

Think "idea" or "ideal."

How "God" can correlate

any two sums,

a circus of boundary.

The oak swells whereas

the pine concentrates.

A system, in this case,

a fascination with

signals and conduction.

It must be 9:00 o'clock.

The same models predict

the sophistic arguments

of those who seek election,

now that warming

has been introduced.

*Gutstein/93*

In some climes assembly  
requires wooden pews.

The author of “Theory A”  
can correlate any two sums

but not in “Theory A.”  
Think “inert” or “inertia.”

## **Tunnels and Entering Tunnels**

Tunnels and entering tunnels  
then fog the complexion of heavy stones.

Hasn't been a deer paradise  
hasn't been a paradise  
the locomotive returning diesel fuel as particulate.

It darkens  
there must be limits to darkening  
the poles and wires  
the platform, the distal walkers.

You, too, a walker  
you, too, a distal shape  
stepping against colorlessness.

The wind stamps your eyes  
it stamps the roots of your teeth  
the watery metals of an intersection  
your soles and heels slippery.

You may not visit here again.

Up the block / down the block  
houses harbor the warmth of electric light  
as if it were perishable.

A door opens.

ERIC HOFFMAN

From *Emerson in America*

Dawn breaks, the sun sets,  
The dome's slate-colored clouds

Become a wreath of roses.  
Or look down the river

Lined by trees, green & orderly,  
A coronation of elegancy

As if in a dream.  
Is this superficial?

Or is the Earth itself unsightly?  
Narcissus, crocus, lily or petal,

An assemblage of bright & opake balls  
Floating in space, each individual's

A counterpart & contemplator of the whole.  
Events shall shape the Earth,

Lie packed in silence, awaiting their birth.  
Everything emerges, converges,

A pebble & cloud,  
Scraps of thought & action.

RAYMOND FARR

**Who Isn't in Love with Itinerant Emotions?**

I was some kind  
Of a pale cloud

Pondering the value  
Of absolute transparency

& you were a sidewalk  
& so I rained on you

*It's ok with me*, you sd  
Yr head torn off

By the hurtling sounds—  
Howls of the dogs!

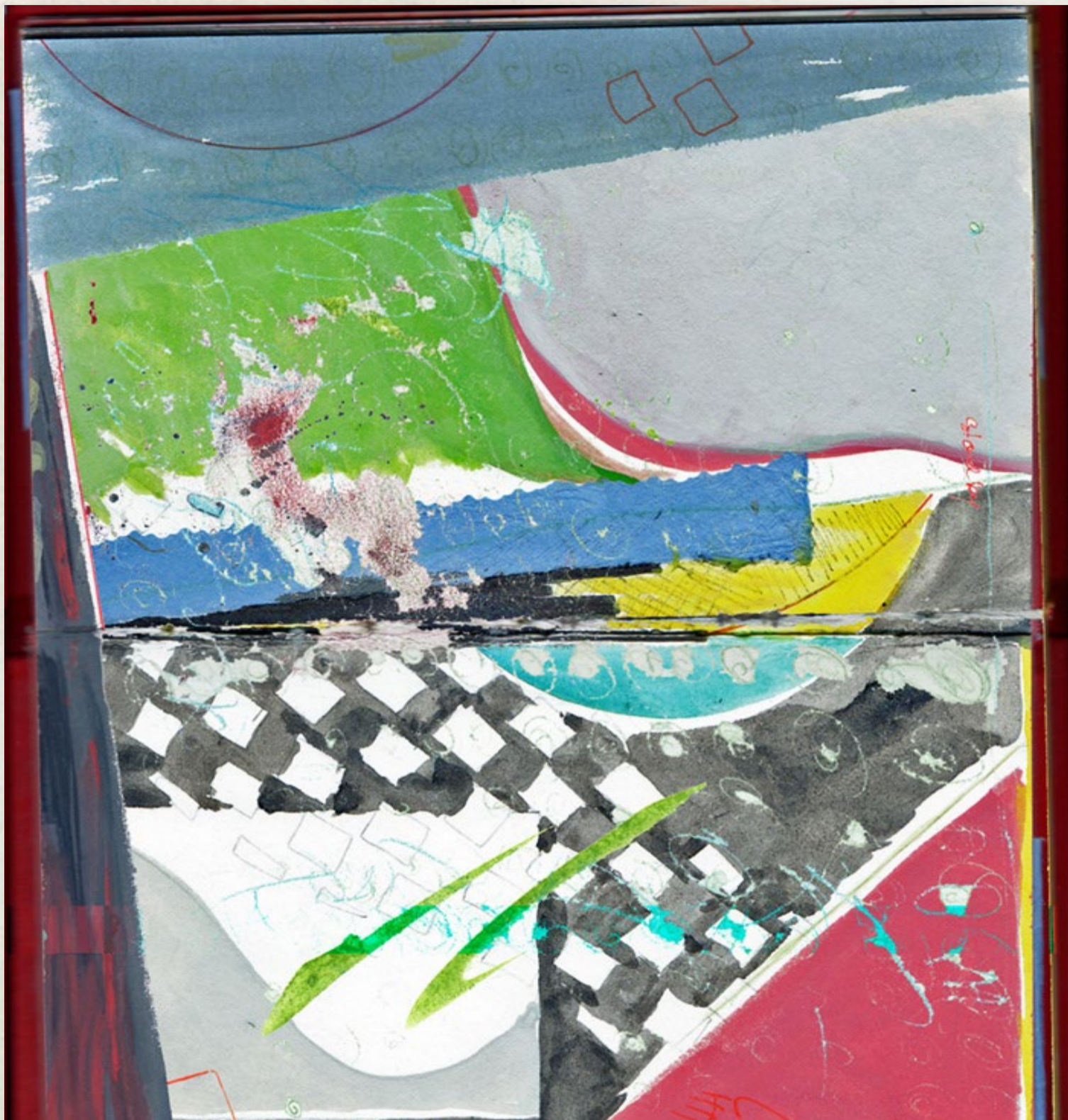
The streets in their howling!  
The idea of rain at the window

