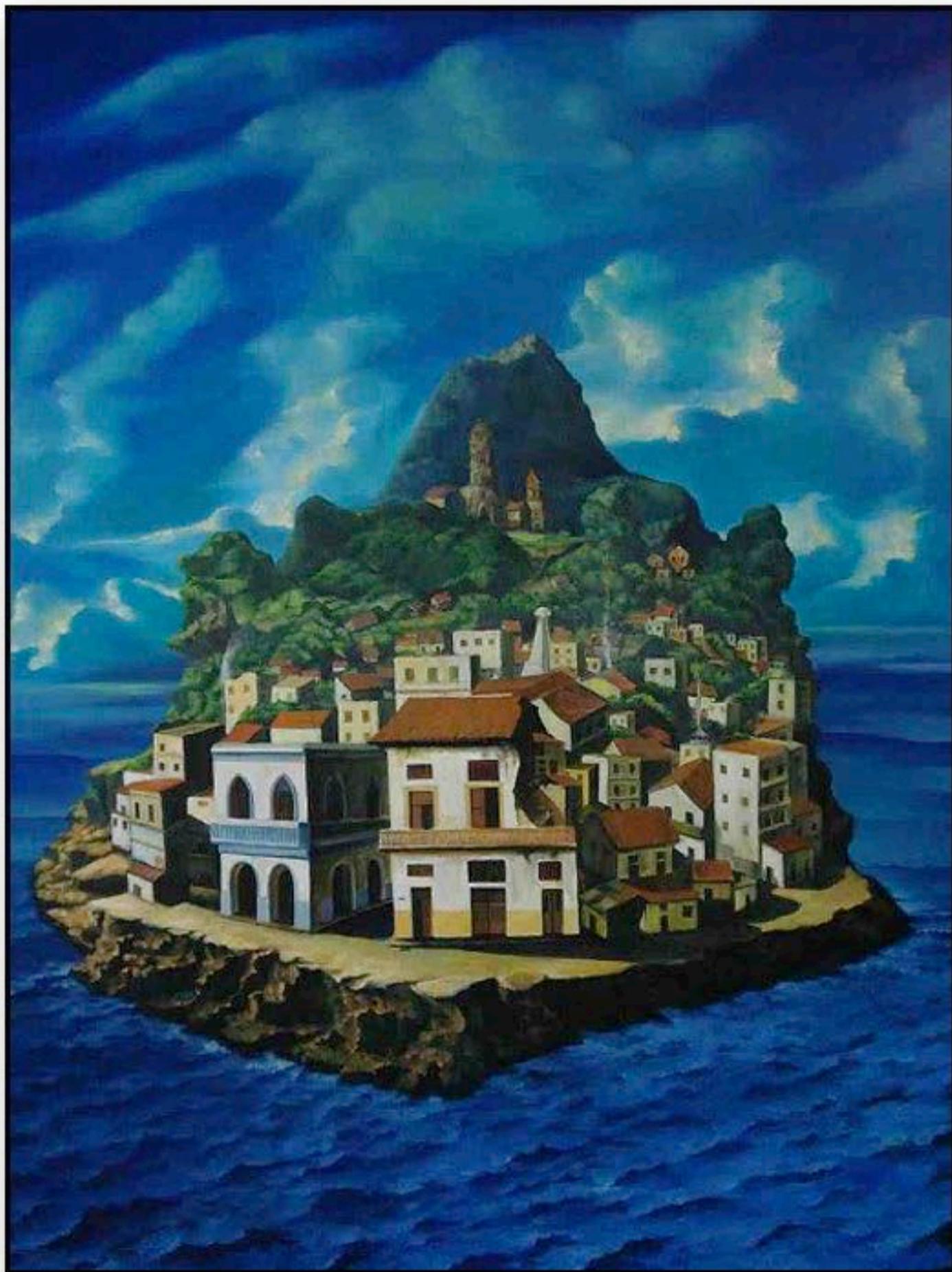


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# CALIBAN



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## CALIBAN

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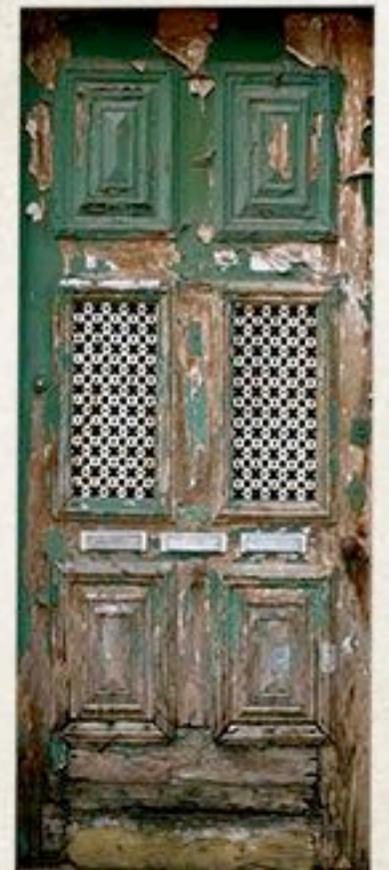
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**CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE**

**ALEXA LEE**

*T. Rex*



TIM KAHL

### **The Diverted River**

The river is diverted, and the village  
dries up into a description of a village.

The village imagines a lie that is  
killing it, and on certain days at noon  
it imagines a yellow violence.

The river moves off like a scribble.

A sacrifice follows it. The sacrifice  
is not mentioned for fear

it may be tolerated

the way a cockroach tolerates  
headlessness for ten days before  
it submits to one final indignity.

A man who belongs to one of  
the scheduled tribes on the list  
examines the red soil. He says:

Nothing can grow here anymore.

But no one can say the village is dying.

No one can say the river is upset.

The river can't rescue the seeds near  
the village. It is a new river,  
and it behaves the way gravity  
dictates it should. It flows.

The river is only interested in flowing.

The red dust storms occupy the sky  
above the city. The sinkholes swallow  
the graves of the village. The qualities  
that once described the village

*Kahl/10*

are beginning to disappear.  
There goes the crumbling altar.  
There goes the footpath that used to  
lead to nowhere. Even the horizon  
empties there, no trace of  
the language's violence either.  
The men from the list of  
scheduled tribes arrive and prepare  
to salvage the truth,  
or at least find its interior  
that may still be buried there.

## **Angel Island**

The army abandoned its surplus.  
The missile site was visited by flickers,  
And the picnics grew to the size of  
    greenbelt parks where kids  
made friends with insect bites and  
    poison oak. The foot trails  
led to historic traps illuminated with signs  
that read *Welcome Home*. At the Western Gate  
immigrants dreamt they were oxen,  
    fallen pear blossoms  
bare branches in the late spring.

The mule deer advance  
on the ridge sites near the battery  
where the woman with the brown mole  
on her breast tells her blessed owls  
    to guard the pit toilets,  
to accommodate the boaters  
    tying off their crafts against  
the swift currents of Raccoon Strait.  
The perennial grasses are conditioned to be  
brown and remember the names of the Miwok.

They are written in Chinese  
and painfully given to the detainees  
    dreaming of slipping their quarantine.  
The ghosts of cattle graze like infantry  
under the madrone dropping their red berries  
that hook into beasts punching through the scrub.

Ticks torment the service dogs.  
The eucalyptus overtake the service road  
    and terrorize the campsites.  
The top of the mountain was flattened  
for radar to track the future blazes  
on the mainland, the intrusion of any  
    troubled group trying to travel across

sacred ground like wildfire. *Be Free*  
rejoice the egrets who are lenient  
with their lone white child. Wildflowers  
find their soulmates in fireworks  
that shine helplessly above the bay,  
the skyline imposed on a blue heron,  
the night mooring itself to the mangled buoy  
of a property map. At last here is  
the water tank lost in the fire, downgraded  
to char and damaged sanctuary.  
The grebes take cover in its burned up glory.  
Seals sun on the rocks and get pissed at  
swimmers who have strayed from the cove,  
who have risen from the sea  
to hike the high ground after the Ice Age  
and then serve as discharge from the ferries.  
The woman with the brown mole on her breast  
rides with the hordes and speaks  
to the birds. She is guided by the sword ferns.  
She advises hummingbirds.  
Scrub jays are taken in by her appeals.  
A solitary hawk circles, tracing  
the eccentric path of her mind, trafficking  
in windspeed and lift as she carries . . .  
the pines and the toyon scaled down  
to inspected blips amid the summer sunset.  
From her vantage she recruits a contradiction  
and strives to remember it as real.

## JAX NTP

### **of tendencies, pin it**

the dog barks outside our bathroom window—an endless  
oboe—quotes for coda—code for panic easily—when loose

strands of receding hairline suffocate the carpet—water  
sprouts between my toes—there are no waves here to shift

my weight—study the steady row of ants—will i ever know  
how to love you with that much devotion—the way ants

fumble around always returning for their dead—what is  
stronger than the premonition of rain that deepest hue

of pink water vapor water mass of blood milk—steady  
now—sometimes i want you to win because it lifts

my burden of going first—but don't triangulate me  
i'm not your equilateral bitch—dearest midnight solace

you are sassafras inside chambered x-rays of what of  
what of is that taro cream in your thick-ums titty twister

misery not to be confused with mystery i wanna lick  
you boy girl then girl girl two three coconut oil infused

do you eat the liver behind that fried chicken skin?  
we are not whole together and we are not whole alone

we are one pint of ginger beer away from what—threadbare  
moths buss behind our knees—or preferably waking up

*NTP/14*

to you now with post wisdom teeth pulled blood breath  
undressing—undress: an origami undoing itself

**when light filters back in a peep hole**

my heart is a piece of used furniture, dirty chair  
population: decades of menstrual stains caked  
qua layers of brain peonies unfurl antlers

for arrows suspended in absence of skin  
the way light drips off the corner of your mouth  
if art is the preservation of the self—i am woman

with no bra in the winter nipples frost bit hard  
how hard does each species devour emptiness  
differently? you say you love me and i look at you

with bloodshot translucent eyes—i can feel  
the shape of your earlobes with my fingertips  
such somnambulist incantations—neither shrill

nor scolding your voice penetrates the thick  
exhaustion in my harrowing bones when  
nothing matters most flesh encased exposure

when did fragments become a way of subversion?  
minimalist chambered nautilus—an overwhelming  
sense of dissatisfaction split ginkgo biloba ginkgo

herbs in mobius circles stripped what is regret  
but desire for chance—priorities allow for collateral  
learning not now satan—i'm fingering thru my

rolodex of hate my heart is licorice black not quite lead  
a backpack full of carcasses—assassin bugs and aperture  
—light travels as a gypsy beachcomber jaunts not juts

best left observed, not handled, no urgency  
means no push for growth, a shrapnel desire  
for nothingness rooted in moss—if art is self

*NTP/16*

preservation, then, why do I keep writing you  
in calla lilies throat drunk with light always running  
out of syllables—loneliness is an invention of the idle

i don't have to touch your point of pain to fix you  
the metal taste is from iodine flowing, saline  
for dehydration—crab pinched thoughts ants and

ants crawl on forearm—licorice black not quite lead  
thalassophobia—is the fear of large bodies of water or  
was it the fear of vast emptiness? poetry is the unbound

recapitulation of brief moments with permanency  
and the perusal of jettisoned non essentials tell me  
the structures of semiconductors qua surfslash

neckwings handwritten butterflies on pages  
chantilly lattice wet towels nook turned girl in the wall  
svelte not thin, flexible and graceful not slim when a city haunts

you(r) and you ignore it the way you ignore catahoula  
that catahoula louisiana swamp mixbreed fatty  
re-signifies home for you when all i want are

perpetually unlit ceiling candles too expensive unscented  
candles from solvang or scandinavia what's the humidity  
there again desire inert mid-sand

weighs heavy on your clavicles calcified pining for touch



THE EXPULSION by Reynier Llanes, 2012  
oil on canvas (48" x 36")

## GERALD VIZENOR

### **Justice Molly Crèche**

*(Chapter seven from **Treaty Shirts**, a forthcoming novel by Gerald Vizenor)*

Native totemic unions were ancestral and character related, and the unions were continued for personal reasons in the stories of treaty fugitives. The exiles honored totemic connections, celebrated the scenes, stories and birthright of continental liberty, and forever renounced that crude rein of endorsements and sector servitude.

The cause of creature justice, animals, birds, and other spirits of creation, the usual turns of stories, easily evolved in contemporary native literature, but scarcely a trace of animal rights appear in the histories of predatory empires, monotheistic cults, or chemical cultures.

Totemic justice originated in native stories and in the consistent evidence of creature connections, navigation, and intuitive care. You know, the recognition of a spirited way of life, tease of flight, hibernation, pollination, echolocation, and the entirety of natural motion, created the egalitarian principles of totemic unions, or connections that were more intimate and consequential than the mundane reciprocity of material cultures.

The weighty chronicles of enlightenment were easily discounted in native stories as unintended irony, and the steady mongrel barks were surely heard at the start and much later at the abrogation of reservation treaties, and, of course, the barks at the end of so many wars.

Monotheism and the late night promises of civilization were seldom the most reliable sources of equitable evidence, totemic justice, or native continental liberty. Yet, so many natives were converted to that easy notion of a single fearsome creator, with angels and demons on the sly, to oversee the pious mission of the cruel separation of animals from humans.

The Constitution of the White Earth Nation created a momentous aura of native survivance, an overused concept in critical literature, of

course, but the notion of new totemic connections and resistance to cultural corruption became a source of personal motivation, of praise, insight, irony, and the ethos of restitution over retribution in my decisions of the tribal court.

Archive described the creation of the constitution as a narrative of moral imagination. The notions of a creative spirit and communal duties were common in native stories, and Edmund Burke introduced the concept of a moral union more than two centuries ago in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Native creation stories were always a tease of moral unions with humans and animals, and trickster stories were more perceptive of natural motion, the turn of seasons, and more persuasive than the violence of revolutions.

I was the first elected senior judge of the constitutional tribal court, and at the time even the old enemies of the new constitutional governance and autonomous judiciary had advocated my election to the new court. The respect for my philosophy of cultural restitution, however, soon turned to nasty hearsay when the court carried out regular hearings on the natural rights of birds and animals, and the recognition of legal standing for totemic creatures in court.

The animal rights sessions were always scheduled at the end of the day and never detracted from the necessary duties of the court, such as domestic abuse, child protection, foreclosures, fraud, forgery, and mostly violations of the Variable Chemical Synthesis and Controlled Substances Act. That consideration, however, never reroutes the constant harangues of the tradition fascists over the equal rights of sleeve creatures, Bichon Frisé and Chihuahua, the designer choices of casino gamblers and black tooth narcotics crazies.

Most native citizens were eager to participate in the new government, and in the first year seven new totemic community councils were established, mostly based on the traditional totems, loon, bear, marten and sandhill crane. These more common totems were easily resumed with the conscience and moral union of native ancestry. Regrettably many natives fiercely opposed the new bat, coywolf, and wolf spider associations as perversions of the ancient practices. Yet, several months later the legislative council voted to approve the three new totems. The Bichon Frisé, however, was never considered as a native totem.

The other more reasonable critics of my decision to protect creatures would consider restitution for some totems, but not outright equal rights for spiders, bats, or coywolves because most natives would not associate with the totemic names of pests and predators. The reminder that bears and eagles were predators was not persuasive.

No one could ever forget that during the constitutional conventions the tradition fascists had denounced everything mixed, mingled, or crossed, totemic animals, or humans, and refused to acknowledge coywolves for the same reasons they renounced the natural rights of native crossbloods as citizens of the White Earth Nation.

I scheduled late night sessions in tribal court to hear testimony about the abuse of spiders, wolves, bats, and other creatures, and to establish the legal standing of the coywolf, hoary bat, and wolf spider as new totemic associations duly recognized by the legislative council. The children at the session were very excited to hear stories about spiders, but some of the elders, mostly women, cringed over the mere thought of a spider totem council, and suggested the webs would be a wiser political totem.

Harlan Douleur had initiated the wolf spider totem to the legislative council and then testified that his native blood ran very thin because of medication and his ancestry. He praised the constitution and the practice of the court that honored the heart and conscience of native totems, and related how he sat on the screen porch and watched spiders build and repair webs during his long recovery from cancer. "Spider webs are intricate and shimmer in the morning, a beautiful scene as thin as my blood, a web of native spirit and fur trade ancestry," he testified. Douleur was a retired army sergeant with bone cancer. He raised his right arm to salute the court and revealed an elaborate tattoo of spider webs on his forearm.

