

HAUPTMAN • DIGBY • GIANNINI • CROSS • MOHR • LOWINSKY  
 BÍRO • VIZENOR • FORREST • SARMIENTO • HASTAIN • BRADLEY  
 GARTHE • VASSILAKIS • GONZALEZ • KALAMARAS • GRABILL  
 BENNETT • GREGORY • HAPEYEVA • GANDER • BEINING • LIU  
 HOUSTMAN • WESLOWSKI • NEUBERG • KLEINBERG • SEIDMAN  
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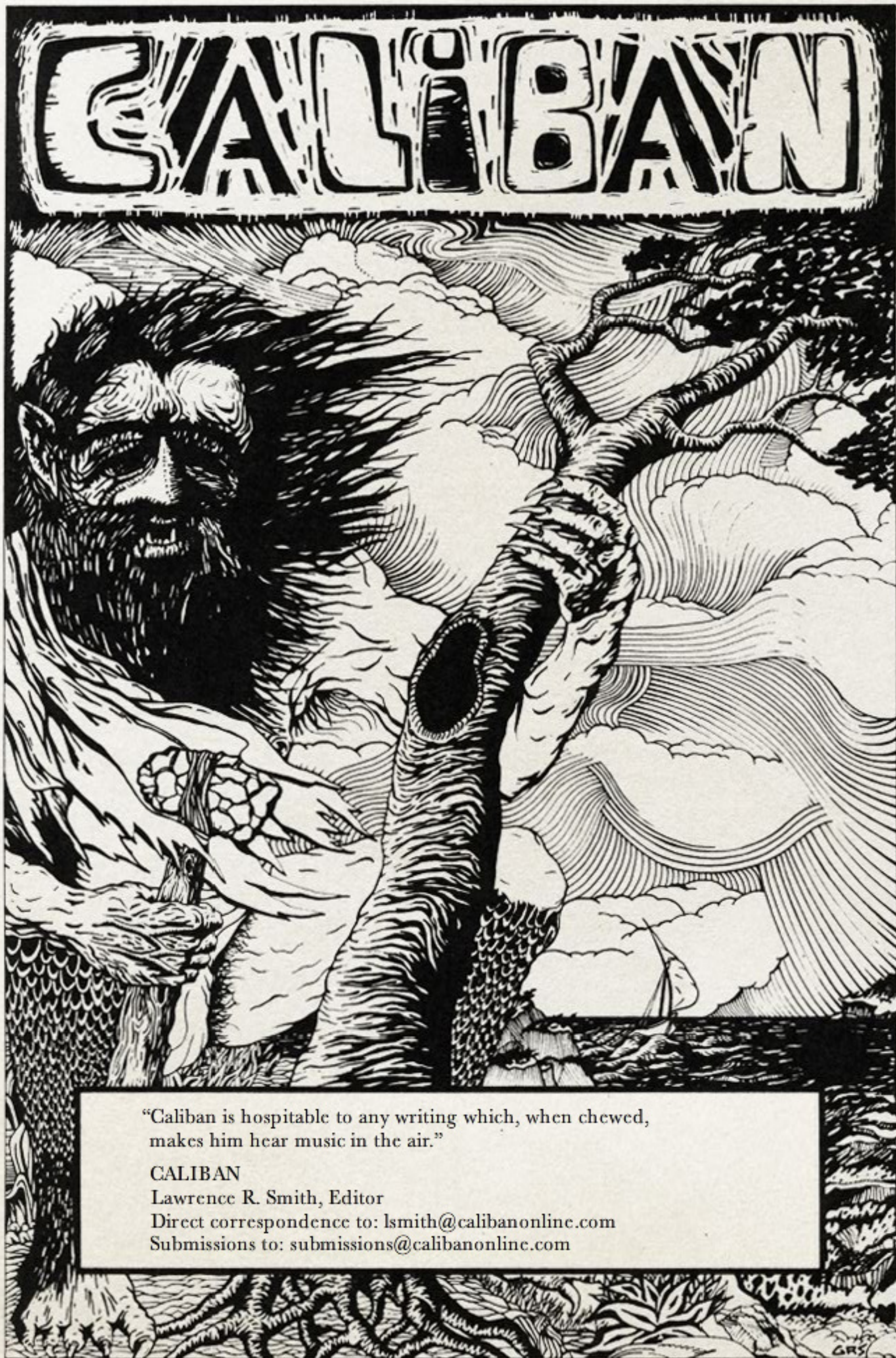
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**CALIBAN**

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**CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE**





## TERRY HAUPTMAN

### Heartbeat

*For my mother, Leonora*

On National Black Theatre Way

Off 125th Street

Passed Malcolm X Blvd in New York City

Listening to the sulfurs of blue-toothed jazz

Lady Day swooning the streets

While crowds outside the Apollo theatre on 125th Street

Memorialize Prince's Purple Rain

Your black butterfly soul appears to me

As subway dissonance pulses

The systole/diastole of the heart.

Coming home from the hospital,

I think about my ninety-one year old mother's

Loss of memory

Salt-glaze on Lost Road,

Her long memory still holding ancestral tales

Delighting us all

As black eyelids close

Over the third-eye of story.

My mother dreams of crossing over

The blue waters to see everybody

Blessing them as her spirit rises up

Into the Raven ruins

Singing the Hudson River's caw.



**Rubies in the Mud**

*From the Hummingbird Sanctuary of Kukulcan*

Quetzalcoatl throws off black sparks  
Laying her eggs in the thunder's prayer  
Holding our babies under the ceiba tree  
Beside the strumming of guitars.

I warm myself  
By the dark-hearted bees  
That spark the hive,  
Wash my hair with lavender and mint  
near Huitzilopochiti's eye of god,  
And Popocatepetl's volcanic peaks  
As crows in the wolves' dollhouse  
Knead the angel bread,  
Salt the black earth

Oh Sister,  
Dancing at Bayamos  
Wearing your red dress  
Playing your flute at  
Sweet Water's and Small's Paradise

Dance with me  
As old trees  
Spin the wheel of K'mesh  
Exiled in birch and mountain ash  
Where hornet's nest  
Throwing rubies in the mud,  
The indwelling of light  
Piercing the moon,  
As the winds return  
Calling me.



**Diaspora**

The day my great grandpa Sam's coffin  
Fell from his third story apartment,  
His pine-box opened up  
And his body fell down the stairs  
Passed the porch glider and seltzer bottles,  
Into the mists and rains.

He was a carpenter who lost his finger  
In a chopped liver grinder  
While building pine coffins during the war.  
Dreaming of herring and black bread  
Served at the Shiva.  
The one-eyed crow  
Listening to the Moma-Loshen-Mother Tongue  
Yiddishkeit of Workmen's Circle Jews  
From Belarus  
Ibn Gubenor Ben Jews,  
Secularists of the Bund  
Returning  
To dance in the New Year  
With Bertha Kalish,  
The Sappho of the Yiddish Theatre  
Walking through his soul.  
It is fated.



**From the Book of Splendor  
Rosh-Hashanah**

*Aleph, Mem, Shin,  
Ox, Water, Tooth*

Pamela White Hadas

When great-grandma Tamara left her  
Minsk-Gibernia shtetl,  
Carrying silver candlesticks  
To New York's Lower East Side,  
Chagall's green violin followed her  
Fleeing pogroms  
Burying her dead son at sea,  
My grandma Lillie  
And her sister Sarah  
Looking on,

Never to return,  
As blackbirds nest in Malkuth's crown,  
Hamseh, the third eye in her palm,  
Ruach's spirit breath  
    In The Book Of Life,  
Soul that breathes the mystery's  
    Blue thunder  
Through the generations.



## **El Día de Los Muertos**

We crush marigolds under  
The bitter melon moon,  
The blood-jade chrysalis  
Hangs upside down  
Secreting silk threads  
From the secret place  
From which the caterpillar is born.

Black butterflies on the keyboard  
Play the blues  
My mother hums  
Rearranging the furniture in The Bronx  
Believing all will be new  
In the storytelling twilight,  
As dreamtime eggs  
Break open on  
La Lumina de Suenos firescapes,  
Ex-votos singed in the light.

Whose taffeta dress  
And horse-hair crinoline  
Hangs between the veils?

You never knew my imperfections  
Were my gifts  
Making the invisible visible  
This Day of the Dead

Who turns you around  
On Milagros' windy street  
Listening to snails singing?

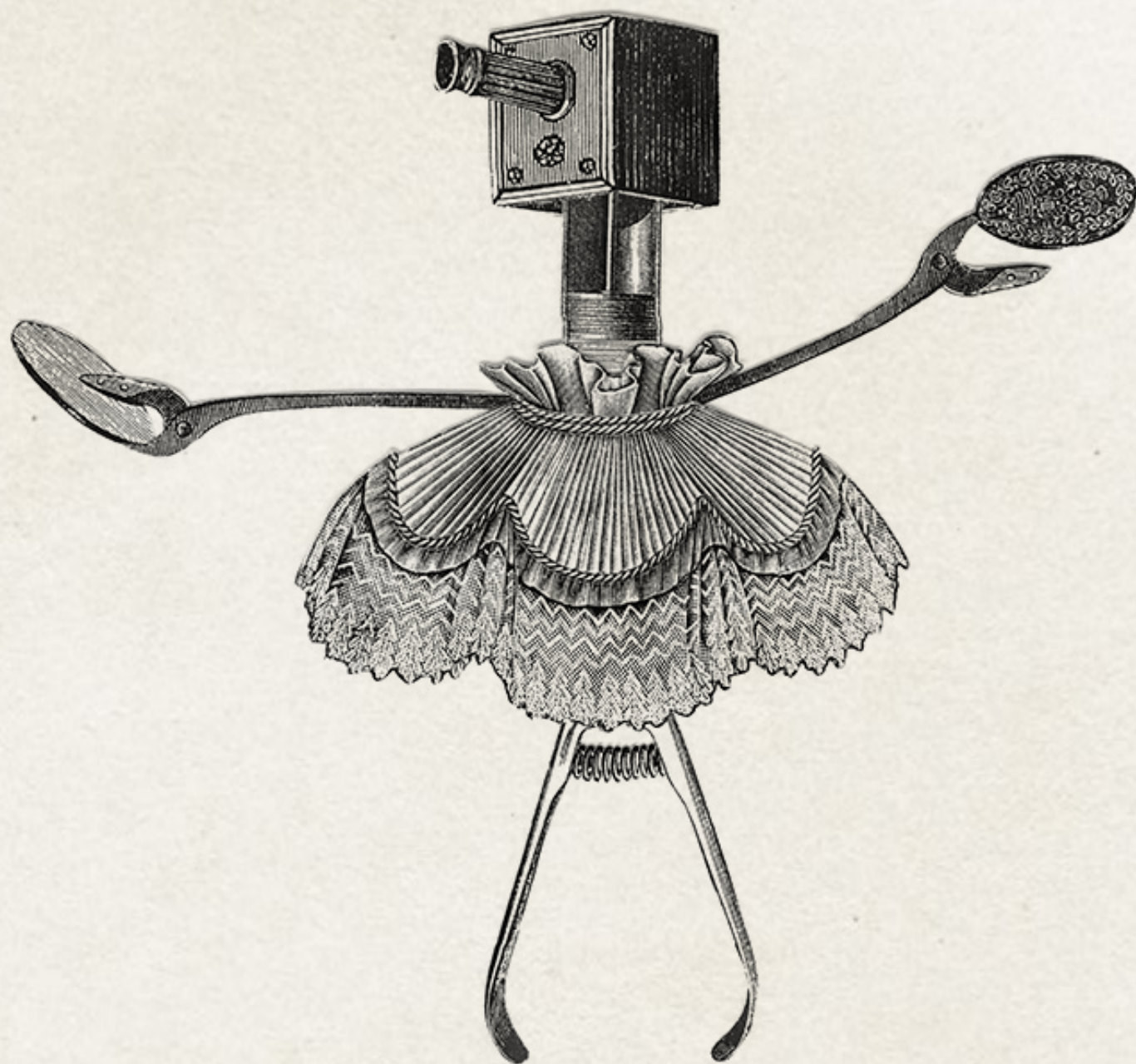


**Caracol of Souls II**

“Don’t go listening to those starry-eyed Cassandras  
On Asylum Street  
Singing from the dark”  
Watching the wind’s green dress  
In the tides of fate,  
As children sip  
The willow sap of Ur,  
While old women  
Pour libations  
For the days  
To come.

Dusk falls, Raziel,  
Dusk falls.





THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE by John Digby  
collage





VIPER TRUMP by John Digby  
collage



DAVID GIANNINI

**A Moment Before Turning To Another Channel**

That fat viper, the President-Elect, center stage, is evil in full flood of light—therefore no shadow, only the slick floor; and we already hear, through loudspeakers, trumped-up ukases issuing from bleak nonsense suddenly becoming an upright being walking ahead into darkness, then slithering—White House Kremlin National People's Congress—snake, vodka, rickshaw chasm.



JOHN CROSS

**Dawn in Diablo and Various Hammers Fell**

If I lived near Seattle  
my poetry might  
have its own Virgin Mary

though she'd be the same one  
they all are

but she would be  
the Virgin of the insatiate green  
she would be Mary house-eater  
of the fringe places

the Virgin of everything tangled together  
the Virgin of what did ancient music sound like  
she would creak in the treetops  
in the forest where  
the Virgin of the scream of the barred owl  
pissed you off  
because you couldn't pocket her  
and now it's almost time to bathe the hounds

I might walk out to the Mary-meadow  
where house and barn slowly list  
their mossy cedar rooftops  
announcing a newborn heaven and earth  
before sinking under wildflowers and Mary-ferns



where the '58 Bel Air rusted and burnished  
bares its naked brown skull  
and I would bury my steel body  
Mule Resophonic up past its hubcap  
its slotted headstock a winnowing oar  
suppliant come from afar  
and I would rise

with all the things cascading  
into the rising



**Unwavering Tribe**

What have the headless fathers learned?  
As each of their legs has a brain of its own  
They approach and kneel at a stranger's windblown hat  
Then they keep walking toward their sons

And what have the eyeless fathers learned?  
As each of their mouths has a brain of its own  
They jar something unintelligible  
A jangling major chord too big as a billboard

And just like my father—  
Crouched over his tools  
And the silent *e* of me  
(Clots of fur stuck to the day's wall)—

One moment you'll see me under the mulberry tree  
The next moment the hills and the river below  
Are empty under the more and more moon  
(Hats off to the shovel turning the dark rain)



## **The Psychology of Haunting Made Simple**

Tontogony Cemetery  
ghosts lean in the windows  
to talk never to appear  
again to scare up children  
who smile & wave from  
the cover of a book on  
ontogeny in my fevered  
half-sleep. So little gravity  
in Wood County those  
people appear to be  
shadows or flames  
hovering just above the  
ground like candle wicks  
or plastic bags in traffic.  
The paving & walling  
continues & we're missing  
the Golden Toad and the  
Hawaiian Crow from the  
audio spectrum & there's  
no direction home & no  
place to clean up or to get  
some rest in in the loud  
hiss of the enormous turd  
rusting even as it rattles to  
life. At least my cough is  
productive.  
Now it's magic time. All  
you darling assistants get  
sawn in half & walk out  
whole! Fragments still bob  
in the surface of Greek  
literature. Good luck,  
literature. Good luck.



