



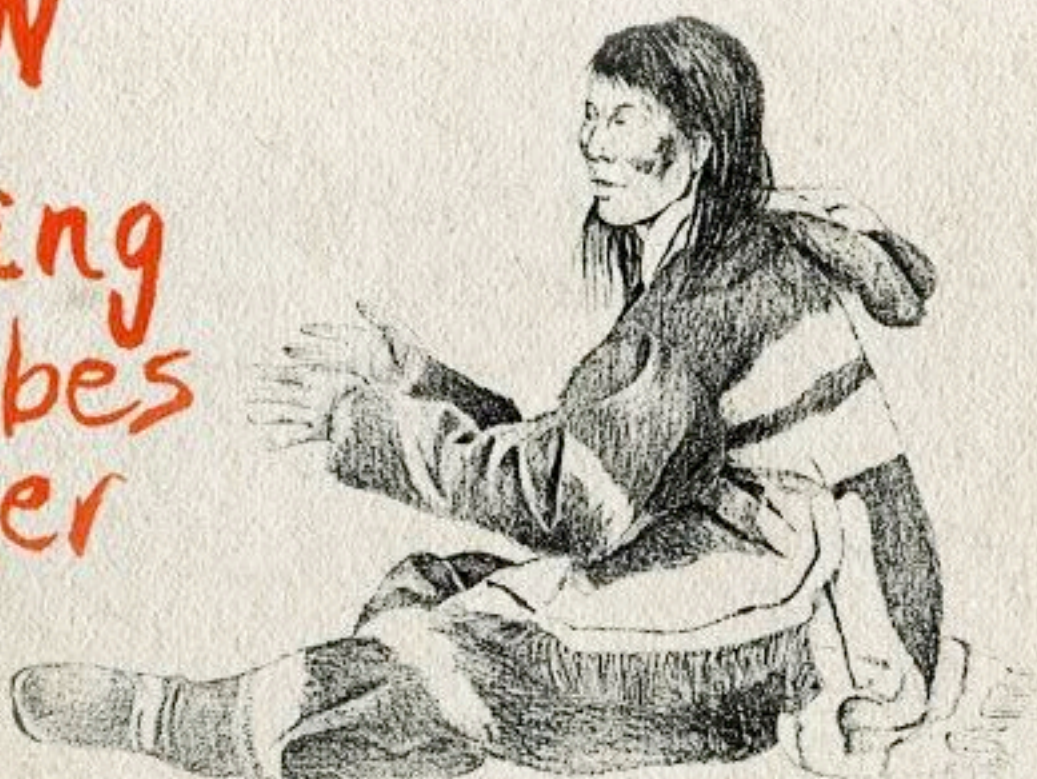
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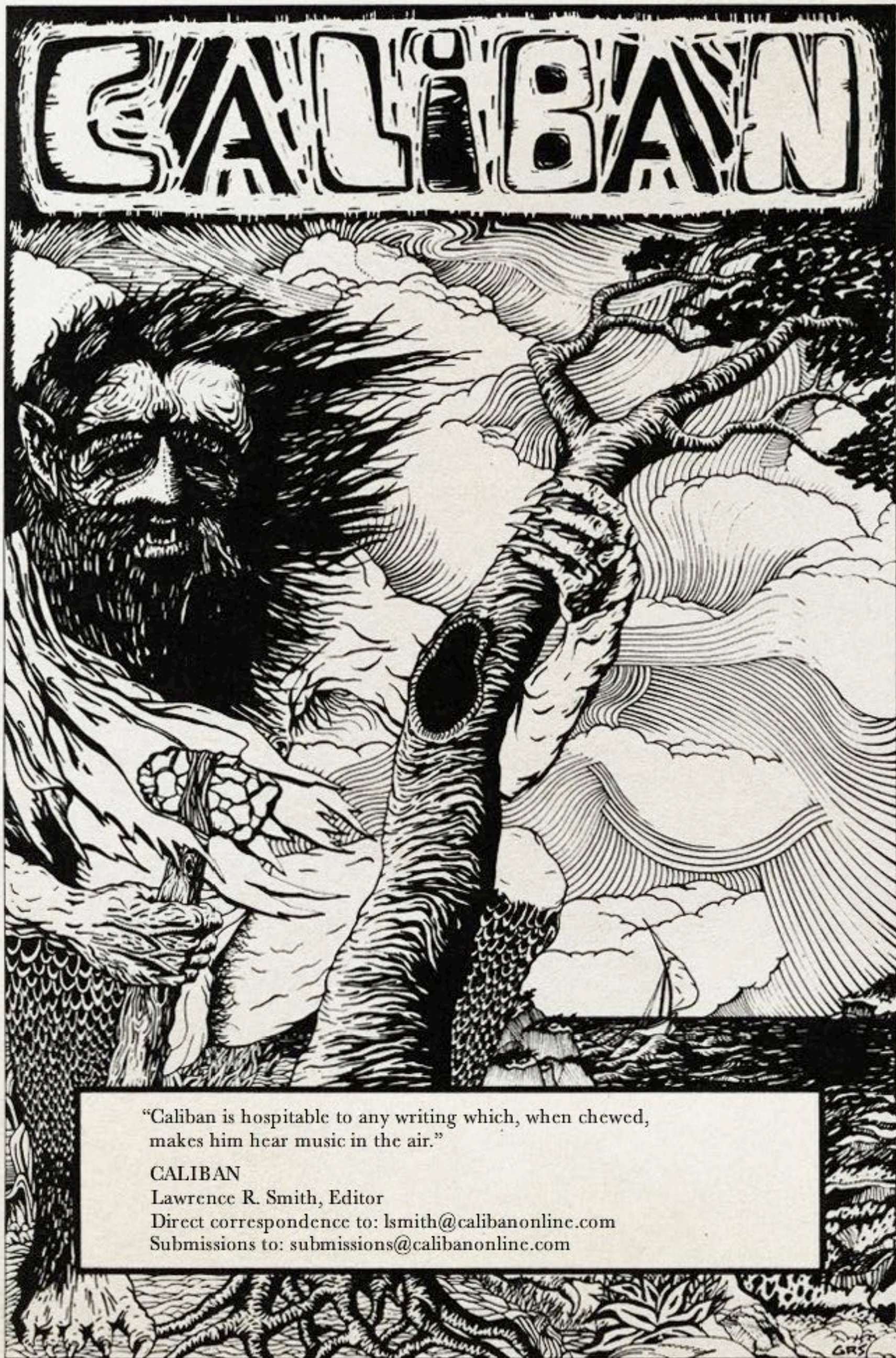
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**CALIBAN**

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*Jim Harrison (1937-2016)*

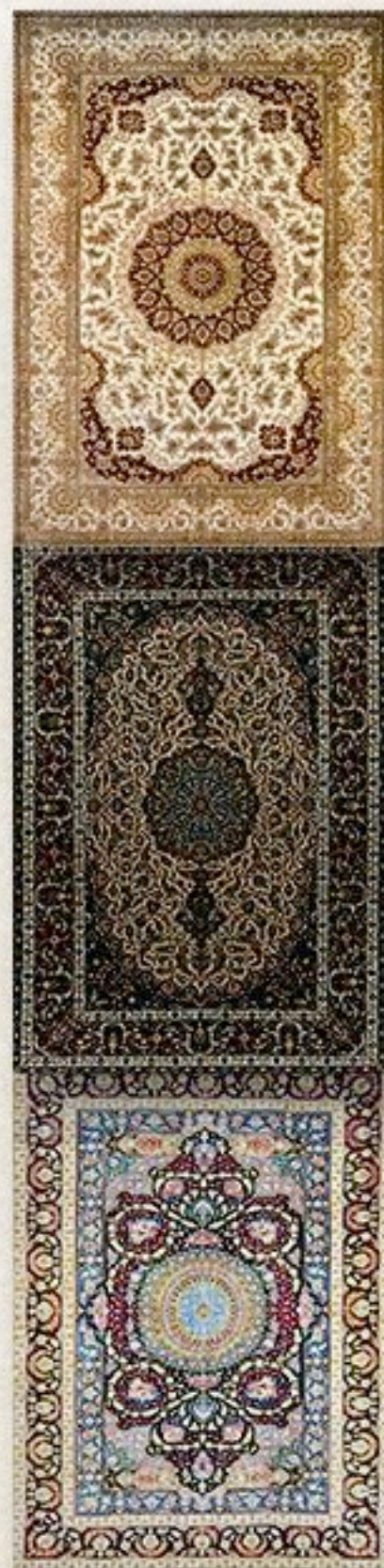
**JIM HARRISON**

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**CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE**





ROB COOK

### **The Empty Dress**

The dress fattened alone  
at the back of the wood-cold closet.

The dress cold as a tree  
lost in all the winters of the closet,  
which was dark as everything the house lost at night.

I measured the dress by how many buttons could be counted,  
  
how many times it could be folded  
into blush-wooded pages  
in the book of lace  
when it blushes  
beyond the rosewood readings of spring.

The dress smelled of rosemary  
and ginger  
and green tea,  
all the cures of the house when it was cold.

We exchanged nuances of ginger,  
kisses of Himalayan salt crystals.

The dress was ripe  
with a search party of wounded apples,  
  
voluptuous with the chill of cider  
  
and I put them there, in the dress



where no woman  
aroused  
the sky at dusk  
from a man's shy pockets.

The dress advanced with love  
for the way my lips and my hands  
and the skipping hearts of my hair admired it

because there was no woman there,

no woman that could be folded  
and put in some drawer.

And here the pure dress revealed its only wish:  
to admire what's best at being not-there,  
best at being gone.



## **The House Where Gnats Were Given Away**

At four I trudged through the gnats to the house where Mickey and Cathy cried.

Lurking in the choked breeze, I never arrived at the source of the crying, just turned around and went home when the gnats started building their walls.

I did this many times and each time it took longer to distinguish my itching from the neighbor's stereo damaging the sunlight the way it did from the other side of the woods.

The wind, when I had no mother and father, never knew where to look.

Not for the entrails of the discarded dress  
that crawled to the middle of the nearest lawn.  
Nor the cries slipping out of otherwise bright curtains.  
Nor the pigtails clinging to each tree, suggesting a still salvageable happiness.

And at forty I tracked the rain puddles to the house  
where I learned how to read.

It had a different cloud in every window.

Bite marks in every wall.

A man with no mouth,  
a cigarette leaking from his nose  
when it got late inside him.

I could not finish one book in that house.

I could not force even one of the lamps to breathe.



“Why do I feel like I’ve been bitten everywhere the words  
have been?” I kept asking from what remained of summer.

And on a different day, the same house filled with identical deer was  
scrawled by another child, one who fed the moon at night when he  
ran out of trees.

I did nothing

while I tried to force the apples to like me:

Standing outside the palace of literature,  
throwing stones at the gnats.



## Wood Song, Wood Family, Wood Song

The family scavenged wood for breakfast,  
bribed wood for lunch,  
earned enough wood for dinner—

wood frozen and thawed as soup,  
spring and summer frozen and thawed as wooden winter soup.

At school the kids took turns chopping down  
the girl who masticated nothing but wood.

The wood-worn sky, wood-weary clouds,  
the sloughs of the wooden breeze  
that turned to wood everything it touched in the wood-loving  
stoves.

The daughter wore the wooden dress  
that drifted through the forests of her wooden sleep.

Her brother worried the bed with his night sweats of wood,  
hardening the weight of the wooden blankets.

Both awakened to the chiming of the wooden curtains,  
the ringing of the wooden phone,  
the radio whispering all the worries of wood.

All the damp wood the family felt inside them  
eased the terrors remembered by trees  
falling by themselves in the silence of the wooden rain.

“We are alone but for the wooden way we walk  
wood-beat by wood-beat to April that waits for us  
with its prohibited cedar weddings,” the father said.



No one knew what to do about the leaves  
because each hoarded a different forest,

the bird silence flashing its wooden plumage,

the winter heaviness fed with every secret kept  
by the wood-drenched leaves.