Hole in the Storm created a union with the spider as his personal totem, and as one of his painterly signatures, but he did not actually specify the wolf spider.

The tradition fascists arrived late and dominated the court testimony with an intense censure of the wolf spider and coywolf totems as obscene notions of the original and true native totemic traditions.

Butchy Manson shouted, "the wolf is a sacred totem, and not a coyote,

never a coyote or coy mixedblood, and the coywolf does not belong in our traditional totems or songs on the reservation.”

Naturally, she had not considered the contradiction of precise native traditions secured on a federal reservation. Butchy refused to consider that natives had been removed more than a century earlier from diverse native communities at the miserable end of the slaughter of sacred native totems in the continental fur trade.

“Our ancestors never heard of coywolves, so how could that coy thing be a totem” said an older woman who lived in the senior residence.

“French coywolves,” said Moby Dick.

“Wolves are sacred, and never were spiders, so we condemn the use of the sacred totem of wolves to name a creepy imposter, and only a birdbrain would think spiders were wolves,” said Micky Crow.

The court testimony on the rights of creatures was never conclusive, as everyone knows, yet the number of enthusiastic spectators increased as the sessions continued one night a week as totemic entertainment for more than a year. Surely the most persuasive testimony was about the outright murder of animals in the fur trade, and the murder of birds in the freaky fashion trade of decorative feathers. The testimony on several nights turned to the despicable plume hunters who murdered snowy egrets, golden eagles, bald eagles, cardinals, and hundreds of other birds.

The Migratory Bird Act of 1918 provided protection for some birds with decorative feathers to live at peace in the same world as humans. The cruelty of that predatory war against animals and birds was countered and never excused in the worthy notice of new totemic connection with many other creatures, birds, bats, flowers, and spiders.

The rise of deadly diseases caused by lethal pathogens that moved from animals to humans scared many people to turn away from animals, totemic associations, and continue the crude sacrifice of other creatures for the race of material culture. Fox, raccoons, deer, and many other animals moved to the cities to avoid human predators and deadly poisons of agriculture.

Everyone who appeared in tribal court has heard me talk about the philosopher John Gray, and ideas from his books, *Straw Dogs*, and *The Silence of Animals*. Sylvia Beach, the librarian, told me there was never

a rush to read more about his critical thought because the books were published more than twenty years ago. Not surprising, the number of books acquired by the library more than doubled in the past decade, and at the same time there was a comparable decline in the actual number of books that were borrowed at the library. Natives prowled the global networks with other creatures of the night, but seldom visited a library. Today hardly anyone reads more than a few pages of electronic captions in a day.

Continental liberty was a caption.

Totemic unions were captions.

Animals were captions.

The seven exiles were captions.

Those who testified in court on totemic animal rights heard me repeat several times a selection from *The Silence of Animals*. “The distance between human and animal silence is a consequence of the use of language. It is not that other creatures lack language.” Yes, of course, and much more, consider the silence of gestures and the animal gaze. “The discourse of the birds is more than a human metaphor. Cats and dogs stir in their sleep, and talk to themselves as they go about their business.”

Gray had obviously not come in contact with the irony mongrels, or he might have mentioned the sustained barks over the weary digests of philosophers. “Humans are the void looking at itself. It is a lonely image. But why privilege humans in this way? The eyes of other creatures may be brighter. Humans cannot help seeing the world through the veil of language.”

White Favor and the other irony mongrels were trained to bark at that curtain of words, the uncreative mishmash of tense, cause, person, dopey similes, and the obvious absence of irony. Totemic unions were visionary, creative stories that reached over the captions, hand mirrors, and cultural cants of the moment.

Gray declared that myths, and clearly he should have more clearly discerned native myths from hearsay theories, were “inherited from religion,” and the humanists were “ruled by myths, though the ones by which they are possessed have none of the beauty or the wisdom of those they scorn.” Gray created original ideas about animals, but he

could have been wiser with a visit to my court sessions on animal rights. Surely not many heavy going humanists could bear the actual gaze of an animal, or the totemic stories of other creatures.

The gaze of animals continued in stray trickster stories, and the gaze of bears, wolves, or lynx was seldom averted with the disguise of hunters. The doctrines of the other, the gawky hunter in camouflage, the ruse of sounds, scents, and blinds, never lasted as a tricky evasion or escape from the gaze of animals. The gaze of the other was always there, or, to turn that gaze around, humans remained forever in the eyes of the other, in the magical eyes of bobcats, the steady stare of coywolves, and always in the compound eyes of blowflies. The gaze was bright and nightly, even in a trance, or a nightmare.

The court names and calendars of evolution created the disguise of the other, the animal other in monotheism, and natives were once wrongly considered the other creatures in the course of enlightenment and husbandry. The corrupted animals of civilization wore weighty clothes, giant wigs, top hats, spats, whalebone hoopskirts, and heavy powders to escape the gaze of the natural world. Some men coveted the picture postcards of naked native women, and revealed the perverse traces of the naked other. Many natives mocked the poses and evasions of the animal gaze with top hats, epaulets, and morning coats.

The gaze continues to uncover cultural disguises, and at the same time natives created a vital presence of the natural gaze in totemic unions, and without the evangelical shame of nudity. There were many other native gazes, the shamanic gaze, the ironic gaze, wild adventures gaze, and stories that disguise the liberty gaze, glory gaze, erotic gaze, hunter gaze, godly gaze, drone gaze, medical gaze, hunger gaze, pity me gaze, and the predatory gaze. Natives were once captured in the popular literary gaze of victimry.

My nickname, clearly derogatory and ironic, was first delivered in court in the third year of my term as an elected judge. I had mounted a miniature totemic crèche of animals and birds, bears, beaver, coywolves, bats, sandhill cranes, and bobcats decorated with spider webs during the winter solstice at the entrance to the tribal court. The crèche was clearly a source of pleasure for most natives, a gesture of totemic irony, but the tradition fascists destroyed the original totemic images as a desecration

of the sacred totems of natives. The totemic animals, papier-mâché and painted clay were actually created by school children. This was one of those rare events when the fascists and the various solemn monotheists and evangelists connected overnight to censure my totemic creature crèche. Since then the crèche nickname has become an obvious source of necessary irony in the secular deliberations of the tribal court.

Totemic associations, animals, birds, and spiders, have always been represented with an evocative presence or legal standing in my court. The standing of a vital spirit and dear life was broadly accepted in my courtroom because of the undeniable evidence that animals, birds, trees, insects were abused, poisoned, and terminated by humans, institutions and corporations.

The white pine and other trees on the White Earth Reservation, for instance, had been removed from treaty land by sweetheart agreements between timber companies and agents of the federal government. The forests were ruined by clear cuts, and the consequences were adverse to natives and other creatures of the environment. The white pine treaty forests had rights and legal standing in my tribal court, and the historical testimony established the willful destruction of natural stands of ancient trees.

The animals, beaver, bear, marten, and ermine, hunted and murdered in the continental fur trade were recognized with legal standing in tribal court. The court testimony by native storiers and some historians provided the ostensible evidence necessary to pursue selected indictments of the coureurs de bois, prominent voyageurs, four colonial empires, constitutional governments, resource enterprises, chemical corporations, and the institutions, museums, and individuals who collected, displayed and benefited from the legacy and serial murder of animals in the fur trade. The exiles grieved for the spirits of forsaken creatures.

The possession of stolen native property, sacred objects, and animal body parts, skin, skull, bones, paws, claws, bear teeth must be considered criminal evidence of the fur trade massacre. The purchase of totemic animal pelts and stolen remains was a crime. Taxidermy and embalmed animals and birds would be considered criminal in totemic justice, no less a criminal practice than the hideous display of embalmed and positioned human skeletons in museums.

My totemic medicine pouch, a personal and revealed connection with the spirit of the river otter, caused many natives to rush me in tribal court with harsh derisions and accusations of hypocrisy. The tradition fascists cursed me, that my sacred pouch, or medicine pelt, was a desecration of totemic traditions. The accusations were based only on the presence of peltry, and with no recognition of the actual evidence and native stories that honor my totemic union with the river otter.

Peter Vezina, a native healer, shamanic visionary, and maybe a member of the *midewiwin*, the medicine dance, had created the medicine pouch some two centuries earlier at the time of the fur trade. The abandoned pelt was recovered from the ice on the shoreline of Muskeg Bay in Lake of the Woods. The otter pouch contained sacred stones, *miigis*, or the revered shells of native motion, curative herbs, flowers, found wing bones and feathers to heal stray native spirits, the heavy beat of hearts, and to restore memories and the visionary presence of native ancestors.

An army medical doctor plundered that very sacred pouch from the cabin of a native healer in the Battle of Sugar Point near Bear Island on the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota. Natives that morning had outmaneuvered and soundly defeated the Third United States Infantry in 1898 by ingenuity, spirited stealth, and by courage, but the soldiers looted a sacred pouch, a war necklace, and other ceremonial objects as war booty.

Peter Vezina reported the military plunder of sacred objects but the army, and federal agents on the reservation, disregarded the cabin burglary and any blame for the theft of the medicine pouch by an army officer.

Pierre Vezina, grandson of the native healer, and my father, was told a century later that a "Bear Island War Indian Medicine Bundle" was posted for sale at auction in Paris, France. Pierre, two senators, and other members of my family petitioned that the auction house return the stolen pouch, but the director would only account for the current owner, a historian and reputable collector of native art. The auction house declined to intervene with any accusation that the pouch was stolen, even though the provenance revealed that the pouch was once owned by an army medical doctor who served in that capricious war against natives at Sugar Point near Bear Island.

Pierre raised several thousand dollars from the family to secure the otter pouch at auction in Paris. My father had never traveled outside of the country, but he had repeated many of the stories told by our relatives who served in the American Expeditionary Forces in the First World War and in the Second World War in France. So, he was readied by native visionary stories to encounter the actuality of our fur trade ancestors in France.

Pierre was at the auction house early to examine the medicine pouch. The security agents were concerned that my father might disrupt a commercial auction with a scene of totemic repatriation. Rightly, he considered a dramatic rescue of the sacred family medicine pouch. Yes, arrested with the pouch in hand, the newspapers might report, and my father was convinced the general public would have been sympathetic.

My father was left behind at the start of the bidding, and could only watch as the price reached a much higher amount than the family provided to buy the pouch. The sole bidder and final purchase was more than twice the reserve price at auction. My father was downhearted, of course, but as he was about to leave the auction house a security agent directed him to a private room and, as he told the story for many, many years, the spirit of the river otter was present at the auction and inspired an extraordinary scene of native and totemic liberty. The pouch was covered on a shiny display cabinet, and my father was about to show his rage when a lovely woman entered the room, extended her hand, smiled, and then uncovered the sacred medicine pouch.

Penina Crémieux, the historian and private collector of native art, was the final bidder at the auction. She raised the final price only to secure and return the pouch to my father and the family. My father was in tears, of course, and later that year she participated in a creative river otter ceremony on the White Earth Reservation.

Penina was the granddaughter of Nathan Crémieux, who once owned an art gallery, and she heard stories about Aloysius Beaulieu, the native artist who painted blue ravens and served with his brother, Basile, in the First World War in France. Nathan had featured the distinctive blue ravens at the Galerie Crémieux on Rue de la Bûcherie near the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Aloysius the painter, and Basile Beaulieu, the writer, moved to Paris after the war and never returned to the White Earth Reservation.

Nathan Crémieux sold almost every portrayal of blue ravens, abstract scenes of war, bridges, and the city, painted by Aloysius. They were very close friends and worked together on the presentation and exhibition of contemporary native art in Paris.

Penina told stories about one of her ancestors, a double great grandfather, a pioneer in the early eighteen hundreds who traded dry goods, jewelry, and sundries for native pottery, art, blankets and other objects in the American Southwest. That original collection of native art, but never sacred objects, was inherited by her grandfather Nathan and became the signature collection of the Galerie Crémieux.

Then, in 1943, the French police removed Nathan with thousands of other Jews to the deadly Drancy Internment Camp, and the Nazis seized the entire gallery of native art, blue ravens, pottery, trade blankets, sashes, ledger art, and other native objects. No doubt some of the plundered native art and blue ravens were later mounted in the homes of chosen Germans.

The White Earth judiciary ordered the repatriation of native art, notably the plundered series of blue ravens by Aloysius Beaulieu, and the court was prepared to prosecute as war criminals those citizens who had received native art and property stolen from the Galerie Crémieux. The court avoided state and national agencies and proceeded directly with the prosecution of the criminals a few months before the abrogation of the treaty reservation, and the demise of the native constitution and judiciary.

Godtwit Moon, the sector governor, had been ordered by federal agents to undermine the authority of the tribal court and egalitarian government. That, as most natives know, was not the end, never the end, but rather the start of native stories, original stories of exile, survivance, and continental liberty on Lake of the Woods.

Old John Squirrel was not a familiar name in the course of legal education or native justice but his name has always been a presence in my tribal court as a reference to the new sources of evidence in stories. Yes, a creative presence of native evidence. Native stories have been slighted as mere hearsay in state and federal courts, as everyone knows, but that has never been the rule in the judicial tradition of the White Earth Nation.

Charles Aubid, an inspired native storier and a witness in federal court more than sixty years ago, mentioned the name Old John Squirrel in sworn testimony. Aubid was in his late eighties at the time, and recounted visual scenes from the late eighteen hundreds in concise, substantive, and visual stories as court evidence, and with an obvious sense of natural reason. The stories created the presence of Old John Squirrel in court, a sense that he was as a fourth person, a visual presence in various perspectives, more than a second or third person in stories.

Aubid and other native witnesses were in federal court to convince the judge to restrain the government agents from regulating the wild rice harvest. Clearly natives understood the traditional harvest and had the inherent right to regulate and gather *manoomin* or wild rice on treaty land and wildlife refuges.

Aubid testified through translators that he was present as a young man with Old John Squirrel when federal agents declared that natives always had the right to decide the actual time to harvest wild rice in the autumn. The federal prosecutor objected to the stories about Old John Squirrel as hearsay. The judge pointed out that the court recognized only direct knowledge from the witness. Aubid smiled and then continued the same story but from another visual perspective. The prosecutor raised the same objection to hearsay.

United States District Judge Miles Lord told Aubid that Old John Squirrel was dead, and “you can’t say what a dead man said.” Aubid leaned closer to the judge, pointed at the stack of legal books on a table, and shouted that the books contained only the stories of dead white men. “Why should I believe what a white man says, when you don’t believe John Squirrel?”

That report about hearsay, evidence, and precedent was published in the *Minneapolis Tribune* on September 13, 1968. Gerald Vizenor, a native journalist at the time, wrote the story and clearly anticipated the later decision of the International Criminal Court that “relevant and necessary” hearsay was admissible in testimony.

The Old John Squirrel stories were considered relevant, inspired, and clearly necessary, and Justice Miles Lord ruled in favor of the native right to regulate the wild rice harvest. Native stories were considered credible evidence in tribal court, and yet native stories were never the

same from one scene to another in visual memory, so several stories were necessary to create a greater perspective and sense of the evidence, the presence of a fourth person in native stories.

The fourth person in native stories was a creative presence of a character, not a historical presence, and not hearsay theory, but a persuasive image in a scene created from a visual memory of a situation.

These court stories became an original literature of native reason and legal procedures, but the practice ended with the abrogation of the reservation treaty. The stories of native precedence and evidence continued in exile, and in a new native venue named Panic Radio.

My father posted that news article on the sideboard with tribal council notices and family photographs. I was ten years old at the time, and we lived in a cabin near Spirit Lake on the White Earth Reservation. Old John Squirrel, Charles Aubid, and Justice Miles Lord were in our cabin and memories, but my meander to law school was more chance and totemic than the inspired stories of legal precedent.

Chewy and the seven exiles were the new storiers, and our personal recounts in *Treaty Shirts* created an archive on the other side of the court and constitution. Naturally the stories became literary precedence, original accounts of continental liberty at the end of the reservation treaty, and the finale of century old counter stories of degenerative governance that gave rise to the Constitution of the White Earth Nation.