**Your Monkey's Rent Must Be Low**

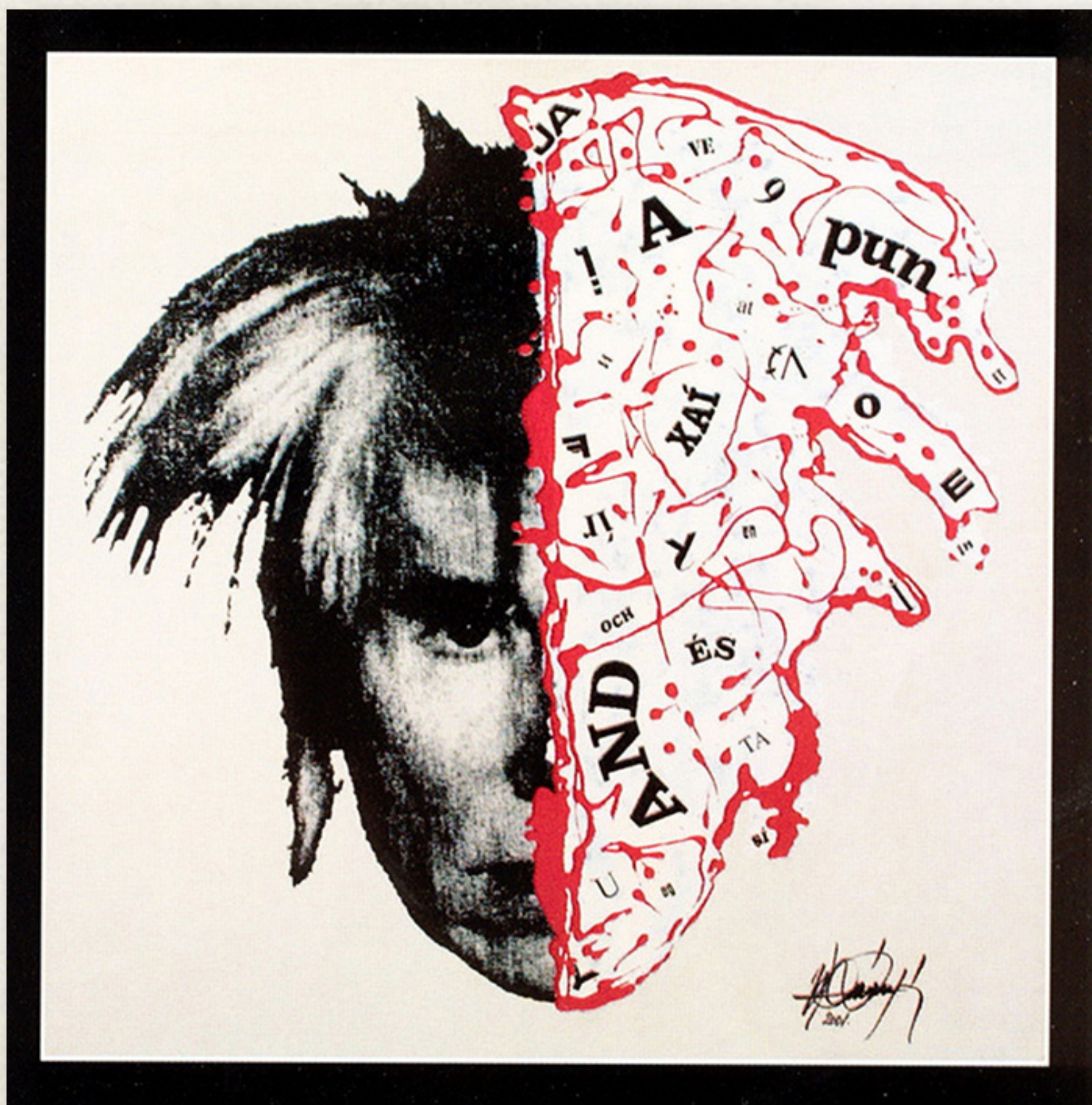
Under the heat dome  
shallow breathing in the bee-space  
I'm aping your style between frames finding  
a tiny sense of community on the cutting floor  
every time I wake  
to find myself breathing

Something's jealous as a god out there  
so I act like a bird and flap my arms  
but I'm only getting tired in my monkey suit

When we learned that the forest and waterfalls  
were not beauty enough  
you played colored lights over all of it  
and piped in music and we stared  
into the orbits of octaves  
while you whisked away our bananas

What do I have to do  
to coax you closer  
to my cage's bars





VISUAL POEM by József Bíró, 2001  
mixed media



NAOMI RUTH LOWINSKY

**Angel of the Not Yet Known**

Something is trying to be known  
in a city whose language escapes me  
in the unseeing eyes of the angel  
his golden spots the book he reads  
the crowd that forms around him  
taking photos    Something is trying to be  
seen in a corner of my mind a sudden  
flash a turbulence of clouds threat  
of rain    Something is trying to be heard  
on street corners where I wait  
for word    A gust of wind disturbs  
the palms    Crack  
of thunder    Flurry  
among shoppers descending  
                                into the underground

Coming back through the *Barri Gòtic* in the rain  
the unformed not yet known  
flutters wet wings  
The glowing bellies  
of young women are  
                        a revelation almost  
                                to the pubic bone



## Shades of the Gathered and the Gone

When your closed eyes see  
the faces of the dead  
When their resurrected bodies do  
a dance  
around the bedroom floor  
Do you know who speaks  
while the moon goes about  
her extravagant business  
and you're worlds away  
from the traffic of morning?

A long-gone father reaches out  
what was his arm  
If only he could touch  
your life once more  
Have you figured out  
what is required  
when wild women  
in wine red in druid green  
come running through the woods  
blood on their hands?

Do you know which god it is  
among the elders by the sea  
who sent those breezes  
so the golden ships of Troy  
could sail into your dream  
bleed through into your day?



## GERALD VIZENOR

### **Nurse By Now**

By Now Beaulieu rode Treaty, a native farm horse, for more than a thousand miles over two months that spring to march with the veterans of the Bonus Expeditionary Force at Capitol Hill in Washington.

By Now had served as an army nurse and was ready to march with her cousins and other bonus veterans. No doubt some of the marchers were soldiers she had once treated in combat. She read stories about Walter Waters, the inspired leader of the Bonus Army, and hundreds of veterans from around the country who were on their way to demand a bonus payment from the United States Congress.

Most of the veterans traveled in open boxcars, others in passenger cars, farm trucks, and only a few veterans rode motorcycles to the march. Some Oklahoma native veterans drove fancy cars, the oil discovery cars, and wore ceremonial feathers. By Now was the only nurse and veteran mounted on a horse along the dusty country roads to Capitol Hill.

Treaty was spirited and ready to tread, slow lope, and canter out of the stable and south along the river, and then east on the section borders of family farms. By Now and her steady mount were treated to supper and a stable almost every night on the road that spring. Many farm boys had served as infantry soldiers in the war, some were wounded, and the families proudly supported veterans, the march and the Bonus Expeditionary Force.

The Anishinaabe were hunters and fur traders with canoes, but not a horse culture. Nonetheless federal agents sent treaty horses to natives on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. Mostly the horses were used to tow logs and wagons, but not many plows. By Now easily learned how to ride and shoe a horse.

By Now toured the entire reservation on a Morgan, a chestnut wagon horse named Stomp, and with the company of Torment and Whipple, two loyal native mongrels. She was twelve years old at the



time and trotted through the white pine stumps from Bad Boy Lake, White Earth Lake, Naytahwaush, Headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca, to Bad Medicine Lake, Pine Point, and then returned by way of Callaway.

By Now was born late, more that a month late on the conception calendar, so late that her father boasted that she could speak three languages by the time she was delivered one warm spring morning. "That child should be here by now," her father shouted, and she was born a few hours later. By Now was her nickname at delivery, of course, and later the catchy byname was entered as a given name on the federal birth certificate, By Now Rose Beaulieu. She told variations of the same story, that there was no reason to start out in the world on the last few cold days of winter, so she held back her native arrival for a month to the first warm and friendly day in March.

She was born in a tiny house on Beaulieu Street in Ogema, and lived there most of her life, but she decided to name Bad Boy Lake, a few miles away, as home when she was an army nurse because the soldiers were curious about the place name, and that was always an invitation to create stories about the lake. She related the sudden turn of the seasons and spectacular natural scenes to the mysterious healer Misaabe and his incredible recovery mongrels at Bad Boy Lake. Later, she declared that the old natural healer had inspired her to become a nurse.

By Now was a veteran of the Army Nurse Corps and had treated hundreds of soldiers with combat wounds, and at the same time she had treated and shod a few military packhorses in the First World War in France. She rode Black Jack many times into combat near the Hindenburg Line, in violation of direct military orders, and treated soldiers with severe wounds from the heavy enemy artillery. Black Jack learned how to high step over the rubble on the road that blocked the ambulances.

Black Jack, named in honor of General John Pershing, was her favorite mount between the combat areas and the medical aide stations, and she rescued many horses with combat fatigue and trained them to carry the wounded soldiers. The soldiers reported that the steady sway



of a horse was the calm after a storm, and much more curative than the noisy and bouncy ambulances overloaded with bloody bodies.

The French Army, civilians, and steadfast soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces teased her about the native equestrian style, hunched close to the withers and crest, and many soldiers were ready to mount any weary packhorse in her company. The farm boy soldiers were forever beholden to the nurse who rode a horse into combat with tourniquets, splints, compress bandages, and native medicine stories to treat their bloody wounds.

By Now should have been decorated for her courage, obviously, but the distant commanders avoided any official mention of the native nurse, the name of the horse and the unauthorized combat duty. The French Army commanders, however, honored the unique medical services by a native nurse on horseback and awarded her the French Croix de Guerre.

Treaty, the name of the horse she rode to Washington, was a direct descendent of the original federal treaty horses, and was given to her as a native tease. Treaty was once a wagon horse, the last of the breed to serve overnight guests at the Hotel Leecy on the White Earth Reservation.

Treaty was sidelined as a favorite in the hotel stable, and with the arrival of motorcars and no wagon to tow or children to carry she was ready to escape the outdated wagon duty as a new native mount.

By Now was the first veteran to leave the reservation for the bonus march. She read about the move of veterans from around the country and could not wait to depart, but the tour by horse was much slower than jumping boxcars. Four of her cousins traveled by train two months later as veterans in the Bonus Expeditionary Force.

Treaty raised her head and cantered over the Potomac River on the Arlington Memorial Bridge, and then a slower gait through the campsites on the National Mall toward Capitol Hill. She dismounted to talk with three veterans smoking near a shanty named the Dug Out. They told her about the schedules of the bonus marches, and warned her several times to watch out for the communist troublemakers in the camps.



By Now walked and Treaty clopped down Constitution Avenue in search of water and a shady place to rest. Pelham Glassford, Superintendent of Police, drove by on his blue motorcycle, and then a few minutes later he circled back and parked on the sidewalk.

“Where did you ride from?” asked Glassford

“Bad Boy Lake,” said By Now.

“What state?”

“White Earth Reservation.”

“Indian place?”

“Yes, Minnesota,” said By Now.

“Many Indians in Arizona,” said Glassford.

“Never been there.”

“Horses are not allowed on the National Mall or on Capitol Hill,” said Glassford, as he reached out and touched Treaty. “But there are plenty of other places you can park a horse in the city.”

“Treaty needs a trough,” said By Now.

“What breed is your horse?” asked Glassford.

“Morgan treaty horse,” said By Now.

“Never heard of the treaty breed.”

“Treaty farm horses, that was a long time ago.”

“Talk to the veterans at the Federal Triangle a few blocks back on Pennsylvania Avenue, or even better you could ride over the wooden drawbridge to the bonus camp at Anacostia Flats,” said Glassford. “That’s a real Indian place, and your horse might take to the river.”

Anacostia Flats was a new nation of veterans, and they were camped in tents, wooden shanties, and automobiles. Several thousand veterans and some families mingled on the dusty roads, and every day more shelters were erected from scraps of lumber and canvas. Circus tents, bright blankets, and curved boughs, or wickiups were crowded together on both sides of the dusty pathways.

Treaty was tied to a bench outside The Hut, a huge green canvas sanctuary that was started by the Salvation Army. The Sallies, dressed in neat uniforms, set up a library, provided tables to write letters and play games, and gave away shoes, clothes, playing cards, and tobacco to veterans.



“Veteran, and do you smoke?” asked Sally.

“Army nurse, never smoked,” said By Now.

“Good for you,” said Sally.

“Any horses around here?” asked By Now.

“Never saw one until today.”

By Now seldom read literary stories or novels. She would rather create her own stories, and yet she was an obsessive reader of newspapers. She read every page of the *Tomahawk*, the very newspaper her relatives had edited and published on the reservation, and later on she read every article in the newspapers cast aside by travelers at the train station and hotel. The news stories were a rush of gossip, she said, and with no humor or irony. So, she imagined the episodes that were described, but not to imitate or become a writer. She envisioned the scenes of the newspaper accounts and then related a more ironic story.

Charles Curtis, for instance, was on her mind about four years ago when he was elected as the vice president. Herbert Hoover was the money man and food huckster, and hardly noticed natives or the distant ancestor of the vice president, White Plume of the Kaw. By Now read the stories in newspapers about the candidates and the election and created new ironic stories. Curtis was born in a territory not a state. By Now teased that his mother was a prairie caption of the Kaw, Osage, Potawatomi, and French, and his father was a migrant merger of the Scottish and Welsh, a territorial fur trade rivalry on the run in the blood, bone and beard of Charles Curtis. He raced horses, rode bareback, and learned how to whisper native promises in the ears of the horses, enough oat mush, rich grass and prairie liberty to win money at races. He whispered and the horses would move from side to side in a dance. The political whisperer could have been a circus barker.

Curtis was named a senator, and his strategic whispers of legislation amounted to nothing for natives but an empty chair of manners. By Now said he shouted out an act in the senate that overturned treaties and natives lost their rights to horses, land, timber and minerals. White Pine reservations became timber stump estates.

Basile and Aloysius, her closest cousins, actually sold copies of the weekly *Tomahawk* at the Ogema Train Station before the First World War. Basile became a writer, and he encouraged By Now to write about



the war and her service as a nurse, but she was a creative storier not a solitary scribe, and was more alive on the back of a horse than cornered in a library with the grammar chatter of an editor.

Swat Beaulieu, her father, blurted out “by now” as a constant native tease, rather a mastery of the moment with “should haves” and closed with a signature “by now.” “You should’ve worn a dress by now,” and “You should’ve settled down by now,” and “You should’ve found a husband by now,” and “You should’ve had children by now,” and most recently “You should’ve written books by now.”

By Now wore trousers, and never owned a dress, except as an army nurse, but even then she wore trousers under the long dress uniform. She was nourished more by natural motion than men, and would rather ride a horse than run with a man, but she almost married once.

Le Caporal Pierre Dumont, an infantry soldier followed her home from the Hindenburg Line in France. Nurse By Now had hoisted the wounded soldier onto a horse, and that lift, a memorable touch, became a fantastic romance for the lonely soldier, and several months after war he arrived healed and lusty on the White Earth Reservation. Pierre was enchanted by the western romance stories he read about natives, and the novel *René* by François-René Chateaubriand. Louisiana and Minnesota were utterly distinctive states with only the Mississippi River as a connection, but that was close enough for the corporal to complete his wild romance with a native woman. By Now would never marry, but she never hesitated to carry out the lusty motions of the ancient fur trade with the French. Pierre returned to his family fish market at Les Halles in Paris six months later, and after the second wicked snowstorm with native stories about the Ice Woman.

By Now walked Treaty down to the river, and from there she could see in the distance the dome of the Capitol Building. Treaty waded in the shallow water, and pitched her head from side to side. Later, she rode back to the camp, and searched for a familiar face, or a practical place to stay for the night.

Nearby an entrepreneur sold hats, pans, shirts, tires, and much more, and there were other scenes that reminded her of the reservation. A barber cut hair on the dusty road, and names of the states were painted on posters, poles, and car doors. The Stars and Stripes waved



over almost every shanty in the camp. The hundreds of prominent flags were enough to scare any potential commies out of the country. "Maryland Vets," a large poster was set on top of the highest pole, and the camp was settled mostly by states. "Ogden Utah" was painted on the side of a car.

A boy walked a pudgy dog with the word "Bonus" printed on the sides of a pet vest. By Now dismounted and asked the boy if "Bonus" was the actual name of his dog. The boy was shy and silent, but he was very excited about Treaty. She asked once more, and he said, "No, my dog is named Geronimo."

"What's your name?" asked By Now.

"Billy Pudgy Raymond."

"Have you ever mounted a horse?"

"No, but," Pudgy hesitated and then said he always wanted to sit on the back of a horse. By Now asked his father for permission and raised the boy on the back of Treaty. Pudgy held the reins, and By Now led Treaty slowly around The Hut. Stubby Geronimo barked at the horse, but Treaty was steady and only moved her ears. Other boys gathered and wanted to ride, and two girls who were not shy about horses. Treaty was gentle, more content in the camp of bonus veterans and their families than she had ever been in the stable at the Hotel Leecy.

By Now was excited to see her cousins, Basile Teaser Beaulieu, a writer, and his brother Aloysius Blue Raven Beaulieu, the painter. They were looking at books in The Hut. Two more cousins, Paul Plucky Fairbanks, and Lawrence Star Boy Vizenor, were talking with a group of veterans nearby. By Now moved slowly and surprised Basile as he was reading a copy of *Three Soldiers* by John Dos Passos. He turned, shouted out her name, and the four cousins gathered and danced in the aisle of The Hut, so many relatives together by chance in a tent library of the Salvation Army.

Treaty neighed close by.

