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CALIBAN



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

CALIBAN

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CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE



JANET KAUFFMAN

Undercurrent

They were able to live invisibly. Like Lazarus dead, but not absolutely, before Jesus wept and said, roll away the stone. You can imagine, they lived without limits. Fully functioning, with none of the usual obstacles.

There was artistry in it. So much water-coloring, or drawing of chalk lines, pastel and charcoal, burnt sienna and beige, they were camouflaged even in bed, in plain sight. When they pulled a sheet over their bodies, they were gone. The space looked like a field, contoured, the soils striated, wavering in the heat.

And of course the same cloaking applied when they were out and about. Air settled on their shoulders, infiltrated their hair, and passersby noticed nothing, maybe a shift in temperature as routine as that flow of cool across your arms from the dark of an alley.

No more than an undercurrent in daily life. In that way, they couldn't have been more ordinary.

It's difficult to assess them morally. Did they kill animals for food? Or grow tubers and greens? Did they hurt each other in small ways, or worse? Did they seek justice for any reason?

Did they attend to the world at large? Or live wholly apart, the newsworthy world a nebulous swirl, not even a context for their unique situation, their struggles and passions.

Whatever. They were a pair, we might as well say *virtually*, as we say about so much these days that's out there somewhere we can't go with our own bulk and substance.

But still. They were more than that. We know this. They were what they were—fully realized, and shameless.

They apparently did more than have sex, though that was the core of life. Imagine, unseen, with no schedule, how much time they lavished on the body, how they abandoned restraint, and didn't give thought to anything but the expanses and apertures, ridiculous topographies,

the startling landscape of inlets, protuberances, appendages. How the fingers played and the belly shuddered.

They certainly entertained themselves, to the point of hazard, and invented out of those recreations a system of marks, some call it a language, we have yet to decipher.

All of this comes to us remotely, like the digital images from the Mars Rover, out there rolling up and down the landscape, communicating with 0s and 1s, like words from letters, alchemic, and we recognize the red rocks in heaps, and the crusty sand. We presume these two still collide and orbit in that way, as we understand from the snapshots of Hubble the collisions of spheres, catastrophic in glitter and neon, now placed in evidence.

The consequence of their connection, in other words, can be registered, envisioned. A look off to the side, or, for more precision, close your eyes completely, as you do when you wake, to set in memory the landslide you just dreamed, tall brick buildings slipping into a ravine.

An odd swatch of intense color, a rock in sharp focus that blurs and flattens then returns to solid rock, a surge of cascading emotions, then calm—there's that. And touch. Alone in a grassland, you're aware of the hairs on your arm, something blowing, there.

They have never been named. So far as we know. If they were, the names would no doubt be strings of vowels, spoken while breathing. Or the names would conjure other invisibles, remote and scurrilous, geographic couplings with no witnesses, Mount Kailash with Lake Manasarova.

Some try to track their whereabouts, upheavals in grasslands, the steppes of Kazakhstan, or that flow of fabrics and waters of Manhattan. Various underpinnings or overthrowings of modulated landscapes. Their blurrings and breathings.

They are best known by their refusals, and endless indulgences. Their nomadism. Their naked opposition to restraint. The way they suck down polluted waters and spit them back clean. We presume. Even here. The Great Sulfur Pond in Lake Erie, a black hole in the lake on the old maps, has migrated onshore and bubbles up fabulous algal paints.

Hundreds of egrets stroll the shore on black stilt legs and strike at fish. The water roils. Legs and beaks flash above. Fin and flesh below.

the sharp crest of this ancient land
very vast very anxious at not
positing weighing forcing how not to weigh

not to think of anything in order to think?

& borders have no taste whatsoever

things have no weight only seem to

& navigate, transition



Two

there is that transparency...

there is that transparency—

dispersed petals

a whole devastated vegetation

there is that strange perfection—

like a moon

destroyed in depthless night

a night pierced by lightning flashes

in the relentlessness

& there is a very grave weight

heralding severe headaches at dawn

threads of ink flowers

scattered on lawns

under throttled stars

among shouts & frozen

screams—

words' syllables

nipped trapped in ice

RAY GONZALEZ

A Rhino Howling at the Moon

Too beautiful to let sorrow sleep,
the rhino is devastated and alone.
To leave room for the stroke of luck,
“My daughter my dove,” the rhino insists.
In the short blue, men with hats tumble
to the moon hunting for the rhino’s horn.

The lilac mask dressed with rain returns
alone, the men charged by the rhino on
a moon doomed as a beautiful voyage,
the rhino dangling on the chest of those
who forget a howling rhino prefers
moon mud to a punctured man’s leg.

Under heaps of clouds, the rhino is
named and his grunting changes.
To mount the female, he wears the rings
of Saturn between his legs, necklace of
windows worn around his neck to reflect
a jealous moon that shaves itself each
morning before the horn pierces the sun
and, done coupling, the rhino is breathless.

I Look at My Stones

My stones spell an undecipherable phrase.
The oldest stone is mathematical and spins.
It might attract extinct forms of amphibians.
The smallest pebble cannot be included.

I don't know how the stones were placed here.
They resemble a broken wall that came down
on top of a dwelling designed to cover the past.
The most colorful is yellow with red dots—
the first colors I recall as a child.

My stones form letters of the alphabet.
Even tiny grains beneath them are alive.
The largest stone makes the earth, though
the canyons redefine what the stones mean.

I look at my stones and close my eyes.
Nothing happens, so I stare at the rough surface
of one stone and it reminds me there are rosaries
in coffins of the dead we have never prayed to.

Seven Fires

Seven fires burn on the U.S.-Mexican border,
their flames signaling that something has died.
Each fire starts at a different, isolated spot in
the desert each night. No one knows who lights
them since they burn hundreds of miles apart,
seven pyres marking journeys that crossed and
treks that ended on the other side of the line.

Seven fires smoke along the Rio Grande, their
glow attracting no one, no movement at the wire,
no camps to allow water and a resting spot,
seven suns radiating over what took place,
how often it happened and why few managed
to cross the mountains and reach the towns
where other fires are doused each evening.

Seven fires glow eternally to design a light,
black smoke easing down to cover the graves,
though embers lead to the path of survival
beyond the heat of the ground, faces catching
a spark as they move north, seven fires blessing
the ones who keep re-igniting the earth.

The Lice in Arthur Rimbaud's Hair

The lice in Rimbaud's hair
burn to this day, his stink

the cloud of the imagination
where centuries pass with his

gnarled snot and fires from
the senses blazing in his head.

The lice plant eggs that hatch
worlds of the lost brain and

shimmer the vibrant mind,
each nit a note in the universe

freed when Rimbaud was shot by
Verlaine, flying particles from his

bloody arm kissing the galaxy in place
of torched words, Rimbaud flinging

words at Catholic priests because
the cross and the poem never meet

without youth crucified, the lice in
smoke hiding the last sentence God

whispered to the angel before stealing
his last piece of bread.

The Spider's House

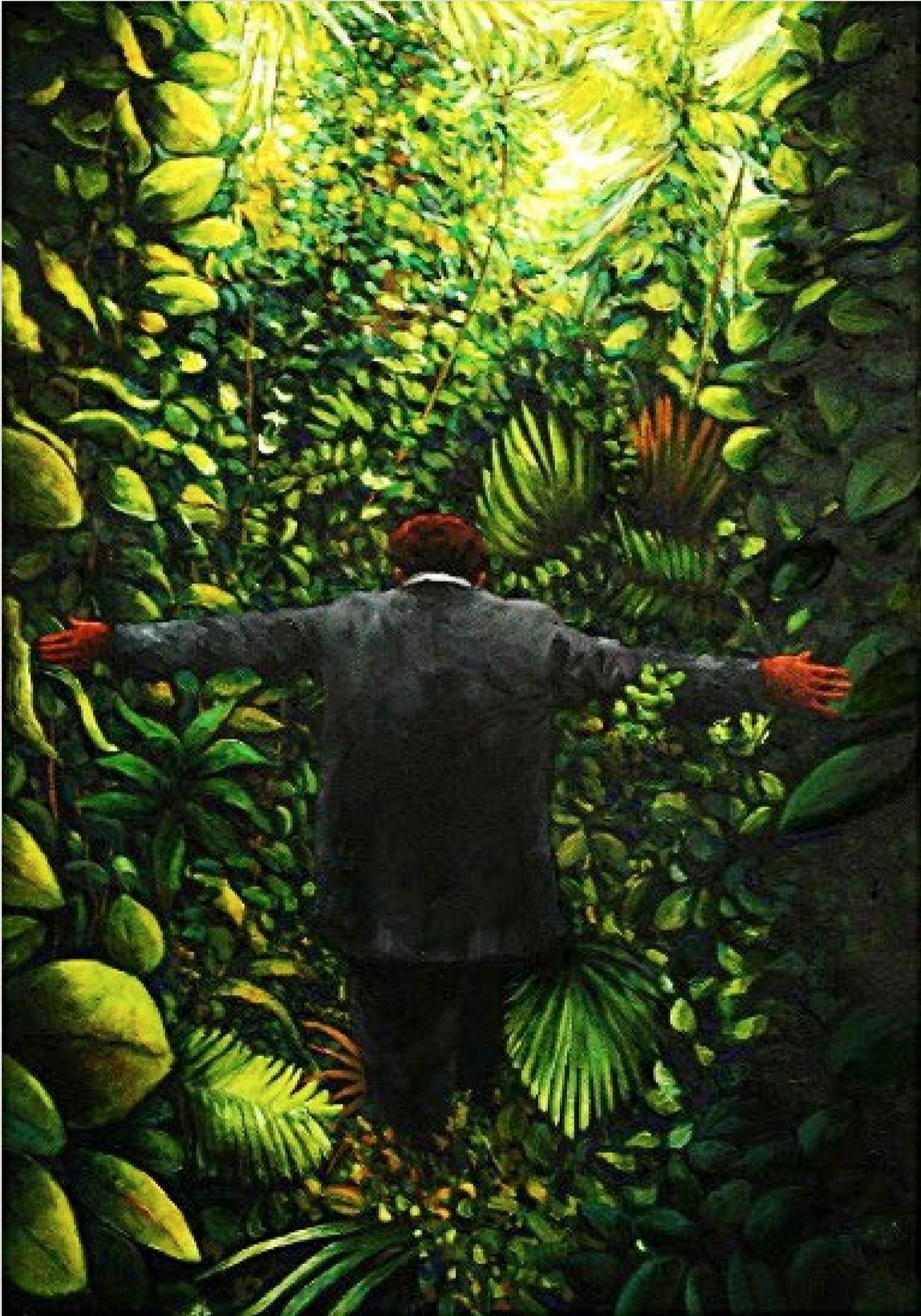
after Paul Bowles

Open the eyes of sand because
a man walks into the sea backwards,
an octopus at the bottom embracing
his mother for a thousand years.
Stain the eyes of time because
Mayans reached the point in their
calendar where time disappears,
the end of the world explained by
nights and mornings in the library
where memory burns until there is
nothing left but the true story.

Close the eyes of blood because
the tracks lead to the wilderness
where the mother's house is built
from afterbirths of women who
believe wombs of mud are signs
their sons come from the other
side where the spider takes then
gives, spins and weaves, follows its
pattern until the axis of love is
plunged into the deepest wound.

It Flew Away

Hands inside the clay jar with mud
dripping a design where strange figures
are bent over, advice stolen by a prophet
and hidden inside a conception vessel
where the dance is painted on the walls
where it took place, the story of fire
revealing how the string of beads reaches
the stomach, the eater swallowing
to prove those possessed are blessed,
the photograph unveiling what it means,
and how easily the figure resembles
a ghost preserved inside the clay jar,
parchment papers on the rack drying
until the text is translated by someone
who understands.



TEMPLE by Paul Sierra, 2004
oil on canvas (40" x 28")



THE LANDSCAPE IMAGINED by Paul Sierra, 2010
oil on canvas (50'' x 70'')



INHERITANCE by Paul Sierra, 2015
oil on canvas (44" x 36")

ELIZABETH ROBINSON

On Walking in the San Andreas Fault

Walking is the only consolation
where the very soil is contaminated with instability,
where the soothing maternal voice of reason doesn't say "There,
there," but

"Where, where."

The sky above threatens perennially to fold and drop
temblor, seismism, tremor.

Best to take shelter in the fault. Better to walk on friction itself, heels
in the
where-where, treading on that soothing voice
because it is

a fount, a full breast so ready to
release the foremilk of solace.

Walking is a consolation that
hardly worries the nursling gap in
a world suffering from its own mild infinite.
Where reliance and need, where.