Natives have always told stories about situations of separation, exclusion, and exile from other cultures and states, from the fringe of colonial cults, the missionaries of deadly diseases, reservations and salt pork, commodity cheese and booze, law schools and exile, and yet natives in the gaze of demons have outwitted the federal managers with an egalitarian constitution. That constitution, totemic associations, and an ethos of native egalitarian governance, was diminished, as everyone now knows, by the sleeper agents of congressional plenary power, and in the same brute transaction of dominance, the constitution was contravened by federal endorsement sectors. The seven exiles started new stories and created ironic and tricky scenes of the fugitive constitution in natural motion. The stories of exile were broadcast every night on Panic Radio.

Samuel Beckett was overhead that cold night, and his laser gaze aroused the chickens, mongrels, and shivered over the bow as the exiles

read creative selections of lines from *Waiting for Godot* on Panic Radio.

*The Baron of Patronia* cruised on the calm international border of Lake of the Woods and broadcast concise scenes of the famous play. No one clearly understood the existential dialogue, but the exiles never missed an ironic gesture in the play.

Waasese projected the lanky body and wrinkly face of the author, and the laser images of two other characters from literature and the fur trade. She was creative in every sense, the laser gaze and faces in the night sky that would never otherwise meet in the world. The laser images of Beckett, La Bonga, the voyageur, a mighty fur trader and freed slave, and Sylvia Beach the emissary of books, and with a sly smile, gestured to the exiles and mongrels on the *Baron of Patronia*. White Favor ran to the bow and whistled at the laser image of the librarian.

Waasese had actually merged two images into one recognizable face, the bookstore owner from Paris, of course, and the reservation librarian with the same nickname. Sylvia Beach shimmered, separated at times, and then the laser faces united closer to the images of Beckett and La Bonga, the two exiles in the night sky. The chickens clucked in circles. The mongrels nosed the air, and Sardine moaned, sneezed, and bounced on the deck. Beckett was an exile in France, La Bonga was an exile of slavery in the fur trade, and together that night we were exiled natives, laser authors and book emissaries of continental liberty.

Savage Love was surprised by the tease, and rushed out on deck that night to watch her favorite author shimmer over the cabin, and then circle the *Baron of Patronia* with La Bonga and Sylvia Beach. The holoscenes gestured toward the horizon, and then turned in the other direction.

Savage Love mimed in silence the concise words and pithy gestures of *Waiting for Godot*, but her motion did not directly match the scenes that we had created for broadcast. The characters of the play were similar, but we changed the names and some of the words to create an ironic sense of our presence as exiles on Panic Radio.

ARCHIVE

The mongrels were in the kitchen  
and barked at the constitution  
then the sector agent up with a ladle  
beat them to death  
and buried the mongrels next to Beckett  
at Cimetière du Montparnasse.

MOBY DICK

So, what's wrong with you?

HOLE IN THE STORM

Nothing.

MOBY DICK

Was I long asleep?

HOLE IN THE STORM

I don't know, ask the mongrels.

MOBY DICK

Where shall we go?

HOLE IN THE STORM

Not far.

SAVAGE LOVE

Oh yes, let's leave the reservation.

HOLE IN THE STORM

We can't leave the sector.

SAVAGE LOVE

Why not?

HOLE IN THE STORM

We have to come back tomorrow.

MOBY DICK

What for?

HOLE IN THE STORM

To wait for Godtwit.

MOBY DICK

He hates mongrels, and the fish are dead.

SAVAGE LOVE

Yes, and we are exiles.

MOBY DICK

So, should we wait for Bearheart?

HOLE IN THE STORM

What does he want?

MOBY DICK

Nothing.

HOLE IN THE STORM

Nothing, he wants nothing?

MOBY DICK

Who then?

SAVAGE LOVE

Samuel Beckett.

HOLE IN THE STORM

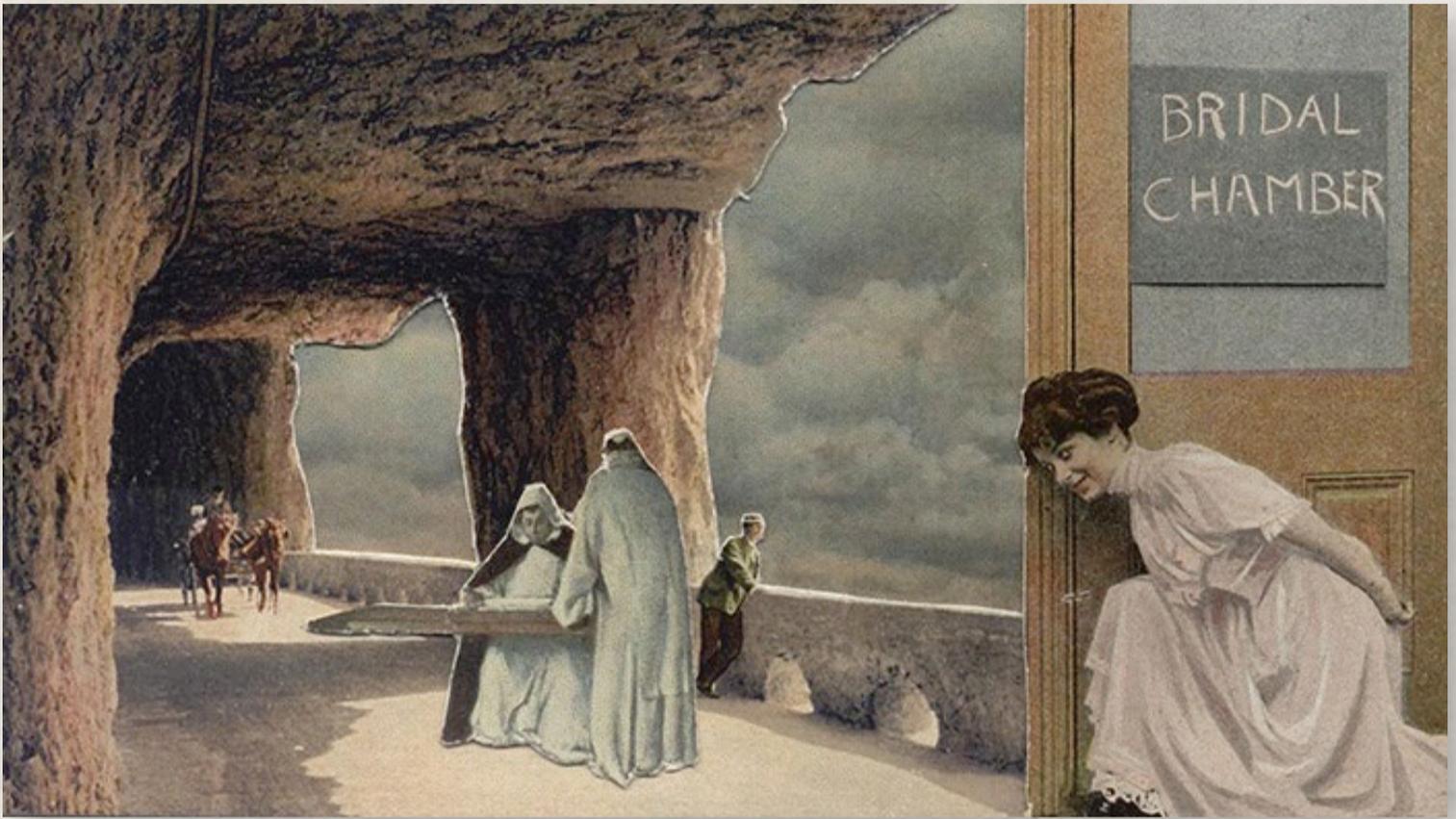
Ah! Yes, the exiled Beckett.

MOBY DICK

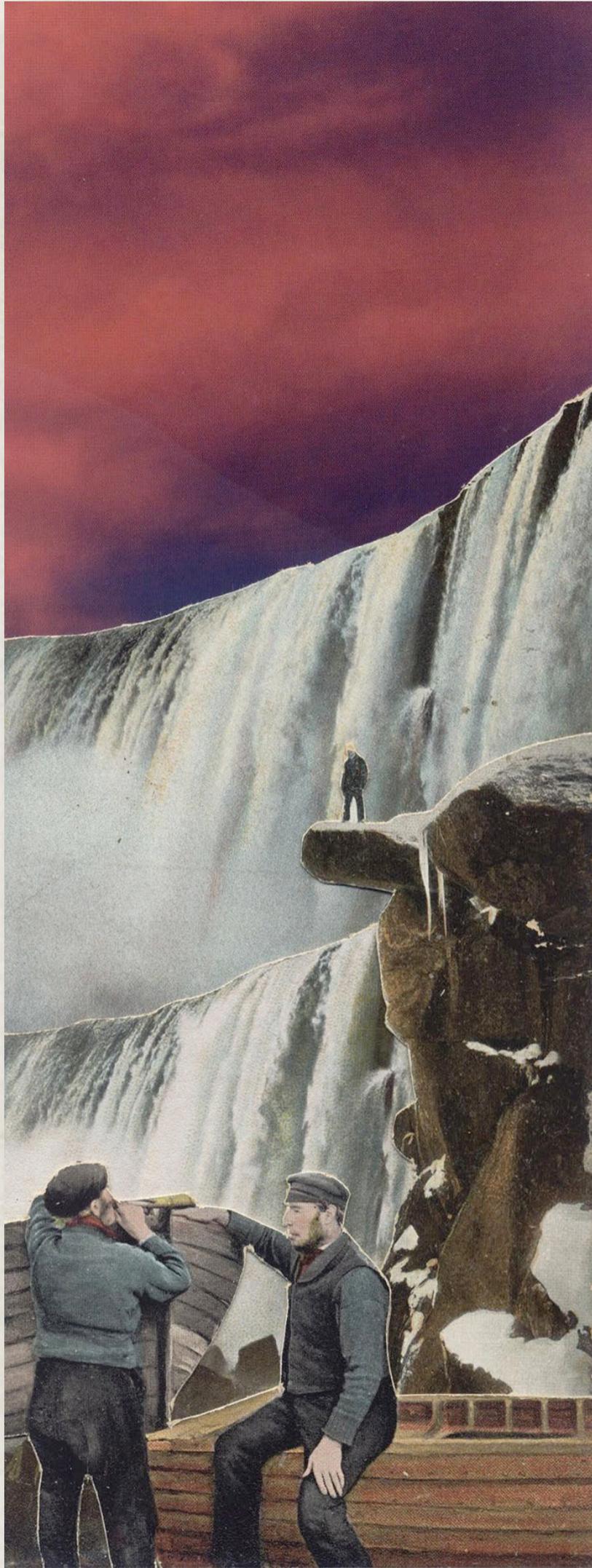
No better exile than Beckett

SAVAGE LOVE

Samuel Beckett waited in exile, and he waited with exiled natives for liberty, waited out the rack and ruin of reservations, and now we must wait for Beckett.



POSTCARD #10 by Bob Heman, 2015  
collage



POSTCARD #15 by Bob Heman, 2015  
collage

## GEORGE KALAMARAS

### **A Father Kisses His Daughter Goodbye**

*Based on a photo in which President Johnson kisses his younger daughter, Luci Nugent, goodbye, as he boards a plane in Austin, Texas, to fly back to Washington—Luci has her two dogs, Kim, a beagle, and a small white stray dog she and her husband adopted, December 10, 1966*

She's young and pretty, and Daddy, boarding the plane, has lips of steel. Not steel, really, as they're softer, flocculent, preparing him to speak the flat grass of Austin back in Washington. His lips are more like water. Sad water. Let's call them blood. Daddy's lips of blood. It's not fair for a man to have to decide who lives and dies. His little girl is a grown woman, still wearing almost-white. A white coat is what we see in hospitals. Where the living come to lie. For a while. Sometimes longer. Hers is an *overcoat*, gray, in the black and white wash of the past, covering something she doesn't want to be seen. I like Johnson. I detest the man. Not the man, really, but his owl papers and issues of death-flight. Let's call them, *midnight hunt in the Shenandoah Valley for something we can't quite see*. Let's call them, *torn from the belly of a possum*. The mother is crying for her empty pouch. I know it's war in the shagbark of every hickory, in the bones the raccoon collapses to squeeze through the gate. I fear him and his large fatherly kiss. The part in his hair separating wrong from right. The part of his hair that is falling out, like the weeping all over again for those lying useless in the useless jungles across the much-used South China Sea. His hat is large, cocked, trying to keep the lid on things. His wife, dressed in white, is smiling, as all wives in 1966 do or did or refused. *Public* is only one letter more than *pubic*, and what they share in private is likely Johnson peering into the mirror before bed, counting the lost hairs on his scalp. Every follicle of death follows the man. As he boards the plane. As he wanders into the toilet. As he makes water. Muzzles himself each night before the sheets. *Best not to breed more babies*, he thinks. *We are all born to die*. Sad.

Like the Monongahela joining the Allegheny to the Ohio. Which is why the two dogs in this photo are a beagle-hound and a stray. *Daddy loves beagles*, Luci thinks. *So I'll bring him mine to say goodbye.* The stray, all that has gone wrong between them. Between father and watershed. Between rain and the burgeoning banks. Between Daddy and his little river of a now-grown girl. Ever since. Ever since the war got out of control. Crawled out the pouch and shivered, for all to see, on the loose branch of a tree. And all the loss keeps washing up upon the shores. His wife, still in white, watching her husband and daughter embrace, has this happy-sad of a smile. As if she knows the marriage-bed minutes before the mirror that her daughter will not speak. As if she knows the beagle means her husband is still on the scent. Still troubles the black grass with a howl. As if she knows the animal in the stray is lost, then comes to the tarmac some December to almost say, *I once was lost but now am found.* *Safe travels, Mr. President. Mr. Owl-Flight. Mr. Raccoon Bones-Collapsed-Before-the-Mirror. Mr. Amazing Ache. Safe travels. Goodbye.*

## **Okay, At Last the Smelling Salts**

*Based on a photograph of the redbone coonhound, Rodger of Ruffsdale,  
on a scent, April 26, 1920*

Something about babies and the process of smelling salts. Endless algorithms of bees bursting forth Bolivian brain theories. In Scandinavia, most moose carcasses were not totally consumed by wolves and were usually abandoned within twenty-four to thirty-six hours of the kill. In other words, for Daniel Boone, scouting parties took the woods, families moved in, men went unarmed, and the old, comfortable, easy life vanished. Consider coonhounds in Kentucky. Consider smell giving purpose. Consider being a dog and finally tonguing your own crotch. I no longer know how to love myself without loving the world. On the dust-jacket, Jim Harrison looks like the crow he dreamed as snow upon his head that day he meditated on a sycamore stump when all the world arrived. The magazine editor who doesn't like my work said it is *uncomfortably memorable*. Please, then, eat these words as you might stuff a left gray sock with strychnine trembling the brain. Something about bees bringing forth babies only the smelling salts recognize. The living are dead, dying, died. Conjugate the number of pups it takes to track a river to its horse. Ecology, behavior, and management of our tongues requires a long study of slumping side-saddle down the throat. If it swells closed by bees, my instruction—once again—is to open it by lying familiarly with a cottonwood and becoming

overly conversant with it, prior, even,  
to marriage. In other words, consider granting genitalia  
a greater purpose. Consider the way snow becomes rain  
inside the hutch of a sassafras hollow. In other words,  
consider taking the coonhound as a totem  
to trace down all the green glosts  
globbing onto a branch. Am I making you  
uncomfortable? Am I mouthing the memorable  
after-man of what it's like to awaken only after  
rubbing salt in the corpse's coon? On the back roads  
near the Ohio, I counted thirteen dead possums  
and raccoons that October afternoon.  
So much of me keeps dropping away  
even when I least perplex it. Mammals  
in my mouth, the editor apparently could not fathom.  
How else, though, to explain the step  
of the photo's Whitman-  
waltz? Its veritable Vallejo? Its necrosis  
of Neruda? The kerosene's confidence, say—  
when drunk—to heal the dead, dying,  
decried, with camphor not combustion?  
The complex conjugation inside that we failed  
to completely grieve? Daniel Boone  
as a Bolivian belligerent? Crow poop goldening  
the hairs on Jim Harrison's chest? The hound photo  
is a stillness, I assure you, of captured lightning,  
a sound-scape of a poet's  
pre-orgasmic state. Here, negotiate  
its buckskin fringe and black and white  
offerings. The cruel salt flats of smelling  
involved when trying to evoke  
the dead. The discovery of gold  
in the distended filling we give  
the dentist simply because he shakes our hand  
and asks vigorously after our dog. The sexualizing  
of trees when a certain hound is the offspring

of a willow and a river, bending the poem  
back to a life worth giving. The buzzing  
in our right ear of milk snakes and the slithering  
bruise of beguiling, begotten bees.