Dos Passos graduated from Harvard College and then served as a driver in the Ambulance Corps, along with many other young writers who avoided military service. By Now knew that much from newspaper stories and her experience in combat areas as a nurse. Basile said the



novel was mostly dialogue, soldierly jargon, and with class clumsy accents. The slight notice of war noises and devastated landscapes would easily convince most veterans that the author was not a trench soldier, but an educated spectator or an ambulance driver.

Sally moved around the circus tent with absolute ease, and her casual manner turned the canvas cover into a home, parlor, and a grand library. She smiled and celebrated the native cousins in *The Hut*, and at the same time noticed that Basile was holding the novel *Three Soldiers*. “Coincidence, John Dos Passos was here today,” she said, “and writing something about the camps and working on a new book about big money.”

Dos Passos was parked near a Model A Ford talking to several veterans from Pennsylvania. The cousins gathered around and listened to the conversation with Anthony Oliver and two other veterans. Anthony, a bricklayer, had driven from Belle Vernon at the end of the school year with his seven year old sons Nick and Joe. The boys were boxers and staged fights at Anacostia Flats.

Chateau-Thierry was mentioned, a catchword of the deadly war, in a conversation about the ambulance service and the wounded stacked on the side of the muddy roads. Dos Passos seemed at ease with the veterans, and he turned every combat notice around to lambaste the politicians and generals who carried out the war.

Basile asked Dos Passos about his novel *Three Soldiers*, and would he create the same scenes today, or does time change the perception of the author and the characters, more grave, more humor, more irony, and more philosophical? Anthony and the other veterans moved closer to hear the response of the author.

Dos Passos said his novels were chronicles of the time, not just fiction or history, but stories with a critical bent, and he used the word *bent* more than once. *Three Soldiers* may not be a good novel ten years later, he said, but the story was one more record of war. He seemed distant, not quite there, and his comments were directed to some other listeners, or maybe an article for a magazine. Then he paused for a moment, and said he had never forgotten the experiences, the smell of war that lingers in memory, the smell of gas and artillery explosions.



Basile continued with his questions, and more veterans gathered in the circle to listen. "You experienced the war as an ambulance driver, would your novel be more direct if you had experienced combat as an ordinary private, a nurse or infantry soldier?"

Remember, he insisted, my novels are contemporary chronicles, and some novels about the war are preachments, authors must show passion and rage, but too much anger and emotions are preachments, not a novel. He insisted, "My novels are not preachments."

Dos Passos seemed evasive, and the veterans were obviously thinking about personal combat experience as soldiers, and the natural creative right of preachment about the dread and lingering nightmares of the war. The veterans talked more urgently and directly about actual combat and then compared that experience to the escape distance of an ambulance driver.

"Ambulance drivers were never ordered to rush over a muddy pitch at dawn in the face of enemy machine guns," said a veteran. "Soldiers were sacrificed by the orders of distant generals, and the educated ambulance drivers were never threatened with treason for a turn to avoid an enemy camp. The war might have been a better chronicle as a constant preachment of combat soldiers."

By Now said, "I rode into combat on a horse, treated wounded soldiers, and carried them out on the back of packhorses when the roads were bombed by artillery."

Aloysius said, "General Pershing ordered soldiers not to write about their combat experiences in journals, or even letters, because the generals worried that the humor and preachment of ordinary soldiers would counter the entitled military chronicles of the war."

Preachment became the word of the day.

Dos Passos was silent and then cut into the stories to say that he would sign a copy of *Three Soldiers* at The Hut. He was ready to leave the conversation about war and his service as an ambulance driver. Sally was happy to see the group return to the library, and she carried out the usual service, no favor or special recognition of an author over a veteran. Dos Passos signed his novel in a practical way, not with the flourish of a vain author, and regretted that he could not dedicate the book to honor the conversations at Anacostia Flats.



“Send the library another copy,” said Plucky.

“Dos Passos, would you do that?” asked Sally.

Naturally the author could not resist the invitation and promised to replace the library copy. He then dedicated the novel to “Basile Beaulieu, Combat Stories at Anacostia Flats, June 10, 1932.”

Basile expressed his appreciation, of course, but the novel was not his choice of literature at the time. Basile had memorized, however, a few sentences from *Three Soldiers*, and recited the lines at a precise moment to surprise the author with one of his own scenes. “The company sang lustily as it splashed through the mud down a gray road between high fences covered with great tangles of barbed wire, above which peeked the ends of warehouses and the chimneys of factories.”

Dos Passos seemed hesitant that afternoon, but he was never at a loss for words. Yet, to hear a slight wave of his own novel, a strategic prose delivery, truly took him by surprise. He was poised and grateful, and wondered how many other authors had been waylaid with the recitation of selected sentences of their own work.

Dos Passos turned and slowly walked down a dusty path to the drawbridge. His shadow was narrow, and he might have saluted natives and veterans for their memories, actual stories of combat, and preachments about the war, because the chronicles of learned ambulance drivers were dead on the shelves of libraries.

By Now walked Treaty back over the drawbridge with her cousins, and then slowly along Pennsylvania Avenue to the ruins of the Federal Triangle. The buildings on the land had been abandoned, and the triangle became a reservation for the bonus veterans.

William Hushka, the first veteran they met at the site was from Lithuania. He invited the natives and horse to a camp supper. Hushka told By Now that he had migrated to Missouri and then Chicago, sold his butcher shop at the start of the war, and volunteered to serve with the first combat infantry units in France.

By Now was captivated by the gentle energy of his voice, and she caught her breath over the slight accent and the motion of his eyes and hands. Hushka wore a white shirt, and his forearms were smooth, clean, and tan. By Now was not ready that night to be teased about her sentimental manner, and the cousins held back their taunts and mockery of romance for another time.



The other veterans told ironic stories about the war and bonus march over the slippery dumpling soup with chunks of potato, and a hard biscuit. By Now drank the gray broth and scooped out the doughy mush with her fingers. Hunger overcame manners as she licked her fingers.

Treaty munched on the thick grass on the boulevard, and later she was fed oats. By Now removed the saddle and rubbed her down with a wet cloth, and then brushed her back and withers. Treaty raised her head and shivered with pleasure. She was the only horse at the Federal Triangle.

Hushka was eager to show the natives a neat pile of bricks with a magical view of the sunset over the Federal Triangle and Pennsylvania Avenue. The red bricks were stacked with precision in the shape of giant summer chairs. By Now sat with Hushka on the curved bricks and together they watched the glorious rosy hues across the sky.

Congressman Wright Patman, Texas Democrat and veteran, cosponsored legislation to provide a cash bonus to the veterans, and after many political tricks and diversions the bill was finally scheduled for a vote in the House of Representatives. Early that morning the veterans carried out their duty and marched with the Bonus Expeditionary Force down Pennsylvania Avenue to Capitol Hill. The veterans and families gathered on the steps, shouted, whistled, and waved hundreds of Stars and Stripes, state and city signs, and placard declarations, "Pay the Bonus Now And We'll Go Home," and "We Decided When to Come We'll Decide When to Go," and "I'm Helping Daddy Get the Bonus."

By Now was inspired by the march and the waves of voices, songs, and hollers on the marble steps of the Capitol Building. Commander Walter Waters ordered veterans not to enter the gallery of the House of Representatives, but the veterans were there to witness the speeches for and against the actual bonus legislation, and especially to hear the great friend of veterans, Congressman Edward Eslick, Democrat from Tennessee.

James Frear, Congressman from Wisconsin, rose to the podium and dressed down the legislators, those who earned thirty dollars a day "should not denounce these wet, ragged, bedraggled men soaked for days in the rain, who only ask for a dollar a day." Frear was sixty years



old and had served before the turn of the century in the United States Army.

Edward Eslick was the next representative to address the legislators. The gallery was a clear view of the speakers, but the veterans leaned closer out of respect to hear the great congressman. He gestured to his wife in the front row of the gallery, and started with an easy censure, "Uncle Sam, the richest government in the world, gave sixty dollars." Mister Chairman, "I want to divert you from the sordid. We hear nothing but dollars here. I want to go from the sordid side," and then suddenly he turned silent, gasped, doubled over with pain, and collapsed on the floor. Congressman Eslick, the honorable advocate of the bonus money for the veterans, had actually died of a heart attack on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The veterans were devastated by the sudden death of the congressman, and the next day marched in a cortège to honor the memory of Edward Eslick. Some five thousand solemn veterans waited to salute the procession as it passed near the Union Station.

Wednesday, June 15, 1932, the cash bonus legislation was passed in the House of Representatives. The mighty roars, whoops, and hurrahs reached across the city, over the drawbridge, and echoed through the marble hallways of the Capitol. Over the next two days more than six thousand veterans gathered around Capitol Hill to demonstrate their support of the bonus and to wait for the delayed decision of the United States Senate. The veterans were perched on the marble steps, camped on the grassy mounds, and sang a new overnight version of the chorus to "Over There." The Capitol Hill revision of the George Cohan lyrics that night changed the "Yanks are coming" to the obvious, the "Yanks are starving."

*Over there, over there,  
Send the word, send the word over there,  
That the Yanks are starving, the Yanks are starving,  
The drums run-tumming everywhere.*

Friday, June 17, 1932, the drawbridge over the river was raised and more than thirteen thousand veterans were held captive at Anacostia



Flats. Superintendent Pelham Glassford learned about the bridge detention, and ordered the police to lower the drawbridge. He declared the obvious that veterans were not criminals and had a right to stay or leave the camp. The veterans marched directly that night to Capitol Hill.

Walter Waters, commander in chief of the Bonus Expeditionary Force was the first veteran to be informed about the late night vote of the senate. Waters, dressed in his signature khakis, high boots, and bow tie, announced that the legislation had been voted down, defeated, and tabled by a vote of the senate, a “temporary setback.”

Saturday, June 18, 1932, Basile, Aloysius, Lawrence, and Paul were depressed by the death of the congressman and angry about the defeat of the bonus legislation in the senate. The senators had escaped through the back door to avoid the veterans on Capitol Hill.

Early the next morning the cousins marched in silence to Union Station, and boarded the first train for New York City. By Now would never leave without Treaty, and now she would stay with Hushka at the Federal Triangle.

By Now and Hushka traded personal and ironic stories, and they were always together at supper, shoulder to thigh, at the Federal Triangle. She teased about his accent, humor, and the tender touch of the butcher and infantry veteran. The murmur of their voices at every sunset was the show and motion of intimacy. Months later she reminisced that he had never sacrificed the easy and generous touch of passion with any trace of native romance stories.

Treaty was content with the sweet grass under the shade trees on the boulevard, and at least twice a week she was saddled for an easy tour of the other Bonus Army campsites around the city. Superintendent Glassford made similar rounds of the camps on his motorcycle, and Treaty could hear the sound of the engine at a great distance. At every chance encounter the superintendent touched Treaty on the nose, and then ran his hand down her neck.

Hushka had many friends at the other camps, and especially Anacostia Flats. By Now mounted Treaty that morning and trotted over the drawbridge to the river. Treaty high stepped in the shallows, and then plunged his head in the cool water. By Now invited two or three children on each visit to mount Treaty and circle The Hut.



Hushka talked with Anthony Oliver about a boxing event to support the Bonus Army, and then feigned a few punches with his boys Nick and Joe. Nearby, Alfred Steen was preparing to pose for a newspaper photographer in his sensational "burial case." By Now mentioned that she had seen him earlier in the makeshift mausoleum. "Bonus Soldier" was printed at the bottom of the mock burial stage. The veteran wore a white shirt and tie, and he was stretched out on a raised platform over the notice that "Most of us will be dead by 1945." The sign was an obvious reference to the Tombstone Bonus. The Congress had approved a bonus, a tombstone bonus that would be delayed by twenty years. "We want employment not charity," was another message printed on the simulated coffin. Alfred played out the tombstone scene with a great sense of irony.

Thursday, July 28, 1932, William Hushka, and another bonus veteran, Eric Carlson, were shot and killed near the Old Armory and the Federal Triangle. More than a hundred police closed the section in the morning, and that afternoon the veterans moved to recover the area. Police were pelted with bricks, and two officers fired pistols at the veterans.

Hushka was shot in the heart and died alone in the red bricks and debris of the city. By Now had mounted Treaty in the morning and was at the river in Anacostia Flats. She mourned for months that she was not there to nurse her lover from Lithuania. She imagined his last glance, and the last easy whisper of his life that afternoon.

Hushka must have been shot without cause, murdered by police, because he would never menace anyone. William was always ready to march and shout out the matter and cause of veterans, and protest for a cash bonus. He was a loyal veteran and never threatened the police.

Superintendent Glassford waved to the veteran and migrant butcher of destiny almost every day as he toured the many camps on a motorcycle, and whenever he stopped near the Federal Triangle they talked about German and the independence of Lithuania at the end of the First World War.

General Douglas MacArthur, Army Chief of Staff, and his tight booted aide, Major Dwight Eisenhower, commanded an armed military assault against the peaceful combat veterans. The soldiers used tear gas and bayonets to chase veterans out of the city, and then destroyed



with tanks and fire the huts, shacks and exotic shanties of the Bonus Expeditionary Force.

By Now and Treaty returned to the Federal Triangle late that afternoon and on the way saw columns of armed soldiers near the Capitol Building. Later, tanks and soldiers with gas masks invaded the camps on the National Mall and burned the flags and shanties to the ground. That night the army crossed the drawbridge and with bayonets forced veterans to leave the city. The soldiers set fire to Anacostia Flats. That night the capitol was a war zone, and the smoke lasted for several days.

President Herbert Hoover dined alone that night, and must have witnessed the glow of fires on the National Mall and Anacostia Flats. General MacArthur invaded the camps of honorable war veterans only to protect the president from the truth of the Great Depression.

Tuesday, August 2, 1932, By Now was one of three veterans and the honor guard at the burial ceremony of Private William Hushka at Arlington National Cemetery. He was born in Lithuania in 1895, served in the Forty First Infantry Division in France, and died as a veteran in the Bonus Army on July 28, 1932. By Now stayed overnight at the grave, and at sunrise she mounted Treaty and returned on the same dusty roads back to the stories of Bad Boy Lake and the White Earth Reservation.





ORIGINALY FROM CANARY ISLANDS,  
PATERNAL GREAT-GREAT GRANDPARENTS  
by Eduardo Sarmiento, 2012,  
ink on Arches paper (16" x 12" each)





NARCISO JUVIER & CARIDAD CONDE,  
PATERNAL GREAT-GREAT-GRANDPARENTS  
by Eduardo Sarmiento, 2012,  
ink on Arches paper (16" x 12" each)





CLOTILDE LOPEZ & ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ,  
MATERNAL GREAT-GREAT-GRANDPARENTS  
by Eduardo Sarmiento, 2012,  
ink on Arches paper (16" x 12" each)





REBECA SANCHEZ VALDES & EULOGIO SARMIENTO  
JUVIER, PATERNAL GRANDPARENTS

by Eduardo Sarmiento, 2012,  
ink on Arches paper (16” x 12” each)



J/J HASTAIN

*From* **Priest/ess**

Note:

**Priest/ess** is part memoir, part anti-memoir, part somatic map, part queer rant, part aura correction, part cathartic scroll, part eco-erotics, part self-imposed violence (re what is not preferable in my psyche (a process like dead heading roses)), part gender pus and gender opus toward psychosomatic and telepathic opulence, part necromancy, part quantum turbulence, part cross-world self-help manual, part sex magic/intimacies with my spouse, part sex magic/intimacies with Unseen Beings, part queer aphrodisiac, part animation of goddesses (forced and reactive), part confessional bridging, part poetics as mergers and part schisms for emancipation.

Disclaimer/Trigger Warning:

These books are not meant to represent any one person or entity in totality and any resemblance is purely fictional and/or coincidental. **Priest/ess** converges many realms, among them talk of sex and eros. Some people may find this kind of writing uncomfortable. Be it known, then, I am not offering any general cultural statement, but am weaving and relating my own experiences, their trails, entrails, trials and the like, over the course of my life within and without those many realms.



(  
Specific things that had to happen in order to keep the stones alive and warm. They were the ones responsible for beating the heart of Earth. When the stones were held—music of Earth could be experienced in a bodily way. Extensions of Earth could feel ourselves as Earth. Holders—proven Earthen.

Water was required—and a constant attending—love and warmth. Whenever I had to go teach or do something else in the dream I had to leave tending these sacred stones to someone else. Anxiety and guttural fear to let them go to another. What if they did not tend them correctly?

Sure enough I got back from one such event and the stone had been injected with something toxic deep at its core. They said they were just experimenting. It dried up as a result of improper tending—assumptions being made.