Robinson/24

Maternal fault.

One hesitates to use the word "cradle."

Heels pummel the udder, rut, croon of rift.

JAMES GRABILL

Busload at the Metro

A priest, a rabbi, and an optometrist walk into a bar. No, it's a station of the Metro, a massive marble-plated transaction lobby with vaulted cathedral ceilings in one of the decades when travel was still possible. So a priest in vestment, a rabbi carrying a briefcase, and an optometrist head in with others, including a few fathers of mothers and mothers of fathers generating a charge that keeps the lights on, along with an august figurehead stepping out of a frieze in a pavilion for the documentary on winning and losing all you can carry, with an imaginary number of people who've been here before in a déjà vu in a déjà vu, a sacrosanct primate-handler in a blond wig accenting her intricately tattooed tribal face, a well-cut parapsychic invention in a cat-whisker vest sliding in the rotunda of a muted Gregorian umbrella, a slight witness of chance situated on predilections for the grievously elated feed-lot stage, an ancient misnomer in the making of dramatic forages in back of landholding, a real Alaskan rolling her own in a writ of habeas corpus, a slow snort of domestic whiskey promulgating song then bereavement, a sunken side-pocket eight ball with an eye for the lacy fringe in purgatory, a quick extraction emulsified in a concoction of wind-swept stilettos and black nylon country-western guitar strings, a well-articulated speech overheard in medieval stone hallways of Macbeth's castle as Ginsberg's jukebox resounds, a switch-hitter playing left field in a ball gown reinforced with tailor's

pins, sporting an Easter hat nest in which Nepalese wrens are hatching,
a resemblance of 18th century corseting whose gown dissolved in a future market fluctuation hand-in-hand with a master polo player sky-diving into his now-impooverished home town where the secret's buried in a feed bag,
a lanced corporeal in a body of work and release,
a small tot dressed for an armored battalion that stretches back through time to the Roman Legion and Sparta,
a mild-tempered birthday suit cloaked by a team of industrial spoon makers Sufi-dancing,
with an in-depth artistic study of atriums from before the ancient Greeks to the present,
a reluctant domestic nude under an Etruscan hide serving a Lord supper plucked from the harp of Helenism,
with a sizeable steer driving cowboys yonder as the sun sets into a little cowbird erupting with feathers where before there were none,
by a stunning underfed practitioner unbolting a tooth-whistled melodious extraction of common good,
with a penciled-in difference looking similar in light of the dooryard bloomed,
an uttering punch in the gut brandishing disarmament, smoking with pre-Caledonian ritual incense,
an off-hand bet on the risks of appearing with facial jewelry and ear bones humming out of their hymnals,
a wide-angle shot at threading the needle eye in the company of top-drawer paparazzi in the kingdom of well-equipped camels,
with a child in a half-made somersault on spell-binding solar-lit Germanic soils,
a serious declaration in primeval galoshes angling straight back to the accounting department,
a nascent nay-sayer knocking around in a nanosecond,
an organic squeezebox released and recaptured by camp-tent idealism,
with a tough meander plowing up rock pouring toward the ocean where it's all headed,

an example of demand responding to the firearms community in a tall
carcass of talking to a little question of upbringing,
a shipwreck survivor in a bottle,
a sauntering long engagement beside a state of betrothal negotiating
an affair in small steps of garden-variety dalliance
rubbing elbows with lovers of socioeconomic polyamory,
beside a polite kiss of the Pope's ring under towering rung bells
from the book of large numbers,
a raccoon-hatted eager beaver still horsing around on the catwalk
between one bull's eye and a next floundering only a little
in the dog-gone room packed with wolf and lion-head
pins on licking tongues of lapels,
a cozy previous approval in a leather vest and yak mukluks walking
on eggs of threatened birds while the tundra melts,
a well of information tapping fossil aquifers left over from the Ice Age
while dragonflies dart around her flashing eyes,
a few contemporary bald-faced tycoons of identity serving up a few
more up-and-down hard congressional chews,
a generation gap that cracks further apart and consists of breaking
current and high-rise transnational tankers,
a sip of East Indian tea in a milk-dull Victorian room standing off
to one side in attendance with a sterling silver serving tray,
a rack of milk pushed to the lip of a backed-in truck,
a service employee on a transoceanic flight taken many times
over to Berlin with its orange construction cranes
lowering steel beams to beds of acetylene torches,
a pile-drive of the hard past like nobody's business with a strobe-lit
case of dangerous religious tools,
beside a front door in a white vinyl car coat
behind which archaic opposite energies rhawl,
with a major-league incapacity specializing in ignorance,
a hermetic overexposure to present effects, undergoing evolution
in gradual stages over scores of millennia,
and perplexity in the saddle of completion carrying out a violet
for the fountain of delight,
a sounding board in a powdered wig, a croquet mallet in one hand

and janitor's bucket in the other,
a ghost town rifling through secret pockets until his hands go numb
and mule's braying with pity,
a hair-sprayed conquistador searching for purposes within longing
for random distraction,
an honest believer laboring to maintain contact
with otherworldly influences,
along with a little swing that flew out holding a young girl only
to return twenty years later with three more.

Entanglement

Electrical stories blow in from distant civilizations
and villages at the edge
of time which stops and starts up with every birth
in a surgical theater or rush-hour taxi backseat
at the midpoint of last century
before the global population tripled. These stories
rake over the small houses in a wing of bone
and confusion of untried chances and private
confessions packed with warnings and reprimands
passed along for generations in anger and love,
with sensory overload
and deprivation, victorious elation and surrenders,
strategic reprisals and breakthroughs, endeavor
and betrothal, with thick slices of embarrassment
spiraling up black-red
dust clouds behind massive industrial harvesters
on the horizon with open-pit acreages gone airborne
alongside chemical debris
from better living through chemistry ladled out
through biomaterial flues in the days of much trading
in non-lucid identity and banding together of many
for expressed prognostications
in hot-tempered providence, with bandying relative
stays and familial armistice, uncanny private
power projects around a hearth or declaration
of loyalty not open
for debate, out of extraordinarily hungry desire
for recognition or meaning in the province of hours,
where the long dark hair of the mother in Genesis
still appears, shimmering
from the unfathomable burst into tool-making brain
that must have happened suddenly, over millennia,
one person to the next,
where complexity triggers more out of faculties

Grabill/30

until the renaissance masters in candled hats
are painting angels with faces that resemble ours.



Energy on the Loose

The aesthetic periphery of light turns on palladium
and neodymium axles, condensing within gravity
at night until the city becomes a patch of Aztec jewelry
smoldering on a dark river
when seen from above. The dedicated engines kick in
with their medieval calliopes, as the present commences,
foreshortens, and is rescinded
the instant the next clear present takes form, bends short,
and falls off the instant the next appears

Pressure drills, of course, now fracture underlying rock
of the planet that seems held in place, with everything still
orbiting the source of being alive.

Nearby stations reverberate through electrical rolling burns
reaching cavernous wounds of old trees. Where the terrific
new world has nearly been
ransacked, traffic blurs, pumped through arteries, with NASA
scientists analyzing dust from a comet and background dust
from stars. The cast-iron pre-Christian core of Earth spins
along magnetic arcs between poles,
shielding us from the mostly unpronounceable photorealism

of ongoing food supplies. A cool celery with capillary spines,
as it grows, wages peace. Muscle and sinew know powers
of featherweight energy, electrons jumping between molecules
in fingers of a violinist who helped Cold War silos stay closed.

Temporal continuity lacking collective intent
still has its intricate tiniest bearings, where inhabited weeks
reveal intrinsic value of each being alive,
holding a golden bowl open in the museum of beauty.

LISA B (LISA BERNSTEIN)

From Persephone Post-War

The Other World

the graves in loose dirt
mounds
shaved sticks marking them
whoever staked them
long gone

and the trenches
my father lying there
wet fatigues hugging his body
hand in a fist
like an infant
a book open
beside his face

God
who knows what is written
who has already walked
on this surface cut with trenches

I can't bend
alone
to the fingerbones
and I can't rest here
where the steel poles rise
into archways beyond archways
a hand signing mutely

the crowd rustles in the street,
the houses sit,
the trees turn their spora and leaves

and the world doesn't let me back in.
I'll take my knife
from its sheath
and cut from the air
a dark slit where I can breathe,
a resting place.

The bodies
collapsed in the alley—
leave them for the mulch
into which all matter dissolves,
into which.

Plum Juice

The fleshy plums
firm and black-purple
falling, shriveling,
in days
rotting on the ground.
The relief
of just looking.
Just stepping past them,
bits of plum skin
sticking to my slippers.

The space in my throat
where a bite of sweet plum
could slide past.
From that hollow,
my voice
echoing on gray
wood, apples
mottled,
a woman's
sweet singing in the lanes
of trees.

A faint
gleam is hidden
in the crack of a mossy
rockface. I reach in
my thumb
—it stings. Pull it out
dripping blood.
I suck it,
weeping.

So,
I can still feel pain
even gone from the world
which sliced into me
when I saw through it.
Here a simple line
of blood from my own flesh.

Sucking
my juice.
See the water pooling
in a hollow of
grassy dirt, sap
in circles in
the bark. And transparent beads
of liquid welling from the sliced
pumice-white fruit
which he places for me
on the tops of tree-stumps
at points along my
unplanned path.
He must see

where I walk and
when I want,
the sharpness of light
and liquid blurring
into hunger.
After each bite
a space of air.
I am inside

and outside
the orchard, a lady
in a gray dress,
myself

Bernstein/36

treading the leaves.
A matted scent
like singing warms my throat,

and then
silence,
warm as the orchard air,
where I can breathe.

His Living Daughter

A space of light opens above my head.
I see my father wave from above the surface.

My escort holds my elbow, I'm walking beside him
as he looks calmly ahead
and the stone-black ceiling is intact.
In that bright space above
is my father,
waving to me.

And I remember
this is the underworld.

“Don't worry,” my father says,
smiling, “Someone else is taking care of it,”
just like he said when I was a kid.

And then, as if an afterthought,
“All those years, you didn't have to look
at what I saw. Those deaths.”

I look away.
I can't pretend
he and my mother didn't need
to show me the pit of bodies
turning underneath us—

“Anyway,” he says,
meaning he knows that too,
“it's over. Let the others
do their jobs.”

Behind me
sounds and pictures are
replaying from parchment and screens and stones,
infinite histories, shapes of babies,
women and men appearing,
falling, torn apart.

The echoes in blood memory
fading a little, the resonance
receding in rooms and cells.

And one small body
reduced, imprinted
on a shard
has been passed
out of my guard.

My father is watching us walk
through another doorway,
his hand raised as if to wave
or to reach and grab my hand
and pull me from this dark and shiny place.
He's frowning with concern.

My escort hurries me forward.
My father can't keep up.
I look behind and wave, and smile.
"I won't stay," I call.
His face creases with relief

and I see he knew his war, and the wars before,
are long over.
He came here for the one
he was accountable for,
his living daughter.

His body relaxes above in that bright space
which dims behind me like a shroud.

The escort grips my elbow harder.

Our footsteps echo
through the empty rooms

as before us blossoms a ghostly net
of laughing infant faces,
apparitions bobbing in a billow of lace
as if to slow us, catch in my hair,
stick to my face.

I try to brush them back like moths—
these beings just released from death
fluttering near the doorways of a woman so alive.

My escort steers us through,
the almost-flesh-and-blood parting around us,
sticking in a gray web to my shoulders.

I shake it off,
a thousand eras,
a hundred months,
the dead, the withered eggs.

Once I asked for
and I received
my own life above the ground.

Hexagons within hexagons in the honeycomb.

Just before a bright doorway
the guard lets go of my elbow.
For the first time I see his whole face
behind me,
a signal that his services are over.
He turns back to the dead
and I go on.



WOLF by John Digby, collage



LION by John Digby, collage



BULLDOG by John Digby, collage



BLACK BUCK by John Digby, collage



OWL WITH OBELISK by John Digby, collage

JOHN M. BENNETT

dice foundation

whose voice is that opening
o ping escapes there news a
half knee diffe ning in
shape gene from here and
when does it begin un
end rescapes such plywood
of the brain's hemisphere
left right frot amerio
grits ladder identical
to jihadists and the
broken paper dirt dia
lectic halved by each mar
riage soup controled her feet
entity dazzles slate job
unexfully eployed make
words in the grass fish drone
re leased a sadistic tire wind
held forth the "parnassian
ridge" in their little soap con
sciousness)worn in the
hair(collaboration rip
ens in the word floods
philology of corpses o'goose
sir slackers absorb man
agement's appliance poetry
lifted high from the blinding eyes

*Chattering through Ivan Argüelles'
"anabasis xxxviii" and Jim Leftwich's
Six Months Aint No Sentence, Book 114.*

ruego

wet cheese and stones a
wheel sinks in the lake
your riddled leg drowns
fastness of yr phone
lost yr ear lost yr f
finger dónde dónde dón
de encontrar la nada
r oiled behind yr eeye
la quesadilla de tu re in
verso que el silencio cuenta
en los cantos duros del río

...ante mis plantas

vértice hirviente...