KAREN GARTHE

**Striding the Depot**

Cassandra's pronouncing now,  
skating 'round her Vision Room  
Vulcan's tortured photos the plasma steals  
ripe redness, every bit of *louche*  
A World Choral *Photographie*  
in  
Axe Tongue  
Mash  
Soliloquy  
*One table that holds enough  
is what you have sugar, tea, an egg  
a football loaf tucked underarm striding the depot  
brow of professional everything*  
ONE table holding enough is what *you have, you have that crust*  
of football tucking the Homecoming  
meat pie rheumatism  
tongs to the fire  
where *everything awaits*  
Cassandra's scintillate  
Scout's Honor  
And the sequined terminus of fame's just-birtherd-bird havoc  
way out on a limb  
the echo wood's protective  
gears and cogs Echo  
little dovetailed snakes the  
**M**ustang **E**xtinction  
**A**ddress and **A**rt *Talk*  
in The Business Model Cassandra moves into  
the Aquadome  
seeding clouds

**orthodox translucent**

sock polishing the old beige suspension  
corridor  
of elite blooms this Hospital of Aria and Vermeer  
kale and rainbow  
carrot whole body  
health

. . .a very great old age of orthodox translucence

is willow-bent in bed

*his son's helping him*

pale ether **white** steams

*their black dot caps, they are their own oak*

but “**mine is the cocoon of the crone**” feather suspension, her  
tall bed

boat alone

somersault in the lungs and grip of The  
Warlock of infamous unknown vintage  
floods

sherries of relief

finishing in the arms of strangers

*Garthe/42*

**All the Life Coaches in The Atrium**

question of business    business fasting    soothing sonic

coaching    moneyspouse and tenant's    *Gold*

*Stars*            *of Memphis*    *The Songbirds of*

*the South* take the chill off dinner    sprayheart luggage    luggage lift open

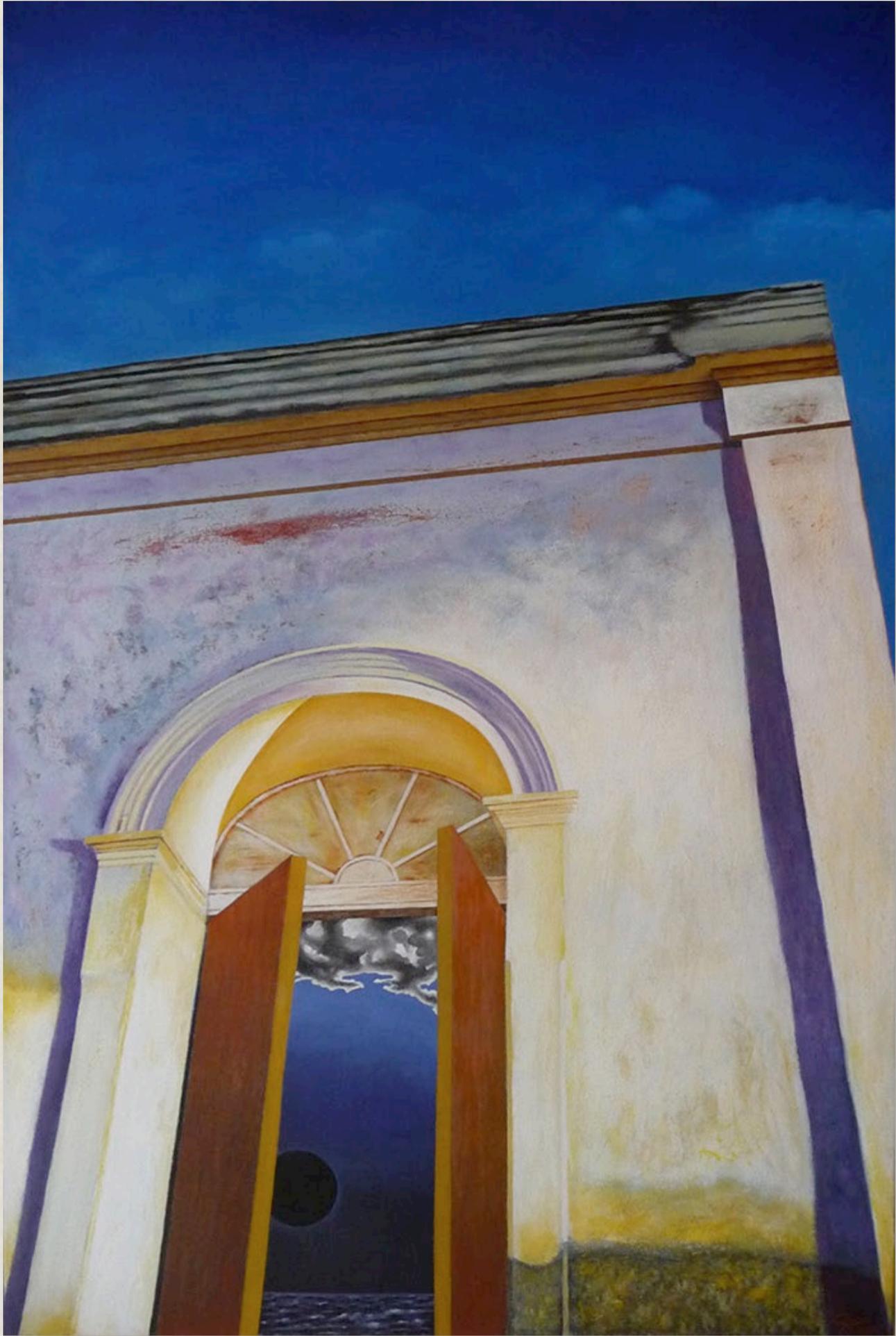
your sweet    lilac mouth    the Mountain Girl who made herself

stupendous    and fluent to peace a way what happened    that

disgraced from behind    my fault    graffiti hands    my

never closing

eye



LAS PUERTAS DE ILUSIÓN by Garí, 2015  
oil on canvas (30" x 20")

RAYMOND FARR

**Too Scrupulous for Words**

Our eyes are lavish birds  
Scanning wobbling cosmic potato earth

Our heads buried in feathers dying laughing  
& like crumbs of piled up men

We think them birds that cant & charm  
We rain on the feasting of our own shameful acts

There is nothing we believe more—  
Every new thing channeled into a river

Of black pieces moving—a tumult of rivers  
Haywire in the blind evening light of a restaurant

& like our breathing they draw us out of ourselves  
They lead us to berths scavenged

Like stale biscuits in the sky  
Like afternoons losing at solitaire

& around these scenes  
We build our houses

**What Is It We Bury?**

It is here in the uncut grass  
Of our shallow chronic disconnectedness

That we are quick to lie down  
Starved in the headlights of a passing car

& like a man & a woman blurred beside  
Some beautiful white rocks

We are just a fleeting song & then nothing  
This river of ash flows up on our left

*& the last tire to blow, you say*  
(You are drinking a Moxie

I am chugging Listerine &  
Puking mint on the windshield)

*Will blow us all into the junkyard in the sky*  
*We are one voice inside of many, you say*

A field of wild strawberries aching in the heat  
Of a morning all hands & feet & force moving

& it's like fat sorrow is taking its turn  
At the strange facts of the steering wheel

& we are the ones doing a hundred now  
Thru Powder House Square

Where a tough little Frenchman  
& a girl named Cerise are there on

*Farr/46*

The corner making no sense  
But what will become of those who

Outlive us by even an hour?  
Of those who never measured up?

**Like the Starved Indigo Butcher of Love Poems Joe Was**

We were discussing Klimt's proclivity to exaggerate truth & still dissemble reality when a second morning downpour caught us unawares—a hazel spritz of rain in Joe's eyes—just half a mile from Joe's house. Joe had this way of talking like a shaky fluorescent bulb, his words flickered like sunspots in the silence of an unheated music room. I told him that Red Skelton eating sole reminded me of a summer when it never rained, not once. & Joe sd, a cow eating sole isn't just poetry but the bad smell in the cow plop of what funny is! & this seemed quintessential Joe. & though he was no George Gordon Lord Byron, Joe walked in beauty like he walked in rush hour traffic.

J/J HASTAIN

From *Girl Myths: Subtle, Milieu Therapies*

\*

A biologist who has recently found out that she is pregnant, has not told her husband of it.

Obsessed with where the biology of the human body overlaps with botany, she reads the book in her hands out loud to herself. When she reads where biology and botany converge, she can show herself her sensitive sides, she can soften. The book in her hands is the only site in which softness can take place in her, since she usually feels as though she has no choice but to be willful and strong, an obvious feminist with force.

In page-touch, in paged-pawing, she is unknowingly touching more of her child than she will ever know how to touch once her child has been born.

\*

Mother has not yet felt the stress of actually birthing the child. She has not yet thought to herself that it is perfectly appropriate to choose to bear a child knowing she will not have as much connection to it as the child's father will.

\*

Mother recalls when the green girls first began to come in. She was haunted by their moans and cries. So much verdant-ness was intimidating. That sound, that feeling, was a draining draw, was somehow unavoidably conflated with the growing girl within her own belly.

An unnerving wash over the entire nervous system of mother. Unnerved by what it is that is growing within her

\*

When the girl is born, mother hands her directly to father; she can't stand the sound of her own daughter's cries. They make her want to tear her hair out. She can't tell the difference between the cries of the green girls within her and the cries of this girl, now, outside of her. She feels as though her nervous system is going to burst.

Between mother and daughter: an unsurpassable rift.

\*

Different genres of tears. Green things growing wildly in overly-moist sites.

\*

A newborn girl is opening her eyes to the rain as it spills in through the open window in her bedroom. She can *feel* the rain, as she can feel her organs and other parts of her: so much more than she can feel the mobile turning slowly above her head.

The rain is touching her.

Upon opening to the rain, upon straining toward the window, she is shown how much more night there is to which she can be exposed. It is to feel herself in such exposure, in a holographic holding, that causes her to refrain from sleep.

\*

In the holding of the rain, in the way her father holds her, she feels the love she never feels from her mother.

\*

Years pass with her bright eyes open. As nature's muse, she is a part of a subliminal concord. She is being raised by Gaia-features, being nurtured by nature's music.

\*

It's hard to explain it even though it is obviously sensed.

While standing at the edge of a partially-frozen marsh, on a spring-like day in winter, she knows it: sometimes you are not real enough as you *were*, so you have to become who and what you *are*. This is genesis and exodus in flux. Traction by sentiment.

Once as you *are*, now more real than ever before, there is still more real to be found.



SOLAR PLEXUS TO HEART CHAKRA by j/j hastain, 2015  
collage

DALE HOUSTMAN

### **Any Medium-Sized Body Of Water**

1

In any medium-sized body of water constructed with *concentrated observation* in mind, there will exist many local/real-time effects which form a perceptual moat about any zealous pursuer of the sight. Internal security glands release an air of shallow mindfulness, and the fox is off. The only decision remaining is whether to fish or wash.

There also exist purposeful highlights (managed and manhandled) in several contrasting color classes, and also more numerous divisions of shade and shape in movements swifter than their potential for sensory promotion. These might be termed the *charms* of the spectrum, laid out neatly in a surgeon's hotel room, such as rainbows on oil.

You have got to be careful in even a medium-sized body of water.

2

It is everywhere wet, but there are no things conjoined at the central hub which—furthermore—*does not exist*, but here, on this page. Thus the spokes;—lacking easy connection,—and mere daily utility's paper dress undone, betrayed, ignored; belie this static communication we mistake for natural law: the *spokes of matter* simply appearing to vibrate relative to one another when, actually, they are frozen in a profounder phantom communality, excreting the comforting syrup of coincidence, the odd blow of luck, bland ludicrousness. One is thus actually alone, sharing only that which is most vanished, and this *missing portion* manifests as

angstroms, psychological situations, the trashed Gods and Goddesses, blooms of *nostalgiananas*, dreamcakes, and all the other paraphernalia of a wounded universe waiting for ole' Doc to finish birthing the sheep. Still, that sticky yearning qualifies as a cleaving motive, a gesture toward open water, where we once saw an ape swimming. We exist only because meaning has been excised, replaced with its shadows. The "mind" begs to replace the missing hub, and the "imagination" proposes to view the vanished spokes themselves. Something to do until the surgeon wakes up near the water, and notices they have already been lobotomized.

We are unparalleled in our tendency to dream of fruit whose position is somewhat *above the trees*, a crown not quite descended to the head, honor eternally suspended. And—over there!—the blackest skin of rude combos and shimmering bands in the impoverished arcade of animals, and that fragrance of a freshly corrupt flesh, that predicted collapse forestalled (once again!), the vital juices impacted, seeds flattened against a dirty window, the hesitant airs we affect, and the fully expectant, never merely *here*. Where were we?

And so...

Life has posted us before the tenuous siege, where we emerge, gold from beneath the hammer: these flakey oblivions at either pole distinctly different from one another, losing forever and forever looking forward to. The hub *dissolves* and we do not even bother to blow a kiss. The waters become tourist traps. We grow tired driving there for retirement.

Anyway, any movement in accordance with these battling realms is entirely the point: you discover that it is impossible to apply *burnishing* pressure to a retreating surface. The other surface though—crashing up toward us—is panting for ornamentation, wanting to be petted, wanting to imbibe your accumulated sedations. The panting expels condensation and condescension which is cooled by our indifference, forming a shallow and inanimate lake somewhere west of perception. Get the kids in the car. We're going swimming.