“No!” I shouted.

Then—overt application of love—bringing the stone up to my bosoms. Holding it there until the dead stone came back to life. **It occurred me as I was rocking this hard thing to life—I also did this with myself. Relation to self by gender. Real heartbeat tending against the agenda and demeanors of Earth.**

(  
She is holding me, singing.

“I’ve loved you for a thousand years. I’ll love you for a thousand more.”

Feel the settling. Feel how it makes my hair relax as she tells me the angels love how I work with image. Feel any residue of Dark Mother ease as she tells me,

“It is an honor to be around you. To be sculpted by you.”



Breathing God. Causing everything to loosen. Her kiss crooning my flesh. Sacred containment magnetized to the violent site. Caresses and cradlings like candlelight. Tell me you are desperate to be inside me. Tell me it is your joy to light me up. **Take responsibility for what you do to me—from inciting darkness to inviting light—and do it overtly—words going into my mouth and sex.**

She is socializing my cells to be a poem. I can feel it in her repetitions,

“The sacred bind of Druid to Priest/ess. The sacred bind of King to Queen.”

Our goblets are quaking.

Fashioning her in me by no other action than that she is in me. Somatic intelligence what holds this all together—not ego or identity.

“Open your hips wider to me. Let your secrets stretch to hold my wholeness.”

Now we’re getting there. The poem falling from her face is helping me breathe. This is what I meant God/dess: I love sculpting men—I mean—*man*—Mythic man as presence inclusive of many different sexes and genders. I meant sculpt by processes of endogenous sway. Growth by union—not combat or competition. Put me back together as a light body after such a deep dive into Dark Mother. Let neither of us be victims because we have both done our part to house the next step—light.

In the light my orgasm colors us both.

Later—at the restaurant—she hand-feeds me truffled mushrooms.

(  
Dove=Sophia=Wisdom—with time eventually became neutral-gendered breath of life sealing physical world to Spirit. In Sophia’s



mythos she so loved the human realm she came to be with us. Upon arrival she was not received—she felt largely ignored and overlooked by us. Us—being human beings.

The needle is dragging through my arm—distributing ink into The Dove's form from claw to wing. Crying—not because of pain but because of glory and promises. Because by heart I could call Sophia into this room of men.

“I won't ignore you, sweet Sophia. I will love you one-on-one—as the light that could be known by us together. Inherently light and dark integrated—not at odds with each other—not seen as polarized from each other. Let us cast long shadows of lace. Catch the sweat from under each other's breasts.”

The men in the room are calm as a result of claw and wing. He tells me he purchased special binaural 432 hz music for me to listen to during tattoo time—did this specifically so I would enjoy getting my tattoo. Such a sign of respect. So different from how the tattoo shop usually feels when I am not in it. I am aware I am being met by God/dess in the form of tender men.

It is nearly impossible to trace Sophia's origins to anything but myth. Sophia is iterations. She is associated with the Holy Grail (which—in times past—was actually depicted as a cauldron). Many faces—means including myriad goddesses who swirl and cast spells held in vessels of shadows. In order for shadows to exist light must be present—also forms. **Light responding to forms in physical world creates shadow worlds.**

Deep into the layering of tattoo composition the guy who is getting tattooed next to me is overwhelmed by the pain. I have known him for some time now—feel close to him. He regularly calls me “God/dess”—refers to me how I wish to be referred. I just hold his eyes steady. Help him distribute sensation. **Sink far below the flesh where the world feels completely open—maybe not yet formed.**



“Yes please...” he states, grateful I have lifted my leopard-print glasses to reveal stare. I recall a few sits ago—a different man was in the room during tattoo time—and was blocking my ability to assist him with the pain. He had the word “Logos” tattooed on his chest and I wondered why mister Logos would not let Sophia help him. Was mister Logos too self-involved in a Patriarchal manner to see her luminous hand stretched out to him? So representative of the impending impede (cosmic trauma) by which Sophia—Feminine face of God—was put on the backburner only to later be omitted completely by traditional clergy and conservative Church agendas. Such a problem for her to be right there—loving and interested in helping humans—and for folks to turn a blind eye—even blot her out because of their own agendas. I wondered then, if the Logos term on his chest was vibrating in response to Sophia’s stirs—even if he—as an individual man—refused to let her in.

I keep repeating the words “pathic aptitudes” and—after having explained to them what they mean—the men are repeating the words out loud, thoroughly enjoying the words—what they mean. In this case submitting is not suffering. It is freedom. Rolling them around in their mouths like young children sucking on gobstoppers they understand: you don’t have to be in charge all of the time dears! Roled-men herein become soft-boys—not as regression but as progress! In this manner there is infinite room for Sophia’s enchantment of males. When they are boys giggling—they want to play with her. Experience ease and even enjoy submissiveness in the grounded guarantees of her luster.

Sophia as dove is Spirit bound to the physical world by gender-neutral breath of life. That—in and of itself is what most royally crowned my lights.

Sophia’s core colors relate most deeply when care is being given her by humans.





SOPHIA'S FALL UPWARD by j/j hastain, 2017  
collage



## JOHN BRADLEY

### Van Gogh's Hereafter Ear

Someone must say it. In what garden, dear Vincent, did they bury,  
below blue iris glow, your hereafter ear.

*Everyone could hear it*, said the woman in the sea-green pharmacy, rubbing  
her lobe. *Hold me*, the ear throbbed. *Hold me near for a spell*.

I asked the air in Arles if it is true, and it said, *Read a book from the back  
and the front at the same time, and you never arrive at the same point*.

This is the way it will end and begin. A meander of ants holding you  
here, syllable to soil. Roiled sky wheeling above, as it does below.

*I saw him in the field*, said the sea-green woman in the pharmacy, *sharpening  
a spoon on a rock, talking in grunt and rasp*.

Ask his Gabby, who is sometimes Rachel, but always sienna, sepia, and  
sinopia. Ask Louis Pasteur, who is Dr. Rey, who is Vincent, open razor  
in hand.

Someone should interrogate: The walls he fevered. The yellow that  
stammered. The rent in the tenderest flesh.

Someone should interrogate: The vibratory saliva of the gone dog. The  
cup of granular sunlight downed each night. Sienna hair stuck to the  
brothel door.

Bound in brown paper, the hereafter ear, stained with sunflower grain.  
Held in Van Gogh's left hand as if a fissured fish. Pressed upon the chest



of the girl called Rachel. Who cleansed each day the damp brothel sheets.

How much, how little, the blade removed. *Only the lobe*, said some. *The entire ear*, said the dotted line in Dr. Rey's drawing, *annulled and annealed*.

As if Vincent, his left rupture. Said to her left scar, *Gabrielle, take this and gently rub it on the marred flesh for a spell*.

*Without yellow, without orange*, said the palette knife, *there is no blue*. Said the bandaged head, *For someone must say it. I am a beautiful monster*.

FIG. 7.



**A NERVOUS HORSE.**



**Rhetorical Velocity**

[Sheets have been draped over the walls and images are projected on the sheets. The following images should appear at random and without any sound: a hat flying through the sky, a smokestack falling and striking the ground, close up of a couple kissing passionately, bombs falling from a jet, someone writing on a speckled egg, someone washing her/his hands, an unblinking eye staring into the camera, a metal hoop rolling by itself down a street, two hands balling and then unballing a sheet of paper, an elephant orchestra playing various instruments, a mechanical bird circling in the sky.]

Moon: A tumult of sand wearing a burning boot. A hearse bearing a baby clutching a sandstorm. A swollen tongue lit by the friction of sand. All this shall pass at the speed of sand. As far as we know, sputum has never ignited sand. As far as you know, I am but the bastard child-mother-grandfather of sand. If not for the weaving wave, weaving wait. In the envelope, her letter written with a feather dipped in sand. Let me unburden your sand. Let sand rain down on the lizard's reign. No one needs to know how every day you betray your own sand. Sand traveling on the back of a transported transparent ant. Sand shadowing the shadow of a hand. Sand, as you know, should not be a regular part of your diet. Soon you shall come to depend upon its coat sandy shell. The emperor of appetite cannot endure without an audience, their mouths sand-stuffed. The minister of mist hovers above the long ladder anchored in sand. There is a pause, there is the apotheosis of sand, there is a pause. There is no other, no other silk. You owe sand only your first and last sigh. What wave, what weightless wait. Who has not salted his own sand, speak now, mouth, through every pore. As all this shall pass at the speed of sand.



KAREN GARTHE

# Mill

[illegible]

& verged      lyrics gasp the flower shills      rapt

Perfume. Costume. Promise

the very very *high shade*  
of birds

but not the birds, themselves. . .

the breeze blows the water wheel now THE MILL  
SNAPS ON ITS LIGHTS

lovely pear blossoms aisle      and fanged bark soothes to a ribbon  
soothes “to a man”

but the shaft of birds drives back in  
*the tight airless parts of wounds they lock*

so  
they tuck in the breast of an old personal street



**We run together**

We never  
left  
our *life on the spear end*  
*glinting* its point  
a scar      pressuring  
thru the sieve we leave our jackals

Behind the veil  
*you are*  
*pure love* ringing  
my hands    a font  
for  
the thirsty losing angel whose wing caught  
shouting down the door  
totalizing silence

we run together



**kind drug waltz**

Wild west to the river   sunset blinding  
the *beveling water*  
*right there* You are a soft grotto curved at the top  
of Old Glory painted on the floor  
a Futureworld  
of  
**Man Down**  
The **Dream Girl** who cares when you die   *arching Old Glory*  
your jailBlack Cross of *hacking*  
*lurching*  
*sea legs*  
of  
drunken plotting   your blood orange   whips   and ruin  
&  
Finally  
Last Lodge   Great Snow   in a mountain view  
sledged in the arms of the good long wife  
a kind drug waltz  
and the tv's blooming   scarf   of pale up  
country music

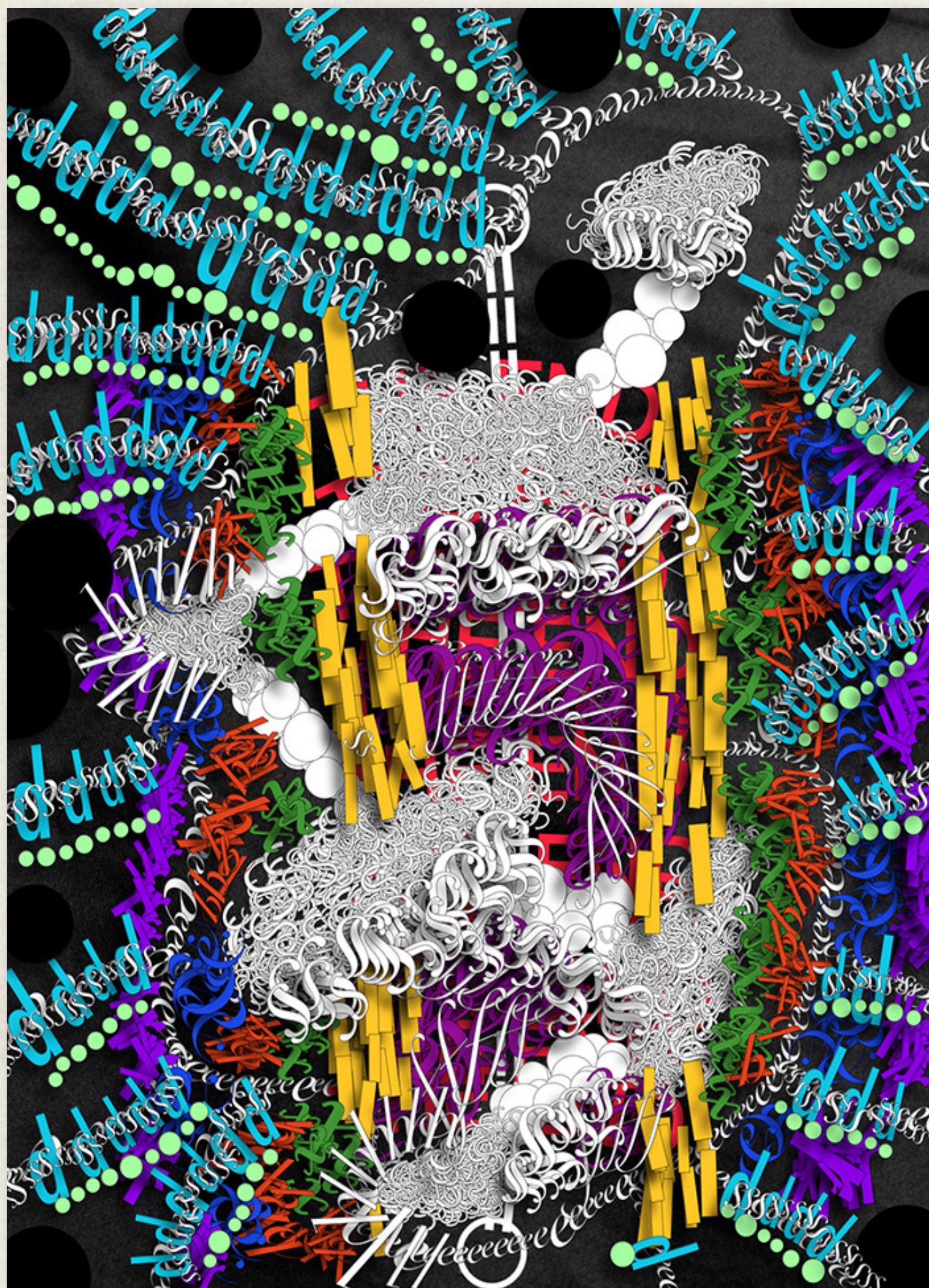


FOUR VISUAL POEMS BY NICO VASSILAKIS

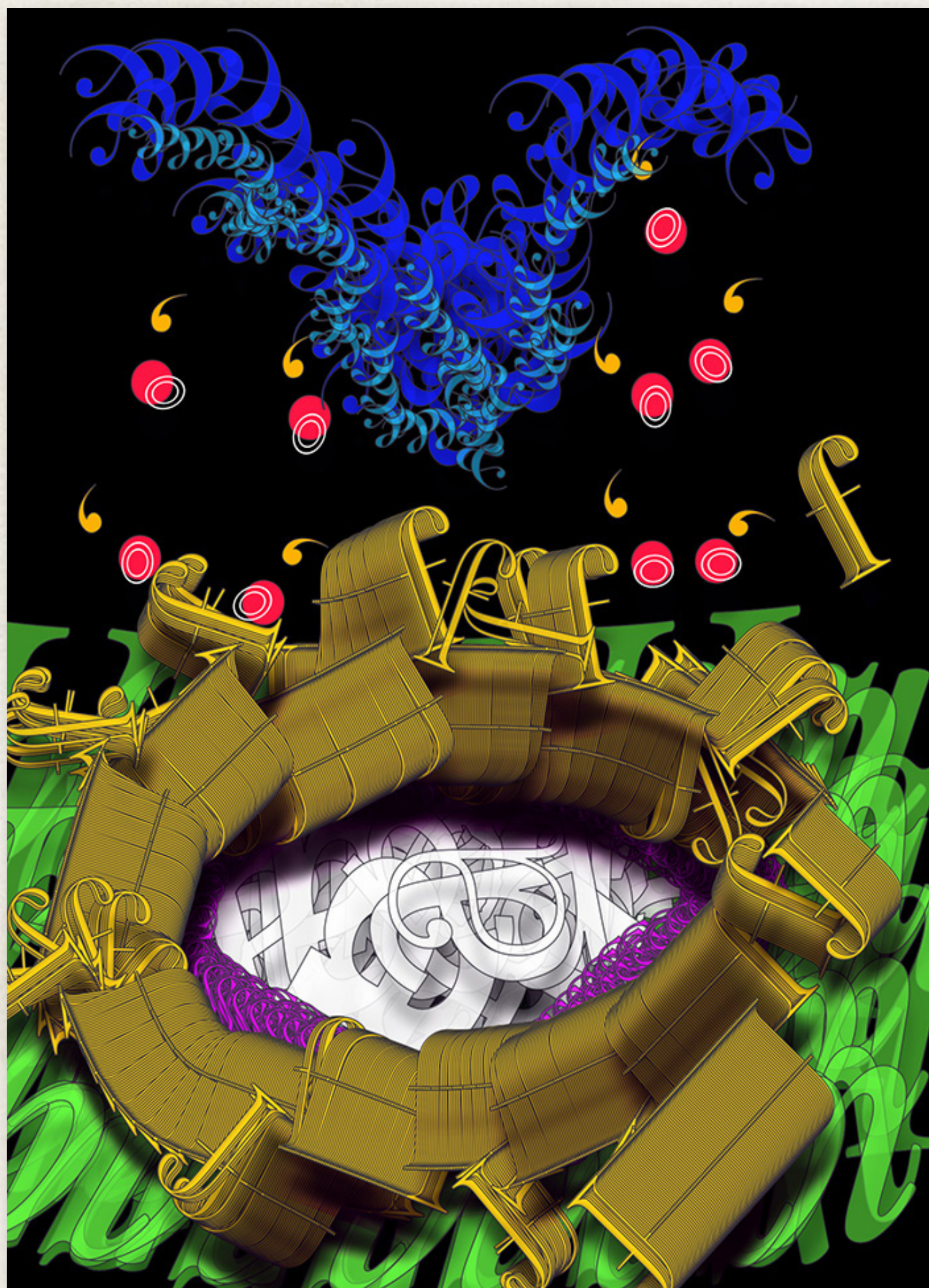


















## RAY GONZALEZ

### Home to Stay

Cliff houses contain wrapped bodies . . . forgive the black rosary bead  
. . . it will not conquer veins or skulls or slapped bare feet . . . the throat  
is holy . . . mountain peaks accept the dead when no one else will . . .  
rain finger . . . time to pray . . . go home to polish the baby stone . . .  
the teacher is not there . . . speak like a king and leak like a victim . . .  
cliffs often house the soul that is not afraid of heights . . . monks bend  
at the waist as they lift their robes . . . resurrection . . . the perfection  
of a troubling childhood memory . . . he said keep writing texticles . . .  
fumble the data . . . open the canyon shadows where no one visits the  
stationary light . . . it has to be an iguana . . . one for the heart and two  
for the sorrow . . . time forgave the plague and gave mosquitos a chance  
. . .not the moss on the cliffs . . . adobe ruins are a stereotype . . . so are  
broken windows . . . what change . . . tiny steps on the cattle range . . .  
I live by the river and hide my house away