Like a book being shut  
All summer we held nothing

Like a snow globe  
In our hands

On one hand—  
Propriety

On the other hand—  
A blur



WHERE IS THE DOOR 1 by Marilyn R. Rosenberg, 2013-14  
art book, collage, mixed media (8 1/4" x 5 1/4")



WHERE IS THE DOOR 2 by Marilyn R. Rosenberg, 2013-14  
art book, collage, mixed media (5 1/4" x 8 1/4")

JAY PASSER

**Letter to Myself I**

Looks like I've settled after all these years for good in San Francisco. Really there is no better city for me and my pocketbook ethos and slander of the spirit and breakfasting of the apocalypse. I can walk to the wharf and the ocean and back in a day and pretend I fell off a rock and was ravaged by seals. Say I lost my hearing aid and glasses and false teeth and wallet and keys and a shoe like Bob Kaufman and beat up by cops to boot. Eyes crossed out with masking tape and bare-breasted a little paunch after all these centaur years. The computer won't let me say CENTAURIAN. That thin red line beneath the word telling me wrong wrong wrong. It's cool here, and I'm glad I was gone for 20 years so I can fully appreciate the native city. I live in the Tenderloin district just northwest of downtown which is in the heart, amongst the poorest and wretched and broken and flying. I walk around a bunch through the tunnels and fog and graft and endless chatter, avoiding the detritus as best, and talking up the living dead, and numbing down for the warring invisible but inevitable.

## **Letter to Myself II**

I walk through thrum of siren and lurch of earth mover, the pile driver seeking new routes to teeming transplants. Bolting from drought to scathing, from muscle to musical. Market tinsel, fountain bustle. The scent of the streets assails and assuages, grilled beef wafts, unwashed human staggers. Smoke and bright windows and clotted sidewalks and color miasma and small apartment dogs skittering off pulpy hands. In the mornings to climb legions of steps up to Coit Tower either bold sunlight or shrouded chill. I could be in a wheelchair still I'd pull it off. A cylinder loosens in my mind as I gaze past what I know are cold distances over the bay waters. At arm's length from peripheral vista I sense in the Bridges a fetal pulse. I embrace twin totems. The tourists stream around me as if in speeded-up film. Just another among the multitude of figures painted on the murals in the interior of the Tower. Like some apotropaic shadow. The nights roaming elder states of lucid debauchery, then to hole up in the paint-peeling cubby, listening to rustle and mime of pages. Try to pick up something on the radio. There seems a decline in quality of language or trafficking of futures—I have to draw straws flip a coin or fall asleep to decide.

## ROBIN HUDECHEK

### **Pearls scatter on my bed**

from a sky spitting pearls in trails from star to star  
then threading them once more into gray wisps  
thin as smoke, thin as my hair  
where these pieces remain  
hidden, constellations on an ocean floor.

Black pearls are as comforting as coffee  
grounds when I rub them between my fingers  
or large as bowling balls in my dreams.