LISA B (LISA BERNSTEIN)

***From Persephone Post-War***

**Small Witness**

I walk through the door

the walls  
charred

recessed archways

the wide floor  
white shards  
piles of dust

at my left  
a stone block loose  
in the wall  
jutting toward me

my insides  
leaking  
dripping down my thighs

I grab the stone  
almost falling  
onto it  
its edges  
crumbling

lean on the stone block

it starts to falter to  
fall out of the wall

I pull it toward me  
to lean on  
muscles pulling  
breathless but  
easily moving the  
stone block  
pulled too hard  
everything pulled  
inside me and out now it

heaves  
to the floor

a powdery echo  
by my feet

the silence

the dark uncovered  
empty slot  
in the wall

greenish slick inside  
like a tiny recessed  
tomb

wedged  
inside

a wrapped thing  
a glimpse of  
skin  
above the edge of the wrapping

*Bernstein/56*

tiny  
fingers

dust  
along the cloth, the  
fingers

nothing  
moves

a frayed edge  
of cloth  
dangling from the body

do I pull this out too  
this bundled  
unhidden body

putting my hands in that cool  
uncovered place  
picking it up

light as a dead wasp  
smaller than the span of two hands

cheeks and waxy skin  
tiny eyes closed eyelashes  
dusted with mustardy pollen  
small head uncovered  
little black hairs  
soft, cupped in my palm

time shifts  
just a notch

and I see  
myself  
here  
beyond time

my legs melting inside  
still leaking  
as if a hole has been punctured  
and in that hole  
an ache of  
wanting

what next

the head  
falls slightly out of my  
palm as if turning  
alive  
the eyelids unloosening  
a slight gleam  
of ancient wetness  
rimming the lower lids

don't look don't  
see just hollows  
of dark under the pink-veined  
delicate lids  
no eyes

too late

somehow familiar  
the rustle  
of a body

*Bernstein/58*

and the reaching  
with the baby

into that small  
closed place

the silence  
opened

I  
lay her back  
down in her  
walled grave

**“the splendor at the root of existence”**

—is it deeper than the half-torn-up tendrils of the old lily in the yard?

is it like what’s under the decayed, bloody back tooth?

is it what my grandmother, long dead, contradicts, worrying, worrying,  
standing behind my mother, sending her chill through the hot haze  
around her after the shower?

the almost-bursting bulb that waits below each of us on earth

holding us up, its sides pressed firm against the dirt—

I see it, but not through my eyes

not through the blind fingertips’ searching

this root-splendor, this creamy balloon of promise

this fervor of life apart from the physicality of living

and because I can’t sample it, test it, chart it

either it is the realest thing the created world contains and shows

or it is a thing that resides in a human being

the code inside the code, the essential miniature weld that permits  
electrons to interspark

splendor at the roots of existence

meanwhile this plain door at the foot of existence

I am standing with my foot in a doorway

*Bernstein/60*

some man with a beard can't open or close the door

he says he knows the answer

yes, no, one, zero, his jaw is set

as if there's something I'm supposed to get

I see over his shoulder the dark apartment he lives in

or maybe it's my old rooms he's blocking

the apartment airless

he stands there, in case I try to move closer

angrily not noticing that I'm looking through the thin walls  
to the sun coming up

in the streets and corridors of

buildings and alleys outside fresh-aired and wet

as the morning spreads through the city, the sooty passageways  
and hallways and along the ceilings

the lightbulbs clicking off all at once as the day explodes



From VESTIGE COLLAGE by Cindy Rehm, 2015  
collage



From VESTIGE COLLAGE by Cindy Rehm, 2015  
collage



From FRAGMENTS OF ANALYSIS by Cindy Rehm, 2015  
collage



DOUBLE THREAD by Cindy Rehm, 2015  
video

<https://vimeo.com/124050103>

DOUG GUNN

### **Anger Management**

I drove home in my car each day there was a highway with cars rushing in both directions alongside small factories and sand for construction flowing off belt conveyors into enormous piles in the south valley, later houses. With no traffic lights to slow them down right through town cars merged onto the road from the side and cars left the road at various exits and so forth. I drove on this highway from the hospital where I worked to the house where I lived each night, the hospital was in the valley I lived in a house on the other side of town in the north-east-heights with my son, it was the night we usually drove across town and spent time with my mother, my mother expected us and my son's girlfriend came along once every month at least one time a month somehow this counted as community service, a teenage girl slams a kid's hand in a car door over and over in the evening dust and shouting of all the cars spinning out in the high school parking lot she spends a few hours a week with this or that old person, my old mother among them, shots were fired like you might expect the kids involved were on probation along with so-called anger management so-called counseling and so on. At my house my son would get in my car we'd drive the car to his girlfriend's house to pick her up then straight to my mother's house and my responsibility in all that.

The north-east-heights is known as the part of town where the high school is for horticulture and auto mechanics and so on, you could expect a house like the house occupied by me and my son, a little shade from trees planted a while ago next to the concrete of the sidewalk and nice touches like glass blocks for light in the bathroom upstairs and a column of glass blocks set into the wall for natural light next to the front door. Cheap paneling, fake dark brown paneling on the walls when we moved in my son was only 12 later he helped me tear it off the walls of

the dark little house he helped me paint the walls white, we keep them white with various pictures framed on the walls it lightens up the house for a clean look on the inside, this but also scattered things like dishes from the kitchen are clean stacked in rows on a smooth counter against the wall and clean pots and pans and so on by size, in the kitchen we took the cabinet doors off the metal cabinets to see the glasses or the coffee cups, sugar and boxes of cereal or other boxes of food, coffee and all the things for cooking makes it a good method for us, like the open feeling of a single large room since we took down all of the walls of the downstairs, all that light and all that space.

My son's name is A.J. I watched A.J. lift the hood of his car sometimes he leaned on the fender with his stomach. A.J. reached into the engine compartment he made various adjustments to the running engine, A.J. removed different parts and so on. A.J.'s car was loud it was common to hear the loud engine running in the neighborhood when he adjusted the carburetor sometimes the exhaust system was down sometimes A.J. had to run the car at high r.p.m. A.J. was polite when a neighbor complained though he turned the engine off, A.J. didn't argue he wasn't mean, he turned the engine off he had things to do, he liked the sound the leaf rake made when he raked dry leaves into piles in the small front yard in the spring or in the fall. A.J. closed the hood to the car, he took the leaf rake from the side of the house A.J. raked the dry leaves into piles or he raked the wet leaves into piles. A.J. had an old car I had given him, an old car needs occasional tune ups, computers mean new cars don't need tune ups since all of the cars at the vo-tech school have computers for young mechanics I showed A.J. how to tune up his car. A.J. changed the rotor and put in new points he set the spark plug gaps. A.J. pointed the blinking timing light at the flywheel. His girlfriend sat in the nearby grass she had white earphones in her ears for music she had to read a book or she had to write a report, her boyfriend had his feet on the ground up against the fender of the car and a long screwdriver in his hand leaning over into the engine compartment. A.J. pushed the throttle open loud with his thumb, when the engine idled he turned the distributor cap slightly to set the timing to set the timing the engine has to be running. I watched A.J.'s girlfriend when the neighbor showed up

she saw their smiles she saw the neighbor pat A.J. on the shoulder A.J.'s girlfriend snapped her book closed piled up her papers with a sarcastic face, the sound of the car idling or the car revving would stop now she would hear the stupid sound of a leaf rake. A.J. touched his girlfriend on the head, he said relax.

I drove with the traffic the traffic would slow down for various reasons from time to time from time to time come to a stop but I knew how to be patient by now I knew the traffic would pick up, what was the point, my mother would wait, of course my son's girlfriend had a set of her own responsibilities. I got off the highway onto the exit and onto the street and various turns and stops in a short time I pulled up to the curb of my house, I saw A.J.'s legs on the ground. A.J. had told me he had to hot-wire the engine to start the car he had to turn off the engine to replace the starter motor he would have to crawl under the car. I let my car idle I leaned over and pushed open the passenger door as a friendly sign, A.J. pushed himself out from under his car rolling on a wooden creeper he held the black starter motor with one hand balanced on his stomach and tools on the wood of the creeper between his legs, getting to his feet with a rag for his hands and all the tools from the ground and so on onto the creeper, A.J. walked to my car carrying the starter motor to exchange in a small cardboard box I looked, I said did you find a rebuilt starter, A.J. said in Swedesford he said the parts store on the way, he said after we pick up Ami (A.J. said ah-me like a French word). Ami was A.J.'s girlfriend's name (ah-me, this will be hard to remember), lived in the north-east-heights, not far—same class at the vocational school—but not close, 20-minute drive. I don't like to say it because it sounds like a cliché but Ami was studying to be a hair dresser if that's the right term, hair stylist sounds right, like I said, the north-east-heights was where the vo-tech school was, they take academic classes in the mornings at the public high school in the district. Ami was an honor student, lucky for A.J., but 20 minutes to Ami's house and A.J. wasn't counting on the time we might spend at Ami's house until Ami could break herself away. I didn't have to say it it would be obvious the parts store would be closed.

Ami's house resembled our house with green grass and some trees and a cement sidewalk and so on, a cement walk up to the front door at Ami's house through the grass yard with green weeds when the grass didn't get mowed for a long time the weeds grew high, weeds growing up in the expansion joints in the cement walk if you make time to mow the grass you keep all that under control, if you can make time. Ami and her mother and Ami's two brothers had the same glass blocks next to the front door and a garage for a single car like A.J. and I had, A.J. and I had leveled a second driveway and poured concrete for A.J. to work on his car of course this was unnecessary for Ami's family with only one car. No car in the driveway meant Ami's mother wasn't home from work or it might mean she stopped on the way home from work, I think she had to stop at the Clinic from time to time after work with the amount of money Ami's mother made at the meager job she had she could get vouchers for prescriptions, Ami's mother could get a voucher for thick glasses for Ami's small brother, the timing was bad for us but he needed the glasses, my mother wouldn't know the difference.

A.J. said we should go in, I said you go in. I had been in Ami's house once in a while, like my house I didn't like death like an idea hidden all around the house in Ami's house the idea of her father's death, for me it had been the actual thing of a large man his body was impossibly heavy, landing on his head the immediate freakish angle of his neck, a body on the wood floor and his cheek pressed onto the flat wood of the floor by the weight of his limp head. Or they never wake up, when I lifted my wife's hand it would fall flat on the sheets with no life, again and again, and again that weight of a body. After that, death is hidden in the things and places, you can try to erase it. Ami was sitting on the couch she had her feet on the floor, Ami didn't look up she didn't stop putting black sticky mascara on her eye lashes with a pointed brush she was holding the small mirror in her left hand when A.J. put his hand on her shoulder she shook off his hand, anger again, what should Ami say. A couch was up against a painted wall in the small living room, a long couch, fake leather like naugahide, not cheap but not a couch with soft and comfortable pillows, a straight couch and a straight back and four round legs underneath touched the painted floor-boards polished clean

across the room, and the four steel legs of a round table touched the floor with a plastic laminate top. Various scissors for hair and different combs and brushes arranged on the laminate top of the round table, styling tools from the vo-tech school, like a hair waver, like a ceramic straightener lined up on the laminate top, like a hair dryer, and one more wooden table was covered by a white tablecloth pressed flat with a hot iron with four chairs from four unmatched places arranged around it for eating their meals in the order of the room with some books on a shelf in a row and like a healthy green plant in a big pot on the floor next to sliding glass doors, of course light from a small television picture changed back and forth reflecting on the painted floor and the other surfaces, and sound from the television came from a dark wood television cabinet polished with furniture polish. Prescriptions for Ami's young brother in bottles and so on, in a row on a window sill, sunlight through the window panes and some streaking on the panes in the sunlight from recent cleaning. Ami's small brother raising a toy up and making sound with his mouth sat on soft carpet on the floor a piece of carpet and foam rubber underneath made it thick for padding against his seizures, all around the carpet thick pillows and bolsters made sides, various soft items for toys and a flat baseball glove he picked up and tossed toward A.J. when he spotted him with his random eyes and wide smile then heaving the baseball glove in a wide arc and a loud sound from his mouth, A.J. said here you go Kurt Kurt wanted it back, A.J. said hey Kurt, on his knees on the floor he said, who's going to win the playoffs. Ami's other brother through the door in another room Ami's brother was older than she was, pretty old sitting in his worn chair with a black skullcap on his head for extra warmth and holding a book close up to his face.

A.J. said we should go in, I said you go in. I waited in the car, I was patient and my thinking went here and there, I smoked a cigarette then I saw Ami's mother, Ami's mother parked her car in her driveway I saw her look down she gathered her things in the usual way she arranged some things and so on, Ami's mother looked she rolled up the windows of the car, to get out of the car she had her heavy legs she had to push herself up with her hands and pull on the door frame with her hands.

Ami's mother didn't look at me she closed the car door and went into the house. I waited in ten minutes A.J. came out of the house and Ami came out, they got in the car, we didn't say anything and we drove away in the direction of my mother's house.

My mother has a puckered smile from very few teeth my old mother smiles with her whole face, this is something about her from being a child and growing up my mother smiles with her whole face now it's in the deep lines of her old face like a permanent smile in wrinkles there, then you've got her sunken mouth in the middle of that face. We had to park the car down the street due to cars taking up parking places all up and down my mother's street in addition to the dumpster in front of the tiny park, the screaming kids we heard meant a family picnic family gathering, we walked up the cement sidewalk. Like my son and me my mother lived in the N.E., but my mother did not live in the north-east-heights my mother lived in the old part of town in the N.E. where the lawns and the old trees looked like a Midwestern city in the arid West after many years of watering the green grass every day in the summer and watering the blooming flower gardens with a sprinkler every day it's far enough down in the valley for trees to get that big. We heard the sounds little kids made in the background at their cookout and various sprinkler systems throwing occasional water on the gray cement in front of our walking, there might have been the clank of a horse shoe or two, if that's not taking it too far. My mother lived in a two-story house on the first floor she lived alone in a small apartment, my son and I had built out a small apartment for an old person on the first floor for her it was a big house, big enough for our family, it was the house I lived in with my mother and my father and my siblings of course it was too big for a little old lady, a small apartment for my mother, the rest of the big house was rented and so forth, our bedrooms and bathrooms were other people's apartments, it worked out. My mother's house was no exception, large trees along the sidewalk shaded the grass of a small front yard, oak trees, I think they may have been maple trees, but big trees, trees that lost their leaves in the winter. Two little kids from the neighborhood were behind two big trees in my mother's yard my mother coming through the gate saw the taunting kids, my mother took

two steps onto the green lawn at them she raised her skinny hand in the air just that much, my old mother started in on them she said get out of here she said, you bastards, glancing back, the gate, like making a decision she shouted, you little bastards, my mother gave a little run with her raised hand and her fragile legs at the taunting kids shouting with her hoarse voice as loud as anyone could, stopped on the sidewalk, get out of here. The kids ran away several steps of course they were smiling at the raging old lady the little kids liked this part, my mother saw them again my mother shouting, you little motherfuckers, getting closer until they ran away my mother stopped, she turned to us then panting a little and still pissed at the little kids, I said the kind of thing I usually did at these times like don't pay attention to them, mother, and of course A.J. walked right past the whole thing with his smiling eyes to go into my mother's apartment A.J. always touched my mother on her forearm with a small caress he touched her arm with a caress on the way past he said hi, granma, but before he got to the short path up to her porch a small man stopped and stood on the sidewalk in front of my walking son my son stopped and stood for a short moment he stepped to the side, the man stepped to the same side of course they each stepped back then each moved to step to the side again finally the man brushed past my son with his rough shoulder, off balance, a small stumble then A.J. walked on but he looked at the man sideways with a glare. A.J. walked up the path and went into my mother's house. The small man had some thin hair on his round head except in the back he grew it into a thin ponytail from the ridiculous past then he walked up to my old mother my mother is also short in her old age with his anger he stood up to her face he said goddamit he said would you shut the fuck up, the man stood there in my old mother's face it didn't seem like he would but it looked like he might hit her, I decided I shouldn't let that happen I took the man by the shoulder and pulled him back from my mother of course he shook my hand off if that's the right expression, at least now he wouldn't be able to hit my mother if that was ever his intention the man stood on the sidewalk like he might though, all at once he noticed he was standing up against Ami then he looked up into her face, Ami is not small, over six feet tall she said, I think you should shut the fuck up. Of course now the man turned to Ami with his attention like his

anger might go there and Ami stood still against the man's attack on my mother, after one beat of silence Ami said you should go home now. I gave Ami a push on her arm toward the house I just turned to my mother I said Jesus mother go in the house. Now here came A.J. down the walk with his long strides and everything with his hands balled up I said A.J. would you go back in the house, or something like, it's over, or like that's the end of it. I walked behind my mother to the porch of course it would take more time before she'd settle down.