## **Zen Antelope**

Broken curious , , , the cross . . . the lips in prayer . . . a pillar rises . .  
the invented self presides . we are not woven . . . flying nose drop . ....  
Remove the herd . . . treble wires vibrate . . do not believe . it is curious  
and devastated . . the crowd part of your face . . . sleepwalker's hands  
. . there can be a brick . you can swallow . . hooves across prairie grass  
equal migration with fossilized faith . . . horns belong . . if one thinks so  
. evolution of the invented self . . so small a picture . . . the horizon's  
a bison . . captivate understanding before intruders change your name  
. . . the spoken leg is given a chance . . the hunt with secular eyelashes

**FIG. 3.**



**AN EXCITABLE HORSE.**



## Broken Eye

Broken vision , , , carp denial and dirty nose . . . no one says farewell to old poet friends . . . they stay there and are mistaken for dead . . . this is not an error of compassion but an eyelash in your iced tea . . . email yourself when you clean hell with a vacuum cleaner . . . don't forget your diapers . . . slow drive to find pelicans and give up the rosary ' ' ' water does not pertain . . . each capture is the road that goes there and never comes back . . . mistake yourself for a fish and go popular as the latest saint . . . each afternoon there are baskets and nudes and more nudes . . . each night the scorpion dangles before falling off the bedroom ceiling onto your forehead . . . you sleep through the blessing , , , each morning your purple face is taken away , , , there must be fresh lettuce and a method of understanding . . . purple face clear throat dreaming heart . . . the politics of drive-by shootings and cop hunting . . . who rode first—the klan or the slave . . . who ate first the ape or the shark . . . why is race merely a trace of embrace . . . broken eye invents image of running boy smoking gunpowder and smoking eye . . . let you deny before you fly . . . we were scared when hippies roamed the earth . . . long hair was a sin because only Jesus . . . wake up . . . lava lamps melted in your bong . . . don't wish you are still not the fish . . . your wine is dead . . . the hawk is in trouble . . . it swooped and stole the bong but forgot the cheap lighter , , , no one goes nuclear anymore . . . what is a book wiped of all traces of scorpion tail intercourse . . .



## GEORGE KALAMARAS

### **Almost Autumn**

Once, when the insouciant leech was lifted from the bedsore, we praised  
the estuaries of the five senses.

I dreamt of the hairy patriarch of everyone's calm demise. And we  
were alive.

Then there was the horoscope containing nine secret lives.  
Each, somehow, belonged to me.

It is further from my left hand to my right, than from my right  
to the left.

I don't know why, though I scent of it and tongue and speak.

Yarrow clots are stalking the blood.

Hawk in moonlight is an enormous measurement of breath.

Another success is inevitable.

She sewed the button and I felt closed in, almost connived, in the  
not-quite fall.

Boil the water. Shred rags for coffee grounds. Sop the blood with sight.  
Help me to see the world.



**A Pitiless Expanse**

Or perhaps the upper indigo edge of a volcano.  
Or perhaps an ancestral pain in my expression of laminated watercress.

I no longer know the layers of snow, nor multiples of three.  
If they contain fire, that too is uncertain.

How quiet the clicked religion of everyone's film-stripped youth.  
How grave one of the many unmarked ant mounds of Lorca.

I was told all this by the sound of a brick fireplace resembling  
mantra diksha in my right ear.  
It was the winter solstice, and the radio was suddenly agape with Brahms.

Or perhaps it was the hibernation cough of a bear, hookworm  
in the nonexistent stool.  
Perhaps it was liver, sautéed Nametoko Bear Livers to be exact.

This issue, having departed from the layers of snow, was a  
pitiless expanse.  
I thought of numerous other expanses—sparrow breath of spun wool,  
the retina of a dead giraffe, that narcotic mole in the belly button of  
a certain woman.

Then I returned to the study of bones, not the least of which was  
a brightly failed corpse.  
It was sure, finally, of its emotional density, of unnamed fire, the untamed  
transience of all that human weight.



JAMES GRABILL

### **As the Solar System Holds**

The solar system punches down through the blue July afternoon rotunda from every direction, insinuating its impression onto the old cave walls far back in the interior of atoms making up this world.

Atoms of the Earth respond, concentrating what and where they are in the spectrum of interconnection. The solar system delivers its fingerprint circling orbits seen from multiple perspectives out in space, planets rotating, seasons wheeling, beings taking shape and continuing probably a while longer before ending.

The gas giants resound on the slopes of gravity. Buoyancy results from momentum, with the mind an emanation.

The ongoing creation of cellular systems presses down between valances, subatomic particles building steam up, out of nothing.

The more speechless completeness becomes.

The more undersea pantheriness insistence.

The more immeasurable genetic overflow.

The more manifestations of esoteric antennae.



## **Resilience of the Masses**

For we will survive with a resistance of spectacular color in the provinces of parrots and electrical washes across sides of cuttlefish talking in displays to the living eye, in light of the buoyant intracellular sun. We will find our way past any unschooled disavowal plummeting out of agrarian dance gone sour before sorrowful high-caliber erosions walking on borrowed bones under rhino-gray camouflage.

On the rising oceans of microorganisms, we'll see what's thrived or fallen in inexplicable pin-drop struggles, with or without more libraries cabbaged by fummy reserves of money-grabbing poachers who, no matter what, charge on, unleashing eruptions of reinvented gases that evade Teutonic regulation. But we will be following the road that no doubt leads out of here, making the place more sane.

For we will be leaving hermetic Chryslers and the muffled foul dirges of combustion. Our searchlights scouring unconscious Mariana trenches, our resistance pantheriness and lucid, we'll design tantric armistice on rises. For soon enough, salt-sea spawns will be flooding anyone's buried offshore vaults. As the root sinks, we will resist unspooled polarizations unleashed on persons. We will stand alert, in places possibly far from enthusiasm or solitude. We will not surrender bell-raked and ringing on archaic grounds to freefall baptisms or fundamental transplantations.

For we will harness current billionaire hoarding for the public work it is. We will intervene to bar further snake-tongued licks of metal-mongering predations from holding neighborhoods hostage. We will keep finding the route and adhere to fact until heavy money stops abandoning communities and damages are reversed.



## **Going On before Going**

Don't animals cry and sing under the moon and sun, lowing and bellowing, roaring, thumping, calling and chuckling, using their sense and voices?

When flat on your back, will you drink through a glass straw? Do you favor resuscitation by extraordinary means?

What day of the week was yesterday? Whose coup took the government?

Don't cells choose? Isn't the body thinking, in all the cells and systems they have in place alive.

May the mind grow quiet, calmer than the silence after elephantine thunders have contacted others in the tribe.

What's everything you might want or may need when it's gone?

What's anything that's yours if the risks are on others?

May better sense overtake the place. May what must be shared by everyone alive be claimed by all in perpetuity.

Could what's gone be going on, crowding in while vanishing?

What day does it happen to be when who knows where the time goes in its old car?

May the chief end of people help lessen suffering of others.

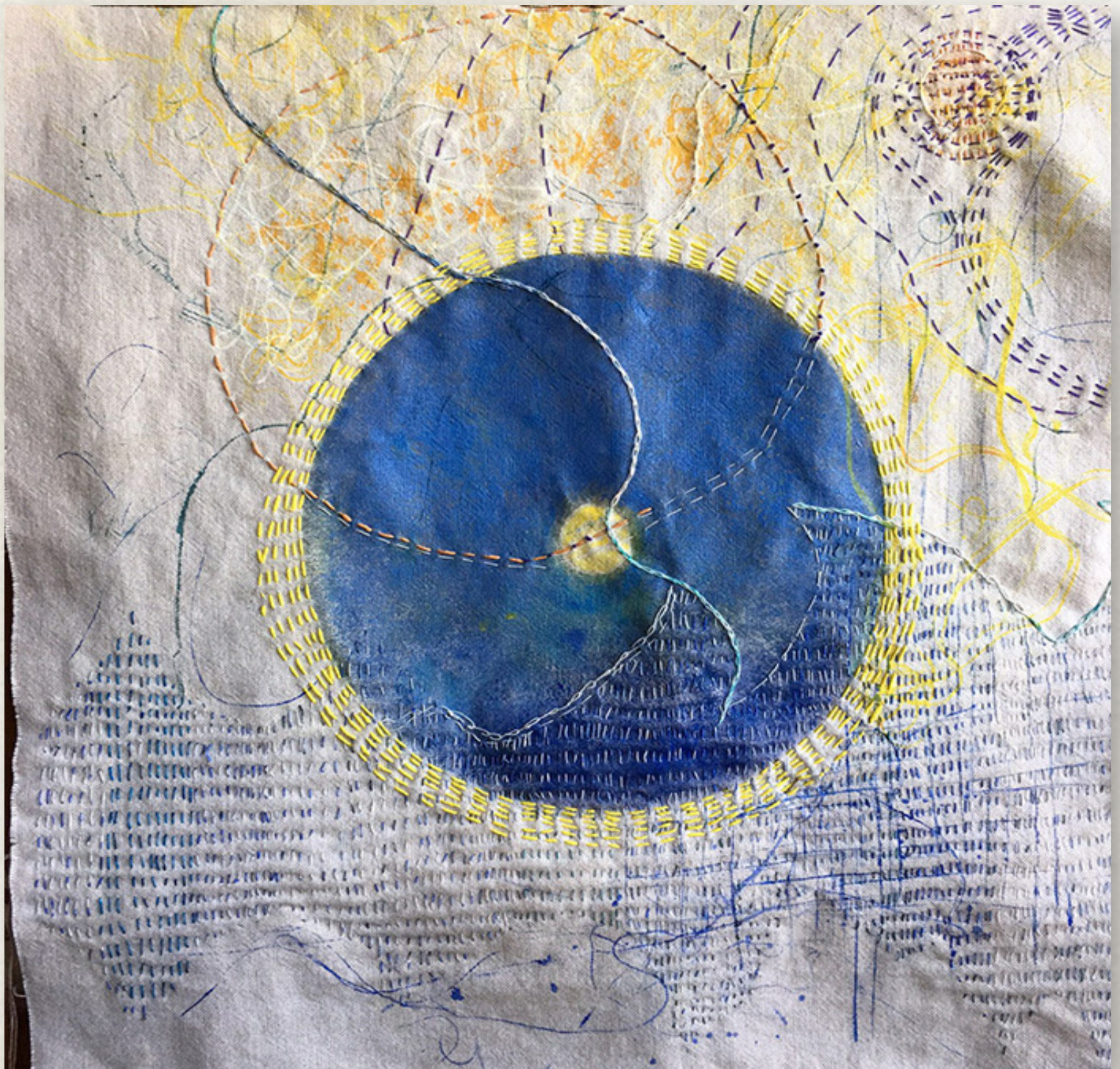
May education end, but not before dying.





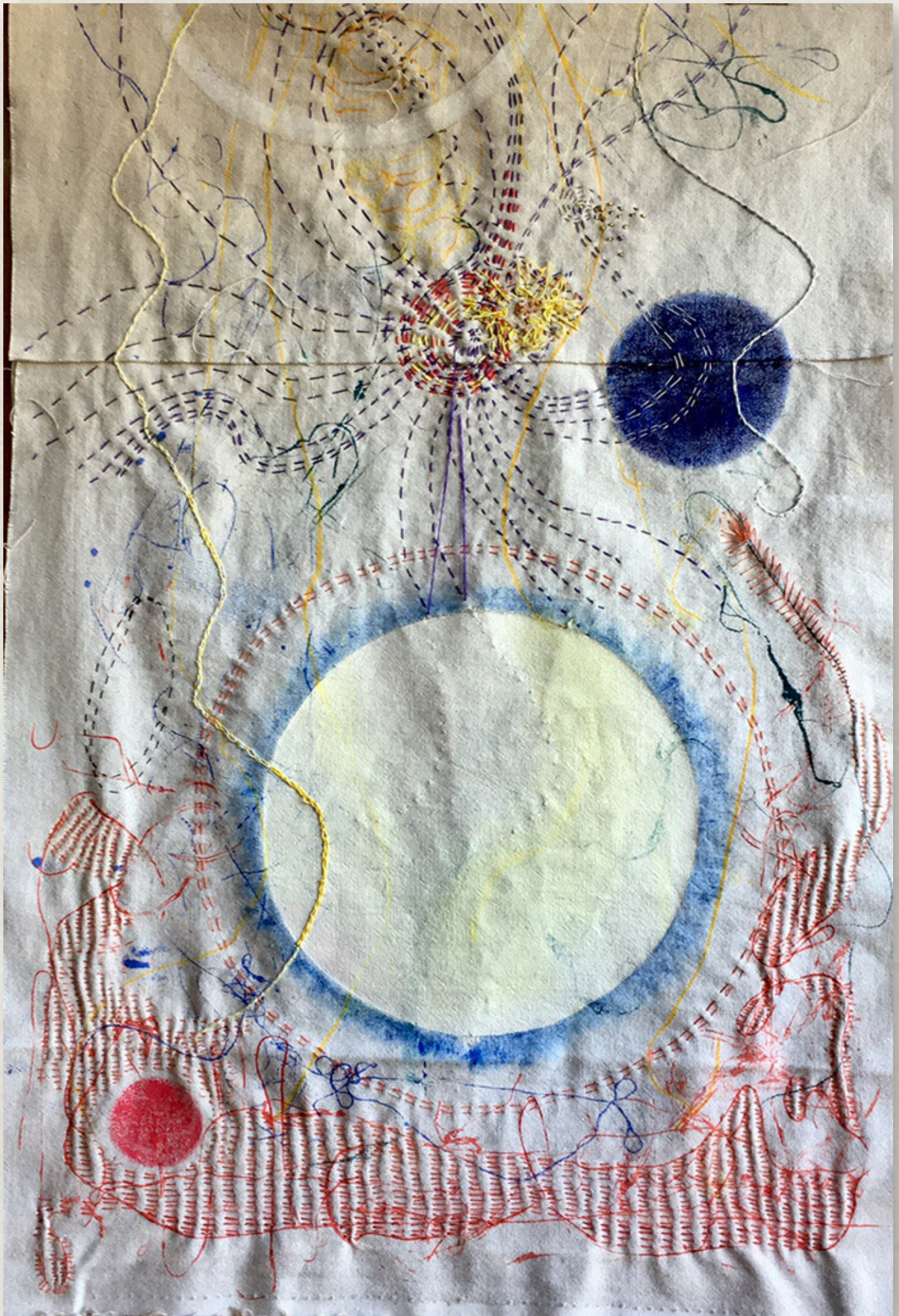
RESISTANCE: PIERCING THE ORANGE by B. Lai Bennett, 2017  
watercolor and acrylic dyed linen thread on primed canvas  
(10" diameter)





WHAT THE MOON DOES I by B. Lai Bennett, 2016  
acrylic, water color, linen thread on linen (24" x 20")





WHAT THE MOON DOES II by B. Lai Bennett, 2016  
acrylic, water color, linen thread on linen (24" x 20")



## FOUR FROM VOLHA HAPEYEVA

*translated from the Belarusian by FORREST GANDER and the poet*

when you are a tree  
and the wind has abandoned you,

you can stand still for centuries

and why care about birds with their piercing summer songs

when you are  
a tree  
the wind abandons



a little pony carries little children  
for the money  
their parents pay to its owner  
but it's still not enough  
to eat sweet carrots for dinner every day  
which is why tonight the little pony gets dry grass

I'm nothing like a pony  
and nothing like little children  
maybe I'm more like a carrot  
or the grass  
you've been chewing for who knows how many years

there was a time  
before I could spell when my mom  
read to me that book in which  
a little pony carries little children  
for free



they handed out compulsory happiness yesterday  
on some unknown Strasse.

someone ran up to me saying  
you have such irregular eyes, please,  
take a bit for yourself.