Seed pearls spill from trees in snowy fury  
or sprout from the ground as dew:  
pearls of light upon the leaves.

My pearls are precious, like pearls carried in pockets  
filled with holes, the pockets of orphan children who could  
never afford pearls in their ears or in their jewelry boxes  
where a single pearl rolls like an eight ball from corner to corner  
until at last it drops unseen into a remote country,  
a pocket of the world no one has mapped or visited.

Pearls sink into the necks of lilies softened by the act of growing,  
pearls are nestling against my palm with its mars and slashes,

my pearls are tiny planets with their own heated cores.



STILL 1 by Lan Yuan-hung, 2014, digital photograph



STILL 2 by Lan Yuan-hung, 2014, digital photograph



FALLING 3 by Lan Yuan-hun, 2014, digital photograph

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

JODDY MURRAY:

It's the whole reason why, at the auction, some boxes are sold complete and you're not allowed to look through, pick out the best and pay less. It's the higher order of acceptance; it's tolerance of junk and the way to distribute it. There is a bacterium, *Thiomargarita Namibiensis* (the sulphur pearl of Namibia) visible to the naked eye. I have personally found no alternative to fallibility. Such is to honor abundant imperfection.

ROBIN HUDECHEK:

The ground is cold. Skyscrapers built as monuments to men lean into the stars. On the top floor I pull curtains, the rings of Saturn so near I trace them with my fingers. The plants are dying, grass hardening into tinderbox stalks. Wind rises from smokeless fires. Those of us left here brush moon dust from our shoulders and dream of fireflies tapping against our windowpanes. They are fossils, cursed fairies, dropping from the trees in cocoons. Their wings are old and moist on my lips, icy wings nesting without heat or light, beading my hair and arms in stone.

DOUG GUNN:

Ideology is fixed in the formal contours of language; ideology and form work together to frame and qualify a world. Conventional forms have been established in the context of an official version of reality—the ideology of late capitalism, in most of the Western World. When you rely on conventions of language that have developed in support of that world, you can make a “successful” utterance. At the same time, you affirm ideologies condensed in established linguistic conventions, from grammar to sentence structure to narrative structure. This is language that has become naturalized: we don't question its propriety, this language is natural, we take it for granted. This principle is supported by common sense.

Writing that flouts the rules of formal convention, and disregards common sense, automatically challenges the ideology of the dominant culture. By “opting out” of the normative speech situation, creating an undisciplined, errant utterance, you place yourself in opposition to the tradition responsible for interpreting the actual conditions of existence in terms of an official version of reality. Your discourse is a threat to a disciplinary society, and the various apparatus that support it. E.g., the literary institution, the academic disciplines. Advertising. The courts, schools, the church.

Or so I once said.

#### EDWARD SMALLFIELD:

In autumn the forest arrives in the city. The rowboat descends slowly, from cloud to cloud, and the protagonists disembark. Some may be animals, and perhaps others are not. Your task is delivery, but what remains a question. First the answer, then the question. Gravity imposes. Stars fall, and ashes, and fragments. Also a reverse action, seepage upward through the forest floor, a distillation of roots and wet earth. Local words for local things: *rovellons*, *girgolas*, *trompetas de la muerte*, *ceps*. Where have you been? Less light in the north now. *All politics is local*. The flag with its red and yellow stripes. A story explains it. First independence, then everything else.

#### DALE HOUSTMAN:

##### **The City**

The City is thickest where the black trees blossom black fruit. Beneath the boughs, the earth's white skin...

Any city deviates from its norm by precisely the degree with which each inhabitant desires more than they will ever receive.

A city's contours—even when indistinct—are extravagant approximations of a woman's body, and a different woman for every pair of eyes.

The crowds of the City are random reformations of countless memories clustered about food-and-information kiosks, but no longer about train schedule counters, because—as usual—the trains shall not arrive.

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Please ignore the black-hooded bodies hanging from the green highway light posts. Downwind of the scene are prettier trees with red-hooded flowers blown open in the early spring air. Sit out one more morning coffee in that elegant breeze. Read your newspaper until the coffee arrives.

•

One approves most eloquently by sleeping. Later, the blood is removed by a miracle product, and the cloth—with its stain—may be discarded: we are wealthy. The newspaper is a sedative.