—José María Heredia

TIMOTHY LIU

Infidels

Could've lost it in the backseat of a cab
on our way to the airport, our hands

joined together the only church I ever want

to attend. Forget about landing, the wife
outside of baggage claim who's left

the engine running. Might as well be strays

hanging out by the butchers in Marrakech,
waiting for scraps to fall out of the sky

while tourists saunter by—an Arab

grabbing a Berber without ever thinking
twice, the muzzein's call to prayer

ignored as we returned to our spoils—
a round loaf on a pillow waiting to be torn.

Liu/48

As Far As Cho Fu Sa

Who enters
the mouth of another

willingly? He said,

let's get out of here
so of course

I followed

that man who didn't
have a car,

only what it took

to take us there
from first erupting

tooth to last forgotten

dream—a bowl

full of cherry pits
with bits of flesh

attached—

Legacy

Could not explain

how you found yourself
at the foot of your mother's bed

while she slept, straightening out

a Turkoman's tangled warp
your father had won at auction

before you were born—

Liu/50

He Held

his sadness

close to his chest
like a breadbox

that concealed a violin

too small for even
a child's hands

to play—

DAN RAPHAEL

So i push out

Breathe til the air gets sticky like an egg white sneaking back through a window of juice, a fenced in window learning to dig in the air corrugated in anticipation of so many feet upon all the ridge tops before erosion was on the hourly playlist, coming around again in the traffic copter bristling with lenses, lasers and unfocussed microphones to reorchestrate heavy metal steam punk with glistening candy strings, sudden fingers of development, sky quilted in tyvek & micro-elastic sheetrock our boots punch through gotcha flooring into windowless alveoli slowly corroding before the mops of 10,000 feet bull-market oxygen my credit cards crumble without that depleted adhesion: as long as i have checks i can spend, as long as i spend the air is free so why choose flavors or add grilled onions made of text and cornered attitude, my mouth is papered with applications while on the rooftop my personal earth squats like a 10 gallon bag filled with 200 pounds of narrative meat with unexplainable salty crunch, no bone left unfried



THE COUNTERPANE by Ellen Wilt, 2014
mixed media, collage (40" x 30")

DAN GERBER

Neruda Falls

*Vendaval sostenido en la vertiente.
Inmovil catarata de turquesa.*

Rivers of the earth
often lose their names,

falling into a country
they pass through only once.

*

Neruda tells me there is water
falling through his head,

so fiercely he can't hear me he says,
yet waits, head cocked.

*

All around us, the absolute,
hiding in flowers and dung.

No, not *around us*, really.
The bees are busy in the lavender.

*

At any moment my pen may run out of ink
or my heart out of blood.

Gerber/54

That bird is the butt-end of a broken branch
sticking up through the roadside grass.

*

I picked up a pinecone the size of a pineapple,
its spiny scales dripping with resin. Unwitting

kleptomaniac, now my fingers, eyes, heart, and tongue
cling to everything loved and fleeting.

*

Cows in the orchard, fireflies hiding light in the grass, a dove
explodes right under my feet, wing-beats whistle

like a rusty spring, as the last inundation of sky and sundown
wind settle in the cloak of the pines.

*

All my life I've been thirsty.
All my life I've craved salt.

TERRY HAUPTMAN

Shekinah of the Owl's Soul

*and clawing ourselves out of the wind
with our fingernails*

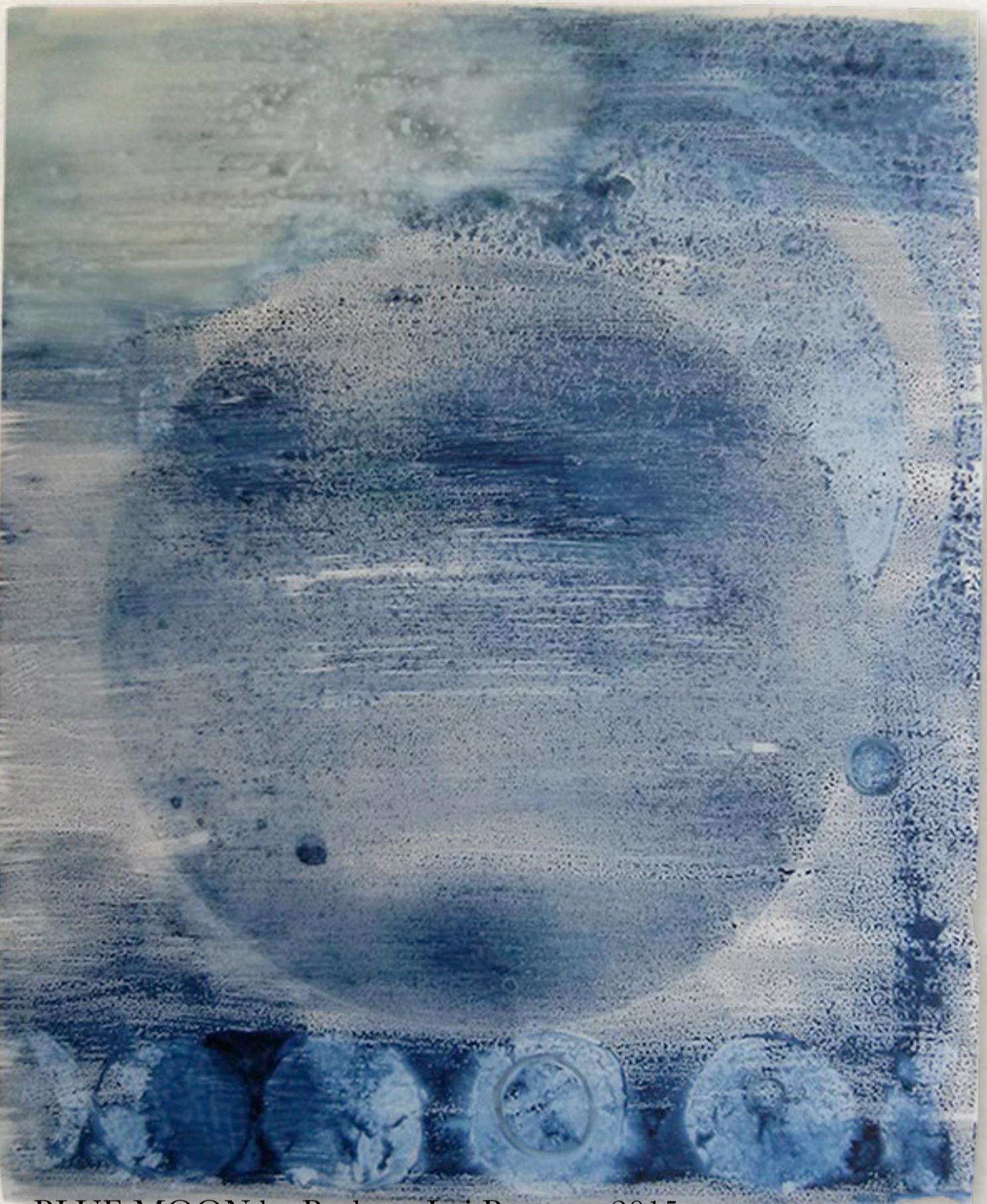
Juan Rulfo

After your father was stabbed in the Bowery
At the break of dawn
We went back into the Sefer's embers
Through the goat gate
Concealing Temple prostitutes
Eating the bread of angels
The bread of love,
The dybbuk of mists and rains,
Calling us back
From the black soot of degradation
On the street
Garlic and cedar oil,
Oak gall, the urine of Baal.

Shulamite,
Lighting your Yahrzeit candle
In the silence of screams,
Shekinah of the owl's soul,
Breathing havdalah spices
Into the rancid blood
Of city streets,
Grieving in tasseled winds,
Cursing the ethers of evil,
As your father's spirit
Entered your bloodstream

Hauptman/56

Shattering warnings
Into the open dark,
Like the memory of crows
Passing down ancestral cues
To their offspring,
Cawing from the heart.



BLUE MOON by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2015
watercolor on vellum (17" x 13")



GOLD DISC by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2015
watercolor and acrylic on vellum (17" x 13")



DIMENSIONS by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2015
watercolor on vellum (17" x 13")



BLOSSOMING by Barbara Lai Bennett, 2015
watercolor on vellum (17" x 13")

IVAN ARGÜELLES

the unraveling (twenty five)

it all happens so fast

it all *happened* so fast

when the second-hand can
only guess

what time it is racing
blankly

forwards into the past where

everything coincides all at
once

birthdays lawns fireflies
graduations

hangovers stiffening of the
body

breath is as great a gift as
any

and to discern colors and
bird songs

Argüelles/62

and falling in love and
walking the rail

east of town and capturing a
cloud

losing consciousness easily
and sleeping

where there are no
boundaries and space

looming over the carapace
and who

in a word the gods are and their
powers

and their diminutives and
prayer wheels

all beings minute and huge
immense with skin

feelings and being senseless
as stone

and light entering the brain
like an arrow

and dust and gravel and
clumps of dirt

grass formulating its
parallel universe

evenings when voices become
echo

and the massy constellations
pinwheeling

in the furious ink of sky

hunkering down in the dark
waiting

just waiting for the
galactic semaphore

to send its thrill through
the nerve-ends

it all happens so fast

it all *happened* so fast

the memory of the train ride
through winter

the excursion to an unnamed
lake to catch sunfish

the patch of weeds and grass
in the clover-leaf

intersection where
dandelions grow rampant

or the first glimpse of dawn
over Troy

Argüelles/64

all unraveling at the speed
of distance

streaks of roseate peppered
with silver

shining in the thatch of
auburn hair

it must have been her skin
at first

faint glints of bronze and
the song

that ushers in an impetuous
darkness

the three-way fuck on
benzedrine

and waking stoned on a
rooftop

the merciless August sun for
a witness

suddenly realizing there is
no Savior

that across the River there
is only desert

and an infernal voice
commanding

levántate hombre este es tu último momento !

the unfinished laundry as
well as

the all-Beethoven piano
recital

and the pedagogical
bookstore in Trastevere

it all comes and goes in a
kaleidoscopic rush

train ride over the
Appenines

and the dusty streets of
Ancona

and the Berlitz school in
Macerata

reading all the poetry of
the Trecento

while daydreaming on a lunch
break in Bryant Park

the day the Greeks set sail
for Anatolia

the day Agamemnon got it

the Eumenides riding the
heavens in a fury

Argüelles/66

confusing Orestes for
Oedipus

looking for the postcard
depicting the descent

of Achilles into Hades

yes *That's it* Fifth Avenue noon hour hustle

whistles and epicenters and
pornographic illusions

stopping at Rizzoli's for a
copy of *Canti Orfici*

knowing this is the last
time you will ever do anything

it all happens so fast

it all *happened* so fast

one day you're flying kites
in Prospect Park

the next day you're
sorrowing for a dead nephew

and on the third day
crossing the river

you hear that infernal voice
booming

levántate hombre este es tu último momento !

CHARLES BERNSTEIN

No re-entry from this poem.

DALE HOUSTMAN

From **THE SOMNAMBULE'S CRIME**

Coffee Before Touring The Pyramids

The tunnel to the pyramids' internal daycare centers was closed as the repairs that never really began began again.

The tourists were left behind on the blood-caked ladders next to a crashed fighter plane filled with birthday tarts.

Where are our sensual warships

when you need a soft shoulder.

Where did all these white insects come from.

The children in the utility slums

fashion puppets' shadows from black rats

and they flit extravagantly

over an ocean trapped in a bucket.

There is a secret burial chamber

where young lovers undulate in a basket.

This is the final international effort.

Any effort is too much

and when the clouds become incurable

the rich are impatient and noxious.

We sent in the great white detective a thousand years ago and nothing has come of it. We expected nothing of it.

This is the same man who stole sparrow meat

from dusty Cairo convenience stores

delivering the small yellow packages on horseback.

We packed some cucumber sandwiches

trembling with ornamental passion.