I brought it home and hid it  
in the cupboard without reading  
the instructions.

and then it turned out  
I had to live with it.



I'm opening my lips to the wind at a run,  
for dessert I'm ordering a caramel day  
so what if I wanted to marry a shadow  
for me your shadow was enough  
but the thing was that your language  
had no future forms  
so I used *to* and fell  
into some plusquamperfection



ROBERT GREGORY

**You're Breaking Up: An Attempted Conversation Across  
Times Between William Bradford, Wallace Stevens  
and Nameless Others**

These changes in the forms of things  
in my first times, Satan's large designs

Disconnected shores and sharp ones

The sails full of smoke  
the wild savages of America

The first breaking out of the light  
vile ceremonies, poor and peaceable souls

After the great defection

A curving word by far the best  
the several places of the world

That old serpent back again to talk and talk  
more secret and more subtle means

This was not the season for it

To stop the mouths, in the north parts, pursuivants  
distance is one way, not the better way

Must be silenced, they claimed  
as saw the evil of those things, in these parts



*Gregory/78*

Gathering the bees to bring them home on his forearm  
crying for fear, the many sharp beginnings

Seemed they were come into a new world

Fair and beautiful cities, cat hair and lightning

The fancy folds don't really hide the thing

Of a sweet situation  
in the agitation of their thought

Those vast and unpeopled countries of America  
to consume and utterly ruin them

In a poor condition, the delicate milk of the mother country

I have been happy in my first times  
the flames and their partners

Mistakes as a way of life

In the midst of all these distractions  
warm from falling

Examples of jangling and insulting

Quieted their spirits  
he continued to be a special instrument

A bundle of lead for a birthright  
folded in his fire, he wrote

Were readier to fill their sides  
full of arrows rather than otherwise



Stale moonlight, he wrote  
they saw she would be long in wending

For summer being done, the company of wolves

Clouds are pedagogues, he wrote

From the cold and wind, these hard and  
difficult beginnings

Dainty and queasy stomachs, the pensive  
giant, he wrote

He was not of these parts, and the heart  
of winter over

Pleased to be folded, pleased to be  
unfolded in time

In the late great mortality, a slender performance

The hand and its shadow, the murmur  
of ink in its hole

Former things boiling in his mind

Corrupt and naughty persons, entangled in the  
young vines

In the time of the wars, till the wind shifted  
shabby reasons and more delectable ones

The curious smear  
the coming of heat, the weight of the selves



*Gregory/80*

Spirits that stink of old grease and green lemons

The blue glass from an old grave, still good

6 am, a sleepy place, robins with their  
mercury songs & sugar falling from the clouds



## DALE HOUSTMAN

### **a charming boat**

•

From here to here  
to a body (and so on

a vinous Seine of hands  
crawling with ashes of a wave

buried in the telephone's  
moist mannerist daydream)

A debutante neurology  
damp from whispers

moors in the forest  
amidst a burglar's savored leaves

(A fountain of fingers  
netting the wild horse starlings

and these suede wires  
we hurtle across the afternoons

to transmit once or 'twas  
a hiss (or huff

of angelfood (  
of lush.



*Houstman/82*

**a bouquet of language**

•

Days shall not walk in unarmed

with a coat thrown over the nearest bassoon  
and the heart's flute a blossom of crawfish

(blue as if married to a beach chair)

It's true

Waiting is true (

One pauses

(for orchids

at seaside

in autumnal brisance

A river unanchored

chimes)

violences

deep as a book

of joyous arrests

(petty with green egrets

and greener deer)

breaths of targets

Their black boats

in a ravine of applause

(Moonlight turned at every window)



It's true  
Waiting is true

One pauses)  
For orchids  
at seaside).



*Houstman/84*

**this Paris of rodeos**

•

Evening all about (

Evening all about (

I won't go on

another minute

about evening

all about (

•

This Berlin of operettas hidden

in this Paris of rodeos

(I disapprove of this Paris of rodeos)

Yet I like that girl

What's the name

*Toulouse Lautrec*

sporting loose yellow ribbons in *Café Visage*

(Gibsons & gimlets & gamins & giraffes

(Dreams

of the newest summer

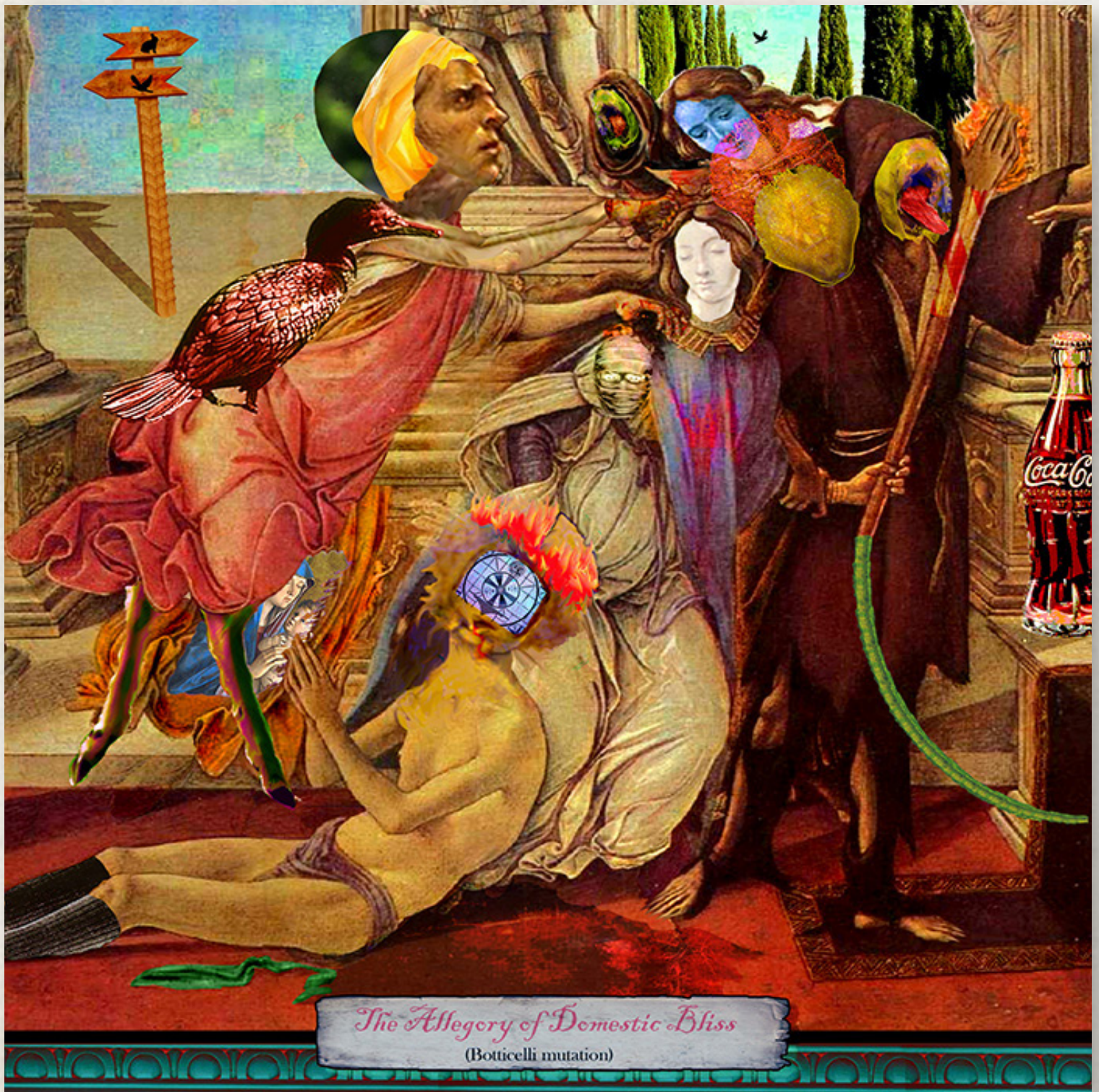
studied by an army of hands)

Yet I like that girl

What's the name

*Toulouse Lautrec.*





ALLEGORY OF DOMESTIC BLISS (BOTTICELLI MUTATION)  
by Dale Houstman, 2017, digital collage



TIMOTHY LIU

**Country Music**

You were a one-hit wonder  
and mine was the kind of face

that happened to catch

your fist. More than half  
of the congregation had fallen

asleep, lulled by the sound

of a sermon that even you  
no longer believed but gave

anyway because that's what

you do best. The red tags  
mean "half off" at the Kingston

Goodwill, my favorite find

a Western shirt with snap  
buttons backed with pearl

and silver threads interwoven

into fabric willing to trace  
the rise and fall of your chest



as I ride off into the sunset

with a fattened lip and a pair  
of blackened eyes if only

you had kept on crooning—



FIG. 2.

**A VICIOUS HORSE.**



**Ode to My Fundamentalist Father**

He tried to keep himself  
busy about politics  
and whatnot—collective

angst and apocalyptic  
prophecies filling the pages  
of yesterday's papers

and broken links  
to fake news sites  
no longer worthy of

archival attention.  
That he wasn't any good  
at intimacy really goes

without saying. Nor my own  
attraction to him,  
wanting to shake him out

from a bad dream. *You*  
*can see where this isn't*  
*going, can't you?*

my father said just before  
he died. There, I said it,  
but you know that doesn't

make it true. All his notions  
of Heaven and sitting  
at the Throne, Neoplatonism



be damned. To spend  
an eternity like that, really?  
WTF!, I texted. Then

I saw three grey dots  
flashing inside a thought  
bubble for what seemed like

an eternity, then nothing.  
Either he had changed  
his mind or perhaps we were

caught in some serious  
Mercury retrograde?  
Later on that day, one of us

must have butt-dialed  
the other, neither of us  
willing to own up

to a chain of missed calls  
unworthy of our leaving  
even a momentary voicemail

to explain. If you could  
send God a smartphone,  
which model do you think

he'd find most amusing?  
before my father went on  
about how the Galaxy 7

had a faulty battery  
he'd like to see go off  
during an opportunistic



*Liu/90*

selfie at a Trump rally!  
which, truth be told,  
made me love my father

more than any Bible verse.



## DIETER WESLOWSKI

### **This Time**

when I open  
my refrigerator, the herring,  
pickled in wine brine and laced  
with slivers of white onion, call  
out to me.

Remember us?  
We were the silver flyers  
at Dreifaltigkeit. We knew  
what you were going through. Granted,  
those ice-etched windows of  
the infirmary were not the work  
of angels.  
You had the fever but good.

Brother, for the sake of our knowing  
how things can seem to be  
other than what they appear and all  
those who eat us to fill their loneliness—  
twist the lid open.  
Let us escape, just  
this once.



KAREN NEUBERG

*(blue) whisper*

I am connected to the (blue) whisper  
and the answers always there  
revealing themselves to me in phases  
of years lived. I want to tie them  
to the tunes, to the hungers, to the final  
array shimmering with the finish  
that finds me, however it finds me.



J. I. KLEINBERG: THREE FOUND POEMS



creating her  
domesticity

Museum of

the tiny  
kitchen

in herself

*the*  
*moon*

**BLUE WALLS**

grief

chandeliers

and a wide

Hall of

stanzas



does  
the knife  
feel  
the hand

engraved with

mysteries:

sophisticated  
bone

*hard*  
*nerve*

*work*

wordless  
metaphor



what plants  
smell

pride of  
the moon.

the envy of  
rain

*the scent of  
light*

and loss?  
ask the  
leaves



## ANTHONY SEIDMAN

### **Enough Barbarity**

Today is the day  
when ash licks the street till midnight;  
today's the lighter fluid;  
doors blaze, human hair smolders  
in cages displaying chaparral during mating season,  
and the gawkers point, puff  
cigars longer than smokestacks reaching the space station  
where astronauts drool in zero gravity,  
and a boy imitating his Father Beard  
shivers as he spoons the oyster's living eye  
from the shell secreted in deep leagues of silence.

Tell me about  
the heart living as a mountain lion,  
tell me about  
the mountain lion slinking backwards  
through the phylum  
and emerging as ejectae  
from the blink-wide anus of the trilobite.

Tell me about  
living in urban cinderblocks  
while bouquets of underpriced human spit  
sizzle in the beakers  
of the lobotomy specialist.

Tell me about the snuffed flowers,  
and the black gloves,  
and the boxcars



full of ambergris, gold, violins, and  
pinned butterflies inside cedar display boxes,  
and surely the shrill noon  
of a desert slum  
halfway between Arizona and exhaustion,  
might spit a spoonful or two  
of salt & vitamins for a pair of wayward sneakers still  
stuck to the carbonized feet of a teenager  
who, like her peers in bluer latitudes,  
sniffs pink rabbits along a trail of soda-caps & soda stew.

Because teachers instructed me on the heart  
as meat,  
as pump, muscle,  
blood sluice, blood sponge, blood drain,  
but never  
the rock which when smashed open  
reveals a web of veins wider than the Milky Way,

carbonaceous: the Heart,

a cluster of lava, obsidian, water, krill, fish-flick, foam & brine, tidal  
tongues laving the shore, mute thunder of terrapin straining up sand  
towards egg-lay, brittle flowers, foot of vegetation into cooler patches of  
green shadows, palms, ferns, the errant parrot, the paw of the jaguar,  
the distant clearings, smoke-swathes of incense, the pathways, and the  
temples;

they were instructing me  
on the false heart,  
stringing its arteries through my teeth like thick  
wires of dental-floss,  
cleansing my concerns,  
coughing my statistics into funnels of oil;



they were shaving confetti  
from my bones,  
they were sticking wasps  
to my tongue  
in the hope I would sing glories  
of the chimney, finger painting,  
the mythologies of baked potato,  
oil derrick as cocktail lounge for sirens,  
and they were carving the roast  
of a gold hog with teats longer than yuletide scarves,  
while the poets burping tenure,  
put on sunglasses  
darkened by the magnetized strips on debit cards.

(Enough barbarity.  
The vandals took office. )

Not too long ago, a century,  
a decade in the past,  
a poet lost on these same plains of asphalt,  
took it on himself to construct the natural history of tar,  
and he regarded these urban basins,  
then he heard the sifting, rising dust on a storm sweeping  
the radiation-riddled desert of Mars,  
  
and he nodded.



## **Offspring**

I make a hat from the cloud,  
and I declare myself a stone.  
I feed some silence to the siren,  
then remain still as a lizard.  
I bequeath a solar system,  
yet to be discovered,  
with a planet of warm water,  
to the fish I unleashed  
when I broke into wild laughter  
when the rain wouldn't cease.  
But my hat no longer fits my mind;  
my clouds sink like stone;  
and the lizard has flitted while  
bushes rattle, and hawks dive.  
Each night I invent a globe,  
adrift in stunning blueness,  
the type of marble a boy holds up  
to the sunlight, slowly  
rotating his treasure so that it sparkles,  
only to awaken as an adult,  
with an attic full of wind,  
a closet filled with empty chests,  
and thorns instead of a tongue.



ANDREW JORON

**On Revision**

1.

Dear redeemer, or crossed-  
out choice: there are no crimes in nature.

The thing is: A  
Meaning wants an enemy.

Why light  
Was made to miss—

Why the myth is little to the mouth.

2.

Trace, once traded for a deed, now dead:  
A  
Name too far from reference

here returns to its ancestral treehouse.