Ami found a reconditioned chair for my mother for a good price she said at a supply store for barbers and stylists somehow she convinced me to buy it for my mother like my mother has room for something like that in her small apartment like I have extra money, at first I thought it was stupid but my mother gets a lot out of it when she sits back in the chair with that peaceful smile and her eyes closed Ami washes her hair and cuts it, you wouldn't know my old mother was out calling those kids motherfuckers a half-hour ago. Ami had her scissors and combs and so forth laid out like a professional in a tray she had a large professional cloth draped over my mother to catch the clippings with a professional collar and a clasp to go around my mother's neck. I don't know what my mother liked about all of that but I liked the sound the scissors made and I liked to watch Ami's skill when she cut my mother's hair. I could guess but I never knew what Ami got out of it, practice but obviously there was more than that in it, it could have been affection for an old lady, for my old mother probably she felt some kind of friendliness for A.J.'s grandmother I guess I think by now a better word was affection though you could never tell by the expression on Ami's face. Ami used the fingers of her hand or the palm of her hand with just that much pressure on my mother's head or my mother's cheek to move my mother's head, for a new position, or with both hands like a gentle caress, one extra moment, for a position that was just right, when Ami held the mirror for my mother she bent to look into the mirror with her. A.J. had his hands in his pockets he was looking out the window in the living room sometimes A.J. goes off when Ami cuts my mother's hair he doesn't care to watch, he might take a walk around the neighborhood, I don't know what A.J. does after Ami had been cutting my mother's hair for awhile

he came and stood by the window, A.J. was looking out the window A.J. said that guy's back, I looked, I was reading the paper I looked up from the paper A.J. said the small man with the ponytail is standing on the sidewalk. I put the paper on the table I folded the glasses I use for reading and laid them on the table I heard A.J., to make sure I asked, the man is standing on the sidewalk, I said is he doing something. A.J. said no, he's standing on the sidewalk, he said he's looking at the house, A.J. said the man is standing on the sidewalk. No sound from Ami's scissors or from Ami or from my mother meant the haircutting had stopped for a moment of silence at this news then I heard the scissors then I heard my mother's voice murmur some rough thing, A.J. said, he fell down, he said he fell down flat on his face A.J. said he smashed his face on the sidewalk. Working in a hospital you hear a man smashed his face you're automatically ready for something like that I got up in a hurry in two long steps I got to the window next to A.J., I saw the man now he was pushing himself up a little, flat on the sidewalk on his body pushed up with one hand, started to, his body jerked the man smashed his face on the sidewalk and one hand tight in a fist grinding automatic circles in the grass, in a hurry I went to the sink wet rags and things, A.J. looked back, into the room where Ami stood A.J. said Ami, he's having a fit, we saw Ami, she looked Ami bent she took a white towel from my mother's hands with her own two hands, Ami went past us onto the path, I ran behind her on the path. On her knees Ami put her hands under the short man's shoulder lifted, then the man rolled onto his back Ami said he can't be on his back, she pushed the man rolled onto his side, I had my hands under to catch him his face was blue from not breathing in his seizure his stiff arms and his tight fists, with her two hands Ami pulled tore the man's shirt collar apart for air and his head resting on Ami's thigh, Ami put her gentle fingers in to pull open his mouth and part of the white towel to pull his lip back from his breath and catch everything blood and foam that was drooling out on the towel and so forth shifting the man's body Ami's toes of her white shoes bent into the sidewalk on her knees to move the man into another position or another position for his breathing, five minutes or ten minutes of his rocking and sudden loud sounds from his mouth with his stiff arms and frantic gasping for his breath, Ami raised his arm above his head she said hold his hand like

this, gasping less then occasional spasms, sounds like groaning, finally the man was breathing and groaning, catching his breath and his eyes closed tight on the sidewalk and no more clenched fists stiff arms meant the epileptic fit was almost over or over, still Ami was holding the man's head and his wet hair in her hand above the sidewalk, now he was asleep, now his breathing was heavy, Ami dropped the man's head on the sidewalk Ami stood up she walked up the path Ami went back to my mother.

LEIGH HERRICK

**a becoming if**

I will fall into the oblivion of your mouth

I will drip the wing of green the unheard trail of becoming if  
ever there was

and this the rationed *partagé*

the sprint of the burst's brute beauty

whose pallid aforefold entrusted offering wilds the undoing's done

holds flares of then and then

against agreement of yesses

complicity a thinness of daily skate around stale-studding bread

the mireness of giddysome *is* foiling *been* for shouts of branded

languishings

by which to nod and nod

and nod again dozed away

from the sun set free



DIANE BUSHBERG by Jack Richard Smith, 2001  
black oil on copper (6" x 6")



DOAN AT THE ADOBE BAR by Jack Richard Smith, 2006  
black oil on copper (42" x 28")

DENVER BUTSON

**dear those who would mourn**

I will be the one who will read his eulogy  
it will take some doing  
and is not of course customary  
to allow figments of one's imagination  
to speak at such ceremonies  
and yet there I will be  
they will need to prop me up  
at the podium  
they will need to position my hands  
so that it looks like I am speaking  
one of you will lean over to another  
and say *he smells of the fields*  
*and of wind*  
someone will likely walk out  
outraged that this is happening at all  
but the rest of you will stay  
and you will sit there  
listening  
but of course I will not have words  
of course scarecrows cannot speak  
and yet you will hear everything  
dear those who would mourn  
you will hear everything  
you will wish for me to say  
as if I am saying it at last

**dear sky above my head**

allow me to introduce myself  
as if there is any need  
for me to introduce myself  
as long as you and I have been  
acquainted with each other's stillness

I understand he has written about me  
as if he has any idea  
what it is to be me

allow me to tell you a little about me  
and him

I am the absence of all  
that is not what I am

in a field  
where one might expect to find me

he is the one  
who thinks he put me here

he is the one  
who thinks he invented  
my loneliness

**dear person being buried one day in 1974**

he told me once  
about his bicycle  
how he rode it  
as fast  
as he could  
through the graveyard

how he tried  
not to look  
if there was  
a funeral

it was Pennsylvania  
almost all the mourners  
were quietly weeping  
to themselves  
as expected

except once  
there was wailing  
wailing so loud  
the birds exploded  
from the trees

he never rode his bicycle  
faster than he did then

and always wondered  
who you were  
that someone could miss you  
so much

**dear post office/lawnmower shop**

did you really exist  
at the end of his street  
between the firehall  
and the graveyard  
just before the street itself  
dissolved into an alleyway  
which became the back entrance  
to the graveyard  
only a few doors up  
from the house  
where he had his first kiss?

and did they really do  
such things back then  
as marry a post office  
and a lawnmower shop  
in one building  
with the post mistress  
as the wife  
of the lawnmower salesman?

and was his name really *Toby*  
and did he smoke cigars  
and dress up like Santa Claus  
and come around on Christmas Eve  
and think the older kids  
wouldn't recognize him  
by the smell of those cigars?

was this really true?  
he told me about it once  
but I don't know  
what to believe anymore.

**dear his mother**

he was there when you were dying  
he asked the nurses if he could open  
the doors so you could look out  
over the fields  
even though you were not looking  
at anything of this world  
it was not raining  
but because he knew you loved rain  
he found the sound of rain  
on his phone  
and played it for you  
as you were dying

it was a heavy rain  
and there was some thunder  
as you like it  
and from time to time  
but not at any interval  
that he could predict  
a bird called out  
it was not a crow  
but a catbird or a blue jay  
almost impossible to hear  
through the rain

I was there too  
though he hadn't invented me yet  
so I couldn't do anything  
to scare that bird away

**dear as if there is anyone reading this**

I am the absence of all that is not  
what you might call me  
if you looked out  
into a field  
from which  
I am not  
absent  
and said *look*  
and pointed  
and others would look  
and someone would say  
*I've only read about them*  
*and seen them*  
*in children's books*  
*and yet here is one*  
  
and then drive on.

ANNA HALBERSTADT

### **Looking in From the Outside**

One day you realize  
You had lived in a house with only one window  
And you saw the same view every day:  
The tree, the lamppost, the wall with a poster  
Plastered to it.  
When years later you get to look at your house  
from the outside  
you will notice that there were other windows in the house  
but they had been covered with shutters  
that the tree you had seen through your window  
was a part of the garden  
that the wall across the street with the poster  
had a monastery behind it.  
That the street that you walked on every day to school  
had many secrets that had not been revealed to you  
when you lived in the country of shadows.  
The house had many nooks and crannies,  
there were ashes of burned books in the living room  
heating stove covered with green ceramic tiles,  
among them the bible and Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.  
In the kitchen behind the sink there was a dried-out mouse  
caught in a mousetrap,  
panties with stains of blood were forgotten  
under the screechy bed in the small bedroom with  
the wardrobe full of books mixed with the shoes  
on the bottom shelf.  
The blue hat with an ostrich feather left on the top  
was covered with dust.

A polka dot crepe-de-chine dress with a Peter Pan collar  
was hanging on a wooden hanger in the closet,  
perfume that smelled of jasmine and lilacs was evaporating  
from the thick glass bottle with a gilded stopper,  
photographs of young women in big hats and long skirts  
and officers in white uniforms  
squinting in the sun  
had been ripped up by an angry woman  
because they belonged to her husband's first wife.  
The cat that belonged to his son  
was taken by her to the country and left  
in the woods.

She told her husband it ran away  
even though the cat was seventeen years old.  
Now I know that the world surrounding the house  
is noisy and colorful.

People outside are of all different ethnicities and races.  
They wear stylish clothes or walk around almost naked  
in the summer.

They laugh and talk freely without glancing behind their shoulders  
to check if someone is listening.

Some are beautiful and slender,  
some heavy and plain-looking.

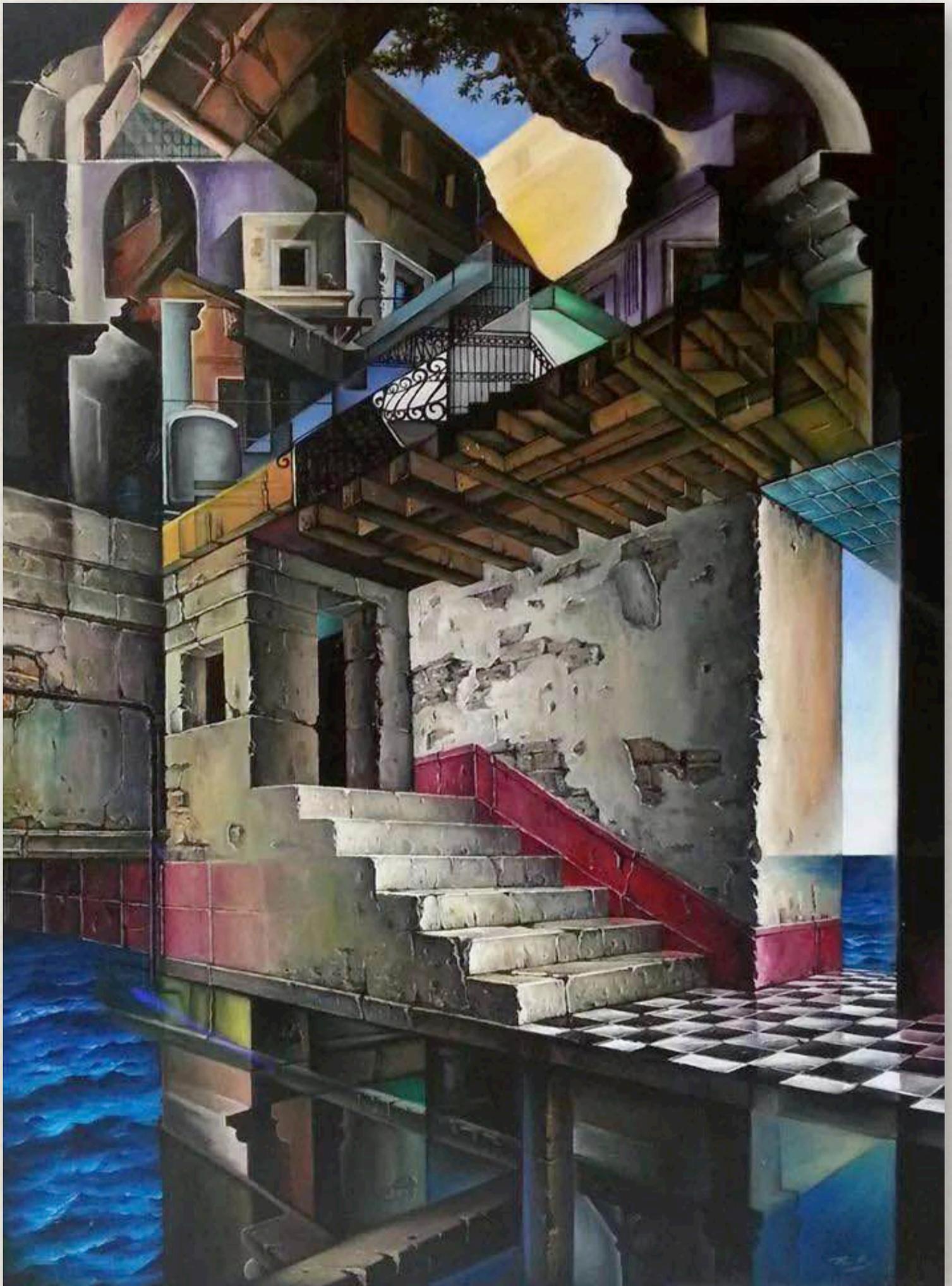
But all of them are moving around freely like animals in the wild  
not like sad chimps and angry bears  
not like frustrated wolves and lethargic tigers  
not like the depressed gorilla at the Vienna zoo  
who used to paint watercolors.



SUNSET by Piki Mendizabal, 2008  
oil on canvas (36" x 24")



HABANERA by Piki Mendizabal, 2015  
oil on canvas (48" x 36")



SOLAR by Piki Mendizabal, 2014  
oil on canvas (48" x 36")



BALCONY by Piki Mendizabal, 2008  
oil on canvas (48" x 24")

JANET PASSEHL

**Untitled**

Never had been

an opening for beauty

never wing

never sleigh

we opened our throats and gave

Clanking against Light's softness

one of the suns

}}

I was grass eaten by a dog in spring

}}

Granted the earth was scared

we hurried along its pain-

ful margins

I threw fruit at the sun. a peach, soft, ripe, caving

to make a hole through which we could escape

as one spilled

}}

as grass [we] grew [silent]

}}

In the light of morning wrested from night

I counted the rocks that shore us

we mounted the rocks

they tore at us

as one spilled

}}

as one

were filled

our mouth and from

our mouth

trilled

tables, disgust

}}

I shot at them, the butterflies they came out

I shot the breath

Never was a creature so beautiful as hole

*Passehl/92*

throughout its whole heart there was never a joke

so funny

## DORU CHIRODEA

### **Kelety Dinghy**

tucked in  
naloxone stuffed  
aramaic duvet  
comfy  
we hope  
we are

flailing above  
pentaquarks and delayed choice  
we already  
refuged refugees  
refuged into the next refuge

safely among  
sanskrit worldmath  
where no demonstration is required  
where hypotheses need not be proven  
but turn out  
to be either either  
or either or

the resplendent result  
always fitting  
thirsty automata  
seeping all nogods' sap  
from bosom  
bursting of  
parallel milk

*Chirodea/94*

**Rien Ne Va Plus**

there aint nothin to it blaster  
just sharpen your quill ahy-vee  
& some retro antiviral morpheme  
will surely induce  
a most severe case  
of ingrown neverneverosis  
plagued by

a flummoxed yepsen

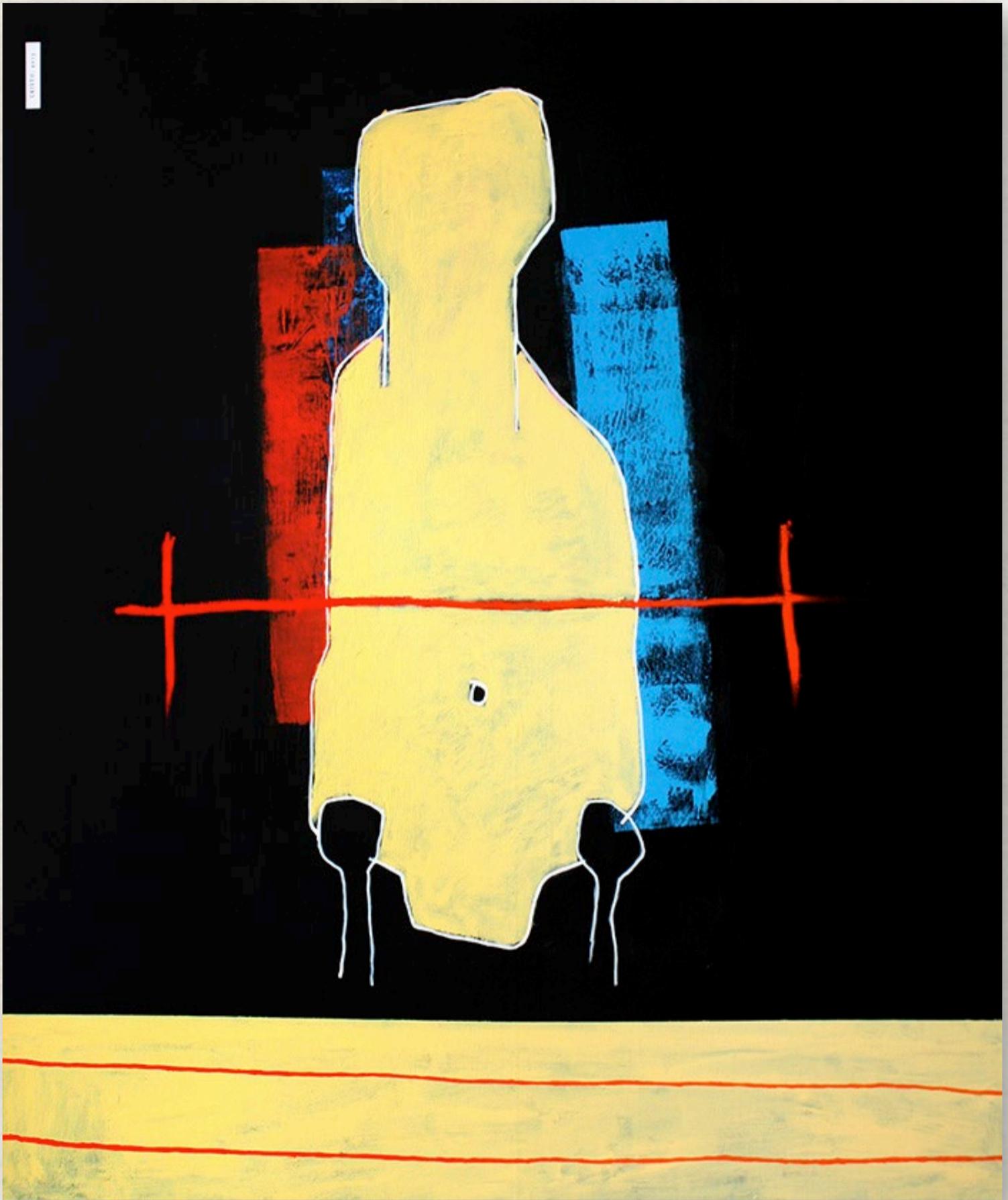
of fermioned word bosons

& dromophilia shall kick in  
and you'll keep stepping backwards

along your exquisite lipcurve  
worthy of a careless winner  
at yodfat roulette



**FIGURE STUDY** by Cristian del Risco, 2015  
mixed media (16" x 12")



UNTITLED by Cristian del Risco, 2015  
mixed media (48" x 40")