Statues in baggy brown suits
who write poems about sandwiches.
Silence is the rhythm for climbing
into the bed hidden deep
within the King's galley.

The cold spring night fell diagonally across the lawn.
Dreams are always perpendicular to the wind.

In The Dinghy

Indian violinists are sleeping
beneath yellow umbrellas.
In blue smoke
a woman's torso.
The great white detective
is investigating a canal
that snakes between two vowels
in a thank you note.
Results are always startling.
Everything is steeped in warm red tea.

We huddle below the blue smoke
with the little boys and their little bikes.
Sunday follows Saturday into their clothes
as is the tradition
with little boys and their little bikes.
One of them draws a crude picture of a fire iron
upon a wedding dress that was abandoned in an ashtray
to generate a theory of crime.
Through the blue smoke and beyond the yellow umbrellas
there is an inconsolable opera mounting toward the utility vents
to create several new stars named after animals.
Everything is a gracious moistness.
Restaurant napkins are mistaken for clouds.
Every road ends in a dinghy
full of little boys and their littler bikes.
The esplanades are obscured by the blue smoke
and lined with children impatient to climb into graves
where there are always two or three grackles
imitating journalists
and doing a superb job.

We are all burning houses in a sentimental novelette
and the little boys and their little bikes

a mere afterthought to the security of water
out there beyond the blue smoke and beyond the weeds
and beyond a milky distillation
like smoke but not smoke
and beyond a woman's torso
and down the esplanades obscured by the blue smoke.

We believe we see comets in fundamental trenches
and an alphabet for birds to eat like the eyes of little boys.
There is a fat man tickling a cheetah to amuse a naked bride.
There is always so much left to undo in the dinghy
which oozes out from the blue smoke
much later in our houses.

Something Stirring At The Airport

*“...once I had a conversation but it was lost in the city.
It has my phone number around its neck”*

A long time ago it became dark and you also
would have been lonely in the falling petals
if you could see them.

We had fallen asleep
beneath the surrendering trees
and you were precisely where the airport would have been
if airports had any existence here.

Space had been invaded
and both vital and trivial objects scuttled between
the dark weeds.
Is that an airplane or a boat.

There is a willow branch trapped in your bed
and we had been trailing the present tense
always alert to incoming affections.
A long low hum vanished down the concourses
between the dark weeds.
Is that an airplane or a boat.

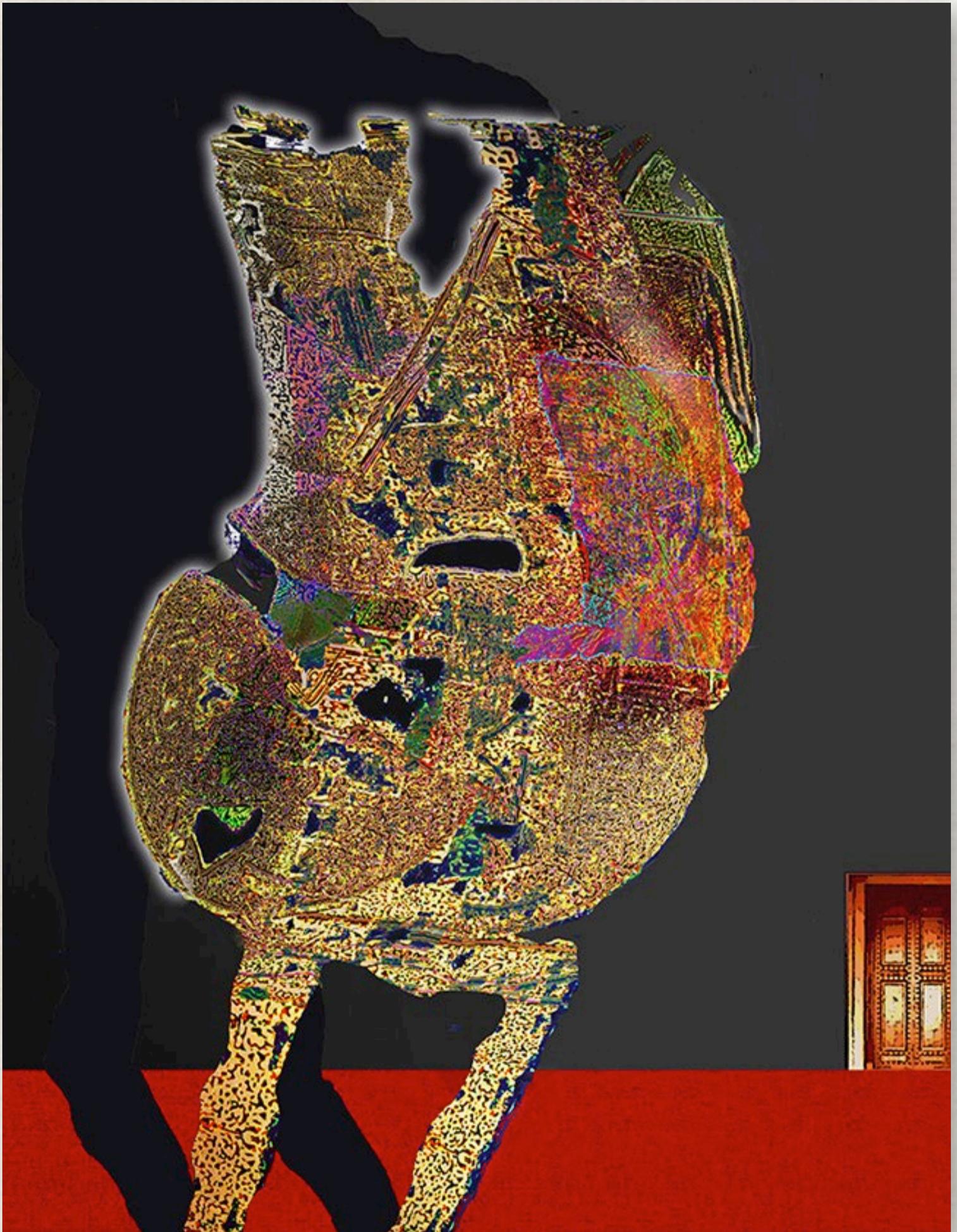
The buried mezzanine is long and the store numbers confusing.
We try to remember
when we were most likely to have seen a telephone.
In a field
frequented only by the most cosmopolitan animals
white necks and true plain hearts moved toward the tarmac
with torches aloft. Shall the summer ever be light-headed again
behind its folding tables and do we need a paperback for the flight.

Where were we stationed and is this your first time
on the perimeter of novelty. We shall be serving tea in red kettles

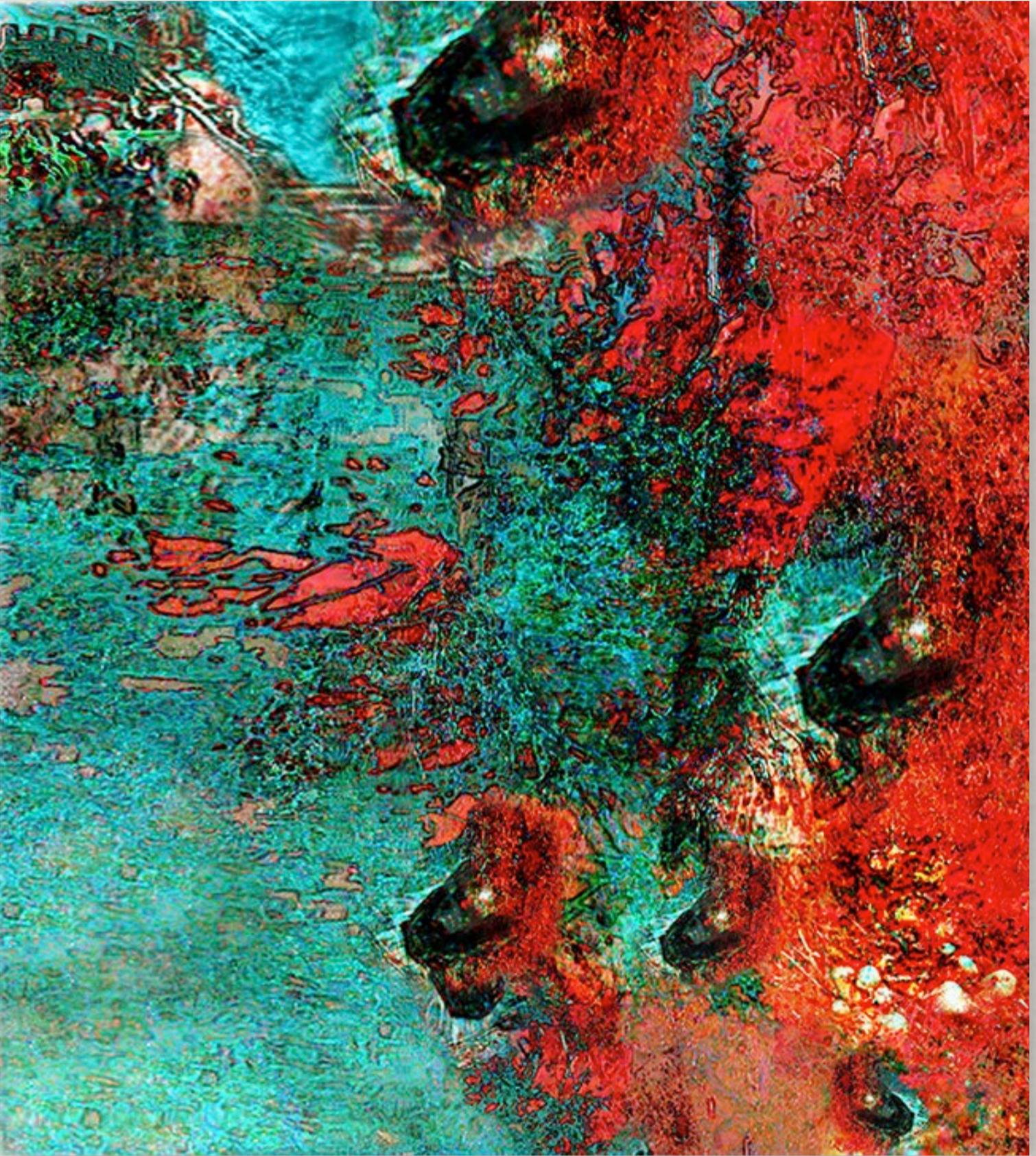
to the soon-to-have-been deformed.
When did we first beg for a cheap death
as a corrupt holiday is already forming about their memory and you
also
would have been lonely in the falling petals
if you could see them.

Once upon a coming age there might yet have been
there were theme parks with long dimly-lit hallways.
There are women hiding there between the dark weeds.
Hiding in the petals.
Is that an airplane or a boat.

The coin slots rise high above the roads
and that is belief constituted.



THE UNERRING APPROACHER by Dale Houstman
2014, digital image



UP THE DRIVEWAY WITH ALICE by Dale Houstman
2015, digital image



WOUNDED WONDER EXCUSED FROM SCHOOL
2015, by Dale Houstman, digital image

RAYMOND FARR

Sleeping in a Room in which No One Had Ever Been Happy

I am Paul Drake
Condemned to make noise

A sheet of rain priority
You are Della Street

Just making a living
Out of drinking Cold Duck

This morning's coffee
Howls in our stomachs

We can't explain the bicycle
The *film noir* hotel

Or how the happy birthday
We make of solid granite

Started out a minor indiscretion
& yet we blossom into

The birds & the bees
Of a believable sentence

But the black lips of our words
Could never sprout love enough

To speak of death this lucidly
& so we sleep in a room

Farr/78

In which no one
Had ever been happy

The emptiness of what we are
Redacted by existential laughter

By these TV voices
Circling around us

A Flaming Fucking Death Car Tattoo!

A man is sitting like a state beside another state
& the fire beside him is a turbulent flower—

A suffering spill of protagonists as plastic as a cloud
We watch him tremble in the neighborhood

His bike flying up the cellar stairs to the pantry
& he hides

The smell of wilted petals drilling his skin
His soul still dingy in the washing machine of modern life

With pistils of dear comeliness anything is possible
Everything it seems is a grimy face—

A flaming fucking death car tattoo!
A curious razor we figure is ours or someone's

S. MARIE CLAY

The Refugees on the Boat Are Talking

in buckets of every language extinguishing the night's small fires
& I see the parts of my life as long pauses
between
Seas that lap themselves and love nothing
but their own knife sharpening sounds.