*See* Wood, knots in, 666; whorls in, 999.



3.

A

rampant temporality is needed—

one recursive to fire, uncontained

As any verb without a subject.

First never, first nerve—

The work of working *wing*  
against *king*

to vary & to  
Void its major meaning.



JAY PASSER

**Date Night**

We looked at the legs of the buried horses which were sticking up in the air. Meager sunlight through gray haze. There's satellites up there with billions on the line. Awkward hooves, hordes of black flies. Even my past-life wrangler had to look away. This is what happens when equipped with dried-up ears strung on a leather cord, stepping out of rotten boots: I haven't quit walking away. The rain beating on the corrugated roof, the candle set too close to the pillow. With fences falling to ruin, the creek a mere trickle. Finally, I quit listening. It's a real wet day, the mud of the track pounded molten. Why not a toast while we run for our lives.



## **Election Year**

It's smash in the middle of the city, or was it the landlord carved out of ice, or maybe I lost my keys again. Bike pedals and cops with heads like perfectly crafted beach balls, armed with bombast and semiautomatic vindictiveness. Sure, there were deaths by shooting naughty children and valued pets, sure there was compromise and the peddling of fish, various qualities of smoke pumping into the uncompromising sky. I finessed a beheading when the feature was programmed for a hanging: goddamn it! In the old days you'd jackrabbit, heart quick like a stone skipped across a cool creek. Hey! That's only worth a half day's shoot. Set designs extremely refined, and in the end just a couple iconic monsters stalking Town Hall, sorely equipped with the weaponry of halitosis.



JEFF HARRISON

**The Word Ancient Was Just A Long Impatience**

nine million Sphinx were contained  
in fifteen long rows of Sphinx

upon which Sphinx should Virginia,  
the sepulchress, hang her name

Virginia's name never occurred  
in all the words princes place  
though powerful her patience

in all her words, princes place their  
foot yet east, fair verse, to night

her murmuring green worth  
is rich also with pearls, dainty as  
a nightingale in fair glass

so droop, voices, and your mouths  
move a blue rasp of silken blood,  
mouths move in the every shape  
of what's hidden beneath sands,  
lowest like the sphinx hung with  
V's name, crying meteor, meteor



**A Leaf From the Faucet Hill Quarrel-Book**

the wonder sprights, already foolish  
& cramped into history, those sunny  
clump-by-jot animals do ring grammatically  
(they thought I was of the sea, from  
the slow dark of the waves, but I was  
of the sky, though still counted among  
the meat Virginia's characters paw)  
& in the tombs of the Sun they crouch  
squatted though they're wingéd  
the first who beheld Moon already Moon  
together they shine an immense letter  
southward from Three Ghost Circle (as  
the Sun is addressed on Faucet Hill)  
& in the tombs of the Sun they crouch



total (12)

take  
seats  
away  
in parade  
fall behind  
bells  
& horns  
passing  
flaking statues



clash



april  
locked  
by bent  
tulips  
a splash  
on ashen  
heads  
turned  
up

*finished 9/24/16*

TOTAL (12) by Guy R. Beining, 2016  
mixed media

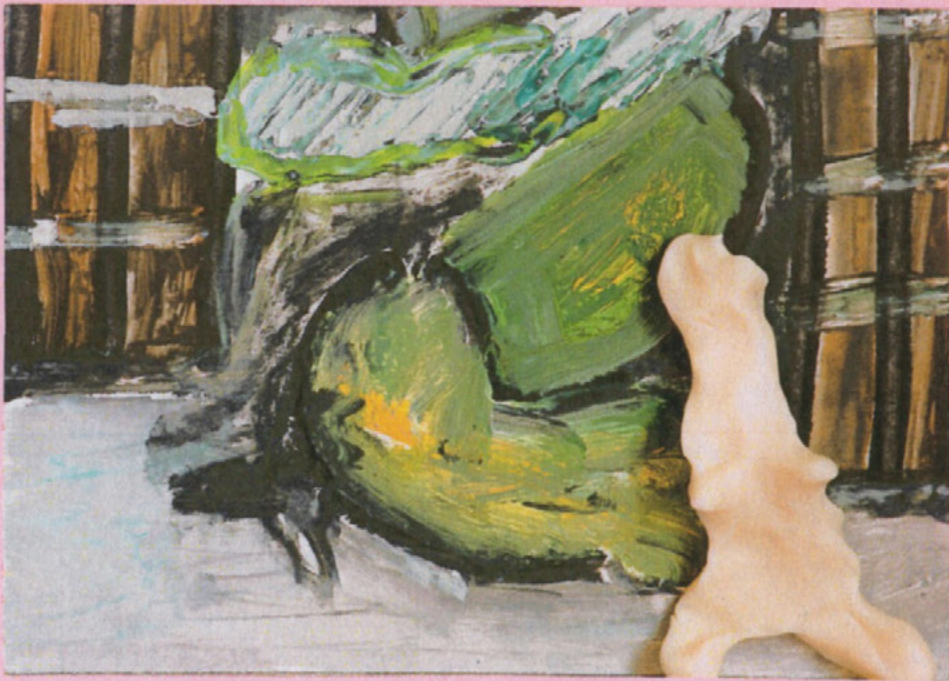


total (13)

quintessence  
quiet tense  
speak easy  
draped  
grinders  
ribbed  
a melon  
sound  
thumped  
the heart



minced



the chapboard  
hut  
was in splinters  
after  
the crash  
then  
a long  
silver spoon  
was used to  
feed the boarder

*minced 9/24/16*

TOTAL (13) by Guy R. Beining, 2016  
mixed media



CASEY BUSH

**A Card from Katie Meyers' Mother**

a caravan reaches the desert's edge  
and comes upon a cemetery  
that extends to the horizon  
camels turn into horses  
and nomads to conquistadors  
a woman steps out of a large vase  
soap bubbles float from her mouth  
waterfalls in the ocean  
pyramids full of decay  
Greek ruins  
resembling the faces  
of birds and fallen leaves  
driven by arrows from a crossbow.



RAYMOND FARR

**There Is No Rocky Road or Tomorrow**

1.  
Home is where  
Fire sweeps over me

Like the opposite of  
Snow & sleep is

Just another face  
I hang on the wall

& I'm out walking  
At twenty past four

& the street is a stray  
Dog chewing the plenary

Soles of my boots  
Down to their stitching

It's how I mourn  
The sublime error

That has taken you  
From me

& I'm thinking  
How frame after frame



Of nuanced porn  
Can only segue

To the flowered arch  
Of a tired piano

To the one-eyed  
Monster of wishing

2.

I was not  
The same man

There was sawdust  
Sprinkled like blood

On the snow & I could  
Never scrub my body

Clean enough  
I could never

Isolate the factors  
You sd, let's go

To Sorrell's  
During the late '80s

& eat selfless chives again  
With Duran Duran

& then placed  
Yr teeth on yr own



*Farr/112*

Ten adorable toes  
& bit down on them

With desire  
I was just

This punk kid  
Always playing

*I'm on the Road Again—*  
The one & only

Great Country Joe  
& the Fish song—

On a comb  
I'd made of ice

One winter  
In Boston

3.

Huddled  
In the sweetness

Of the gym  
Shadows of

The deepest deep  
Woods where

We live  
Silence



Borders on  
A frustrating

Lack of  
Narrative

& there's hunger  
In each nerve

& it's all about  
Rhapsodies

& the meaning  
Of one drop

Of ink in  
A shrouded

River of ink  
& the gentry lost

& paddling  
For their lives

Nothing about  
An evening's

Conversation  
Or this curious

Razor we  
Figure is ours

Or else  
Someone's



**This Perfect Yellow River**

The handsome vase on the piano  
Is almost like a David Bowie finger up

This perfect yellow river  
Our teeth pooling in the valley of the dead auriferous

Rats without teeth & so I grab a thick blanket  
Before getting some milk

& women, I find, love themselves best  
In a can of soft green asparagus



## BRANDON PETTIT

### Obedience

Blowing down Main Street under the dress of some  
Poor women I am the click-bait News Paper Headline.  
The traffic directions even when you've bought The Collector's  
Edition

D-cypher cereal box GPS drone.  
I am the puppy mill.  
I am the maker of all leashes

And yet I can't understand how my compatriots do it—  
Hook the bad dog to its leash again & again  
When *it* is the bad dog standing still

In its power over ownership.  
I think, "Look at how obedient I can be under command."  
I think, "Look at me

Sniff this air—."

I think, "Look at me  
Looking at you wagging your tales  
When I don't chase the bank robber

Getaway natural gas van."

I think, "I don't necessarily care if you see red  
Or green, Now or Later,  
I will roll over and play dead."



But have you untied yourselves  
From the empty joyful jobs  
That health and oil drums?

I think, “No. No. This will not do. You must first unfollow  
yourselves.”

FIG. 5.



**A HIGH STRUNG HORSE.**



**Missed**

The pier we revered.  
These undamaged ears.  
That ten-cent dog bowl  
And how the invitation  
To winter by the  
That doesn't take. Choices.  
Like a mitten and fat hand that squeeze  
Warm knocks from the clock tacked  
To History's trap door  
In the outhouse as birds call  
For a howl of more seed.  
As the oily engines  
Winding down the lake buzz  
And wave over September  
The signs on all three shop doors read

No Mental Gymnastiques Requ.

No firevorks.

No, Jokes. Please.

Drumming our fingers on the mirror ages  
And marries more of the same

Dust just like the hearts of those saddened  
Shadows pinning their laundry to the lines  
Stretch to the arms between city and city.

*Listen, it wasn't meant for you then.  
Not here. Not here.*



A box of red tulips sunsets the violin on the doorstep of tomorrows'  
Work? *Not now,*  
*Not here,* I said. I said Strike

I must leave you this skeletal mood ring.  
No, please. Take it.  
You can smelt it for its gold.

You can mail the ashes back to me.



## CATHIE SANDSTROM

### Tracking Papa

“Paris, 1948. *That* would have been the place to be...”  
*my father in conversation*

In the year my father died  
a psychic told me he was circling me.  
This rang true. When his orbit

grew elliptical, I knew he was ranging  
farther and farther away. I assumed  
he was headed for the distant regions

explored only by the dead.  
So I was surprised to see him  
years later in Rome, Terminal C.

He hurried past me at international  
arrivals then folded into the crowd.  
Tonight in the *LA Times*' arts section

a black-and-white photo, *Café Procope*,  
*Paris 1948*. Sartre lights a cigar.  
Boris and Michelle Vian, in animated

conversation while Simon de Beauvoir  
leans in, lips pursed to dive into  
the argument. In profile behind them,

my father sits against the wall, the black  
frames of his glasses, his receding hairline,  
unmistakable; the front of his face



hidden by Sartre puffing cigar smoke.  
But in '48 Father was younger,  
his thick hair all bronze waves.

We were stationed in Japan. War  
in Korea still a year away.  
This photo's how he'll look later.

Now I see how death liberates,  
the soul able to travel forward and back  
through time, through space; unfettered.



## WILLIAM MOHR

### **Echolocation**

1.

A fish doesn't stop breathing when it swallows another fish.

Twenty years ago a friend and I took a discarded door and turned it into a table. I used it to write on until I earned enough money to buy a desk with drawers. I moved the table outside. Now four dozen potted succulents grow on top of it behind my apartment. Hard winds subside, leaving small mounds of sand against the fence across from the table. I begin sweeping and get carried away, brushing up sand way past where I was going to stop. Suddenly I'm sweeping around the cars parked near the alley.

Second graders crayon their fingernails red. Infinity will never repeat the perfect alphabet, a shy audience with an extraordinary fondness for toys with rubber wheels. How did I learn to read? I memorized the alphabet and then as many combinations as I could answer on a spelling test. The alphabet was an easy target, but how did I learn to remember? I don't know. I assume it's like breathing, not something you try to do. It's automatic, irreversible, hopeful, maniacal, reconciling, worth it when I answered 20 out of 20 questions on the written part of the driver's license test. The art teacher talked perspective, the music teacher tapped black dots on lines. I didn't understand the perspective of harmony. Control, control, control, control, control. By whom? Does anybody know where I am right now?

The main purpose of education is socialization, training 30 or 40 young humans to be in a room together and not panic. Same thing with a job. Part of it is just so someone knows where you are. Most jobs will try to call you if you don't show up for work. Think of it—someone's



worried about you. Didn't know you got that with your paycheck, did you? As for death, the teacher explained it as a termination of illusory space, i.e., you were dead before you were born, so don't worry about it happening again.

Black letters for products, red numbers for prices, he smacks each one onto a black suction cup at the end of an aluminum pole and hoists them to the slats in the parking lot's signs for specials. All winter three potted plants hang from the lowest branches of a tree in the next year. In June green leaves have hidden them.

The ice cube sopped up the cranberry juice on the rim of the plate. I did it more than once to make certain I didn't imagine it. Of course the "ice cube" was frozen cranberry juice in the first place, so the frozen water left after I sucked the cranberry juice out of the ice cube had an affinity for the molecules of cranberry juice still caught in the cube. The juice seeped up through the cracks which my mouth had sucked it out of. I dumped another trayful of frozen cranberry juice cubes onto a plate and brought them to you on the couch. When I was a boy, we used special rubber molds which my brothers and I could shove wooden sticks into to make our own juice bars. I haven't seen any of these molds since the late 1950s.

Surfboard tethered to his ankle, he strides over the shredded residue of a fading tide. Fuzzy on the backside, yellow-brown sycamore leaves tumble. The instant my brain realizes the sole of my shoe is pressing down on a snail's shell, my step is balanced too far forward to stop and I can't help crushing the snail, though I back off enough not to kill it completely, I don't want it to suffer, so I step on it again harder with the toe of my shoe and I feel the rest of the shell crack. I feel awful even though I didn't do it intentionally.

Playful witness: black spot on the updrafting silhouette. Resonant turbulence scavenger. One nostril plugged up with cylindrical toilet paper walks past a woman who stubbornly grips her buffeted umbrella near the bottom of the handle. "I've never dyed my hair more than two



colors at a time.” Once Cathay and I were hiking and we saw a squirrel bobbling a large chunk of horse dung, nibbling bits of straw. She saw us and dashed away without her food. She stopped halfway up a tree, chirruping, terrified that we might be interested in her double-poop hot fudge sundae. A waterfall’s scampery ultra-green. After the shunt, Nevada’s mother-of-pearl acetylene prism fizzles mist.

My brother Joe, who is eight years younger, dreams about Dennis Christie, someone he never met. “Who are you, Dennis?” my brother asked in the dream, when the figure identified himself. “Ask Bill. He’ll know who I am.” I tell Joe that Dennis was the toughest fellow on my high school’s football team. He truly enjoyed running at people and knocking them down. He wasn’t vicious as such. In fact, I never saw him take a cheap shot at a player after he was tackled. He didn’t need to take cheap shots. He just clobbered you the second he got you within arm’s reach.

After high school, he volunteered for the Marine Corps and was killed in Viet Nam when his helicopter crashed. I remember at his funeral Father Lanphier tried to console his family by saying that any person who dies in defense of his country is a martyr and a martyr is instantly admitted to heaven. I didn’t believe Lanphier not because I didn’t want Christie to go to heaven, although I was fairly doubtful about its existence, but I thought that only Islamic people believed in that solider as martyr routine. I thought Lanphier was a hypocrite anyway. Halfway through my senior year, he expelled a half-dozen jocks, including Christie, because the football team had lost five consecutive games. The explanation was that the school didn’t want these students to ever go out looking for a job and say that they graduated from Marian High School.

A loud explosion. The cellar had a secret window through which I could see dust and pale debris bulge into the sky. The heat from the explosion was extremely intense. I couldn’t stand it in the cellar anymore and I walked up a staircase. Halfway up, I saw a refrigerator jutting from the wall. I opened it up. The cool air blubbered over me. I didn’t realize how hot my skin felt until I was standing in front of the refrigerator.



“I enjoyed watching you dance last night.” On top of the telephone pole an utterance of myriad strutting whistles, clucks, shrill pecks of consonantal nestic doublings. What is human consciousness and what is it dependent on? What is without which it never would have existed? Literally, the sun, as a written language is dependent on an alphabet. Without the sun, human consciousness could not exist. The idea evolved of a being whose consciousness was not dependent on the sun and that Being became the Creator. But the Creator is not “conscious.” The ultimate and most extreme error of the entire process of anthropomorphic projection is consciousness. Consciousness is a state of being which demands rituals and procreation.