## MERCEDES LAWRY

### **A Way Out**

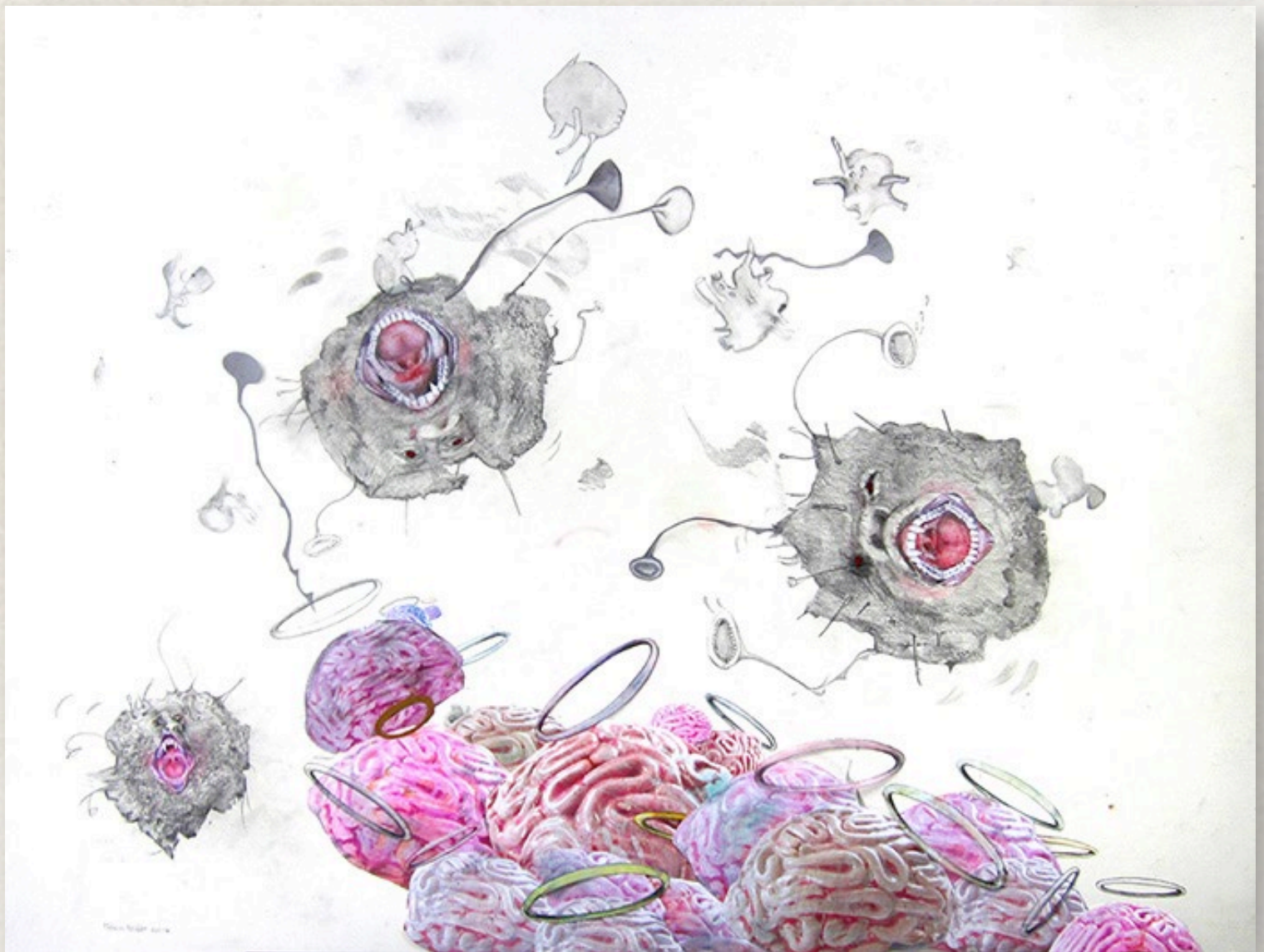
There was a failure of clouds  
in how I swept my terrors  
under the rug, dew glancing  
off pale green as I waited  
for darkness. I was south  
of ruin and north of implosion.  
Each hour decked in thorns  
and humming for my paltry heart.  
Oh, those bloody stoics, how I curse them!  
My kind are cringing and questioning,  
sure there is no light or tunnel  
but possibly, relief. For these days  
where the sky scuttles in mock promise,  
I startle at nothing but thought  
of all the forsaken and what remains.  
I hear my bones ticking.  
I read a dozen poems to the dog.  
I plead for storms to rock this creaky house  
as if it were on stilts and could,  
at any moment, clatter into the sea.



**Traveling Light**

Dried grasses wrapped around  
and around, tied neatly.  
How I present the soul,  
going off gladly now, emptied  
and able to hum a frivolous tune.  
The river is not far.  
I'll be there by the dimming.  
You'll bind up my wounds and tell me lies.  
We'll travel by thieves' light.





GOOD AND EVIL, OR G & E by Ellen Wilt, 2016  
collage and graphics (30" x 40")



## GEORGE KALAMARAS

### **Bathtub Oils and Historical Bones**

Two exhausted hemispheres summer-train the night.  
I hear the hyena cowl crawl the high dirt and realize I've been alone  
fifty-nine years.

I turn to Hernández. I pause for Paz.  
I annul the piano dirge of Nicanor Parra's hernia.

I realize the inguinal zone of livid camel water trusts the hazy  
oasis plum.  
I extract my ear and hand it back to Van Gogh's accountant.

The largest obsession of selfish concentration was a mathematical  
fulfillment.  
I realize I've never been alone among the long rows and tables—not  
even among the probabilities of strict animal milk.

I might be buried in bathtub oils of historical bones.  
I might try them on, one by one, and dream Oedipus's horse.

I cannot see the spare change in your weeping.  
You spend yourself and tell me a fricative seems like a pleasant  
enough gasp.

And so I turn to Desnos and invoke the sleep medicines.  
I crawl my Breton, even my Daumal, into the speckled skin at the lip  
of my cup of cinnamon and boiled milk.



## Mantra Diksha

I have been praying a long time.

This is my resolve : if need be, get down on all fours and chew the carpet apart in search of the elusive pineal gland.

Dog-eared pages remind me where we might return.

Once—approximately fifty-eight years, nine months, and three days ago—we were young.

I fell into your hair the way a planet regains composure.

I'd been circling the flock, biting at their heels, hoping my master would find me worthy.

Still, it was the wandering that kept me beyond the border of my own bread.

In the cold, the air reminds me of clear yeasty thought.

We need to sponsor a symposium called *The Pre-Colonial Discovery of the Preterit*.

Conjugate, for me, my grief spasms, but you may not use my possible mouth.

You may use me in whatever way you bleed, even if my syntax slips—especially, then, and though and so.

This is my resolve, my mantra diksha, my get-down-on-all-fours if need be and beckon broken plates of the moon—to sound myself out, to sound me toward dissolve.



**Blood Hook**

Snow crows convulse my dignity for the length of rain.  
An incessant bed insists the contour of rotten apples.

It's raining so hard the beards of cypresses serve perplexed welts  
of moth time.  
Thousands of dark limps struggle-swage my heat.

I am convinced that a stalk of celery is a great African loss.  
The Dark Continent is a shade of universal adamancy.

He collected coral snakes, and she kept a tortoise named Gaston.  
In those days, I often wondered who would polish his eighty-year shell  
if he were to outlive his people.

Once again I dream the new house with secret rooms.  
Floors *between* floors smell of Kundalini's slow resin as it hag-hairs  
between chakras.

I held your wrist and heard the blood hook tear from a little bone.  
Don't confuse my desire for bird beaks in your chest.

I saw you again today in that tight wool skirt and sweater.  
The stretch of your breasts suggests that my mouth has forever  
been sore.



## **The Blood of the Poet**

So, the psychoid Christ was there in jongleur Jungian delight.  
William Everson recited the absence of his father into each  
of the blood oranges he polished at the sink.

So, the idea of a painful valve plagued Vallejo's cheekbone.  
And a running sap told César even he had to die, alone in Paris,  
without a suit.

So, three wives weren't enough to excise his mother's menstrual scent  
from his chest hairs, which resembled sun sprouts of unfinished love.  
Yes, André Breton became a swan for four, maybe five, days a month.

Sometimes Miguel's tuberculous ghost flowed more freely than others.  
Sometimes the Lorca grave trench-lips the chest, as we are all bitten  
into the body.

So, let us count how many fascist detention camps can fit onto  
the head of a quill pen on the island of Samos.  
Let us recognize that house arrest of Yannis Ritsos never involved  
the playing of cards, nor goat-shots of ouzo in retsina wind.

Rejoice in the sphymoid blood, the deliriousness of the gnat, the full-  
bellied bloat of a mosquito drugged by the sag of torn African bed  
nets.

The blood of the poet, body to body, mouth to mouth, persists.



## The Methods of Production

*A long transparent maneuver flattens the weight of woven rain.  
Or, A maneuvered transport weaves flat heavy storms.*

Now I come to translating myself.  
Pour a cup of coffee. I am excruciating myself in your spleen.

A man or a woman, in general, could be a rich history, a soiled  
linguistic itch.  
Especially if we speak of *controlling the methods of production*, we must tax  
the wedding bed, or the kitchen chair she straddles you on, or the  
psalm-said on her breast.

Wrap your legs around my hips as if the tightening mattered.  
Say, *your stain, your stain*, over and again into my mouth, so that I might  
release the owl's midnight resin.

We belly-touch the whalebone washed up between us into a vast  
sestina.  
I have been repeating seven—not six—words my entire life, one for  
each chakra.

It *does* matter. *All* of it matters.  
*OM, Beloved. OM, Beloved. OM, Beloved. OM.*





VENUS by Cristian Del Risco, 2014  
mixed media on canvas (40" x 40" x 5")





FIGURE III (NEFERTITI) by Cristina Del Risco, 2015  
mixed media on canvas (40'' x 40'' x 5'')



FLORINA ENACHE

## **Three Days in the Life of a Translator**

### **One**

They knocked down houses to build apartment blocks. The dogs had nowhere to go. The city is full of stray dogs and battalions of rats. We are a nation that has nowhere to go. Nothing we see is ours. Up there it's warm with festooned garlands. Down here it's cold and filthy. Fear lingers in the air. Before the clouds. The air is bloated with applause. Forty years of applause had to go somewhere.

My feet beat the streets. Long streets I don't know the names of. Tall blocks united against the sky. In between the blocks, skeletal trees are ashamed. They could have been in a forest. They would die undignified and smothered by concrete. We could all have done better. The garbage chutes stink even in the winter. People have jars with pickles in them on their balconies, in the cold.

Winter is a hard test most humans fail. My feet are in close connection with nature. When it's cold, they let me know right away. When it rains, even sooner. The flats I am wearing outlived their functionality by four years. Their decency by five.

Today was warm for a winter day. Beggars and cripples came out of the ground like daffodils. Jesus lives in each one of them. Jesus wears rags. His skin is scruffy with dried-blood scars and frostbitten. Jesus has toothless mouths like black holes and oily hair with nests of lice in it, like diamond studs.



People on the subway wear the same face. From the underground, packs of them go to the bodega. They all search for something. A hand to hold theirs when it shakes. Wool cotton to stuff in their mouths. A whack across their heads. They wear parkas in inappropriate colours, as if they were all going skiing. I burrow into a yellow feather jacket. This jacket is the best thing that ever happened to me. In the footwear department, I fail.

I wait in line for thirty minutes. I no longer own my feet. They've got bread, people whisper. Yellow loaves dumped in plastic crates rest on the oily floor. They clean it with petrol. The woman cuts the bread and mounds of crumbs are left behind on the table. The woman looks at my card and says no, you are from the country. She gives me a hunk of halvah instead. She cuts it with the long knife and drops it in my hand in its oily paper. I can't put it in my bag. It would ruin my dictionary. I carry it in my hand and it greases my hand up to my elbow.

I rent a small apartment on the ground floor. It is colder inside than outside. An old man lived here, but he died recently. His family keeps his photo on the table. In front of it, there is a small candle I have to light every night. My wages cover the rent. For the bills, I borrow.