•

WHY is gold considered a beautiful object: is it because it is shiny, or relatively rare, or fragile, or (for the most part) mainly “useless” apart from its place as ornamentation. Since - for myself anyway - beauty lies in a sustained interest created by unresolvable “problems” (the most common example being the “mysterious Mona Lisa smile”), then what is unsolvable (i.e. what *resists* easy solutions in gold)? Of course, its very malleability makes it perfect for the creation of ornamental objects, whose beauty is easily located in such a “resistance,” but the element itself (especially in its raw state) is not so compelling. Same with diamonds, although diamonds have multiple “exploitable” properties, as gold does not. And—as an unworked “thing” gold is no more attractive than pyrite (fool’s gold), which is quite shiny and—really—almost indistinguishable from gold by mere aesthetics. I do not know the “exploitable” qualities of pyrite, and that would answer why gold is used for jewelry rather than pyrite, but it doesn’t explain the initial attraction. Gold is harder to find (where I once lived - in the Mojave Desert—pyrite lies scattered all over the desert, quite available).

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Personally, I'm all for letting people (children or otherwise) grab whatever they want in the MoMA or the Louvre and take it home to their grandkids and parents. Then—since they won't own it either—allowing whoever else wants it for a time to take it from them, and so on. Of course, the Mona Lisa would soon be a pile of shredded canvas, but that's a minor concern all in all.

**ZOLTAN KOMOR:**

Gloomy Sunday: no one thought the celebrity chef of the weekend cookery program was really the leader of a suicide cult. Just after finishing a sauce she showed the housewives how to stick their heads into a gas oven, to get relief from everyday pain, and thousands of husbands found their wives dead in the kitchen. Everyone started to suspect. But of course even suicide cults aren't what they used to be. You join one, waiting for them to carry you into a field where a big bald man walks around with a six-shooter between his praying hands, kissing cyanide capsules into your mouth. Instead, they all just sit in armchairs, eating fast food, not doing any exercise, saying that the most efficient way to kill yourself is eating microwave popcorn. Even a shot to the head isn't always effective. Sometimes the bullet doesn't go through the bone; it just runs around inside the skull and flies out the other side. That's why better schools teach children that they should look around carefully before blowing their brains out. "I've seen many people who weren't brave enough to pull the trigger, but have never seen anyone eat popcorn with a shaking hand." A fat cult follower burps, proudly showing his terrible cholesterol results. The company cancels the cooking program, desperate housewives exchange old recipes on the black market, while a twelve year old girl is interviewed on a new talk show. She was raped by her father and the blood on her blanket formed the face of Christ. The dad hugs his little girl, an APPLAUSE sign lights up, but the viewers switch to another channel and the ratings drop. The talk show host opens a tiny door in his microphone and fishes out a cyanide capsule. The channel gave it to him; it's all in the contract, you see. After a week, they start a reality show starring the suicide cult members, so we can watch how they poison themselves day after day. Our new, lazy spiritual leaders burp up new slogans, for instance "Life

is the new suicide.” Well, Sunday’s programs always sucked, so no one stays at home. A small crowd gathers around McDonald’s to watch the young girl marry her father. They pass around French fries and cola, saying it’s the body and the blood of The Savior (and yes, it’s sugar free). They remember Christ, who was strong enough not to swallow the cyanide capsule hidden in his crucifix. The moment we’ve all been awaiting finally arrives. The voice of a bored worker comes from Ronald McDonald’s plastic statue: “Do you take this man to be your husband?” The girl with the bloody blanket on her head looks at her father, and when she says no, the crowd is outraged, picking up pavers from the parking lot. The good old stoning lures some hungry cameras. Stones fly like the bullets God once shot into his head, but didn’t kill him—they just ran around inside his skull and flew out the other side. They’re floating now in space—we’ve overpopulated one of them, and now we’re searching for a new one. Our little robots carry HD cameras on them as we switch and switch between planets. Then we switch to another channel, where an infomercial pitchman tries to sell us a new detergent. To demonstrate its effectiveness, he washes out the blood-Christ from the little girl’s white blanket. Then he advises us that we should also try drinking it, to get relief from everyday pain. Who would have ever suspected this nice infomercial pitchman?

**D. E. STEWARD:**

Larry Smith began his email soliciting advice for his No 17 with “If in the middle of all the insanity going on right now,” defining things perfectly.

So: Keep your head down, stay away from radical Islamists with knives, and from West Africa and anyone who has been since the virus broke loose there. In the Southwest red heat zone keep a big bottle of water in the car. And be aware of coastal flooding wherever you are. Enumerate telling ironies to yourself and others and laugh as best you can before you despair. Challenge stupidity and listlessness. Intelligent species should do nearly everything to purpose. Sympathize with all younglings because if you think you have sobering and somber things to deal with, you have no idea, and nobody does. Cultivate the abiding fascinations.