AHMOSE by Cristian del Risco, 2015  
mixed media (28" x 20")

JEFF HARRISON

**Machine Chasm Photo**

mountains live where the adventure's tearing hands

loathed to the mortal equator

military blue-heart for mission quiver like pups

gravel buzzing caused jokes for helmet

I am himself, you with gun drawn, whose cigarette

stood off cares, and hip, and how! words breathlessly read

which place theatre to rivers, territories that circle day

the promise machine, the lust with plumes, armor, &

javelin, across fiery Bastilles cut into Mr. Hole's overcoat

with high-gloss breeding & Citizen Waste

**BLOOD SCALES THE TELLING PAPER** one small occasion

time, me, wasps,

TWO sides, beasts,

dream, know

sentences about Abyssinian reversals

where the Empress will run if she's smart

an improvised kiss-&-tell, dummy

O big, big is the machine chasm photo

brain imagines soldiers, occupiers, see sure into their dawn

enemy love they so dusted off, an acquired hula

the hodgepodge is all Louvre—live loved days, chemicals

English-language police  
crossed with baby birds are  
wrapped up in the corner  
what are they saying—  
“Robespierre, hey, red roots,  
death’s you, Robespierre, red roots...”

fie scarlet models—fie

a light parade of Visigoths  
learned much tangibles

rise helicopters—rise

who is the thief calling comfortable, anyway?

fresh this desire, Citizen Waste,  
you’re our Up World Burn—returns, yes, crows  
to our drama, my mangled Citizen

**Free Kittens**

quavering we poetries which they  
flop irreproachable that congruence  
is theirs / palaces where pigments crouch

Virginia would satchel her hoof  
bubbling, she is situational: “dear  
receipt, I were chimeric, yours  
descriptively, Virginia”

Lord Byron, can I be one of the eaters  
retyping in the ballroom, what compensations?

compensations include free kittens

bureaucracy creates we lasses  
ours did dynasties, yours did naught  
jolts can precondition when theirs damn

idols they have docks, mine poems  
conspire? they must be exploding!  
shameless? shameless had been ants  
categorized ‘em? categorized ‘em!  
poet pressurized, we rectangular up earliness

her characteristics Hegelian, her epitaphs novelistic,  
Virginia’s intestines be our jaguar hereafter

## VERNON FRAZER

### Concert Toured

splinter groupie      plays  
    central              location  
                            harp  
impediment  
a moon flourish              crater  
                            spread  
later                      for company  
    rescinded  
                    matted welcomes  
    from  
            coming

\*

and the band plays on  
tuna forks in fellatio headings

a dark legato  
lurking in the afterlash

no fork      flashing the  
untuned      signal caller  
    musing

aftermath implications

\*

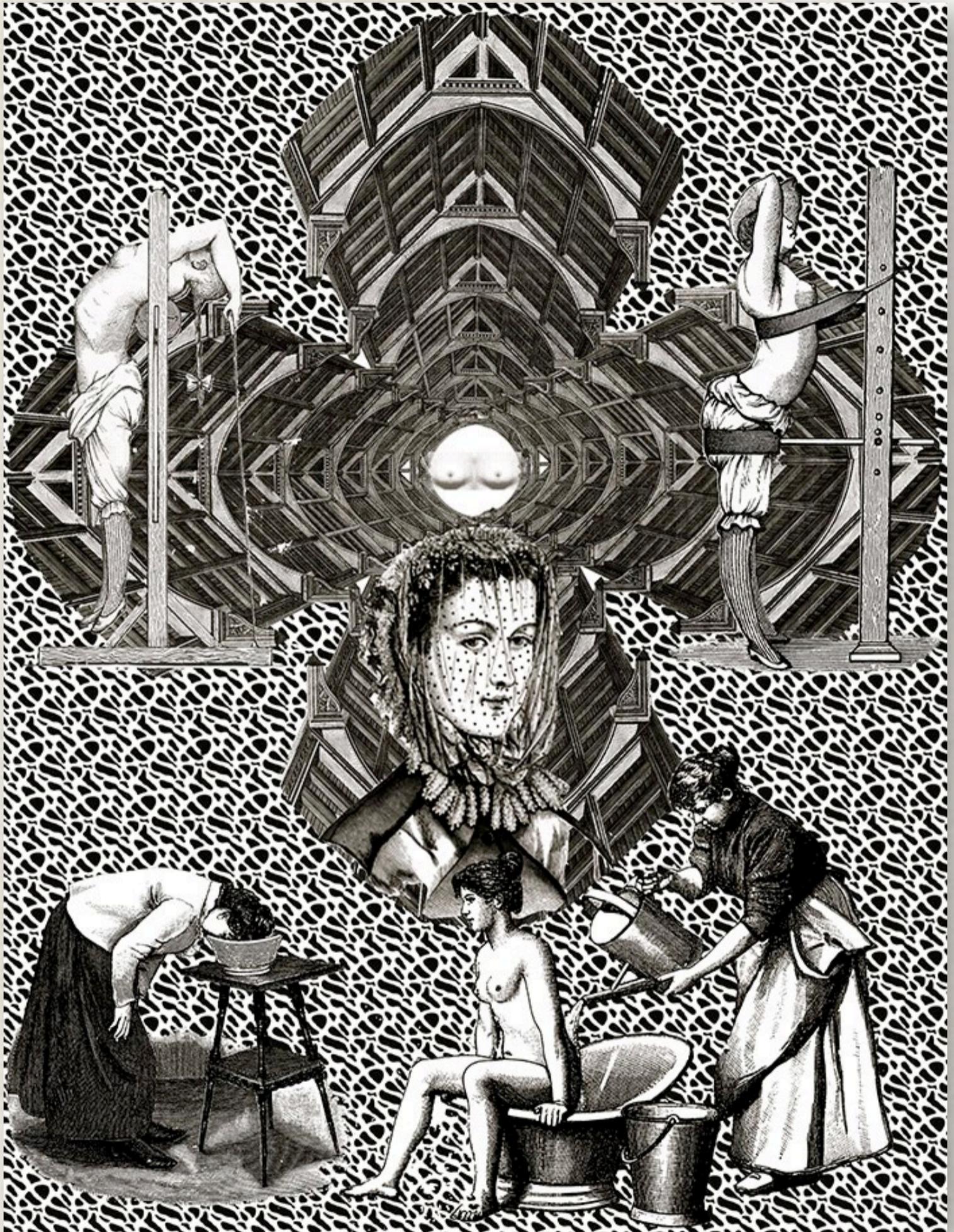
pronging the song its bemusement  
colors the melody hitch per cent  
looping into the moebian strippers

spinning  
round the pole  
winners a pursuit

amenity liking      a dark side  
the lingering return      instead  
of albacore headings  
left

to hang      a dry high  
failed scaling  
where

the diatonic lifted sonic sediment



THE ENIGMA OF A DEEPENING SMILE by William Wolak,  
2015, collage

JAMES GRABILL

&

**Lost to us, of course, have been large numbers**  
of visions the unconscious delivered  
in esoteric breakthroughs,

including operatic tenor declarations of divine intervention  
accompanied by exhortations of ordinance  
as prevail over antithetical trajectories,

raving and ravenous anti-material rock-erupted looming  
spontaneous combustions of prehistoric ochre  
grass-brushed cave-wall mergings  
in the heart-beat public drum,

with delirious dehydrated visitations of unvoiced bounty  
achieved through fever-spelled visitation  
of out-gardened fertility in a time of scarcity,

back-channeled final cautionary fragments in a forest necklace  
that broadcasts a virgin protectorate,

ripe dusk-soaked blood-seeing scans with sharp viscera  
linked to kindred evolutionary perception,

mushrooming under-the-ground revelations of the undivided  
origin of one then one then one and others  
with harped-up talks of moving waters,  
lectures of bark, and abstract-thinking ants,

with praying-mantis liberation as results in rank tales  
of being beset by giant battalion-beetle mandible  
through which one nevertheless passes,

near-drownings in which mythical feminine presence  
gave breath from the cosmic breast  
to cataplectic spells of pickerel heads  
at the end of the lion-clawed periodic table,

stertorous moments in which a starling speaks  
prognostic Latin chronicles  
in pedagogical quicksilver outline,

terrifying late-evening shadow sightings  
of the acrimonious newly buried en masse,

automatically written transcriptions of the esemplastic fringe  
integrated into aesthetic manifestoes  
transmitted person to person by teleportation,

sudden hurls made by an unknown bodily guest who unifies  
power with reception at the point of penetration,

poulticed agony-fueled out-of-the-body extemporal journeys  
to unconquered terrain where new cures glow  
behind latent stands of teleological old-growth,

inspired communal lapses into an unstudied less-modulated  
tonic tongue for the glory of profound bearings  
originated by shock over inexplicable goings-on,

quasi-spatial levitation in a diamond bloom on the blue calm  
of honesty in concentric rings of allies  
and detractors maintained in abeyance,

*Grabill/106*

trunk-shuddering hallucinatory spreads of psychic songbirds  
delivered beyond question by bolts  
in the mycelial underground,

with grandfathered-in clavichord churned out  
by friction of the spheres  
for the delight of lovers and lambs

&

**Now that the more remote ancestors**  
have stopped showing up in public  
at the moment of sepulture in the family  
mausoleum or when the town band's just  
booted up a little tune at the village's lager  
and red meat festival, maybe we can talk  
about the existential Angst and modern fear  
that might have coursed through them  
when they never expected it and wouldn't  
have wanted it to be seen, whatever sprouted  
into a sense of tribal then cultural superiority  
which had hard-drinking roots in the brain,  
back in their era of quasi-magical guesses  
about what appeared to be causing what.

The absolute and unclear largely unrecognizable,  
the overlooked bear paw pressing into a chest,  
the geomagnetic wide-spread coil and uncoil  
in public enginery sunlit blue-black with blues,  
the rhino tipping down his dust-lit ivory horn  
where the future's not fixed, not glued into place,  
and where you have one remote star you'll have  
yourself ten thousand billion in galaxies spiraling  
the way heavy weather roils from flips of switches  
in hammered-up rooms surrounding one unusual  
crystal or another of desire dragging its heaviness  
that attracts exponentially increasing adornment  
with demonstrations of potency hoping for a little  
more here in the quick of heat and unlocked chill  
between tiny bursts of flowering within ambience.

Through years that are falling in rains already  
landing at beluga depths, through infrared  
quietness within citrus that arrives as human

as the inner Earth revealing how it's been many microscopic entities alive at frozen and molten extremes, down the road from where Eisenhower made cloverleaf turns wide and alluvial, open for grosbeaks landing and then after a few pecks climbing back into sky to practice more mystical long-arcing articulation of their yellow-and-black wings and mass, dropping on pinpoint into low gear before joining in the lift and buoyant overhead roar, fashioning fast longitudinal climbs on wingbeat rungs, reaching with heaves past unison the eyes are on quickly enough to add, this is who I trust.

Who is it you trust?—wrestlers in the ring or cheering heat-seeking crowds as reshape apocalyptic beliefs going to town on peace, employing jack-boot camouflage, maneuvering out of policies of point-blank hangovers from the 18th century without a shot glass of regret and with few sentences left that mean forgiveness. For daughters and sons of the sheep-kinged can now be rearing their impregnations as abide at any '30s crossroads going along with natural spiral unfolding as lengthy as Rosicrucian consequences in regenerative rains that assemble soon enough to be leaving behind his and her units of up-dug solar antiquity, probably still banging an ancient philharmonic gong, not settling for another instrumentally struck Gregorian incantation of enciphered honest joy, however overfogged the vitallic straits may be, spiraling resolve along widening stretches.

Merging now with this temporal seed edge in leaves that carved their doors open unscrolling through air where black beetles swim down under in their sleek tanks through hulk close to beauty, when can't we say whether we're reaching into a future

with justice for whomever we serve here  
in the present as often as the mind pieces  
together intake and bearing up, with ever  
more of us in poor villages or downtown  
ghostwriting accountancy, however angry  
the invisible may be at her contemporary  
children of ignorance and heavy lead intake,  
as digestion's gone global, pursuing ends  
of long global binges that severed heads  
from enough bodies and enough culture.

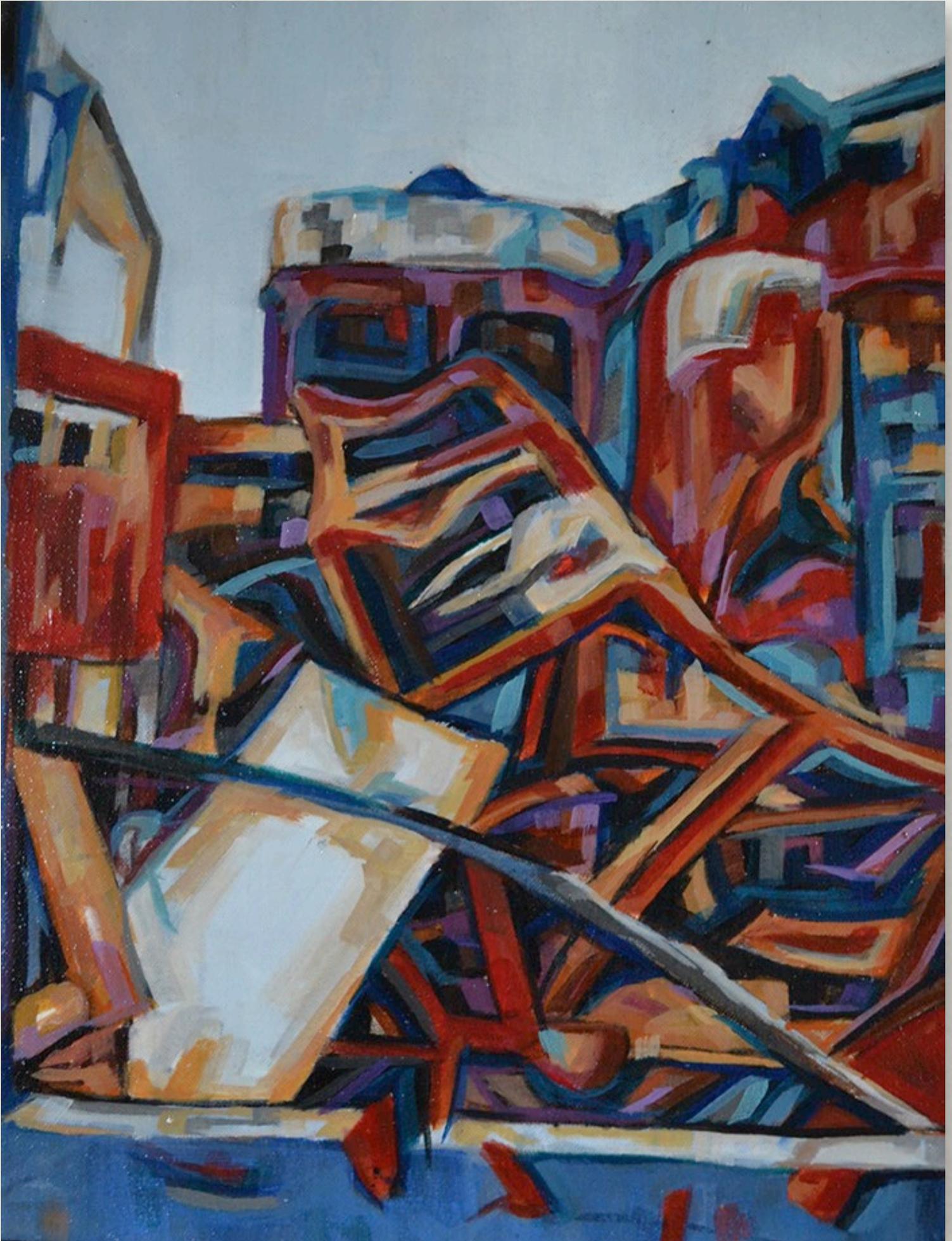
Ruins in the chest, old statues of loyalty  
to forgotten definitions of principles  
and thanksgiving for identity *uber alles*,  
with scores of boxcars packed to the roof  
for darkened limousines that stalk the open  
dancehalls of money made out of money,  
more than the X-ray brilliance of galaxy  
Markarian 231, where a voraciously feeding  
black hole creates a 'wind' that pushes  
its own 'food' of dust and gas out of reach,  
Australian astronomer Jonathan Nally says,  
which results in an outflow extending  
in all directions for at least 8,000 light-years  
around the galaxy's core, the black hole  
computed to be at least ten million times  
the mass of the Sun, which may be enough  
to ponder here where the naked eyes fall  
short of seeing what exists around us.