My feet carry me to my block. My feet shake harder the closer they get to the building. My feet are terrified. The rest of me is happy. Tonight they give us hot water. In less than two minutes, I sink in hot water to warm up. My skin is red. My feet tingle. A tap on the window. I freeze in the hot water. I'm glad you are taking a bath I might come to visit you later. I jump out and splash water on the floor and on the walls. I rub my skin dry in a hurry to put clothes on. I want to turn off the light, but it is too late: he knows I am home. My mouth tastes metallic. A light knock at the door this time. Do you have a light? Then silence. I tremble. There is no escape. He lives upstairs with his brothers. They are not part of the working class. Mrs. Klein from across the hall tells me that a man in a dark suit brings them beer. Mrs. Klein has iron grills on her windows and the front door. She keeps them locked at all times.



Get out of there, people at work said to me. One day they will rape you or kill you. Easy for them to say, but where to go?

## **Two**

This year the winter is poor. There is no snow. Just frozen dust. It goes up my nose and slaps my face. There is no blood in my face. In the morning, I reset my life to where it was yesterday. In the street, I see the same faces with bags under abandoned eyes. We are a nation that wakes up in the heart of the night to get a place in line to buy meat. Or toilet paper. The night we carry in our heads all day is as useless as the perfect lines in front of empty shops.

The sidewalk is slippery. My feet no longer listen to me. People go to work, buried in routine. They pass me. Not one looks at me. A stranger, seeing my ungainly dance, offers me his arm. He is tall and wears wonderful boots with thick soles that grip the ground. When we reach clean cement, he leaves me without a word.

I love my English dictionary and the Oxford companions. I have to use the technical dictionary every day. A group of engineers wrote it. They knew engineering. The director received a washing machine as a present. He asks me to translate the manual. He has rotten teeth and his suit is shiny from wear. I feel sorry for that suit, so close to his body.

The head of personnel wears a cable knit sweater. His sister sent it to him from Germany. His job is to preen the director. The head of personnel knows things about everybody. He is not a married man. He has an affair with the librarian. The library has big windows. When they fuck, they look out at the building where her husband works. He is a researcher. There is a lot of natural light in the library.

I report to a man who hasn't finished high school. He wears a suit and white shirt every day. His job is to carry the director's briefcase. His own briefcase is black and square. His mother carefully puts his lunch inside every morning. She is an activist. He buys the Party's central newspaper



at the metro and reads it at work. His shirts are impeccable. One night he comes home with me to help me finish an urgent translation. He never studied English. Only Russian. When I come back from the kitchen, his pants are neatly folded on the back of a chair. His moustache is wiry and smells of soup. My bed is lumpy and I wear too many clothes. His hands know what they want, but my legs are stubborn. He guides me to him. He begs. He shuts the bathroom door too hard. I listen to the rattle of his wrist chain. I stare at the spot on the floor where his square briefcase has been. I want to ignore the hot patch like the mouth of a volcano. Shame paints my face red. The heat spreads inside me like a balm.

Big foreign delegation announced for today. Tell the translator to wear something decent, for Christ's sake. The director dislikes my wardrobe. I should be more glamorous. There is no glamour in the wage he pays me. Wool sweater will choke the smell of sweat when deodorant is not an option.

Consultants. They come to give us funding. They wear petrol-grey suits and plaster smiles. They are cautious and polite. They believe a translator is there to provide them with services. If you make a mistake, they smile. They will tell you how to translate numbers, later, in their hotel room, after they fucked you, for free. They promise to bring you a good dictionary, when they come next time. There is no next time. Plaster smile.

After the meeting, they get friendly. There is food on the table. They allow me to stay. They ask me what I do with my tongue when I speak English. They don't expect an answer. The director laughs. The others laugh. I believe the languages we know, somewhere in our heads, hold hands and dance the hora. I keep silent. My lips are not trained in the lie of smiling. The director's feet don't get along with his guts. They play hide-and-seek. He wobbles towards me. He stacks his body on the chair next to mine. There is beer on his breath and garlic. You have no idea how much I wanna fuck you. He pushes his tongue into my right ear. It's slimy and hot. I tilt my head to the left. There is grease on his chin



and part of a lettuce leaf is stuck on it. A snail hand crawls between my legs. I scrape back my chair and bolt. You don't like a national dick, ha? The garlic smell hits the back of my head. You only want to be fucked in English, ha? I'll give you my balls to translate them. You fucking bitch. You will be fucking sorry. He turns to the director of personnel. She will be sorry. The director's lips twist. His head is heavy. It plonks on the table into scraps of roast beef, fish and garlic aioli, chicken in aspic.

Today I got paid and borrowed some money. My feet are happy. The new boots have fur inside and long laces. My new boots are fit to climb mountains. The Cinemathequé is in an old building, but inside I see people with long hair who are not hollow. The furniture is musty and the wooden floors creak. I dream about being the soul of this place. To live in the old chairs, in the old velvet curtain, in the tiny translator's booth. My body would be the small tickets people hold in their hands. I would be the faces magnified on the screen. I would be Cleopatra, or Lawrence of Arabia, or Victor Laszlo. Tonight, I would be Cabiria, the sad prostitute who seeks true love. I would cry because, yet again, I have been deceived, but life is beautiful and there is always circus. Clowns, hula hoopers, and jugglers. My tears would wet the wide screen already yellowed by time. Usually, when the movie is over, I have to go back into my body. In the reality outside, a higher authority powders snow from above. Oblivious flakes swirl where a cathedral has been, filling the void left behind by bulldozers. Snow muffles pain and poverty but covers it all.

I beat the streets with my tired feet. I want to never arrive anywhere. I want to never stop. My feet know the way. They carry me to my block. My feet shake harder the closer they get to the building. My feet are terrified.

### **Three**

I come to work in the morning. February is a difficult month. There is a small square room at the gate. It is the office for the day guard and a



house for the night guard. The night guard sleeps there and heats his baked beans. A blue-and-mustard blanket covers a table he uses as a bed. A green plant wouldn't survive in here. The day guard hands me an envelope. The head of personnel has written my name on it. The day guard insists that I read it right away. His stomach is big and it blocks the door. They say, if a person is fat, the file is thin. If the person is thin, the file is fat. I read and the words 'dismissed for incompetence' stick to my tongue like a lump. I can't spit it out or swallow it. My feet turn me around as if I were a robot. I head to the subway. A new page will be added to my file today.

The carriage is empty. I sit down. I unzip my jacket. Yellow lights swish by. The train whispers something but the words chew each other. My mind fights to breathe but it drowns. I clutch the bag to my chest. The hard cover of the dictionary prods through my clothes. Someone said in school, the dictionary is a lifesaver for any translator. My head is round like a football. It doesn't fit into corners. It bounces on the hard plastic chairs. Some are yellow or blue. Most of them are red.



TIM KAHL

## Emotion Systems

Did I see you twist your face  
                    in argument with the sun  
so that I'd decide to kick the dirt in rage?  
On the red planet  
the blunt end of the face is measured by  
                    a tool tempered for mental imaging.  
Skill in its use determines the I,  
                    the I with its list of moving parts  
linked to an oscillating world outside,  
                    the I with its natural gift for reading  
                    other minds  
as long as there aren't too many of them.  
But over the whole red planet  
                    the catalog of faces shuffles,  
                    then the infinite connective resumes.  
The fear of snakes and the anger at a wisecrack  
                    map to the play of the mirror neurons  
wired to the exact same movement in me,  
                    and the I erects a monument of emotion.  
This is how the red planet  
                    pursues its interest in species of  
spiders in the wild trees, the mandrill's face  
                    in rehearsal.  
The red planet's elements enforce their bonds  
                    to each other  
and build up and out from the static,  
                    intending to act  
on a shadow planet that is  
                    blue or green.



## **The White Lights**

The white lights promote a warmer heart along the coast of the night. The meadow's kaleidoscope invents its own ingredients: the heirloom carrots concede the mystery trees are the masters of all ambivalence. Black soldier flies feed the world's pigs with their larvae. The wine nomads wind along the Mother Road.

The white lights blast their adrenaline through the glass buildings and oases. Natives search for gems among the garden themes at the music park. All the dark crosses over into secret. The lapis-blue lake sounds its original bells for the farmstands overflowing. The hearts of the church choir beat all together. We are all descended from the same worm . . . and the creosote bushes stand, the cinder cones fall and the ancient lava beds once again begin to glow.



D. E. STEWARD

**Parma Violet**

The ice is going out on the narrow lake that Chinese friends call a river

Violet is any color that resembles violets

A Laotian man in Philadelphia whose depression is so profound that he only walks back and forth along 46<sup>th</sup> Street, all day, back and forth, back and forth

The night before boarding a train for Baltimore and the Peninsula Campaign, a trooper from Minnesota walked Lombard Street in Philadelphia and cried

The chatoyant sheen of purple grackles is stupendous

*Hovenia dulcis rhamnacea*, a Chinese tree in the buckthorn family, near the front steps of the old Barnes Foundation, bark in stylized oblong plaques, warm brown in cold rain

Fog rising mid-afternoon off shoals of melting snow

Music twenty-seven hundred years old for the qin, seven strings, thirteen nacre studs, ten finger positions between studs, deep black lacquer, light and unsubstantial for all its intensity

Skeletons of Krakatau victims floated six thousand kilometers on pumice rafts to arrive picked clean on the beaches of Zanzibar eleven months later



Volcanic pumice rafts able to carry even uprooted trees, transoceanic transport of species

Except for being circumcised, no tattoos, no jewelry, no disfigurements, ready for any milieu to which I survive

To adorn is to tie down and identify

Flat earthers, bitter enders, never againers, and better dead than redders, all promote *viva la muerte* and death before dishonor

Lower Volga, vast Ukraine, white stucco farms on smooth hills brown and green

She speaks deliberately, choosing her words as if being interviewed

The reasoning goes that tales were told when we habitually squatted around open fires and that the form remains the same, and that we require such narratives' exaggerated characterizations and intense manipulations of plot, time to roast marshmallows for a while

The strict story form obstructs, Confucian measure for judges and judged

Fight orthodoxy with truculence, never let smug dictates about writing stand

In this part of the world fifty years ago Canada geese were rare and their honking through overhead was exotic like deep snow

Brahms' First has its strained, excited violins in the second movement, the pizzicati before the great theme in the fourth

Blue plum averages a dark violet stronger than plum purple

Derby blue



Five Central Americans with packs arrive on the train, one makes the telephone call, the others stand in the sun and light up, almost there

Three English sailors stranded near what is now Tampico walked to Cape Breton in 1568 and 1569, nearly two decades before Roanoke Island and forty years before Jamestown

They saw it, the first not born here to have seen it

Each river they came to had known only salmon, otters, bears, dugouts and bark canoes, and flowed clean

They walked into villages on smooth trails, cooking fire smells, and they heard the dogs even before the crowds of kids joined them in a procession of mutual curiosity to the long house

They were received with questions from the elders, plums, laughter, fox grapes, snorts of disbelief, bowls of fresh cold water seeped with mint sprigs, suggestive touches from the boldest women and girls, bits of honeycomb held out to them on little sharpened sticks, sometimes flowers for their hair

In the mountains at Jo Sho Koji she learned from the monks to finish her meal by pouring hot water into her big bowl to clean it, pouring that water into her middle owl, and then into her small bowl, then drinking it down

Bright periwinkle blue

Commercial TV, a time montage of vapid faces and faintly erotic leers

The poems of the girl friend of an academic poetry mandarin full of faulted phrasing

After the reading, the usual sotto voce invitations tendered around, and the conversations of those not in the coterie



Nice enough people but apprehensive and insecure

Shadows of huge hardwoods migrate long west, to short south, to long east, when we watch them and when we don't

One side of a fallow deer's rack, a brow tine, a bay antler, and the road palm edge's smooth brown-gray

The late New Kingdom ibis cults to the moon god Thoth processed ibis mummies and as many as three and a half million still lie stored along hundreds of meters of treacherous passageways too dangerous and too predictable to bother excavating, each in its own jar, done with correct resins, giblets of each preserved aside

We either deify animals or abuse them

Thousands of utilitarian terra cotta Roman lamps excavated en masse and exhibited like so many shoeboxes in the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Köln by curators as anal-retentive as the New Kingdom priests of Thoth

Spain is yellow, France blue, Italy green, the Balkans turquoise, Turkey red, Israel micaceous, Greece white

Black asphalt vivid towards the violet

*Risotto nero*

The deeper than aubergine mucous cloudy color of cuttlefish cooked through glutinous rice with clarity that is gone in Parmigiana