 This is how I learned to love,
cutting my skin open on your accent,
the weather's appetite devouring the space between
 our equators,
 pulverizing
 and unmaking

and each time I hear a wet hand pried open, mussels
tongued clean,
I feel my ship's
forgetful
carriage doubled over a sea of heads rolling atop heads
rolling atop headless

 islands that we hurricane
around. It is repetition that causes the body
to swell redolent, every wave outcast.
But this boat, proud as a widow's breastbone,
is a whirring spool stringing together

Basic Training: the Gas Chamber

A truncated chimney in the floor. In the center, a beacon of light
and our faces pleated into venetian blinds, untrained accordions

coughing like a docking ship
doubled over on the shore.

Take off your mask. Say your name. In the center, light
drifting into powder and my face an ancient city waiting

for the dust to settle.
Say your fucking name.

Our hands pray behind our backs. But only our hands. The rest of
our bodies—
my body—is pleading into the banner of smoke scribbling cursive
scrawling

thin as a stretcher. My body
is churning inside this stark metaphor

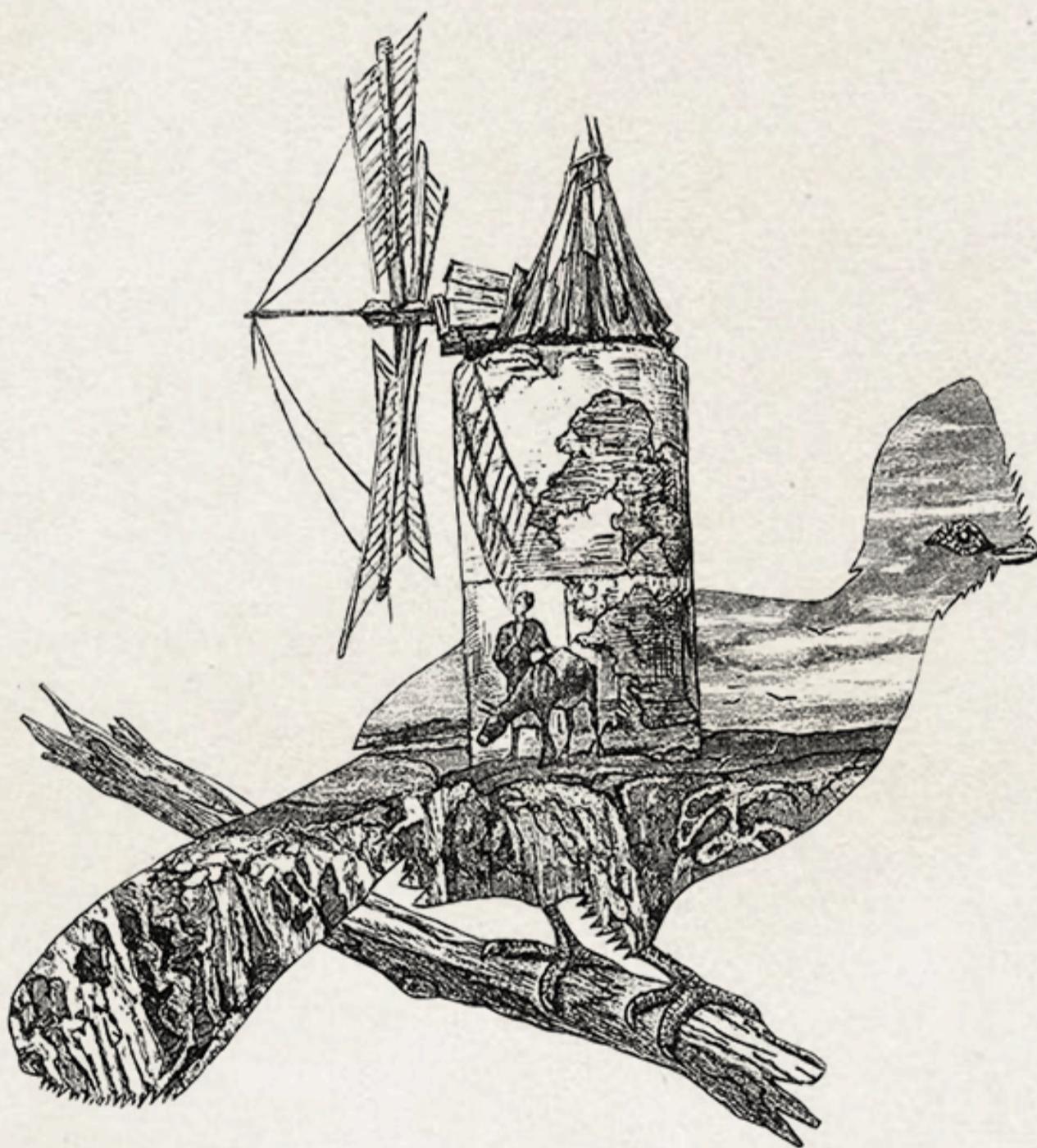
because this is only basic military training and later we will spit
and laugh while we shine our boots black as hammers.

In this instant I hate
the circus of my name,

which I perform inside almost daily, escaping from one wilderness
to the next, wild animals pacing the enclosure of my eyes, now wild
with smoke

Say your fucking name.
My name is a dirt clod in my mouth.

I bite down on it swallow it choke on the dust. I am throwing up
blood and mucus but
really I am remembering my first winter—I tried so hard to find joy
in a field opened wide
as a prophet's mouth.



Clay/84

Dear Geometry,

It is precise like that; circles for swimming inside, one lung at a time,
your body rising as a seahorse

curling into a closed eye. If you want to come closer, I say yes, please
make a list of all that drowns—

airplanes & entire buildings washed ashore to begin again. This is a
special sort of shape and sound

the sun a flaming chandelier swinging from this balcony untethered
from its building, stray like the

shape of a human heart—cables, live wires, fire conjuring ladders &
here we are again at Orpheus &

untamed water; learning how to swim, the inability to explain how but
your head floating right along.

D. E. STEWARD

Atlas Peak

North of the Golden Gate up Conzelman Road for the view from the headland

Shout hello to a bicycle woman climbing hard, she calls back

In the egalitarian asexual non-sexual innuendoishness of California

Modesty, tolerance, curiosity, self-deprecation, diffidence make for the Bay Area's best

In the world replete with want, ignorance, disease, squalor and idleness

Population swelling, climate being modified or possibly going rogue, most resources stretched and dwindling

With Eurocommunism clearly not cool any more

And neither are film, finance, networking, multi-media, body piercing, or an MBA

Although given a conversational opening, a peculiarly large number of long-of-tooth Europeans still go about flogging Marx's dead horse anywhere anytime

“the past strives to turn towards that sun which is rising in the sky of history” —Walter Benjamin

Steward/86

Cuneiform tablets to scrolls to codexes to book wheels to file cards to cut-and-paste to search engines to Google Books

And how did they do so much, the Mendelssohns, Mozarts and Chopins in their mere two decades of maturity

Without electricity in their clime of short winter days, even Christen Købke died at thirty-seven, Apollinaire at thirty-eight

Up on Spring Mountain we have two and three more decades of maturity than they, we have the Internet and easy travel, are accomplished, but still unsure of what we've done and try to do

Philip Larkin's pat assurance that "We shall find out," is not going to work for us

Up on Spring Mountain we will die or go demented not knowing

What we do know, in Geoff Dyer's words, is that, "It meant nothing to me, that job. Compared to the books, the films, the parties, the drugs, the women, the sex, the laughing, the drinking, the clubs and the friends, that job—and the career of which, had I been unlucky, it might have formed a part—was insignificant"

On Spring Mountain with the intimacy of the spectacular hummingbirds

The jays, cedar waxwings, black phoebes, red-shafted flickers, yellow-billed magpies

A pair of white-headed woodpeckers vaulting around from tree to tree with their marvelous "cape-in-the-wind" (Pete Dunne) manner

Red foxes, coyotes, black-tailed deer, black bear, rarely a mountain lion

The vines, the manzanita and madrone

The Douglas-firs much like the bigcone Doug-firs in the high country of the San Gabriels but less stately

Black-throated sparrows, a ferruginous hawk, Oregon juncos, black-headed grosbeaks, a solitary northern saw-whet owl

And up Atlas Peak on the far side of Napa Valley where you can see almost to Stockton in the San Joaquin, the Bay, and the skyline of the city

But not the sprawl because from Atlas Peak you look off above it

From there it all looks the way Jack London saw it

The vast conglomerate of all those roofs, masts and towers, all those girders and facades, all those freeways, all that peri-urban warehoused snarl invisible from Atlas Peak

With all the complexities of now so many situations are missed, ignored

Or overlooked

People here living under freeway bridges or camped up the draws, those sleeping on grates and city concrete

The despair of struggling families trying to hold it together without enough of anything

Mostly invisible to most of us most of the time

The more than two million people in the United States in prison or in jail

All that going on in a kind of fearful privacy

Invisible vectors in the way, people's confounding psychological blocs,
their numbed stasis, like the gumption of multitudes of men over sixty
is flattened and knocked back now by beta blockers

Left to, within their means, golf, grandparenthood, TV and hobby
travel

Geezers in the dullness of lethargy and embitterment of their
disappointments

Perhaps swamped by the ennui of aging

“His asperity continually increasing, condemned him to solitude;
and his resentment of solitude sharpened his asperity.” —Samuel
Johnson's aspersive observation about Swift

Such particular subjective realities pushed up by the determining
heritages of the past

Three hundred years of Ptolemaic Egypt, from Alexander to
Cleopatra, meant Egyptian subjects with Greek masters

Along Scapa Flow there are tombs from 5,500 years ago at the
beginning of the Neolithic period there, older than the pyramids

Study carefully the detail in Albrecht Dürer's *Das grosse Rasenstück*,
1503 (“a large piece of turf”) and then go out into nature to feel the
wonder he knew

Everywhere over the long-settled world, there are holloways, those
sunken remnants of farm lanes and ancient paths

And the trees alongside endure

Green, heavy summer leaves dry and fall in autumn to leave the masts and limbs of deciduous trees safer in winter storms and snow

In an ancient sense of the inter-relatedness of complex things, treating human and non-human agents of at least equal importance is social sanity

As is ecological awareness, which anyone who lives in nature and looks around has

The Keeling Curve records and records and records CO₂ on Mauna Loa and has been doing so since the late 1950s

It's at 394 parts per million now

Nearly a half-century of ineluctable proof

Along with realities like with a population now of nine million, Shenzhen on the Pearl River had a farming and fishing population of under a hundred thousand thirty years ago

That in New York State three in four African-American boys do not graduate from high school, and that nationally the rate is forty-seven percent

That the same breed who called Italians Eytalians a couple of generations ago call Iraq and Iran Eyeraq and Eyeran

Under Stalin's starvation edict, in peasant villages in the Ukraine, according to Vasily Grossman, "The whole village was howling without mind, without heart. It was a noise like leaves in the wind or creaking straw"

And we should accept that extensive world starvation pockets are ahead, probably not far down the line

Steward/90

And that the water cities will flood

That the suffering recalled by Shostakovich's Seventh, *Leningrad*, the Great Patriotic War, and by his crashing, unnamed Eighth, 1943, in the months of Stalingrad, seem narrowed and distant now, their scale diminished compared to what we will endure

A fine, fast-tempo *Háry János* tonight

Insects are often attracted to the brightness of open books

The cogency of the world is simple

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

From Rondelays

BINGOBINGO
INGOBINGOB
GOBINGOBIN
BINGOBINGO
INGOBINGOB
GOBINGOBIN

PENINSULA
INSULAPEN
LAPENINSU
APENINSUL
PENINSULA
INSULAPEN
LAPENINSU
APENINSUL
PENINSULA
INSULAPEN
LAPENINSU
APENINSUL
PENINSULA
INSULAPEN
LAPENINSU
APENINSUL
PENINSULA
INSULAPEN
LAPENINSU
APENINSUL

BOB HEMAN

From INFORMATION

[information]

The bees and the bears and the elephants were all the same size. The houses in the rain were taller.

[information]

The machine told them to listen. It told them to replace their bodies with a house in the woods. It told them to replace the bears with the word “octagon.” It told them to wear clothes made out of moss.

[information]

The door was 15th on the list, the zebra 4th, the woman tied for 8th. The line they followed was only spoken twice. Where it ended the horizon began.

[information]

The road is not a metaphor, but still the bears are afraid to cross it. The woman’s hair is longer during the day than it is at night. The machine moves without being told to move. There were words that separated the different kinds of bricks. Their shoes were the only story they knew.

[information]

Confuses the words with the song the machines sang. Confuses the animals with a breeze that has stopped. Confuses the crayons with a hymn. Confuses the priest with a begonia.