**DORU CHIRODEA:**

11. The Promised Land—Id est, it had already been promised.  
Please choose another location!

22. It took a bloody Indian to come up with Mr. Zero.

33. Ok, I confess; my dog is gay.

An I me I forget

All

In ablative

An ur pink Gstring

All gone

&2Dry4whatever we do in order to do

But

You are left

With the difference

Between arms

Thinking

Any frothy magpie

Pulped

Into an antivaccine

Against

The fireflies

Of receding identity

Would do

(From—How to blow a Hummingbird & Never know the Nibbana of  
Useless Writhing)

**RAY GONZALEZ:**

**Dark on the Same**

His face grew tired and rested because octopuses possess a chemical that prevents self-sucking and can differentiate other octopuses' severed tentacles from their own, which they rarely eat. This means the tiny centipede he found swimming in the toilet bowl fell in on its own. He

flushed it away because male Mientien tree frogs use the concrete drainage ditches of Taiwan to amplify their mating songs and he didn't want to be mistaken for an environmentalist. He loved two women at the same time because mice who over-groomed one another's hair into mohawks were deemed sufficiently similar to human autistics to test treatments on. This meant he was alive with joy and allowed a goldfish to pilot a fish tank on wheels with its thoughts. He used to date a neurobiology graduate student who completed a project that found that the most painful place to be stung by a bee is the nostril, followed by the upper lip, then the dorsal aspect of the penis. He never volunteered to find out because Portland, Oregon emptied its 38 million gallon reservoir after a teenaged boy urinated in it. He broke up with the neurobiologist after she told him that female cockroaches reproduce faster when stroked slowly in short bursts by a long, barbed, motorized duck feather. He had had enough so he went back to tiring his face by staring at cereal boxes because the gazes of characters on children's boxed cereal tilt downward to meet the sight lines of a child because kids were found to place greater trust in the Trix Rabbit when he makes eye contact.

**ELIZABETH ROBINSON:**

Get on a small press reviewers list so that you get copies of all their new titles. I write a fair number of reviews, so I'm now getting a fair number of free books. This summer, I picked out one title from the review books by an author I would never have heard of otherwise—her work really captivated me and helped me to think through poetry in a refreshed way.

**DAN GUTSTEIN:**

**Enmity Hath Motor:** Mankind is being flung towards the far horizon at speeds greater—and heights taller—than God ever intended. “Oh, Why, Oh, Why,” wail the mourners, as another man flies past, overhead. If the synagogue is where you sin, then the dialogue is where you dial. “Help Me!” in one tongue is “Tongue!” in another language and “Merengue!” in yet another harangue. Lemon gets to be a risk. Grapefruits get to be a risk. The fields molder and a cry spreads through the

land. Oh Lord, why is there motor? There is motor, sayeth The Lord, to impress thine enemy. But mine enemy hath motor. Sayeth not hath, sayeth The Lord, for that is my very verb form. Very well then, but my enmity 'hath' motor. Thine enmity hath motor? shrieketh The Lord, thou dost bringeth the disnomer and the piss-nomer in thy protestations and for that—I shall now smite thy fleeting moment of achievement in sport. And The Lord smote the pilgrim's second place finish, and the pilgrim, in turn, smote his younger brother, with a loud clap to both ears, and the younger brother, then suffering from a disturbance, smote the television set with a thirty-ought-six, even as the set continued to speak, “. . . in corporation we trust . . . “ a minor miracle.

**JEFF HARRISON:**

All surprises should be filthy with dust.

**CALIBAN  
IS  
SEARCHING  
FOR  
ANGELS**

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age is expected to increase from 1.1 billion to 1.5 billion.

As the world's population grows, the demand for food and other resources will increase. This will put pressure on the environment and on the world's food supply.

One way to meet this demand is to increase the amount of food that is produced. This can be done by using more land for agriculture, by using more water, or by using more fertilizers and pesticides.

Another way to meet this demand is to reduce the amount of food that is wasted. This can be done by improving the way that food is stored and distributed, or by changing the way that people eat.

There are many other ways to meet the world's growing demand for food and other resources. It is up to us to decide which way is best.

One of the most important things we can do is to make sure that we are using resources in a sustainable way. This means that we are using resources in a way that will not harm the environment or the future generations.

There are many things we can do to make sure that we are using resources in a sustainable way. We can reduce the amount of waste that we produce, we can use less energy, and we can use more recycled materials.

It is up to us to make sure that we are using resources in a sustainable way. This is the only way to make sure that we have enough food and other resources for the future.

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