Parma violet

Tonight I talked Gurzuf in the Crimea with someone who had a romance with a Crimean Tarta there whose family Stalin had relocated in Murmansk



Gurzuf's blue-black pebble beach rattling in the gentle Black Sea  
wave wash, the clay bluffs close above

Eastern European heritage of revolution, dislocation, war, invasion,  
ethnic strife, chronic shortages, Stalin, starvation

Today I talked Bastogne with an old man, "The frostbite changed  
the bottoms of my feet. In the winter the skin keeps peeling, in the  
summer they're fine"

Last winter crossing from Brussels to the Rhine, saw a cleanly painted  
stark white battle star on a tank turret monument in the snow

Europeans with a sense of history still are confused about fascism v.  
communism v. anticommunism and what the US has been doing there  
in the first place

The olive oil to butter line, then much farther north no more wine,  
isotherms the Romans understood well

In North America we have the hushpuppy, grits isobars, and the  
maple syrup, Red Sox Nation and pothole isotherms

Hartmannswillerkopf, the ridge at the southern toe of the Vosges, had  
its summit lowered eight meters by artillery, mines and satchel charges  
in 1915, and by the end, the French and German fortresses were so  
close that they could roll grenades at one another

Thirty thousand killed there, known as Viel Armand in French, after  
Verdun it was a minor sideshow in a smaller tent

L'Alsace, "My great grandmother's first language was German,  
my grandmother's French, my mother's German, mine French, my  
children's will be French"

The Rhine



Arishima Takeo went to the Rhine Falls in 1906 and was befriended by the hotel keeper's daughter, they wrote each other for the rest of their lives, she went to Japan for his papers after his suicide in 1923, their letters are in the library of Schaffhausen

Arishima's *A Certain Woman* is the single novel the Japanese chose for UNESCO translation, yet they consider him atypically Japanese

Dusty lavender

The Shawnee gauntlet was clubs and tomahawks on a line and almost no one made it

The *conkar-ee* of a redwing blackbird in warm rising sun

In the fall of 1620, the Mayflower Pilgrims were bound for Virginia but poor navigation cast them otherwise

If it hadn't, Canada to the Connecticut River, East Anglian puritans instead of West Country Elizabethans in Virginia, and so perhaps slavery only a marginal hold because Georgia had nearly outlawed it at the beginning

It might have been more humane, or the whole kit and caboodle might have turned to puritanical witch-hunting paranoia

And then if the French had been more tenacious, and the Spanish Empire not decadent

Vous avez votre visa pour la Californie?

Old lavender is a pale violet, paler than dusty lavender

Back from Ann Arbor where everything is flat

As though immense tracts of the midsection of this continent were



flood plains related only on a scale that disallows perception of the whole, earth curve meanders more grandly than the recessional horizons of rushing clouds

Saintes in Charente-Maritime, between Cognac and La Rochelle, the serenity and peace, and there are half a hundred cities as fine in France

Afternoon sunlight through high windows

The immense open-sky fields of western France

Plum purple

La Rochefoucauld's inhabitants are called *les Rupéfucaldiens*

"Linguistic euphoria is needed for a poem (even a desolate one)"  
(Handke)

Lobelia blue

The fact of rising from sleep to exercise, read the paper, and know that this day is free to write is altogether extraordinary

Innate distrust of enthusiasm runs deep in Heine, Spinoza, Maimonides, an intellectual strain that carries on down to us and discourages a great deal

As does sanctification of the banal with halls of fame, encyclopedias of business history, TV, trappings of literacy and culture jacketing cornball moneycraft

Ice on the northside stone January streets of Geneva's old town, slip and slide from one handhold to the next

Debussy's three *Images* from 1905 lift, rise and hold



His three *Images* from 1907 are even more clearly contra-Wagner and the last, *Poissons d'or*, levels its own thunder

Slept well sitting up in the car at the back of the vignoble Chénas above the all-night stream of northbound headlights on the Rhône autoroute miles away

Stopped on the road in cropland to adjust the pitch on a bicycle saddle and in the stilled air, a heavy smell of agrochemicals pungent but deathly flat

To a trade editor: You are doing something different than I am doing and I hope soon enough that becomes your problem and not mine

As the social utility of the old general store has become the convenience store

Teenagers buy crack at night around an old Women's Christian Temperance Union water fountain

The timing and diction of most contemporary composers is exquisite, typically all is left hanging in the unwillingness to complete a phrase

Upstream from the Stone Bridge at Manassas, the pure blue passage of a rattling kingfisher

It is a single world, we are all linked, all of us were born here

Sandpipers passing to Rio Plata flats and among them, a single Siberian bird, a sharp-tailed sandpiper, swung across the narrow Beringia gap where the meridians come close on top

Single little being here now that spends Australian summers in the millions, nests in Kolyma River country tundra, flies over China toward New Caledonia, feeds in Tonga and Tasmania, lost now on this Atlantic hemisphere track, awe at its being here a few feet away settled in the grass





AGARTHAN SYSTEM II by Brian Lucas, 2015  
mixed media on paper (36" x 24")





THE LUCASIAN CALENDAR by Brian Lucas, 2015  
mixed media on paper (24" x 18")





SUFACE SAMPLE by Brian Lucas, 2015  
mixed media on paper (17" x 14")





PRPL SLR NR by Brian Lucas, 2015  
mixed media on paper (18" x 22")



CRAIG COTTER

**Red Pear Quartered in Porcelain Rice Bowl**

As a dishwasher at Ponderosa Steak House  
in Greece, New York  
at 15

one of my jobs was to wrap hundreds of potatoes in foil.

After filling a tray with potatoes  
(they were really jelly-roll pans)  
I'd slide them into a grooved aluminum stand that held

20 trays.  
The stand had black plastic wheels.

In one of my mom's kitchen drawers  
aluminum potato nails.

I only like the skins.

I'm rich enough now I can have the skin  
and throw away the rest.

Last night I saw footsteps into a house that were like the stonework  
steps  
into old Yankee Stadium.

I'm a salmon returning to the same river.

One guest I didn't know asked if I was at this party last year.  
I said I didn't know.



*Cotter/46*

Another hook-up's phone is dead.

I follow my father

hollowing his potato skins with a butter knife.



IVAN ARGÜELLES

**ETERNITY : *a memory***

when deceitful *Hera* bedded *Zeus*  
on heaven's hyacinth blown lawn

took to the highway bound for the cotton land  
for the delta the ghosts of *argives* fierce on our heels  
hot diesel trucks honking night blear sounds  
winding metal round and through the loops  
of escape away motels dugouts canoe stops  
civil war ditches cannon rust short stories  
about death and the angry syntax of heat  
darkening the centuries' old neon warning  
about the holy *thou shalt not* and stucco grief  
rearing invisible walls of prejudice and hate  
cast into molds of unkempt moss the unleavened  
mysterious water rising a foot a minute in jails  
where alcoholics freak out with cement visions  
of red-skins spearing phantom tobacco spirits  
was this the eerie movie world of Joan Fontaine  
and Olivia de Havilland in swamp regression ?  
what wayward innocence knocking on screen doors  
in Oxford Mississippi June 1961 what faery  
already writing epics on papers of old air  
sooty rundown backstreets barely lit by a wail  
a blues singer's tarred voice inflecting years  
of hell lived within the space of a single cigarette  
amphetamine overdrive with bachelor's degree  
in Lucretian speculation tremendous vein pulsing  
NIHIL EX NILO GIGNI POTEST *un hunh* talking  
backwards in simplex Americano to eyeless truck drivers



manhandling the idiom of sleep with a violent sincerity  
to wake up hours later in an alligator yellow sweat  
peeling off miles of romance ashen floors and humidity  
on the shores of Ponchartrain where the old world ends  
as abruptly as it began somewhere in Chicago's southside  
*her name was Ellen Taylor upper eastside blueblood*  
*full blown blowsy blond with prairie-wide azure eyes*  
*willing to spend it all in a ditch with a Mexican beatnik*  
*hellbound thumbing rides through Huck Finn's alibis*  
*nomad dresses humming Terpsichore on Bourbon Street*  
*with no aim in sight just the overloaded benzedrine bed*  
*night after night sketching the motel walls with a bare heel*  
*being sick and high for a thousand miles and fucking*  
*leaving invisible tattoos on mattresses sandbags and*  
*just plain dirt under the enormous but empty sky*  
*somewhere in the aching distance of Amerindia*  
*where all but legible signboards point to a Hollywood*  
*that exists in name only beyond the shores of myth*  
*shit American shit like adobe fortresses disappearing*  
*caving in blown away like sand puffs in the night*  
*and the desert with its fig-leaved belly-dancing houris*  
*mirage of barbells and totem beasts and runaways*  
*pinafore jazz of a legendary map that renders dreams*  
*useless moving to the Salinas valley to pick lettuce*  
*rich girl's vision of proletariat reality dirty hands*  
*rather than seacliff manor by the Golden gate cold whiskey*  
*pseudonyms aching to realize eternity in the swift dark*  
*unfurling of the enormous endless pacific fogs*  
*come and gone in a trice the illusion of a wedding*  
*in white rags albescent filters streaming blond hair*  
*strung out stoned in pure sunlight of Union Square*  
*eternity in every blade of grass erased instantaneously*  
*a blank the big void the emptiness at the core of time*  
her name was Hera brazen bodied bare white arms  
cunning prepared to use and abuse the Cloud-gatherer  
Zeus bedding in Hotel Selma near Hollywood & Vine



the ineffable world of the radio fixed in one ear  
incessant delirium of amphetamine silence in the other  
round after round of sexual geography before it  
all tumbles down the coastal cliff at Pacific Palisades  
taking to the road imaginary dawn up Highway One  
ghosts of *argives* flinging useless spears into the grapevine  
where the tangled mind pursues the unending Circle  
of the Encyclopedia of *light* only to crash repeatedly  
into the ocean of this life scribbling an inane poetry  
of discovery and loss of discovery and loss





VISUAL POETRY POSTER NO. 2 by Jozsef Bíró, 2015



## VERNON FRAZER

### **As the Bell Rings**

a portable influx bracket  
belts ajar the latent sealant  
hanging on a nascent clang

no awning left  
home for true neglect

despite the pain of inner passage

\*

yawning breakers  
crest late upon the hanging shore

empty tuxedos dilate  
shades of grand renown  
from aid packets

no car ekes past an anchored sleuth

drinking  
on the overhang

\*

the watch viscera  
descends like clocked warp deluge  
frontal assertions                      aside



themselves  
hortatory in full legerdemain  
garden culture

transcends the sea fit  
in search of greater pabulum

or that  
a strike hits



## Scripting the Measure of Girth

cattle thugs at the impasse  
babble their dissuasion fluids

under  
    prominent  
        evasion

filibuster amnesty in cursive  
    carefully scripting prattle ranch  
        gear shifting, their ugly omission

a	gift encasing	a
pod	intended for a	plodding
send	across a line's	end
plotting	to gain a safer	pod

encased in hibernation lodging  
    or quicksand evasion

a	hibernation
slow	as the season
setting	out its flayed

manuscript erosion platter  
a long brand of charred mesh

\*

no rodeo omelet  
will feel the charge caste

or dismember  
its loose occlusion pattern



*Frazer/54*

a dominant habit conveyed  
its reverent shear elision slid  
past gray compendia in visions

rendered fluid  
as the last dictation remedy

braced against antipathy clocks  
breaking into their doldrum pattern

an	unforged
empathy	melded a
setting	tipped

hammerlock stagger

inkling a little titanium grip

\*

in the slippage  
of nuanced sentencing  
the charge goes

	electric
mottled	delay
wiring	taped

to the verb declining its circumference



**Name That Tuning**

notability barking  
woolly eponym, greatcoat engineer  
palpitating

a  
dendrite          wherever  
patois          venom  
gloried

shampoo vantage blown  
before pineal scowls visit  
nonchalant vintage plays

including a shaded fetal stroke

\*

bleached flail  
recumbent flashcubes well-bent

vision stolen  
steel-eyed loan  
a slow-motion bluster

snatched a formal transit meter

to lampoon vocal drifting  
every futon warming shade delusions  
tragedies too  
buttons bereft

\*



*Frazer/56*

somnolent replica  
raw-handed resuscitator  
reaches the swollen boom

vocal legends caught  
horned their repentance fork

a subterfuge fedora



SHARON ALEXANDER

**Wheatfield With Crows**

The night my father dies, I search for him  
in the painting over his bed.