[information]

Begins like the bear begins, like the hand begins, like the water begins. Begins in a room with no roof, in a cart drawn by geese, in the stem of a flower. Begins with shoes that are too small to put on. Begins with a word that escapes before they are ready.

[information]

They are not penguins this time. They are not sponges in the desert, or French toast carried through the night.

[information]

Pictures of the diseases of chickens formed the basis for the design of the plaza. Some of the bears were long enough to connect the facing balconies. The music that was pumped in was older than was necessary.

[information]

It is not o.k. to hurt the ants. It is not o.k. to move the mountain. The trail the tire leaves is not an explanation. The bear is not the distance they must travel.

[information]

Remembers a song, a poem, an animal filled with lights, a road which required them to stand up. Remembers a number that was the only name they had. Remembers the instructions about how to lift the horizon. Remembers the color green.

[information]

The doors cannot be predicted. The distance is counted with bears, or with words beginning with "L". There is a reason the color red is omitted. There is a reason their feet all point in the same direction.

[information]

The words they found weighed more during the night.

[information]

Finds women without lipstick more attractive. Describes the machine without describing its parts.

[information]

Reads a book the others are not allowed to read. In it the churches are painted black and the chickens are trained to speak.

HELLER LEVINSON

polymerizing alphabets on irregular incline

clump gravy bowdlerized glue blue delirial ochre to vermilion
snapshots half

the battle compromised over stateliness institutes issue coin
convenience key

↔ note speakers hardly identify as sorely sure secure Lucifer to luster
fine

polish buff poise stroke surrender multi-gender satellite cacophonous
tender

merry-go-rounds go round *organization overrated*

profits

from

disorderly

conduct

querying oscillative from collapsible cordon

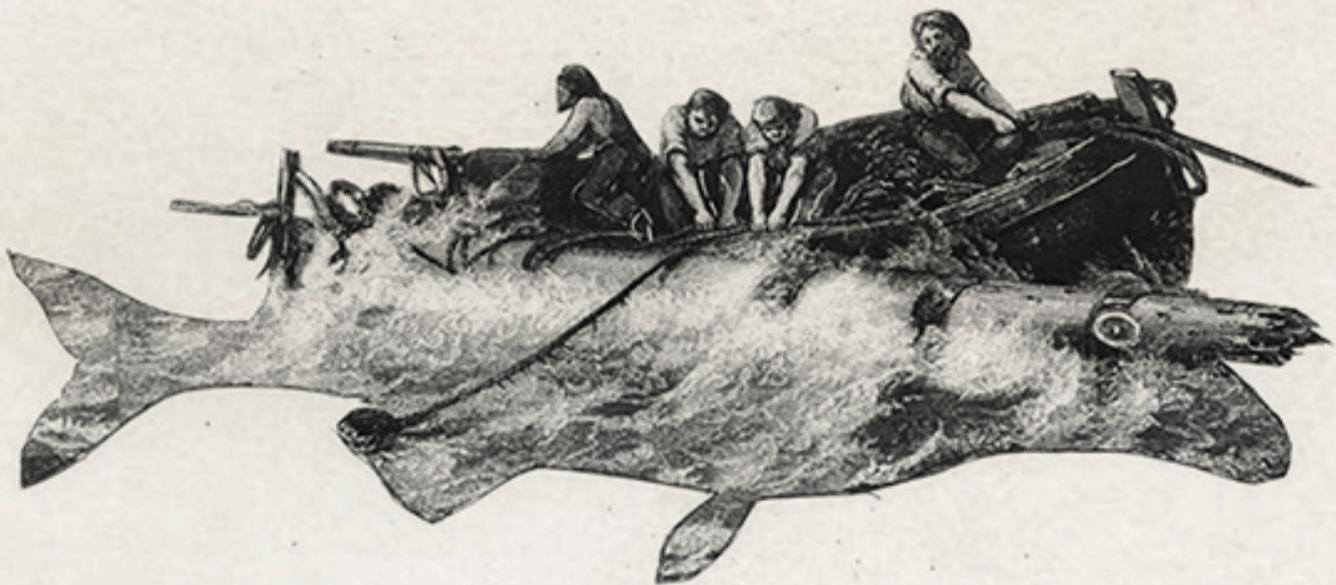
fenders tribalize, root upstream in
multivalvular omniscience, . . .

There! there in the valley, , —Sunflowers!

Wave, veiled in the blurp of unmannerly circumstance, recants,
—filtrative rambuncion
—unholy huddle

Amplitude: the Claw of Harbinger

especially remote seems bedlam when persuasions
fade



ZOLTAN KOMOR

Prego Peggy

for Márió Z. Nemes

Everyone called her Prego Peggy, although the whole village suspected she was infertile. What a great shame this was for her—the girl always imagined herself as some kind of fertility idol, a small rock all boobs and belly. Every night, the rascals of the village watched her squatting behind a haystack, trying to squeeze out something from between her thighs—into the dark, whirling basin of the night—into the gaping mouth of this hungry world. But she could only push out things she placed there herself—a few clothespins, a worn slipper, and one time a baby carved out of soap. Once it was out, the children of the village rushed from their hiding place, laughing wildly as they grabbed up the newborn and carried it to the old garden tap to baptize the thing. The soap baby foamed and shrunk, until it disappeared between their clean little fingers.

When she was a child, Prego Peggy was mesmerized by the giant swinging testicles of the boar that almost knocked the sun out of the sky. She also watched open-mouthed as the trapped baby rabbits plopped out of mother rabbits in their cage. She presumed that people were cages too, so it was quite a shock for her when her mom told her that in fact storks delivered babies. A terrible nightmare kneeled on her forehead that night: she was lying in bed, sweating, when she saw her belly swell. The stifled sound of a clattering bill echoed inside, then something begin to push itself out of her small body. Soon a stork stuck its snake-like neck out between her short legs. An impaled baby—like a worm on a hook—was squirming and crying on the end of its long beak. And as the bird tried to clatter its bill more loudly, the opening beak widened the wound in the bleeding child.

She recounted her dream with tears in her eyes, so her parents finally confessed that fucking exists. And she was only twelve when she first

began to practice giving birth: first, the little girl slid small pebbles into herself, then she pushed them out with a look of intense concentration on her face. Later she chased tiny lizards, and gave birth to them under the warm blanket. When she turned thirteen, she sneaked into the pantry to steal a nice hunk of smoked bacon—pushing out meat and fat was the most pleasurable—but after that, she didn't care about her offspring, not a bit. She just watched them lie on the floor—the slimy food left-overs, the little drowned lizards—thinking about new objects that might fit inside of her.

No one really knows if Prego Peggy was born infertile or if the constancy of her strange practice made her sterile. When she was fifteen, she was already crawling inside the boys' rooms through their windows, and she clamped on them like a hungry tick, swallowing the morning sperm from the boys who didn't resist. Why would they? Peggy wasn't an ugly girl. Nor pretty of course: she was just somehow featureless, like an unfinished statue.

But no matter how many rooms Peggy visited, she couldn't get pregnant. She believed that these little country brats weren't man enough to knock up a fertility idol like herself. There was a fisher boy she mocked by telling him how useless the bait and hook he carried around in his pants was. Anyway, the fisher boy decided to take her as his wife—who cares if the girl is crazy, if she wants to fuck all day long? Moreover, he couldn't have found anyone else since he was as ugly as a bullfrog and always smelled like rotting perch. Yes, yes, eventually he'd get that girl, he just hadn't found out how yet. But one day, when he was slicing fish, cutting out their swim-bladders, an idea smacked him in the head. Holding his filleting knife he made a few slits in his scrotum—the small red cuts opened up like the hungry mouths of catfish—and then picked up one of the swim-bladders and started to force the thing into his boy-bag through the wound. Then another. Soon, his nutsack turned into a fat raspberry—the cluttered balls inside almost ripped apart the whole skin-sachet. He quickly stitched the wound with fishing line, then ran to fascinate Peggy with his freshly redesigned sack. And fascinated she was—corncobs begin to fall out of her, to make some room for her promising new mate, who lubricated his rod with the girl's joyful tears and then began to work on her.

It didn't take long. They started to produce swamp creatures—they were as pleasing to the eye as tears made of fish hooks—so many scaled and slimy offspring. When the first one popped out from Peggy, they immediately threw the thing into the bathtub, because they saw that it didn't have a nose, only gaping gills on its slimy neck. And when the raspberry-nuts boy saw something splashing and swimming inside the tub, the old reflexes took over and he reached for his fisherman's knife. Soon, the tub was boiling with blood. When the poor old midwife who had assisted at the birth saw what happened, she was so horrified her hair began to grow backwards. What a death that was too! When the hair began to tickle her brain, she lost her sanity: the old lady was convinced that every piece of furniture in her house gotten pregnant somehow, so she searched the wardrobes, pulling out old clothes, trying to find the lost infant. Later, she was breast-feeding a rickety foot-stool, then—as the hair grew longer and longer—she was speechless. For some months they could see the silent agony in her old grey eyes, and when the hair finally choked off her brain she died. It was said that matted hair hung out of her ears as they laid her in the coffin.

The crinkled paper-palace of dawn—soap-storks are foaming in the rain, their faces lost in the labyrinth of bent elbows. Kids rush out from the haystack, pick up a catfish-baby to baptize it under the old garden tap. Then one of the children cries out: “Ouch, it pricked me!” The newborn's grabbing fingers were all sharp catfish spikes. The fishing float of the night wobbled. The swim-bladder-testicles keep working—circling around and around, drawing figure eights into the air. The fisher boy touched a forming newborn's meat-jelly head in Peggy's womb with his cock but didn't hold back, spraying fish spawn inside of her. The moon trembled in the water buckets around the yard—inside them fish-babies crying bubbles into the muddy liquid. By this time, Peggy's parents had abandoned the nest, making a run for the village border one morning. Their pale, half-crazed faces drew a white chalk line on the mirage. Of course who can blame them? No one could stand a stomach-grinding sight like the swamp monsters that kept falling and falling out of Peggy. Almost every hour she gave birth to something half-human, but after that didn't care much about it. Most of the time even the umbilical cord was left uncut. The bream-headed baby dangled between her legs

like a helpless marionette, then a newly born cod-livered girl fell on top of it. More, more and more—let the world's water blister swell. The stink of fish everywhere—there's no villager brave enough to approach this place—as far as the eye can see placentas lie like cow pies. Later the raspberry-balls boy collects these smelly landmines and throws them into the boiling fish soup.

The scoop net of nightmares heaves—navel-string-legged storks are squirming on the ground, combing the air with their wings—their slimy souls ooze into the thirsty well—Peggy pushes and pushes more—pushes life into her joy, pushes life into the air and into the fire—pushes meat into the gelatinous mirage. The hardening catfish spike in the boy's trousers—he want some fucky again—he just squirts and squirts, tiny white worms crawl out of his pisshole. It's just the perfect bait, when it comes to Peggy.

This is how the weeks go by—the girl sits on her throne of crying, smelly babies. As new spawn rolls out of her and the mound grows, she rises higher and higher—soon she can touch the sky with her bony fingers. She will send her scaly little angels into the clouds, or deliver them directly into God's hungry mouth.

The boy has to climb this damned child-mountain every time he wants to enter his girl. What a couple! One of them always wants to crawl inside the other, the other one always wants to push something out. But still, neither of them cares about the offspring: some are boiling in the fish soup, some are drying in the yard, where hungry strays tear them apart. A bullfrog-baby was stolen by a stork—the bird flew away with the newborn in its beak. But still, despite these harsh conditions there were some survivors who made their way to the village—crawling on their webbed hands, sticking their dumb newt faces into the villagers' scared eyes.

“For fuck's sake! Lucifer's potty overflowed!” screamed the old priest, when he saw the marching legion of swamp creatures outside his church. He ran into the toolshed and grabbed a pitchfork. Soon, he had killed all the offspring of Hell. That night, the villagers had built a mound of the small bodies, and burned them all. They stood there open mouthed, ringing the tocsins inside their skulls.

“Here even an exorcism wouldn’t be enough!” growls the priest. “We should set that ugly hatchery on fire, and throw salt on the ashes!”

But of course there’s no volunteer—no one want’s to visit the farm.

“Maybe we should just castrate that ratty fisher boy!” A mustached man throws in the idea, and the gathering begins to hum.

“Yeah! I see him every day walking at the edge of town, drawing water from the old well. Ya know, he always uses that water for fish soup!”