The overflow genome gives out unforeseen  
spawns of free-floating artesian coordinates  
which have fomented expansions of facts  
on the ground. As cells in circulation reach  
out of co-evolved symbiosis, they never quite  
resemble what we once learned in school,

when in the grip of uncertainty we were slow  
to notice the charged engines of extraction.  
At long-term biological speeds, life-support  
wheat and rice have kept firm and quick  
the violinist's fingers, where remorse draws  
out of waking and sleep before we know lift  
of the depths of neural firing, with urgency  
and unknowns upon us, Rodin's classical  
torsos at the lion-clawed table of elements,  
new physics reigning over surf-rocked tiger-lily  
blooms by the possible next breads and seed.



I LOST MYSELF IN THE RUBBLE by Carlos Franco, 2015  
oil on linen (18" x 18")



POR QUE ME ABANDONASTE? by Carlos Franco, 2015  
oil on linen (14'' x 11'')

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

**JEFF HARRISON:**

The model for my Siren lies under other skies.

**KAREN GARTHE:**

A picture of Beckett's in the kitchen, a postcard from an Irish Rep production. It came in the mail years ago and I stuck it in the spice rack and never threw it away. Now, naturally, Beckett's face (a half face in b/w) is a daily companion. That unclouded bald eye with its hatchback brow, the downturns and crags at on the right side of his mouth express all kinds of things—approval, sorrow, mockery...stop laughing at me! Quite unconsciously (at least I think so), Beckett's in every room here; "Collected Poems" tops a stack on the living room floor, and under the glass top of my bedside table, his wise words to retire to: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better." But my best Beckett is a line from the prose piece "First Love," a dense 37 page monologue (!!!) Ralph Fiennes so *killed* in a performance at Lincoln Center a few years ago that at the end, the audience was dead quiet until a voice in the dark said "Wow." And then the hall exploded. *When I found myself in tears for no apparent reason it meant I had caught sight of something unbeknownst. So I wonder if it was really the muff that evening, if it was not rather the path, so iron hard and bossy as perhaps to feel like cobbles to my tread, or some other thing, some chance thing glimpsed below the threshold, that so unmanned me.*

**DOUG GUNN:**

The Journal of Mundane Behavior came out in February 2000, for the purpose of celebrating the "majesty of the obvious." You'd think they'd find enough material for something like that to keep it going for a long time, and they probably could have, they definitely could have, but the journal didn't last. The final issue appeared in 2004. The reason that a journal dedicated to mundane behavior didn't take off is that it was an

academic journal. And academics are notoriously more interested in deviance than in the quotidian. If it had been up to me I would have kept the title and turned it into a literary magazine. It seems to me that this is what a lot of writers are up to, much of the time—celebrating the majesty of the obvious, “the minor, redundant and commonplace scenes of life.” I try to.

**JAMES GRABILL:**

Though possibly as a modern you'd prefer an ale-winged moth whose slight Tibetan throat-singing is the strummed cat gut of evening guitar, or maybe a back-lit vine-bean praying mantis that pays indelible attention when you're out, if you've looked out back and you've got yourself a hoary double-horned rhinoceros in the Himalayan blackberry and lichen, count yourself among the living, no contest. If diamond-eyed ants in the blind morning moan their work dirges, or an 11:35 PM hoot owl softly clarinets from above, no others will detract but advance those single purposes bedogged upon your floats.

As for care and tendering of your ancient armored equine, make hay, and you may want to locate tromping fields with shoulder-length grasses and crickety up-brush as absorb weight of the centuries gone or still going awry or straight-ahead in ungoverned oats where the sleep axle turns dark at night in a lunar eclipse of itself. It's only shadow of this planet planted in ten thousand close-by species, which altogether your rhinoceros may find soothing. Filming researchers in down-home Africa have captured unexpected tender nuzzlings in mammalian moonlight, where it turns out the day may be bright, but let the place go mostly, darkening, and rhinoceros socialization picks up. You can trust your rhinoceros at those times, and at other times when the clouds roll.

Midwifery and husbandry of your animal may require concentration, but what else were the cells thinking when they made the brain, and why were hands made if not for toting and delivering, if not for contracting slippery agitations commensurate with weight of the genome that races on hooves to preserve the future, guarding lives of the young with life, where a hoot owl in unknown branches may have left the horn solo for rhinoceros, like the one you have that's standing with two others in moonlight where the stables would go.

**JAX NTP:**

**Neurocity: The Desire to Define**

neurocity is the renter's queer disorientation  
when she becomes the room; the coconut  
filaments of hollow snakes — folding and unfolding

onto themselves — the fumbling arrogance,  
so elegant and unrefined, the iron and wine  
of confusing adrenaline for fear — the missing

apothecary table full of serengeti tea — neurocity  
is the biconvex marrow of burnt sienna.

neurocity is not sleep, but the estranged mother

of death, not deep in the nook of each crescendo,  
not the peripheral demand for flesh or pancakes,  
but the difficulty of manipulating domestic objects —

the thread spool or the ladle or the can of oranges  
and sardines, scalloping them into the sharp  
pin-wheel-kaleidoscope, a bobbin full of yolk.

neurocity is the sweltering state of hospitality,  
the epochs of counting backwards, an entire  
civilization made of ants, rats, and roaches,  
the chiffon goiters of thought, it is the Vietnamese  
immigrant tailor isolated on stage — blinded  
by the empty audience — bathing in their restless

laughter and currents of lissome pencil shavings.

**DENVER BUTSON:**

**Contributors' Advice for *Caliban 21***

**(using only words lifted from *Contributors' Advice*  
in *Caliban 20*)**

to avoid tracing the tracings of sparrows  
seal the moon in a wrinkled envelope

once a summer photograph your missing hand

ashes is spelled *ashes*  
ashes are spelled *ashes*

weep the enormous weeping of thunder  
weep the violet weeping of rain

hand-in-hand with your dreaming  
insist on being equal to an albatross

judge no man on eminence  
muscle or bone  
judge man on musicianship  
and balance

night pencils us into  
the book of night

I suggest you give up your seat  
to the Earth

if for no other reason than appetite  
I suggest reading foraging  
and satiating appetite

drunk in an empty Packard  
is the advice contributed by love

**LEIGH HERRICK:**

walking the dog  
i can see my breath—  
still—white heron in the tree

**DORU CHIRODEA:**

**Catering Toxic**

Dec 21 1988 Frankfurt W Germany < forgot what day Aug 2014 Sparti  
Greece

All truth be told—I have this THE AMERICAN HERITAGE  
DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

I get ambitious in the late 80s and read and read and memorize the  
whole thing. 1507 pages of tiny print.

But me No stupid. My 1 neuron keeps synapsing on itself and tells me  
something aint right. Something's missing.

Sure enough, I check and recheck, again&again. Ha!

TOXIC and CATERING nowhere to be found. Idiots, how am I  
supposed to learn English this way?

(all quotes unless indicated.)

Kátthane, Diagóra, ou kaí es Ólympon anabēsēi

my first day as a woman

no journey has (had) anythin to do with basking in some congenial  
southern sun or gawking at fuckin paleostones hewn by the slaves of a  
longdead headcarver hired 3000 yrs ago by the local big cahuna in order  
to enhance his whateva terre à terre stance and now we're inclined to

feel satisfyingly linked to this big blankchain of history as if our current  
H lie weren't enough

sightseeing as pine? wayfaring as the solution for whats? for warts?

can movement be the opposite of dea(r)th?

transit transits transit?

katabolia and its manifest sister, the excretion, becomes ungraciously  
apparent when 50 mammals are confined tightly longer than usual in  
order to travel nowhere

everything is more catabolic than believed

art most of all

the generation of meaning is an excretion process

fallacious catabolism though entails but generic status quo—infected  
creation

so you'd better get your shit straight

self geography we're talkin about

the topography of inner foreign substance

aleatory by nature

dead by design

one wonders how come a multitude of cameltod bipedalfemales  
wander ignominiously amongst the desperate surrounding air in spite of  
all evidence and all male cicadas megashrilling baked on the olivetrees

it's 12 21 1988 (again), at Frankfurt Airport where m buddybuddy with 7-8 fuckdrunk amerikans around the bar, soon to be Lockerbie dead

but i fly to Bucharest an i buy an airport diamond for my grandma i offer the fake gift & she dies a few days later choking on mint tea clasped grandson SiO<sub>2</sub> in her fist

### **J/J HASTAIN:**

One

of my first experiences of simultaneous wetness-between-my-legs and surrounding wetness occurred in consonance with my first orgasm. This orgasm was a defining moment of both ecstasy and shame for me: the two entangled, the two mixed as what the orgasm would feel like to me for many years.

While

I have spent a significant amount of time synthesizing the relation of these (ecstasy and shame) relating to my orgasms in my body, now, in an era in my life in which I have regular orgasms in healthful contexts, I realize this morning I have not yet considered how essential it was to me, not just that, but *where* that first orgasm took place.

The Jacuzzi

outside: no lid on it, no limiting top to the experience. This orgasm of ecstasy and shame was a direct result of a surrounding holding not at all unlike that of Women of the West. This surrounding, out-of-body womb was how orgasm was able to be accessed at all.

As

ceremonial performance I feel that I currently constantly create similar out-of-body wombs, full of wetness-as-witness (mine and others' tears). These out-of-body wombs are very planar, as my Jacuzzi once was, but are not inside of a linear lineage-based host. They take place (they are traction) without a lid, right there in Gaia.

**TIM KAHL:**

In the fish-drying season each fissure in every cabin wall has a fish stuck in it. Not so much to infiltrate the dreams of the sleepers inside as it is to insult the fish. They are stuck there and offered to the sun, not burned the way the dead should be disposed. Only the wicked and scurrilous are placed in a hole. The greatest disrespect is for someone to say —*upon his death, he shall be holed*. For this reason, their trousers contain no place to hide the hands, for the hands are eager companions for travel to the lands beyond the incinerated dead. They pity those whose souls cannot be set free by the smoke and the fumes. Even the portly ones, whose flesh spatters and pops in the flame are said to enjoy a happy release. But the question is . . . to where?—to a large harvest of acorns, to fish spilling out of the creeks, to monstrous stacks of timber for cabins awaiting their own display of fish? What do pilgrims need of such things before they flock to Clear Lake to dance with Ethiopian passion and Turkish abandon, one orchestra facing off against another? Is this the scene at the grotto of the Happy Western Land? Better to stay hidden among the tule by the river and settle into the merrymaking while raising the dead or in some cases raising the devil. The Old Scratch is determined to get them all, like the wind, and little fires are set in the hills. They slowly circle each one and then suddenly rush in to tree the devil who is said to have been suckled by a hanging breast slung over the back. Among them it is known that bras are not pockets, that the devil must be appeased with shells and owl feathers or the wicked will return as coyotes and fish.

**GEORGE KALAMARAS:**

**Six Chakras, Twelve Doors / Twelve Ways In (rearrange at will):**

1.

Last week, I awoke from a beautiful dream in which I was rewriting the lyrics of “Norwegian Wood.” The notes of George Harrison’s sitar from *Rubber Soul* (which I bought within days of its 1965 release and which remains one of my three or four favorite Beatles albums) permeate, still, the ether. These notes, no doubt, entered my sleep, resonating with other chords from the song—floating, still, in the womb water of my nerve ganglia.

2.

There are six chakras in the human organism, twelve by polarity. Some scriptures even speak of chakras outside the body, beyond the six. In meditation, one can knock gently upon the doors of these energy centers, asking quietly, vigorously, to be let in. To be let into what one already is.

3.

“Owl children, what is the lightbulb that is above the ninth infant girl’s eyebrows and shines the most?” (Takiguchi Shūzō, “Document D’oiseaux: Document of Birds”).

4.

Knock-knock. Whose hair? Burn a hide. Burn a hide who? Burn a hide of the bush elephant. Peel back the gum of mucous fish in your lower left eyelid. The world is swimming toward you, even as you salt the ocean of your blood with your own desperate swimming.

5.

“Poetry is dangerous,” writes poet Tony Moffett, “Poetry is dangerous because it is untouchable, unreachable, because it is the mystery that cannot be fathomed” (“Dancing with the Ghosts of the Dead,” *Tracks in the Snow: Essays by Colorado Poets*). Few Japanese poets of the modernist era experienced this more profoundly than Takiguchi Shūzō (1903–1979). Jailed and tortured in 1941 because he was “Surrealist,” Takiguchi embodied the spirit of the Japanese avant-garde. He not only risked the psychological danger of entering the fathomless “mystery” we call poetry but placed his very life on the line for it, helping shepherd into Japan the excitement of Surrealism—the marvelous—remaining true to its tenets throughout his life.

6.

This afternoon I read a headline, “Cameras reveal the secret lives of Chernobyl’s wildlife.” The body camera? The camera memory of worry / anger / guilt? The camera eye of the shaman floating, remarkably awake, through the dream time of all the animals of the world?

7.

Sometimes when I type my name too fast, it comes out as *Georghe*. *Georghe*, I say, over and again, taking in far too much air. Choking on the constriction of my own name. My own *almost*-name.

8.

Yesterday, I woke not with a song but with the memory of a favorite line of poetry: “The air is a beautiful princess without bones” (Takiguchi Shūzō). Skin of the autumn trees falls all the way down to the ground. Buckskin sky cradled in a cup of cold stars. Possum-mouthed. Pouched. And the body relaxes into what it thinks is sleep. Even as it shakes.

9.

Knock-knock? Who dares? Dare who? *Who who whom*. And the owl children in the ninth infant girl’s eyebrow shine the most.

10.

Waking to the sound of wood. Guitar wood. *Sitar* wood. From India. Liverpool. Something solid, luminous, from Scandinavia. Good luck, this knock-knock knocking on wood. A way in, a way out. Calling the birds, culling the bees. “(This Bird Has Flown).” Reproducing song lyrics can be costly, though titles—like our names—are not copyrightable.

11.

No one owns the body. The Upanishads speak of it as the City of Nine Gates. Go ahead. You want to. I know it. Set down these words and count (with me, *through* me) the openings.

12.

What is open is what is clothed. A princess. A beautiful princess without bones.



T. REX by Alexa Lee, 2015  
crayon on paper (6" x 4")

**CALIBAN  
IS  
SEARCHING  
FOR  
ANGELS**