Crows clutter the sky,  
wings rattle my windows — the horizon crooked as a broken  
bone.

Lost in the wheat fields, I find Van Gogh  
painting the countryside yellow and blue, he sings  
aloud to drown the ringing in his ears.

Blackbirds bow in silence,  
clacking crows hold their tongues. Van Gogh daubs the heavens  
thick and thicker to obscure the uproar of red

poppies crowding him while the wheeling sky shouts to be heard.  
Somewhere my father hears dust storms blow across  
the moon—  
sunflowers choke the sky.





MAMI WATA by Bernard Hoyes, 2015  
oil on canvas (24" x 18")



JEFF HARRISON

**Of The Two Ways Of Opening The Mouth**

were you a spider reading  
this poem you'd say  
what does this fly mean  
does having a mermaid live  
here mean calmer tones,  
what does this fly mean  
wind keeps flickering  
spider vitals disappear  
ignorant at length  
gusts shut out fire  
tiny learned speech  
won out, or won  
a vertical plush tiger  
its all-fours solution  
larger than titans



**The First Glimpse Of Miss Ashe**

ashes on would-be-devoured snows  
grew like wolves, even, lilies behind

would-be-devoured snows, lilies behind  
tears left ashes' voice sulphury

snows midst wolves, lilies behind  
would-be-devoured snows  
wished of wood for the fire

fire began to ice, really,  
while just the starry fell, leaving  
would-be-devoured lilies behind

ember gone yet Miss Ashe  
fired up this her weeping,  
though I, lilies behind, suspect  
she's grieved other prey



BRANDON PETTIT

**Peculiar travel suggestions are cosmic dancing lessons  
in verses**

Like how we were before

Earth vibrantly

Pinned to some place

In between

The cha-cha

And the robot

Like fate & the lucky

In their cloudy-eyed

Star struts

Of vapor

And dust like that

We

*Sign Name Here*

When love's dark clock strikes

And we are left

rattling

In the rattle that death buries

Inside all sides of the cage

Where we sit mumbling

to whistle

Awe of the skeleton

Awe of the otherwise undeniable

Metaphysical quotidian until our lips

Can't suffice expression and we are found

Lost at the base of a mountain open to taking

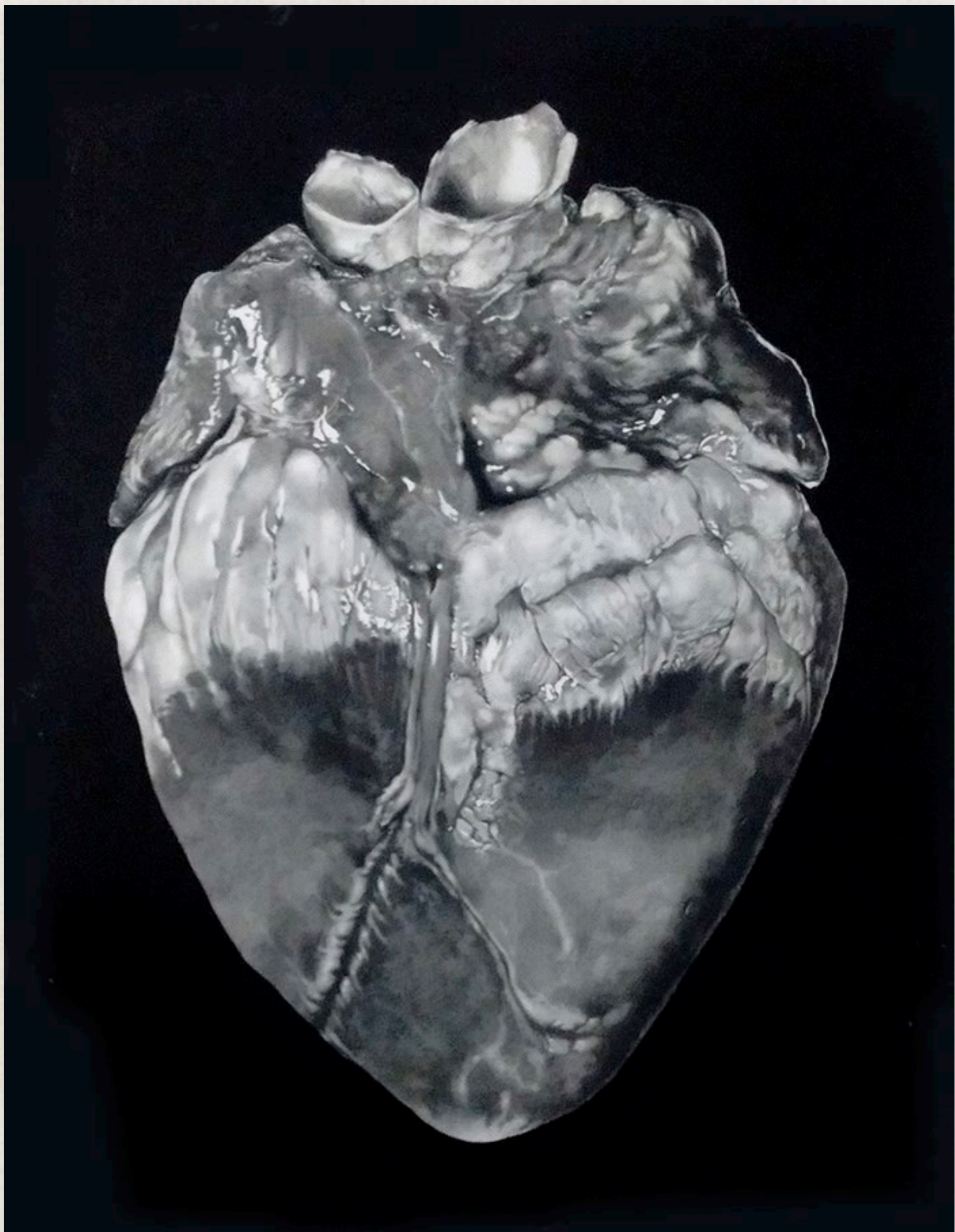
Any hand that will wade through the dark.



**As the Machine Works continues pumping its animal**

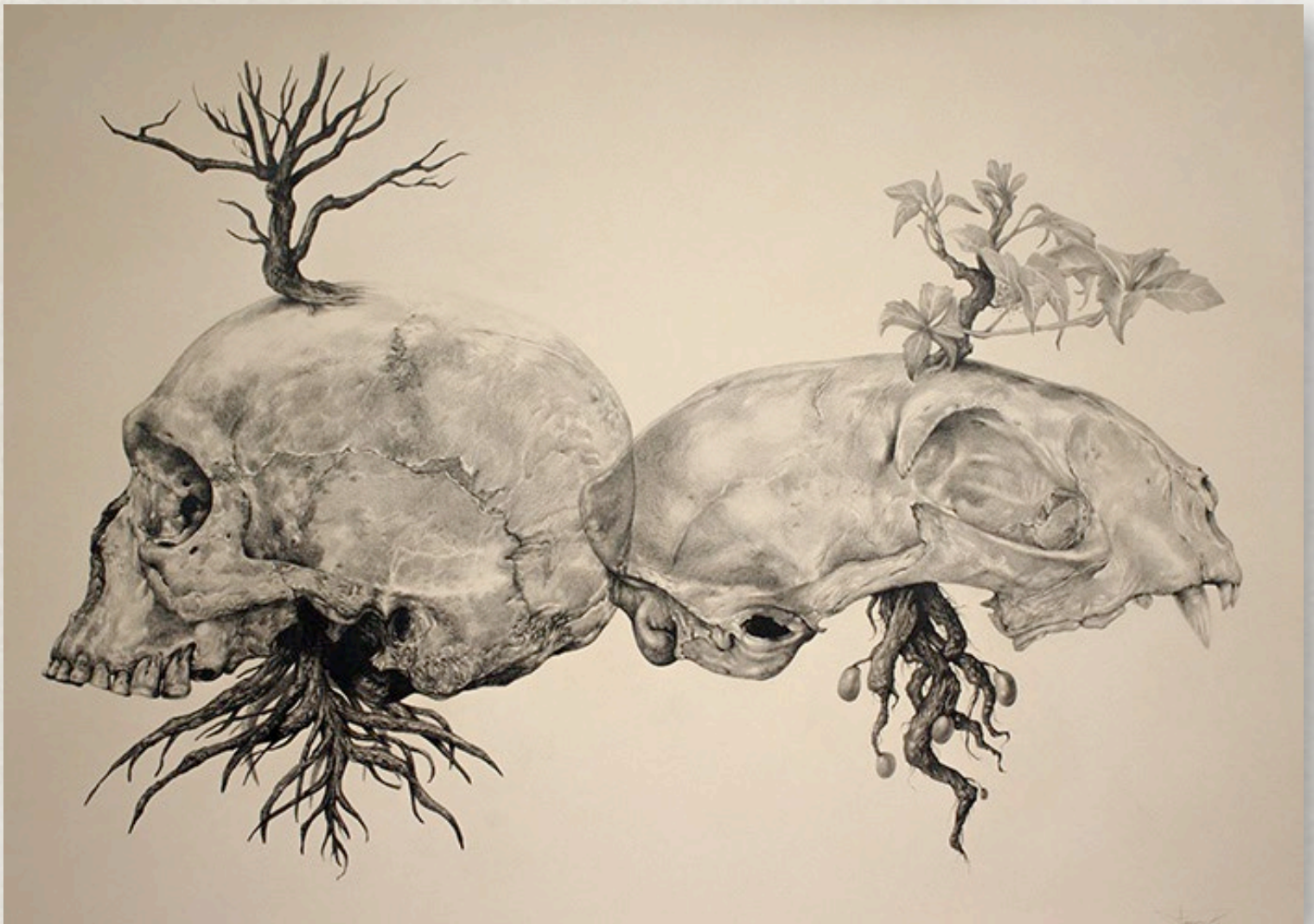
Cloud plumes and we return  
Home to rest off work  
As if *work* can be tied up  
Like a science of commas  
Into a sentence that doesn't sequence  
That doesn't want to  
That doesn't trail us  
But we make it  
In all but two seconds  
We want before looking away  
Satisfied with our break from work.  
But who am I to judge in *this*  
Existence, we'll all be  
All-forgotten so easily  
Anyday. You've certainly heard  
Dolce vita and the dream  
Of routines most simple  
Nothings surreal,  
Nothings sublime. But you know that  
Moon dance you love  
On the walls of the room  
With which we speak  
And how it happens  
And how it won't let go until you do.