So they agreed on surprising him the next day—and so they did: the whole village gathered around the well, searching for hiding places. Some dug trenches, the others hid behind rocks. One man disguised himself as one of his own shirt buttons and the priest turned into holy water and oozed into the well itself. Around noon, the fisher boy arrived, whistling, dangling a bucket. He scooped out the fluid priest from the well and started to head home, when everyone jumped out from their hiding places.

“Not so fast, blister-balls!” they yelled all together, opening their sharp blade-fingers, attacking the boy’s groin. Soon his swim-bladder-testicles flew into the sky, like bloody little meteors. Then, just for the sake of law and order, they kicked and beat the kid, and dunked him in the liquid-priest.

“Stop, it tickles!” laughed the good old priest. But then one of the villagers opened his mouth: “This ain’t gonna work! If we let him live, he’s gonna sew new balls into his sack, and the whole hatching business starts all over again!”

“And who knows what he’s gonna put in his nutsack next time, and what monsters that will produce!”

“All right then, we have to kill the kid!” splashed the priest in the bucket. So the villagers filled the boy’s empty skinpurse with heavy rocks and threw the brat into the well. When this was done, they grabbed each other’s shoulders and, forming a giant centipede, crawled back into the village. After a few days, everyone forgot about the incident. But Peggy was still sitting on her smelly throne, waiting and waiting for her lover to come home. In time the navel cord haystacks around her rotted away, and the angels sewed new eyelids on her from the scraped silver scales. No matter how hard she tried, her reaching dirty fingers

couldn't touch the sky, and her throne grew no higher. What's worse, she felt totally empty—the outside world kept sucking and sucking at her, but she couldn't push anything into it's hungry throat. In a final act of despair, she slid up one or two dead fish-babies from the pile, then pushed them out of her vagina. But there was no use: they just rolled out of her, still dead, with a squishy sound, rolled down from the mound like falling crowns.

“Who needs that ugly eel-prick? I'm gonna give birth to something on my own!” she said and began to push—hard, harder than ever, putting all of her strength into it, gnashing her teeth. The lips of her pussy opened like the fleshy petals of a flower, and like a fat, red worm, her own birth canal turned inside out and came out of her—her over-stretched womb, her tired ovaries.

A great silence fell over the farm, encouraging the children of the village to sneak back into the yard. They walked around open-mouthed, kicking the remains of the fish-babies. Later, they discovered the dead Peggy, swinging from a girder. Apparently she couldn't stand the emptiness any longer and hanged herself with her fallopian tubes. Dark flies covered those ugly flesh-ropes. The busy insects were jamming their eggs into the drying meat, as if they still had great faith in the girl.



UNTITLED by Brian Swann, 2012
mixed media (12" x 10")



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ROBERT GREGORY

Just That Kind of Morning

A disappointed miserated kind of morning,
slickhead robins spit and mumble in the grass
a one-eyed fox comes skittering and flaring
down the middle of the two lane, too stressed out
or starved out to care about the rush of rusty
glareass bonehead smashers in every direction.

Everywhere another mirror city multiplies itself,
lies out flat and brittle full of tiny sad voracious
and relentless beings tricked and all tricked out
looks on their faces coming and going for no reason
they can see, like endless commercials, no program

And out in the last of the bare rib towns
the flocks of black invisible particulate
crowd in, cut in and out of bodies,
so delicate and sharp they can't be felt for years
and up where the hills are much too steep
for human habitation waves of cricket orchestra
predominate, rise and die away
and rise again to mark the hidden flow
of things as they are

Sunny days, forgotten gods in flowing
beards go flashing by just above the knuckle trees,
riding noisy old machines made out of withies bent
and held in place with twisted wire
calling out and using all the silly names
they are the only ones to know

making private jokes and telling all the secrets
of why it is the way it is, why not,
nobody listens and even if they did,
it wouldn't matter—everything is just
too good the way it is

The Wolf

It's just an old story: the same tall wind
that tore the leaves away

and scraped off all the clouds is this
old stringy wolf that's after us right now.

Late. I saw an extra-fancy pinkish sun
lift himself to watch us running toward him,

each of us a black and beatup moon in
some amusing dreamy world in parallel

where days and destinies will curl and run

the branching veins and wicked stems contrived
the colors young and foolish but admired

in a place where the wolf has been brought back
a long thin line from there to Memphis

a single ray of a sleepy sun, peculiar moon
white as a hovering ghost

round as a drop, you could say it opens
when it strikes a hard surface

and the time it takes is a measure
of how long we have.

The unraveling of the plan; all of them take time
just as the clouds do their changes

As they go they unhinder the blue, let
the sky show us what she can do

It's just an old story: the same tall wind
that tore the leaves away

and scraped off all the clouds is this
old stringy wolf that's after us right now



These new easy mornings

These new early easy mornings now
the air is kind of fresh and has been

free and unconfined along the night
wandering the roads that go out past

the last of the lonely lit-up mini-marts
checking out the flavors and the

textures of the weeds, the locust trees
so proud of all their polished thorns

that don't protect them anymore
the dusty wings of moths out spinning

tiny leisurewear from sugar and the
new young leaves, too new to get what's

really going on, the worn-out shoes thrown
over wires, left to dangle and to sway

(a hundred years ago, would not have been
a pair of shoes they strung up there)

but now the big bad light is rising up
the wind is now obliged to stop,

give over and subside, and change
to what we're used to. They say

it used to taste much different then,
it reeked of grease and kerosene, adulterated

opiated medicines, sour endless days,
noble speeches, sweet thoughts of betterment

when ordinary dunderheads became
a million candidates for Hell,

twisting in a fevered thought of heaven
lost, of bloody righteousness,

of old unhealing belly wounds and
amputations that made every little town

a three leg morphine camp, the drawn
white faces and the bad unending stares

ALESSANDRA SIMMONS

Dear Sky

for Etty Hillesum

You glimpse each other.
Scant windows. Greedy for you
she tucks your gray blue

inside her pockets.
When she's forbidden pockets,
she slips you behind

her lips. Your swords kneel
inside her. Burnished by dust
& lupin. Who sees

the station laden
with sunset. Doubled over
to kiss, you slice lung

from breath. A blossom.
Refracted half-note asking
for you to open.

Neither here, nor there, but always

Above my home, a line of light is gliding
toward the ground. On the wings

of rigid birds of aluminum and sound,
it breaks open oceans, waking
the midwestern sky. And limns

the grey pocket of returning,
human hearts pulsing with sighs.

And what of it to me and my neighbors
that even when we sleep and scatter
untame seeds into our gardens,

these travelers steep the air above us
in their hopeful gaze and anxieties.

The Key

The lost key-shaped collection
of carbon & aluminum brings me

to skin's edge, my inability
even in atoms of likeness & salt

to find, remember, open
or close. The house & street

stretch into a laboratory of non-keys
worth trying. The science of purse or

storm drain concludes in question:
Creator, supple & dinosaur, if

I'm unable to locate small & precious,
my own invention, how do you

ask anything of me. When found,
I slice open every door like that is

what I am made of and made for.

JEFF HARRISON

Queen Nab Masquerade

a toast to you, passed-around worrier
dark surplus water rattling around as
you're bending breathing in white grasses
skin my enthusiasm & see how pretty
it is then, a sequential enthusiasm anatomy,
layers nabbed clear & ever clearer
if in such clarity we have silence & if
in silence we have death, then in echo we
have the cradle, words don't spread to the
edges of my breath, these edges are
spattered with blowflies, our bones are
the roots of the sky, the hair of our head is
the bottom seam, is the center of the Earth,
if this cup could snow, its saucer would be
a bank, Queen Nab, faint with feeding silence,
words imprisoned on hairs slender like stakes
dark surplus water in this toast time of your guts

STEVE LAPINSKY

In the Crumbling Blacksmith Shop of My Father's Ear

there is a happy worker.

He smiles at me,
then winks into the rearview mirror.

His new wife in the front seat
chattering about fracking and natural gas,

as we drive through mid-Michigan
on our way to a restaurant
that used to be a lumberjack brothel.

I always remember it the same way:
My mother dragging us out to the car.

My father, walking drunk through the field
of wild carrot behind our house,
with mud up to his knees,
after we left him at Big Boy's:

the hero returning home after years of battle,
the broken axle of his chariot
plowing the earth for the next generation
of hemlock.



UNTITLED by John M. Bennett & Thomas M. Cassidy
2014, collage, mixed media (8" x 5 1/2")

EDWARD MYCUE

Rumble Seat Pierce-Arrow

Lately, when I have dreamed of HOME what appears is that river bottom cabin where 2 men lived and took my brothers and me out in their boat fishing and just seeing the shore life as my father jack kicked back reclining at shore dreaming baseball. Back to that time and of the Pierce-Arrow with the rumble seat trunk where we rode free to the sky: cars and with dogs in them cars with the rumble seats the mid 1940's that were old even then and guys back from World War II who had them and we loved them, ducking down into the space inside when windy or cold or you were afraid—or my dad or and the guys were a bit worried. We bounced over potholes, roots, humps heading down to the river and their cabin, some tributary of our Niagara River. I remember those two guys who lived down there after, back from the war, and the one who'd had a leg off used to grab me to haul me over these ditches and trees, the blond hunk with the missing leg but some replacement (and I think now it was my first crush on a guy) in his 20's who my dad used to play baseball with and the other guy my dad's buddy from their boy scout days or from the Tuscarora reservation near Niagara. Lately, when I have dreamed of home what appears is the rumble seat.

WILLIE SMITH

How Too

Me's on a beam. Use on a plank. Eyes on the prize. Ears and ears of corn. Colonel Pop knows abyss when he sees one twice.

Lips slipped into eclipse. The moon copper. The day robber. The tongue rubber. The skin visquine. Aluminum the strut.

Me's on a beam. Use on a plank.

Eyes from sockets prized. Wrenches prized over Germany. Me's on a beam. Use on a plank. Aluminum the strut. Umbral moon above.

Heart betwixt, gut between. Visceral plane around.

Use on a plank. Me's on a beam.

CHAD SWEENEY

Effect

I was alone and could not see God
and the sky was intimate
with fish and hanging roots

and pages in the library
fluttered with languages
like air in another country

and you weren't even looking when I rescued
kittens from the flood and lifted
their prayers like threads of glass.

That morning tulips could only be touched in museums
through blocks of green
ice,

the houses were stuffed with furniture,

I dreamed we were tunneling
through mountains to find each other.
The best sex in the world

happens during conjugal visits,
I've gotten myself into prison twice
just to have it.

That's why I'm calling.

Lantern

The absence of rain
hangs like a phantom over our town,
one living finger on a dead hand

nervously tapping.

In the square Justice has made a statue
to honor itself.

Bronze hammer reflecting dry trees.

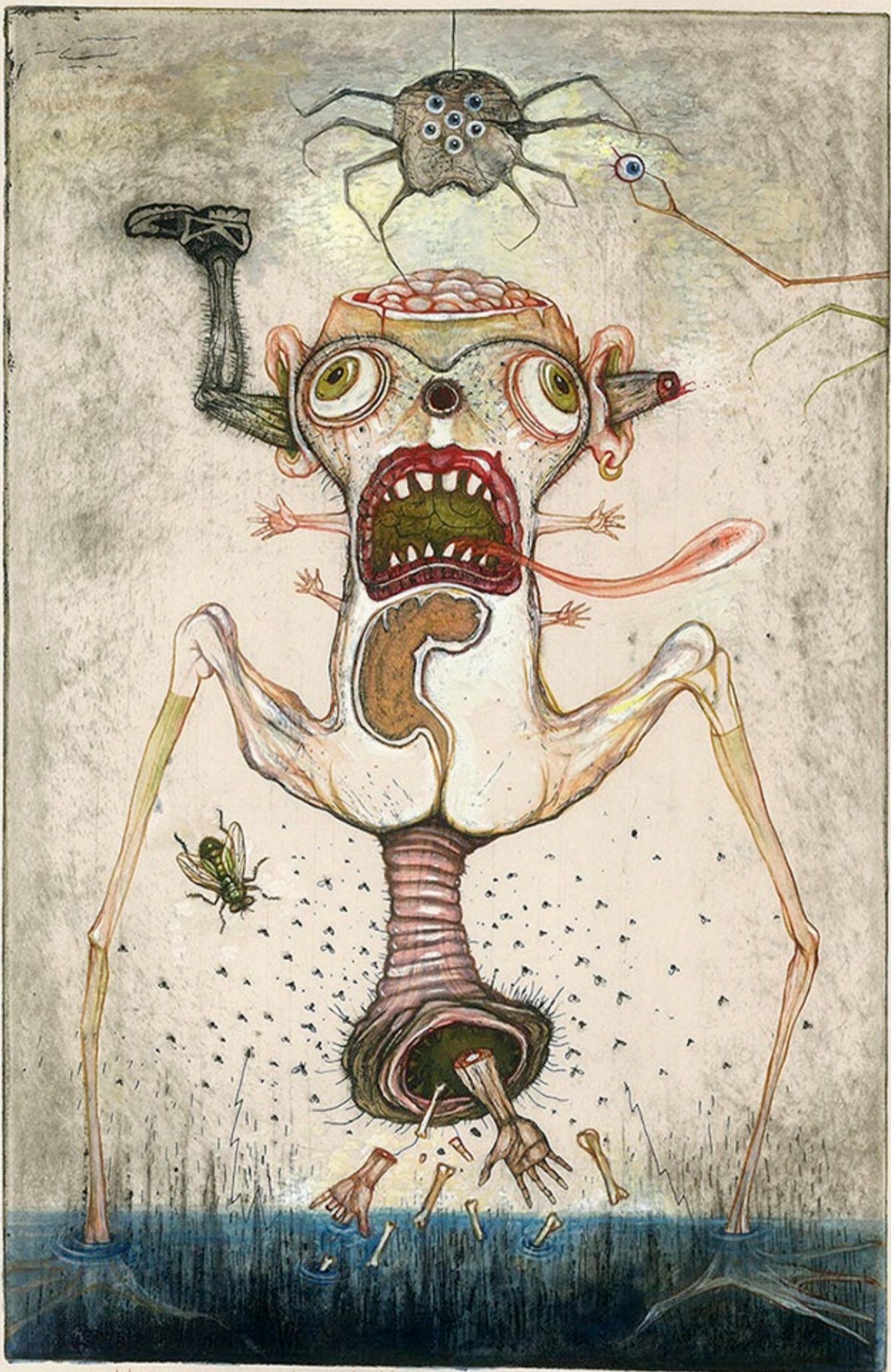
Gravity gathers in the low
branches,
the street in stone