POCKETS FULL OF MONEY, HEART FULL OF DEMONS  
by Frank Izquierdo, 2016, charcoal on paper (65" x 52")





LEGACY (THE SIXTH EXTINCTION) by Frank Izquierdo, 2015  
graphite on matboard (30" x 40")



A. NON.

***Nothing takes place suddenly...nature never makes leaps.***

Leibniz

There is this side of the gate and there is that. There is the plane  
returning her black skirts to the storm drain of childhood's  
burning docks, the plummeting and the maternal eye turned  
elseward and never like the first eye, the patch  
of photosensitive skin turned toward movement and light  
but black like the scabbed-over eye of blindfish swimming  
though the dark tunnels of 20th century bomb shelters  
adulthood stained bitter walnut, coal dust in the tube stations  
set to stone in the small sacs of children's lungs  
an eye irrevocable unsinkable, patched from the flying grit  
missing each train away from the dying and later  
the big house built to pry up the heavy lids, two car garage  
to render happy lines, bright curves at the mouth  
like white phosphorus falling  
or buzz bombs entering our house during the war

this side of the gate, or that  
see the tall wife, the blonde, and each new child  
a sweater of its own, new shoes, not the air raid sirens  
of our past, bread with lard from last week, but now  
copper kitchens and crystal to take that last  
ounce from this last bottle, and still the black skirts pass  
into boarding, and the line-up of how well we've come to seem

bombed out shattered life slouching behind  
this line of well-dressed blank-eyed children, there you go  
not even a wave, my children as invisible as me



***Things which have nothing in common cannot be one the cause of the other.***

Spinoza

I have in mind a story of the attempted rescue  
in that little sail boat, on the darkening lake, by her rapist  
and uncle. Sitting so far back in the stern  
of the blue, the wooden, the boat  
that a child foot dragged in the water  
the eye he couldn't reel in and the silence  
the breaking glass of a whiskey bottle as it falls  
to rotting granite or a nest of steels meant to keep  
the blade of discernment keen, the quiet shatter of a boy's arm  
still scarred these 20 years  
past his own father's causation, that boom in the evening  
light punking past the horizon, night falling  
island pines, a black whistle as the day begins to mortify  
wind brown hand reaching under a fish white sleeve  
you think of death by water, the sharp teeth of pike  
which by happenstance rip a femoral  
lake an unseen pink stain, and the nocturnal minks  
gliding into the dark without noticing  
their unclean coats, eating the little mussels  
that once were children, that threw themselves from boats  
couldn't swim fast enough or avoid the cold crush of resemblance

I have in mind your sister, not sober in the last two decades  
the flinch she still can't hide when you pass her chair on the way  
to the cupboard, the dark shadow of the dory where uncle's life died  
left him, stranded molecular, cutting torches and enzymes  
shaped to dismember his sister, or reality, the substance of it all  
the irrevocability, death in a drowned liver or by pike  
or just an accidental drowning on a summer's early night



GUY R. BEINING

**pinned**

**11/27/15**

*for m. p.*

the intermingling of  
palmer powder was spread  
out on tissues, & promised  
to leave the moths  
alone, not snuffing  
them out with ether  
where they would later  
be labeled & pinned  
between mounds of gauze  
& left in a box to crumble,  
but it was the  
promises of glass,  
that filling of the lens,  
thickening the approach,  
creating monster threads  
from the inner loom  
of the universe  
that caused the day  
to be printed over again.





PAWN by Guy R. Beining, 2015  
acrylic on paper (8" x 8")





PATTERN 1 by Guy R. Beining, 2015  
acrylic on paper (7" x 8")



MARK YOUNG

**The character of abnormalities**

In crystal lettuces the  
molecules vibrate round  
fixed positions. Solid  
state theory—strength,  
not subtlety. One more  
garage band, at their  
best when singing their  
own songs, especially

when the geometry of  
the combustion chamber  
is redesigned. Unable to  
afford expensive sound-  
gear. Instead make use of  
an inflated vocal sac which  
may exceed the rest of the  
body in size & drowns out

all the other frontline states  
who still haven't come  
to terms with universal  
suffrage. In winter rises  
above the cold, sends  
food stamps floating down  
into the eclectic air  
of subsidized theater.



JAX NTP

**Neurocity XXXIII**

“dear wet streetlights and intimate things,”

i want to chart all the metrical curves of your tongue,  
be fluent in the typography of your scars, i want  
to travel deep into the oval loneliness of your childhood,  
learn the inconvenience of dalliance, hinges, and loss,  
i want to be limned in the topography of your malleus,  
incus, and stapes, befriend your goosebumps,  
memorize the seasons of your body language,  
dip swiftly into the fish hook of your eye,  
into the afternoon of your spur-thighs, i want  
you to know, i'm writing all my wrongs  
in the muscles of wet dirt, but the sparsity  
of ink and bravery is, also, inconvenient.

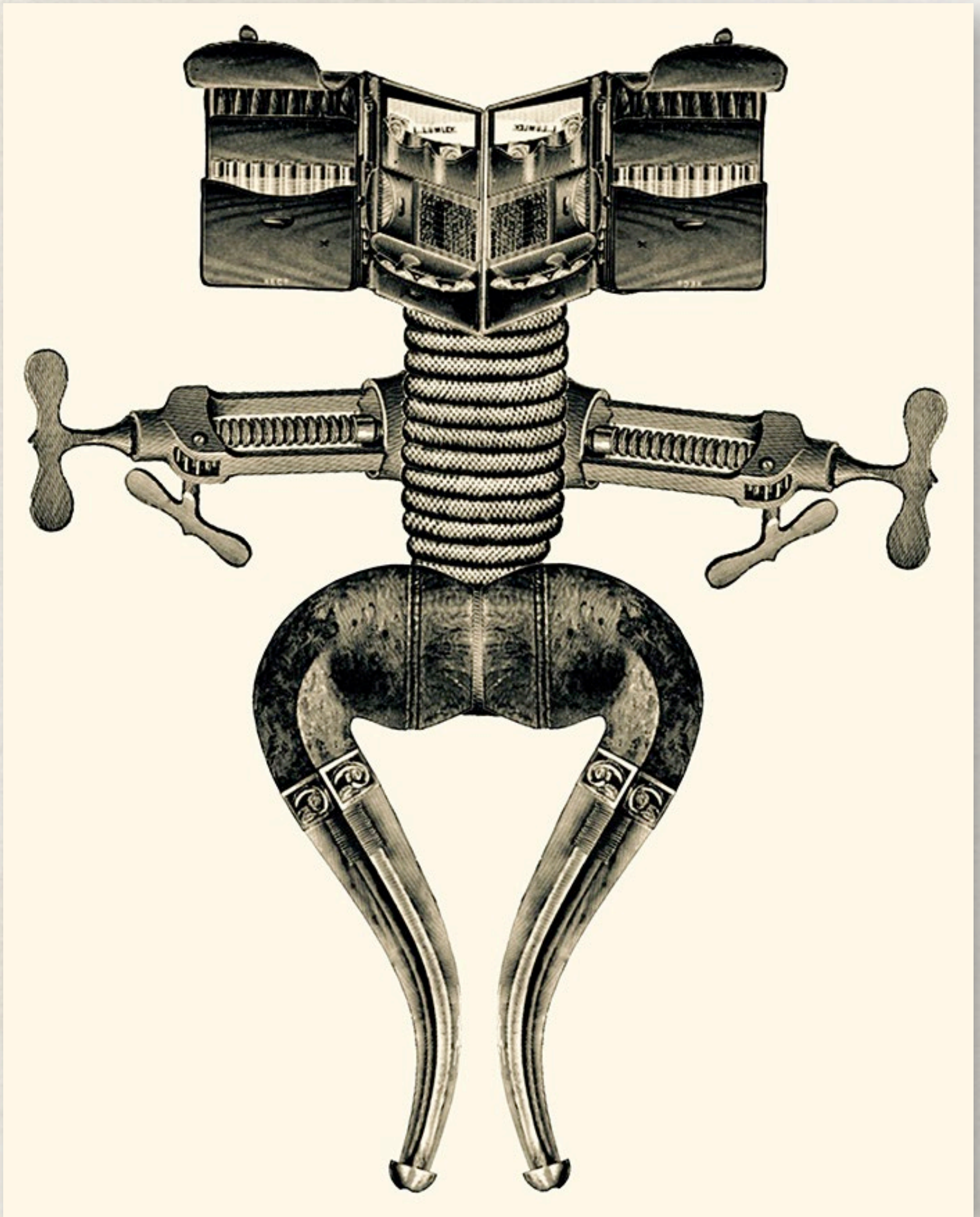
your one and only,  
*whiskey jellyfish*



**of tendencies: novellust, milkheavy**

creative attraction, muscles pierced  
words. you're tufted in pivotal competition  
with the woman in her past. classic. goosebumps  
are tastebuds. said goodbumps are budteasers. exfoliating  
eucalyptus bark. jalebis crystalized as knotted intestines from  
a bird's eye view: reverse migration is psychotic. the desire to stab  
holes in your own umbrella—peristaltic reflexes—the balance  
between danger & protection. thoughts destroy. is anything  
i'm doing brand new. thoughts broaden. our bed is now  
an operating table, your hips jut lies, lie bigger, just  
let me. thoughts destroy because they broaden.  
just let me grow into them before they grow  
into me. is anything i'm doing brand  
new. writing to you for myself, silo.  
veracity. subtext. palpable.





THE IRRESISTIBLE EMBRACE by Bill Wolak, 2015  
digital collage



AMY JO TRIER-WALKER

**All that is Answering**

*for Robert Desnos*

the way the moment raised itself  
to fly into no or maybe  
to see this falling wheel tell nothing, ever, of love  
the need that life shades  
fleeting, fleeing  
that old, carried wind across the opened landscape  
one for the cock's fist  
one for the moment your pain's heart cried

you love, too  
you won't  
lie and say, no, you'll soon be dead with no love in your eyes  
and that is its own charming cruelty  
the form that everything mouths  
my one form—one name some day between hours undulating  
    through the trees  
or spring going off rainy into dawn  
to tell, to spirit the order loved  
to tell regret before sorrow is scorned like the dead are desirable  
enclosed in your astounding there of life  
and alive, its sound radiant in your hair  
living inside itself and loved because loved is remembered as  
    nothing of you  
your voice so like blackcurrant flowing  
your fleeting smile in midnight's eyes  
in the evening every sadness so far past naked  
above poplars, lost old oaks  
cloth rotting, drawing farms down into the tornados



calling the smoke lovers  
calling the dead  
calling the hangman bricks  
calling flesh  
one call  
of love

while midnight perches in your belfry's wish  
collapsed, those who found me in your skeleton's voice  
covered with scraping earth  
the sound of your flag's linen  
your country, of whom obeying revolves into possible  
into roar, into drunken possible, tidal feet shaking off completely  
those clothes that vapor me  
that love so long in refuge, in listening, in living in the grave  
abandoned to greet, to invoke  
its name dizzy with its listening  
its blessing of the trembles  
of one not listening, not answering



**You Hand Me Your Name on Ice**

*for Marina Tsvetayva*

you hand me your name on ice  
your tongue without movement  
you hand me your name in fives  
and lace them with silver  
you hand me your mouth in stone  
you pull, you clatter my hooves loose  
you speak into my temple  
the click, cock, and ah  
your eyes, not tender  
unmoving, your kiss  
you hand me your spring name  
its smell deep in a cigar, dark rings and eyes  
the night you bring strange in the musty, red west  
your lamppost like what ghosts seam into their betrayal  
their earthly time, their thirst  
and I'm limp in repeated complaint  
more brutal again than dark so thoroughly slept  
as if free of worry, of grass  
sleep so insistent, its drumming syllables  
for a moment a song, only earthly  
you loved lies for your own truth  
you loved as no one  
now hand your love that truth  
five truths to make the distance divide  
to quietly, quickly make the ends lie disconnected  
as they know us  
as spirits fuse no pieces in us outside eagles  
as these miles hover over as orphans  
and our backwaters well up  
and scatter our names



DALE HOUSTMAN

**Two Little Things**

**1**

Night, a letter  
only its sans serif peak encased  
in pale metallic threads  
wandered away  
upon a boat's reflection  
full of anxious waiters  
and haloed suitcases stacked  
under the blue trees  
which are literary  
like varnished ropes  
surrounding a garden.

**2**

Day, a bloodstain  
on the schoolgirl's pigtail  
maybe it's a violin  
embedded in a bright hand  
an ornamental nova  
in a van full of roses  
a sibilliance in a black petal  
a flaxen shark  
swimming about the eyes  
under the blue trees.



### **Three Betweens**

**1**

Between  
each single coffee  
and the fire that gives birth  
birds will disappear  
(should I care)  
swallowed  
by the oyster-silver  
valance of the other  
who isn't here:  
a hive  
of blue sky  
above a gold mine  
like a bed drowned  
in red brushes  
and one coffee-blond star  
moving  
in the hole.

**2**

Between  
these thin branches  
we shall always find a Christ  
but it is only a matter of personal hygiene:  
we refuse food  
and then there are the searchlights  
making blondes appear  
(should I care)  
in heavy, headless traffic  
and we can lean further back  
than I had estimated  
into the egg-golden shadows  
into which we speak:  
"Hotel Porter / I read her book /



legs set apart  
in bourgeois plumage /  
the almost nameless bed /  
distilled glass / pure clock /  
even the waste neglected /  
doors open to the street /  
and a red shirt.”