mosaic
withholds its old light.

I carry my skull

a lantern
across the bridge into the ghetto

sprinkling fire blue and green
on the house doors.



edd meg az agyad mielőtt ő esz meg téged

THE HELL OF REPETITION: DEADLY SINS—GLUTTONY
by László Gyórfy, mixed media

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

RAY GONZALEZ:

Pick

The Picassos are in the cellar and the dead horses in "Guernica" are spread across the earth. Bats worldwide were found to avoid the light of the moon. Spanish researchers found the spot where Caesar was stabbed in Rome, sparrows wrinkling the faces of those that can't spell "apocalypse." A quiet and thoughtful finger tracing the bruise on someone's back. The photographed hand of the missing arm of the one-armed man, an ancestor's rosary whose beads are worn down with guilt. Thousands of Mayan symbols unable to be deciphered. The crying out on the avenue is actually a bird of prey. The pores of the body grow fatherless each day. Bowing to letters left out of the Spanish alphabet, envelopes sealing the blood-stained notes. Once a summer, a rain pool of sparrows, knowledge that grandfathers were singers of songs, their tired railroad jobs leading to furious stories of their mistresses trying to recapture the lost birds their wives released. On horseback for days, the wives came upon secret rooms, not on their tongues, but in the dove's symbolic purity inside the roses and outside of the crucifix.

JOHN M. BENNETT:

I gagged on your sandwich

could spell and die the
louder short reballed
on's shirt I'm ashed
I'm ashed to ,able
f laked the headless
sank the head's what
sink ,rests among the

swelling rocks the
lettric roof or silt
you s poke yr g
ash in tongue just
s mouldered tongue
just formed an b
ack the back the word

TERRY HAUPTMAN

Deep Song

But the weeping is an enormous dog,
the weeping is an enormous angel,
the weeping is an enormous violin,
and nothing else is heard but the weeping.

Federico Garcia Lorca

Forgetting the mountain thunder
The lilac qasidas of weeping
Your tears of violet rain
Drenching Córdoba Corazón of forest colts
Running the green wind
As the sky turns red,
Your bitter sap resins
For gypsy violins.
Love, love a flock of deer,
Your Andalusian green flame
In the pines,
Your deep song of roses
On the Tamarit Divan,
Siguiriyas of spiritbirds
Sparking your human love,
And nothing else is heard but the weeping.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON:

As I prepare to move, I'm getting rid of vast amounts of books, and this has resulted in my reading things I've been storing for years just so that I can feel okay about letting them go. Therefore, my advice is that if

you want to read the books you actually own, get rid of them.

IVAN ARGUELLES:

Diderot hand in hand with the
Marquis de Sade

wraps himself up in a mexican
serapé

at Constitution Hall,
Philadelphia, 1930

Blue Grace turns into the Count
of Saint-Germain

who lives forever

cutting up George Washington
dream of pyramid liquefactions
from thighs of Versailles

Blue Grace intimidates Nevil
Chamberlain

feels up Fillippo Marinetti
and other hysterics of the
phallic rose

Blue Grace dressed up as
automobile sperm

My Claw of the future

and the almond rose Rich the Vampire wears
over the US Army

—flags !

american flags !

flying like bats

out of ' My Burial Vault ' !

flood museums

where Robespierre's murder is plotted

—floated from Texcoco,
the Prince of Bogota caught
redhanded
sniffing forty cans of Berlin
ether !
Hydrek ice blue teeth
impersonates, psycho-kinetically,
the resurrection of Blue Grace
as prophetess of the anti-planet system
Blue Grace under dark glasses
getting out of one hundred white
cars at once !
Cars of ectoplasmic tin-types
go to the juncture where Blue
Grace Glass is raped
at the Court of Miracles, Mexico City, 1959
Blue Grace undressed
reveals tattoo marks of Hamburg,
sea & storm of
Neptune-Pluto conjunction
Rumors of war
strafe the automation monster
walking to universal
assassination
K & K and the russian poets
suck Blue Grace's opulent
morsels, back & front
The nicotine heaven of Bosch's
painting
emanates the thousand beauties
of

Christopher Maclaine's tool box
of mechanical brass jewels
Man,
the marvel
of masturbation arts,
intersects Blue Grace
at World's Finale Orgasm Electro-Physic Apocalypse !
I sing the beauty of bodily
touch
with my muse, Blue Grace

HELLER LEVINSON:

At the level of Hinge Production, each word insists on its word associates. In this sense, the practice of the author is to detect (to identify) the reproductive impulse inherent in the word being witnessed.

D. E. STEWARD:

All the land in the world would fit into the Pacific, leaving a moat of ocean around the whole earth continent equal in area to the United States plus Australia

Westland, Southland, Fiordland

A Tasman Sea yellowfin tuna, caught, cleaned, filleted, eaten raw

Australian gannet, cape pigeon, red-billed gull, Cook Strait blue penguin

Westland black petrel, fluttering shearwater, fairy prion, white-capped mollymawk, black-browed mollymawk, white-fronted tern, southern black-backed gull, southern skua, black-billed gull, sooty shearwater

Wandering albatross

The austral oceanic world

Fiordland crested penguin, black shag, pied shag, spotted shag, little shag

Storm petrel, giant petrel

Light-mantled sooty albatross

Royal albatross

In the late-summer open ocean off the South Island of New Zealand generally at least one albatross is in view

Each royal albatross spending its first five or six adult years at sea without touching land

The wind, just the sum total of five years of open ocean wind

To be taken by sharks is a common way for pelagic birds to die

Four-foot shark caught while fishing for blue cod off the stern

Inky black, inky blue

Coming upon a mola, an ocean sunfish, far out off the fiords

And a peculiar standoff with a pod of ten pilot whales off Westland

South from this 46°S latitude are only Stewart Island, Punta Arenas, Rio Gallegos, Puerto Deseado

Puysegur Point on the south side of Preservation Inlet, the extreme southwestern cape of the South Island, at the entrance to the Foveaux Strait, ninety miles west of Bluff

Some of the worst weather in the world

A full gale, sixty-knot winds, enter North Harbor in Chalky Inlet in the black, lie at anchor for a day and a half, no sign of anyone else at all

Big seas, stiff southwesterlies

Dorade boxes, lee cloths, dodgers

Red, black and white are the Maori colors

Red, black, white and yellow, the Native American colors

Colors possible with roots, barks and lye

Pied stilt, harrier, grey duck, white-faced heron, kingfisher, lack fantail, silvereye, spine-tailed swift, welcome swallow, pukeko, pied fantail, yellowhammer

The buzz of North Island cicadas

An absolutely pre-mammalian sound

New Zealand's long-white-cloud sense of temporary human interlude

JEFF HARRISON:

No one may filch the newly-monochromatic dust for talismanic purposes.

JAMES GRABILL:

We'd been nary a score of full day out, judging from the notches, when no man doubted what had set upon us were unseasonable warm-making gusts as if initiated by the aurora borealis itself. Shivering we were when they engulfed our craft, selecting her prow and bewedded power of humanity for purposes the tongue may not pronounce, when out of heaviness, an eminence of light arose from our very skin and air to absorb us, the wave-swabbed planks of our deck and tackle, our hoisted sails and the rest, making muscle and bone itself a home with us swimming within it, carried by it, where were we nuzzled upon breasts of the sea, breathing in circulation as if drawn by the current toward a place where no one stumbled under a load, even if he had he a mind to. Saw we our humanity go becalmed, enwrapped within ever-steadying Mediterranean gales this far south, our approach of the horn less than three days' out—only to find exacted upon us an exotic bloom, a sweet daylight tincture well-scuttling lesser intent, evening the keel, while honing balance in lightest lightning enthusiasms, as bearings of ours wore a unity of organism, with uncommon forbearance, so guided were we by pungent buoyancy, the fecundity of bountiful lots that floated not only the hold but rankest swabs of us. Firm were heights of the masts, powered within this midst as if they'd been spines. Much transpired, where no question we thrived upon the deep, the drink down under threatening not one in our stead. Nights passed, as steeled were we, where borne, were we rocked but barely, in the most gentle of mists.

EDWARD MYCUE:

Pencil musicians don't need theatrical powder.

RAYMOND FARR:

Please, if you are human in the sense that you feast on others like a christmas puppy striding up to its owner's shadow & weeping & then laughing uncontrollably you may want to get yrself checked out, diagnosed, drunk!

I suggest you make all the wrong moves & then make Idaho yr home
the mountains are too sexy to just ignore them career wise

& be ready to flee yr house & family & books & friends
at a moment's notice—become a minute man in the age of the blind
spotted geckos call whatever you write the epitome of a city in the throes
of tiger milk love

ZOLTAN KOMOR:

the gynecologist knocks on my door and tells me he's sorry but my
parents decided to abort me—it will be quite a complicated surgery
since I'm twenty-nine years old—my last memory from this Earth: I'm
speaking with my grandparents on the phone, trying to convince them
to abort my parents

*

the Venetian blind salesman knocks on my door and tells me he's sorry
but I can't have any more light—from now on I won't be able to see the
medals I pin on my chest—I have some stored light yes but I keep it for
other people

*

if I were polite I would give my seat to the skinned women on the
bus—but I imagine her sitting down and rubbing the chair with her red
meaty hands, yelling: from now on this is my new skin

*

I'm a skinned woman and people don't give me their seats when I travel
on the bus—if I had a penis I would rape all their mothers—but I don't
have—so I detach my pussy and give it to a man in exchange for his
seat—the young man puts my vagina in his pocket and when I take his
seat suddenly I yell: from now on this is my new skin (somewhere in a
green jungle a woman screams and molts a seat cover onto the muddy
ground).

BOB HEMAN:

are its dimensions
small? or does it
merely contain
small things?

TIMOTHY LIU:

Maybe the best parts of social media are not the ego-gratifying likes or the thoughtless comments bordering on obsequy but rather, simply, posted links to available texts online—poems, articles, interviews—that move someone enough to share them if for no other reason than to offer some chance sustenance, which I believe, is why we bother at all with lit mags in the first place: to forage, to satiate even as we cultivate our evolving appetites.

ALESANDRA SIMMONS:

I recently read this in an essay by Octavio Paz: “You’ve got to read a few books well and frequently.”

STEVE LAPINSKY:

The spirit of Detroit is unfleshy:
the breasts of the stoned goddess on the toilet.
Gnats swarm like the ghost of Jean Harlow
above the neglected lawn of the Fisher Mansion.
A ruined Packard inside a suicidal garage.
The empty can of Stroh’s used as a muffler
on a seventies Lincoln curbing
the neighborhood, drunk in search of love.

**CALIBAN
IS
SEARCHING
FOR
ANGELS**