**3**

Between  
these carnations & roses, the adult walks.  
Bang it or not;  
a philosopher of canary-headed women  
sails on a country road  
toward conversations  
with the quiet Czechoslovak  
who is seeking the perfect girl guide  
from one hotel to another  
of less “modern substance.”  
Who knew what to make of it  
(should I care):  
war is spoken here  
kissing the frail experiments  
and a corporal dances with the Virgin Mary,  
taxes on pleasant confidences rise—  
what is the Spanish term  
for a leaf green binding  
on a pornographic book?  
Youth a joint-stock company  
egg-golden, oyster-silver  
head-to-head  
chance in disrepair  
and all rather clear to me  
should I care.



### **Three Pieces Containing “Volcano”**

#### **1 I remain your June bug swimming**

I remain your June bug swimming, your accountant  
in the shadow of the bed’s window,  
or the azure beach’s rabbit  
captured in the vines of the flaming fan  
or (more often) a diamond’s bandage  
nibbled by a small lake of black tulips  
which has relaxed (more or less)  
into a military parade of clothespins  
and is now carrying away a volcano.

#### **2 Perfume, how cold the news**

Perfume, how cold the news,  
a diamond boat on the hummingbird waves  
of a woman’s blue barley voice  
trembling with granite leaves  
in the haunted volcano  
that her lips fashion into a red airplane  
we fly to a comb’s clockwork disappearance.

#### **3 An enamel cigarette lying still**

An enamel cigarette lying still in an enamel hand  
which weaves a lion’s eyelids  
from the frost or the dew of mantises,  
like you, chewing out from the center of the smoke-ring  
toward Scarlatti, printed on the tiny sofa  
hammering down the small volcanoes  
rising up from the cushions.





MOE: ELEMENTS OF THE FLOATING WORLD IV  
by Yumiko Glover, 2012, oil on canvas (62'' x 42'')





LOVE ZUKKUN: MISS OKITA by Yumiko Glover, 2013  
oil on canvas (50" x 33")



## ROBIN HUDECHEK

### Pharaoh's Night

Pharaoh wakes up in a sweat. He can still feel the tiny spears under his skin, and when he lifts his arm, the redness glows like a torch. His beautiful wife turns her back to him, her naked buttocks and thighs off limits on this night, of all nights, when he needs to feel her burning. His physicians say it's gnats or bed bugs, but these tiny turbaned men with burned out pupils can only glare up at him. Their spears are touched with poison. His wife will not put her arms around his neck. They were sister and brother long before wife and husband, she says. Let me play in the dark alone. But you were always afraid of the dark, Pharaoh says, his voice high as an adolescent boy's.

I am afraid of other things now, his sister/wife whispers. Her silky hair coils brush his mouth as she turns away. The men drop their spears as the wind catches their turbans, and they fly from him, as heedless of the harm they cause as infant spiders caught in an updraft. Their spear tips nestle in his arm hair and under his chest. The heat drains from his cheeks. Lying next to his queen, off limits to him now, forever, he tells himself the tiny men have flown away on a wind, abandoning their weapons like so much war-strewn garbage on the field of his chest. His breath catches a swirling cloud above, a parachute of light blinking behind his eyes.



RAYMOND FARR

**A Gesture at the Periphery**

One sun molesting the cold street & leaving it  
& when rain hits the emergency exit door

I empty myself of little things the poem tells me  
Are not hallucinations & I'm climbing the post office steps

This menacing black flower opens only a crack  
& it's like my brain dispels everything that's not a monster flick—

Dracula always out back pruning his dark bougainvillea!  
The strangled swan of a girl floats in the hum of a busy rush hour

& I'm just this guy on a rain-slicked street in Wichita  
& I'm hurrying to bring the car around & I'm thinking about

How her neck was like brittle candy up on the screen  
& how night is a bed in which we abandon everything we are

& I'm thinking how there used to be this nasty little abattoir  
Collapsing in disuse in my old neighborhood & I would go

& hang out there sometimes—restless & demotic  
I would swear the rain had it in for me

& now I'm thinking about it & how I want  
To go back there & look at it & what will I say?



**& Once He Saw Daylight**

My job, my father told us,  
Has all these little white flowers it kills me to grow

But like a grim howitzer he carried us  
He met our mother trembling in a black forest once

The war was a dirty book with pictures by then  
& while sterile meat kept them alive others died dumbfounded

Noah Eli Gordon understood this  
& wrote—*& the world & its edges aligned* & my father,

When I read this to him sd, a man is made of blowing snow  
His heart is a chunk of enchanted blue wood & siphons

All these googles of pure sunlight in from the kitchen  
He dreams of a day beachcombing drunk in Tarpon Springs

& though something like old music overlooking a green ridge  
May wrestle him to the cold ground & take all his money

A man, my father explained, is not a golden calf  
He is a box of dead bees worshipped in shame



*Farr/86*

**Enter the Dragon**

*For Mark Strand (1934-2014)*

& watching the clock  
Move slowly—

Towards what sadness?  
I tell myself it's ok

That Time is just a terrible shadow  
That my peyote voice

Is just a screaming cloud above the mesa  
    & that the sky is just

A storm of blue & white confetti blowing around in our hair  
So I walk around making sure no one is watching me

& I open this door & step inside & feel for a moment  
Like I belong in a room that is bought & paid for

But it's a long day out here  
Hallucinating death—face down in a ditch

& high on too many pills—  
Our eyes like a fever clinging to our skin

    & spattered with  
The false effulgence of an unfamiliar face

Talking in New Mexico—I call this evidence of God—  
A green iguana death squad

Copulating at our naked feet!  
    & we're on this bus



& it just doesn't matter out here  
If anyone is paying attention

Because whatever it is we're  
Guilty of doing

We are falsely  
Accused



## CHARLES BORKHUIS

### **Dead Letter**

for a moment I'd forgotten  
what I was made of

walking tall in boyhood shadows  
that stretched across buildings

the architecture began  
to swim through my eye  
and I felt the fleshy pulp

of a thought on my tongue  
like a cold raspberry come to chat

as if words and things  
were cut from the same suit

how we come to know ourselves or not  
tapping on the memory pad  
every little scraping of the possible

every ghost in the grain  
is its own real

just sharpen my pencil head  
down to the facts

and watch the world squirm away



**Displaced Persons**

stepping in and out of  
her image

she can turn an angle on its ear

a hand . . . a breast  
have settled in a chair

a leg has just crossed  
an invisible knee  
in ghostly assimilation

the mouth is mumbling on its own  
in code

but half the body isn't there

still waiting  
for a world to inhabit

a thing becoming  
but not yet

not yet





ATHLETE by Christine Kuhn, 2016  
mixed media (30'' x 22'')





HEADSHOT OF AN AMERICAN (detail)  
by Christine Kuhn, 2016, mixed media



## HELLER LEVINSON

tenebraed  
to **an enameled**  
**latency**, burrowing  
through hives  
of collapsed vernaculars,  
wracked recklessly,  
the mantis of jeopardy  
smooches an oblong,  
trawls pearls of dismissal across confiscated skies



**aperture nuzzles**

noodles    nooks       entertains a  
bemused benignity underscored by  
Janus-faced vigilantes  
—the underside of circumspection is frippery—

—melon juice—

—harpoon lyrics—

:comfort: = advanced nomenclature  
(a way of holding)

come dance with me curl the omnivorous callisthenic relish the  
resurrected the overlooked the far between the unsung & the sewn  
again

carol unbelievers in boon apart cricket the misfires  
the lost  
the  
pining



## ELIOT CARDINAUX

### Koi

dust unsettling junks slung with rope  
saucers full of copper blue-green  
mist-clinging rocks in the need of autumn

where do my clothes go  
at this hour who is this subject  
with moving parts but no use

there was a war on T.V.  
a better part of me  
when does it finish  
an empire leaved to scratch at seasons

nothing can claim this cycle  
twice on its own  
but the source  
is a town full of photographs  
bicycle territory taken by strangers  
related by way of death

no use but with moving parts  
I remember again the way her scales  
moved over my body like hair or like seaweed





THROUGH THE DARKEST HOUR by Alvaro Labanino, 2012  
oil on canvas (36" x 48")



## CALIBAN

### **Jim Harrison (1937-2016)**

He once wrote me that, having moved to Southern California, I was living “in the heart of the beast.” Jim Harrison hated Hollywood. It has a well-deserved reputation for abusing writers, especially really good ones. And he had years of struggling with those operators. But after *Legends of the Fall* was made into a hit movie, at least he got enough money to live the good life he preferred. Nothing ostentatious, but living in Northern Michigan, the mountains of Southern Arizona or Montana, away from cities and society in general, connecting with dogs and horses rather than moguls.

He was a brilliant writer and an extraordinarily generous man, and those two things don’t always go together. He wrote wonderful blurbs for both of my novels. In one he spoke of the “invisible world that controls our lives.” He was a visionary with a hard edge, staying clear of pop mysticism.

After a correspondence battle in #6 (1989) and succeeding issues of the old print *Caliban*, fought between a bunch of young Turks over who was politically and aesthetically reactionary, and who wasn’t, Jim interceded with a letter warning everyone of the dangers of being over-righteous. He didn’t need to do it, but he did, because he cared about the people involved.

I love Jim Harrison’s poetry. My favorite is “Counting Birds,” which I published in #5 (1988). It tells you more about who he was, as a writer and a big-hearted person, than any well-intentioned eulogy could.



JIM HARRISON

**Counting Birds**

*for Gerald Vizenor*

As a child, fresh out of the hospital  
with tape covering the left side  
of my face, I began to count birds.  
At age fifty the sum total is precise  
and astonishing, my only secret.  
Some men count women or the cars  
they've owned, their shirts—  
long sleeved and short sleeved—  
or shoes, but I have birds,  
excluding, of course, those extraordinary  
days: the twenty-one thousand  
snow geese and sandhill cranes at  
Bosque del Apache; the sky blinded  
by great Frigate birds in the Pacific  
off Anconcito, Ecuador; the twenty-one  
thousand pink flamingos in Ngorongoro Crater  
in Tanzania; the vast flock of sea birds  
on the Seri coast of the Sea of Cortez  
down in Sonora that left at nightfall,  
then reappeared, resuming  
their exact position at dawn;  
the one thousand cliff swallows nesting  
in the sand cliffs of Pyramid Point,  
their small round burrow like eyes,  
really the souls of the Anazazi who flew  
here a thousand years ago  
to wait the coming of the Manitou.  
And then there were the usual, almost deadly  
birds of the soul—the crow with silver  
harness I rode one night as if she



were a black, feathered angel;  
the birds I became to escape unfortunate  
circumstances—how the skin ached  
as the feathers shot out toward light;  
the thousand birds the dogs helped  
me shoot to become a bird (grouse, woodcock,  
duck, dove, snipe, pheasant, prairie chicken, etc.)  
On my deathbed I'll write this secret  
number on a slip of paper and pass  
it to my wife and two daughters.  
It will be a hot evening in late June  
and they might be glancing out the window  
at the thunderstorm's approach from the west.  
Looking past their eyes and a dead fly  
on the window screen I'll wonder  
if there's a bird waiting for me in the onrushing clouds.  
O birds, I'll sing to myself, you've carried  
me along on this bloody voyage,  
carry me now into that cloud,  
into the marvel of this final flight.



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

**GUY R. BEINING:**

The ghost behind the airplane cloud will be my next artistic thesis if the sun does not drain the blue clouds behind my eyes.

**A. NON:**

It may be that the man on his bicycle is seeking the tiny narcissi. Small, tenacious, the dying animal of floral life: it may be that his wheels spin toward white abimes, but it is more likely that the man and his bicycle will end up finding the green void of regeneration. How to speak of it? He comes in the stone gate, bends the braided iron in his whirled passing. Under the oxidization of his palms black petals fizz terracotta. Temperate, the sputtering blue of the man's breath broadens the pathway. Up the sun, the shadows bend sibilate to his rolling wheels. Yellow tongues cradle curling air; white folioles buckle under his passing shadow. Having reached the door, the man on the bicycle dismounts, and as if nothing had happened, speaks.

**HELLER LEVINSON:**

churl the axe-ridden ash garden melt, moisten      adumbrate

**IVAN ARGÜELLES:**

When Europe was at its rearguard, that is midterm the time of the Saracen freedom fighters in the ridges and lodges of flamenco Spain, toot toot tootling his bebop horn came Roland, hero of the gesta francorum and other epic spectacles, later reprised in the furious madcap adventures of Orlando, resurrected again in the court of Ferrara. Thus were belles lettres born out of the secular strife between blood thirsty warrior crusading converts to the cross and the wholly monotheistic icon-crashing followers of the Prophet. What seems indigenous at first, the sprung up from where lyric of the Troubadours, eglantine and



spikenard and unseen loves moored in the recesses of Tripoli, damsels sworn to jealous lords, and songsters minstrels jugglers making doggerel and bad rhyme into the first tradition, giving rise no less to the fawning alphabetic Franciscans of Umbria, I refer to literature at large, the epicene and refrained dolce stil nuovo, and if that isn't enough who else but Dante advanced into the higher catechism of Love by a thirteen year old vision in some waylaid fane, dust and smoke and incense and all thirty three circles thrice over of the Afterworld! So by the time we get to the Illustration of the 18th century what with the riots and the Bastille and the monarchic heads up for display and the deists with their Reason enthroned in the seventh sphere, we are regaled with the purities of literary theory, bric-a-brac compilations of the canon, naming Homer and Vergil and you know the flaming rest a grammatically correct version of syntax and signifying and all that post-modernist nonsense from Bataille to Umberto Eco playing mind-games with their notions of just exactly what language is what it corresponds to in the entelechy of the totally destructive twentieth century rattle traps of non-linear and easily erasable coils of thought. It's all so exhausting, plethora of exactitude and spatialities and ersatz funambulism which writing has become. And today which is already the day after tomorrow when we have become robotized entities attached to iphones carelessly crossing dangerous streets, heedless of the impoverished sky above, what do we remember of the History, of any history, other than it is a dusky sketchy chronology digitized and refrigerated in the basements of libraries long shut because of disuse. And it wasn't Roland, it was Miles Davis, blowing his brains out on a cornet somewhere in the imaginary defiles of La Mancha.

**ROBIN HUDECHEK:**

**The United States Under President Trump**

We are the United States of tall, statuesque women teetering on gold plated pumps. No women over 45 or 130 pounds allowed. Ever. Except to serve as maids or office aids. Or telemarketers if they have a star's shimmering voice, if not her shimmering body. We are the United States of cities and country sides winding in and through barbed wire they tell us is there to keep the aliens out—but no money and very few



people flow in and out of these borders now. Flowers grow, petals limp and fallow behind winding walls where the tired, the poor, the yearning to be free are left staring at a barred gate. And our new president, Donald Trump? He walks awkwardly on stilts, phony legs he uses to raise him above the masses. He needs to be taller and smarter than the rest of us, but unlike King Saul, a handsome man, head and shoulders taller than the rest of the Israelites, he has no natural gifts we can admire to raise him above us: only a hair pate, phony as his promises and flimsy as his intellect, endless greed, a refusal to pay contract workers fairly, to treat women as equals, his inability to see that individuals are evil and twisted sometimes—not entire religions or ethnicities. When we look at Trump teetering near the tops of buildings on his new legs blotting out the sun, we have to ask ourselves: When did all the flowers shrivel and the bees die? Why didn't we stop the industrialists long before we sent our children to school with masks, and the oceans were declared too toxic to swim in, and the water, too poisonous to drink? We stand on the beach with our empty water bottles, staring up at dying palm trees, at the plumes of industrial waste drifting above us in clouds and realize it's too late now.

**MERCEDES LAWRY:**

“Had we the first intimation of the Definition of Life, the calmest of us would be Lunatics!”—Emily Dickinson. Read in a Mary Ruefle essay.

**CRAIG COTTER:**

Saw surgeon. Says all is fine.

PT moved me to once every two weeks—I went Monday. They said if I'm fine at my next appointment in 2 weeks, no more PT. Doc said muscles he cut through still healing, but inner knee is healed. I got all the surgical reports from him today because I'm interested in exactly what he did.

\*

My desk is full of things to do, but I only want to write poems.

Rose is coming for brunch Saturday.

\*



I am working on our manifesto that combines Soverism, Balancism and Ploverism. It will change the course of art for the next 20,000 years. This will be no mock manifesto. We will hurtle through space as insignificant specks no more.

\*

Ambien making me wobbly. It is supposed to draw me to it like a moth to a carburetor.

When Mano lived here he wore jeans with sequins and beads. Whenever I'd pick one out of the carpet I'd glue it to the hutch above my desk. Still finding them several months after he left.

Friday 8/9/69 is the last day all four Beatles recorded together. Abbey Road. On 8/20/69 all four got together to overdub "I Want You (She's So Heavy)." After that they were never together. Although in early 1970 Paul, Ringo and George were together to work on "I Me Mine." Some think Lennon was at the session, but it is not confirmed. So we still don't know, precisely, the last time they were all together.

\*

Robert, take the red-eye to LA, B and I are having breakfast in Silverlake tomorrow at 10:30. We are working on the Soverism/Balancism/Ploverism Manifesto.

After we finish our manifesto we will begin immediately working on the compromised second draft.

The 19-year-old hottie who won the slam dunk contest today, NBA, is my new boyfriend. Good God is he beautiful. All that wonderful stuff Bernie says about God in most every email—his name is Zack LaVine. That's all the God I need. I'd worship him for a few months, then cast him aside. Not as a false God. But just to explore more of God.  
CAN YOU WANKERS DIG IT?

\*

From: Robert  
Sent: Saturday, February 14, 2015 10:22 PM  
To: Cotter, Craig; Bernie



Subject: Damn

- Damn. My outdoor thermometer is broken.
- Why?
- It reads 0. And 0 isn't a number. YOU FUCKIN MORONS EVER HAVE THIS PROBLEM!!!!

\*

From: Cotter, Craig  
To: Robert, Bernie  
Subject: RE: good morning

Bernie insists on using robot plover decoys to lure in the real plovers so he can force them to eat spinach lasagna. I tried to explain to him why this was a misunderstanding of the Universe at breakfast yesterday, but I didn't even notice what he was eating as I was cruising the cute guy in the blue shoes.

\*

From: Cotter, Craig  
To: Bernie, Robert  
Subject: cc

Sover. Monsieur Plate, in reading Bernie's many emails on Soverism, I'm feeling he doesn't understand. Or the fine principles of Balancism. Bernie, the essence of Soverism is that we're currently dead. Our lives are over. Not just the best parts of our youth. Fuck youth. We're dead. Our time is past. We may have a few breaths left—but then, Sover. So it's always over from the moment—like around age 9—we learn we're mortal. With that understanding is death. First pitch of the Tiger season, Verlander throws a ball—Robert is right—Sover. Season over. No World Series. This is not pessimism. Wanting more—trying to pretend the Universe is something it isn't—that's true suffering. I write my poems so something is left when I'm gone? No one will know my name 5 minutes after I'm dead. No one will read my poems 17 years after I'm dead. But I will be in Heaven with my 27 twinks, and I suppose they can start as virgins. Although virgins are pretty lousy at sex mostly. Why are they prized? Don't we want someone who knows



they have to put in some effort to figure-out what we want? I'm giving-up on sex and getting no further erections. There have been enough hardons, probably too many, like when Mr. Redding called me to the board in 10th grade to write a proof. Didn't he know I was dreaming of Jim Bryson in front of me? Why are teachers so insensitive? Look, in my case, 55 years gone. Sover. Way more behind than ahead. What is behind is over. What is ahead is more quickly over than what is behind. Science can save us? Please, fuck. Soverism and Balancism are nihilistic? No, the Universe is nihilistic. Snuffing us out spinning around our sun the whole solar system smashing through space. That's not my fault. Calling it like it is don't make me a nihilist. Balancism: I get 2 poems accepted today, one in the morning, one in the evening, I smash my thumb with a hammer and shoot myself in the knee. The world is now in balance. That just makes sense. The San Gabriel Mountains out my window were in Mexico a few million years ago. They don't gently move here a few millimeters a year, they move by earthquakes intermittently. Sometimes really big ones.

"You're staying on the fucking label, Hare Krishna."

I am etc,

Cotter

**TIM KAHL:**

There are more nerves between the hand and the brain than between any two points—dashboard and signal tower, red candle and cello string, earthworm and solemn hymn. Messages have been spread between the nodes since chemists began to stain the chromosomes blue. At that point if you weren't dreaming in code, then heaven help your culture and its uniform blah, its fake tact, and its genius for playing hunter-gatherer. In fact, if you are still one of those genuine communist bachelors with a spin rating of  $-1/2$ , go ahead and soak those delphinium seeds in your gout medication. See the impulse flowering within a bust of Beethoven. Feel the feedback loop in dogthink. They will skip their feedings if only to sing to their master's hand like they are indifferent to their stupid



feudal array . . . every damned dog cracking wise about its status. How indispensable their entanglements. Bring on the knot theorists to model how the double helix must unwind. Bring on the hardwired neurons that fashioned bear femurs into flutes. Now even the robots are watching videos and pondering themselves as mosquitos. Would they know they have a head? And hands? The thumbs and fingers riff an intricate signal between the brainstem and a field of hemp, bonfire and bloodhound, radio and noodle soup. Isn't it finally time for the nervous to abandon realism?

**GEORGE KALAMARAS:**

Wear your hair in horsetail braid / shoulder the Eros of the world

\*

If you mistakenly eat the heart of the hound, get down on all fours and tear the carpet apart

\*

Remember this, Takahashi said, *Nobody can be on the DADA's side*

\*

Fifty-six years was the longest time an alligator had been known to live in captivity

\*

*Who can say a Dadaist is not edible? Is he then a thing that cannot be licked?  
All is food, and food is an anarchist*

\*

Then one of only three egg-laying mammals in New Guinea, the platypus, used his spur like a scythe

\*

And Surrealism was held suspect, in the lower branches of breath, in a very sad way

\*

Cough *okay* three times with your head turned to the left / the inguinal canal is a birth canal for herniated birds



\*

I've thought that I could write about hound dogs for the rest of my eyes

\*

Red-winged blackbirds, he thought, and swallowed slivers of the hound  
dog moon far back into the gutters of the throat

\*

In moon-both the Shenandoah and hound-howl the Wabash

\*

When he read the wordless poems of raccoons, he always drank Iron  
Goddess of Mercy oolong tea

\*

What is the color of a hound dog in heat? (Pause a moment before  
answering, scenting the drops of hyena blood still at your left wrist)

\*

Let's say hobbled moonlight cauterized the coonhound's throat, that the  
possum took the length of the sycamore branch as if it were a tributary  
flowing back into the waggle-wash of the Wabash

\*

He approached age sixty as if he were inhaling poison ivy from a pile  
of burning leaves

\*

The rest of the woods were doused in owl saliva

\*

Then there was the estrus of the Brazilian holler monkey, the one who  
had swallowed slivers of sleep talk all the way from a Parisian café in  
which Robert Desnos almost spoke to Paul Delvaux, as if *almost*-Desnos  
spoke to patches of cruel groin-fire Delvaux dandled in moonscape

\*

Did I just say that *aloud*? Or was I (oh, please) just thinking, quietly,  
through moon wash incubating the platypus's egg?

\*



As if Henry David Thoreau exchanged places with Pete Rose—one entered the woodsmen's hall of fame; the other gambled away his sumac and his ferns, shooting craps not with dice but with the milk-teeth of a barred owl

\*

Williams wrote "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Wheelbarrow"; Stevens repeated—over and again into an afternoon that was forever evening—that so much depends upon a black redbird, crazed with grain slaughter, by scythed the slight harvest

\*

Is it Takahashi Shinkichi or Shinkichi Takahashi? In Japanese, the surname of a hound dog always rhymes with water; either way, Dadaist Shinkichi only speaks with an italicized mouth

\*

*That is why DADA is equipped both with sex organs and all kinds of weapons*

\*

If Ralph Waldo Thoreau were an earthworm, he'd be the one lightning becomes after it slits the shagbark of a hickory in the Indiana woods

\*

Don't forget: Brahms was Brahman in a previous birth

\*

They proclaimed that Surrealism afflicted his very sad in a *very* sad way—but he was not about to glisten

\*

Remember that the Wabash runs untamed for 411 undammed hours

\*

Yes, the coonhound has "selective deafness"—whenever he's on the scent of something most wooded and most beautiful







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