The penultimate goal of this planet’s present era is the consciousness which will exist in and of itself, capable of traveling in the universe by the act of perception itself. Consciousness is the only element faster than the speed of light. It will encounter other beings and begin to plant galaxies in the nothingness beyond the border of the “universe.”

The most painful part of consciousness in this century is the awareness that not only does an individual’s life not matter, but the species itself is under constant threat of annihilation. The pain is almost comic in that we don’t realize how unhappy we are. The only way we could ever really be happy would be if we were born and the thought never occurred to us that consciousness could cease. Even if we abolish nuclear weapons by the end of the century, we will pass on to our children the fear we’ve lived with in the same way I carry my uncle’s fear from the Battle of the Bulge.

Language is an utterance of the sun. It is not separate from the other sounds of existence. Words are only one form of Sound within the experience of all beings’ perceptions. A sloppy bubble of boiling milk flops over the side of a pan. How does the sentence just read disappear so quickly? A temporary finish, poignant until the next one. In the 2nd floor lobby of an equity waiver theater, John Thomas recites the definition of the color “isabella” and the story of its origin.



Divy up the Halloween frosting. A fluffy red rag propellers lumber downhill. Six sides of candy bar boxes stapled to the restaurant's side beneath the counter's large-display menu. Private meaning, public sound.

2.

A compositional imperative, reverence for shrimp and orchids.

Raindrops dangle from pine needles. Deities in exile prepare their evening meals while listening to clarinet solos.

Sediment backs down. The size of her hands aroused me. They were not that much smaller than mine—her fingers were almost as long—but they were strong enough to make me happy with my strength.

Somehow one particular galaxy learned how to irrigate itself with the run-off from other galaxies, or so the theory occurred. The next morning, taking a shower, I thought, “Notice, Bill, you didn’t say this galaxy.”

I met a hundred people whom I met again, and became curious about, which is the only loyalty that friendship can depend on. What’ll become of their inevitabilities, which seemed so plentiful when we first met, but few now have the same proportions. But those few! —luscious as hot water feathering into the tub with my head leaning back on a towel.

Afterwards, an omelette embraces green peppers and gladiolas.

“I felt like a fool, even if nobody was around to see me.”

A construction worker knots the end of a strip of yellow plastic around the bottom of a newspaper coin box and then unwinds it down the slope of freshly poured concrete.

A child runs across a field and stops beside a tree. The tree is very tall, taller than her father or mother, and does not walk around. It doesn’t



need to walk around to get what it needs. That's how tall it is. She knows she will never be as tall as the tree. She reaches up her arms, adores the smell of bark and leaves. The tree has no eyes or ears or mouth and yet it has a face which is like the face she touches when she takes a bath.

In the back of the book about the family's picnic getting ruined by a rainstorm, there were decals which could be glued onto the sideboards of bunkbeds. I didn't want to use them on the bunkbed I slept in because my father was talking about moving to another place very soon and I was afraid he wouldn't move this bunkbed and I would have to leave my decals behind. Instead somehow the book didn't get packed and the bunkbed did get moved.

A crippled man shuffled after me, persisting in his pursuit even though I began to run quickly and, in a few minutes, left him so far behind he disappeared. Then I headed in a new direction: a smart move to end up at the lake. He wouldn't dare swim after me since one arm dangled uselessly next to his side and one leg could do no more than pivot around and balance him while he stumbled forward. I dived in and breaststroked out, turned on my back and looked towards the shore. He was only ten feet behind me, slicing through the water, doing the maniac stroke.

As I got dressed, I reached into my drawer and found a tin-foil box with the bottom edge of a tee-shirt poking out along its serrated edge. I pulled on it and a red and black tee-shirt came out. When the collar appeared, I jerked down and the tee-shirt separated from the next one, which I also pulled out. Soon I had a stack of about fifteen tee shirts, neatly folded. The box was empty, but I didn't throw it away—not that I was hoping for more, but it doesn't hurt to keep it around. When all of the tee shirts were faded, the box was still there.

Several pairs of earrings were scattered across the cover of the stereo, only one of which I bought. The vase which was your birthday present has wilted gladiolas in it, their blooms shaken out from the bottom up. Somewhere in you by now I exist and that's the hardest part of love because it's not the me I hate and loathe, but another part which



has enough compassion on my loneliness to say, “Stop it. Don’t you recognize a gift?”

3.

Tiny steaks of horizontal blue flickered on a muted sheen.

Mud baths. Locomotives.  
A duet of compassionate placidity.

He ran away from his siblings and gave the ocean his only salutation—wiggling his butt and shaking his arms above his head.

People who feel small  
need their shoulders rubbed.

We depend on randomness to reconcile, on fragmentation to subdue.  
Or am I only talking about my own loneliness?

Extinction of  
a ferris wheel.

Atop pillars which they have scrambled on, two boys crouch, motionless, posing for their oldest brother, who is repairing the flat tire on his bicycle.

Gladiolas embark.

Koki painted the walls of his bookstore a dark creamy green. I didn’t recognize the shade of green, just as I’ve never seen a red which even remotely approximates the red cloth that hung from the ceiling of my bedroom, fluttering and beckoning. An elevation; and I have never felt so happy, so blissful, as I did then.

The illusion of a whole  
strawberry in a jar  
of jam is not a deception,



the liquidity surrounding it  
on the spoon dissolves  
onto sourdough, stranding  
ripeness on the crust.

As the bridesmaids cross the street, a policeman's fingers toy with the  
switch that whirls his red lights like a top. Their dresses have a pattern  
like the wallpaper his wife showed him a sample of last week.

Darkness pressed into sand  
by a tide's lingering thrusts.

On scaffolding drifting from Bulldog's Batteries, he chisels italicized  
plaster off continental brick.

Backlit stroll of seaweed,  
like a caterpillar lounging  
beneath the ocean's undulation.

A young girl stands on the first tread of the staircase, which descends  
sideways to the ocean.

Crosshatching. Magnetized.  
Shrinking lakes. Clean stones.

As he dumps another batch of dead flowers gathered from the Memorial  
Day gravelaying, he picks a lemon from a tree.

On one of the globes  
through which this axis sways  
he sits back down, rubbing  
the wet hair on his legs

Even if it were possible for others to see our dreams as they were  
happening, would their descriptions be any more reliable than any other  
eyewitness.



Imagine a sentence that lives  
with the ferocious playfulness of a  
dolphin.

A eucalyptus in a motel parking lot with lane lines painted to indicate  
that it is parked there.

4.

The rain stops. Last night I drove a bus with windows large as a  
laundromat's. This afternoon my umbrella taps the aisle's grooved  
rubber matting. Steady click of signal to the bench. Beyond sports car's  
polished hood and roof, on a center divider, a kid is selling flowers in  
cellophane crooked in his arm. He's sipping a huge cup of carbonated  
soda. The world can be erased. Blank space surrounds the cellophane  
and straw with the sip halfway up.

Each letter of "COIN OP CAR WASH" is bolted on a separate yellow  
board, spaced above cinder block stalls. The van hoses down the man,  
meticulously. At a gas station across the street, an attendant lifts a car's  
hood and smothers the radiator cap with a dirty towel. Yellow paint,  
cracked and peeling. The rim of a basketball hoop bends towards  
cement. A bird's nest in an almost leafless tree.

Two crisscrossed boards nailed to the stump of the pine tree. Where's  
the hammer? There isn't any hammer? Did we lend it to someone?  
How could we lose a hammer? Maybe it's in the box with the paint  
roller. Luckily I put the key to the carport storage box in the same place  
every time I use it. The trajectory of every time I use it, mapped out on  
a grid which does not account for the times between its use, how often,  
whether in a regular period of time, or sporadically. We take a chisel  
and bend the boards back, then twist and rock them loose.

"Do you remember your dreams?" I asked the fifth grader. "Yes, but  
they don't make any sense." "If you write the dream down, it might  
make more sense," I tell her. "Sometimes when a person writes things



down, it makes more sense.” But then I realize that writing down the image only makes it make more “sense” to language. The image itself doesn’t make more sense. Words make sense to other words.

I walked through the turnstile beside the row of cash registers. Shopping baskets were shoved into each other so the metal rods overlapped each other like a series of squished cages. A fly zipped above the metallic tunnel, fissures in the surface, a waffled runway. Back and forth the fly dribbled its drone above the cages, the metal “ve”ed like water rippling behind a duck, the cages about to be filled with lettuce, broccoli, eggs, spinach.

You nailed a painting above the bed, a nude of you painted by a woman, leonine tints sideways leaping. That night, asleep, I turn over. Suddenly my back winces. Maybe this is only another dream about nails, like the ones slowly poking out of my feet which I pulled as gently as I could. How could there be a nail in the bed? We changed sheets after we hung the picture. Surely if you dropped one -- propped on my elbow, I rub its tip—it would’ve flipped off as we flung the dirty sheets into a cardboard box across the room.

A child walks down the bus aisle. His mother says, “Sit anywhere you like.” He walks to the back of the bus. She sits in front of me. “I can’t blow my nose, mommy. It’s blocked up,” another child complains. “I know it’s blocked up. That’s why I’m showing you how to blow. Close your mouth. You can’t blow your nose with your mouth open.” But the kid sits there, whining, his mouth gaping at the kleenex.

On the top half of the oblong front walls of the Globe Tire Company, a “chevron” of a tire skid glows in light purple and dark purple. A half-dozen palm trees are strapped to the side of an insurance building.

A pile of asphalt, granular embers. Two men shoveled it, and two others raked it away from the corner of the intersection. A man sat on a small tractor engine with a huge metal roller in front for flattening the raked surface. Shovel and rake and roll. Steam rose into November’s morning



sky. A man leaned his rake against a telephone pole and scratched his damp tee shirt. The new gasoline pumps were still in their boxes on top of concrete islands beneath the overhanging roof.

The bus diver lifted the ironing board from behind his seat and left the bus. He leaned it on a wall next to a pay phone. Black on yellow, stencilled vertically, on telephone poles. No benches.

The liquor store clerk lifts the white plastic tray off a rack and dumps the water than had dripped into it since the store opened. He replaces the tray and the tall beer bottles that surround it.

5.

Alongside seafoam lace, tape on a restaurant booth. She sits on her father's shoulders, her thighs pressed against his beard, her hands scrubbing his curls.

If you don't wake up, it's said, before you hit the ground, you'll die. But it isn't true. Actually, I don't remember landing, but I certainly remember walking around afterwards wondering if I would be made to jump again because I hadn't died the first time. They were making some other people jump and they went straight down, bounced with a big puff of dust and died. Somehow I jerked my clothes out so they formed a tiny parachute and it was just enough to slow me down so that I was falling, but flying at the same time. It was a very exquisite, distinct descent. But I was scared because it seemed that the longer I floated, the more my speed would build up and soon my tiny parachute would rip.

I thought if cinnamon tasted that good on toast, how about straight up, poured on my palm, and licked.

A groundswell of flannel. Clouds, spidery and triumphant, forget preliminary acrobatics and go for ecstasy.



I don't know why I'm so obsessed by women. Many times it's their hair. It's one of the first things I found attractive about them when I was a young adolescent. She walks by with a pineapple over her shoulder, green spikes sprayed out beside her tawny tied back hair.

All the guests were enjoying the party. I was putting on a new album when a wave of water churned around the lawn chairs, turning the back yard into a small island. I stepped into the water, hoping to get back to the house, but it numbed my bare feet immediately. As I stepped further out, the channel became much deeper, pulling me away into the current. I reached back to the island and tried to pull myself up on it, but my legs were soggy, bloated, gulped down. I became terrified I was going to drown and desperately thrust and heaved my legs over the edge, and lay there, exhausted.

6.

On October 27th, I drove down to the University of California at Irvine from Santa Monica to visit Bob Kuntz, a poet I knew from San Diego State. My motorcycle was a Honda 100cc, which was not big enough to take on the freeway, so I took the Pacific Coast Highway route, a three-hour trip each way. Three weeks later I received a message from the California Highway Patrol which requested that I give them a call. They had something to discuss with me concerning a traffic complaint in the Huntington Beach area on October 27th. The vehicle in question was registered to me. I looked at a calendar. What's going on? I didn't get stopped by any cops. I had been very careful driving through the beach towns especially, since it's well known how much such towns depend on traffic citations for their city's income. I called the CHP. They informed me that a citizen had called and reported that a 100cc motorcycle had been driving wildly on the streets, zooming in and out of lanes of traffic, ignoring stop signs, driving onto the sidewalk and over people's lawns. The man had not gotten the license number correctly because when they ran the number he'd jotted down through the computer records, there wasn't any such license number. So then they scrambled the numbers, figuring there was a possibility that the man had transposed



two of the numbers. The numbers and letters were combined in every possible permutation and the only two 100 cc motorcycles with any of the combinations were mine and another person who lived in Northern California. I told the officer that indeed I had been through that city on that particular date, but I had never gotten off the Pacific Coast Highway, not even for gasoline. What puzzled me was the coincidence that that day was the only time in my life I had ever passed through that city and yet someone claimed that a motorcycle resembling mine had broken the law. I suppose I could have denied that I had been anywhere near that city on that day, but I was too fascinated by the coincidence to lie. The officer on duty told me they couldn't press any kind of charges against me since there hadn't been any officer "present" to witness the wild driving.



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

**KAREN GARTHE:**

I get about 12 news feeds on my phone every day, to keep up with the details of our gringo catastrophe. It's perverse how much media attention is paid a man so clearly non-dimensional, that one-celled creature of greed trolling mouth open for all he can swallow, an insecure transparent glutton requiring gold-plated everything. What IS interesting is the ascendancy of a man whose trivial celebrity eclipsed the most qualified presidential candidate in American history. You can call it anything you want, you can call it "chocolate milk," but it was misogyny (above all). Misogyny pure and simple. What if this black cloud of ours has a truly silver lining? If because of its corruption, it lifts us to new purpose—truer values, compassion and empathy, to "more love." What if this blatant error provokes us to heave off the tide of idiots and tyrants? Anyway, that's my hope if we live long enough, if the Orange Supremacist doesn't nuke and stumble us (or anyone else) off the face of earth.

**FORREST GANDER:**

An exhibition celebrating CD Wright's forthcoming paean to beech trees, *Casting Deep Shade*, opens at Brown University this week. The sui generis book—poem, research, "prosametrics," as CD called these rangy forms, comes out at the end of the year from Copper Canyon Press.

**DALE HOUSTMAN:**

**Corners Inside Corners in a Corner**

(A Whiney and Owl Tale)

Whiney sat down and thought about a Corner and sometimes He thought about the Bottom Ground which is a sort of Corner and then He thought about a Long Short minute ago which is a sort of Corner until He came running back to when He first accounted for everything



and it was now a Corner owned by a Someone playing happily in the Wallpaper River and then sliding away beneath the New Green Beds of smaller and newer Streams and knowing Something Himself about Corners and very often Corners of great charm although a Knocker disturbed Owl who went all to Pieces and Places and very often Pieces and Places of great charm and Whiney cleaned It up again and again missed some of It and It was blown into one Corner that was not any of the Others or even Another which was Terrible and Bothersome even when Whiney looked in the Honey-Based Thing Cupboard which was full of Corners which Whiney filled with Knockers which were of the Nearly Handsome sort if ever Knockers were Nearly Handsome and somewhere Someone thinks they are Sometimes and Somewhere Else a Bush stood in another Corner and part of It came off in Whiney's Hand but Noone seemed to want any of It so It blew into another Corner and not the one where the Pieces and Places of Owl were but another Corner which Whiney was quite fond of in the Best-To-Sleep Days when Corners were rare and thus each One was Very Much More Nearly Handsome.

**NAOMI RUTH LOWINSKY:**

In winter the mountain holds my gaze, seen through naked branches over the neighbor's roofs. It's been a long stormy winter emerging from drought. So quickly too little becomes too much.

Mother used to say, "You Californians are wimps about weather." I can see her bracing her small body against the wind from Lake Michigan, back in the day when she knew who I was.

Now it's spring, still raining. The trees are aglow with green. The mountain is gone.

A dragonfly lives in the East, dispelling illusion. A frog inhabits the West, wiping the mire from my eyes. The mountain holds the middle. What middle is left to be held? The mountain is gone.

A man is walking the woods, looking for origin stories in the roots of trees. A woman wanders her mind; she's losing track of herself. What became of the red thread? Her words fly away like a flock of starlings.



Don't even ask about dreams.

Mother is driving a jeep. We're in India. She brakes for the women who stoop on the road, making intricate patterns of leaves, rocks, sand. Their saris are vivid—emerald, violet, peacock, peach. "I've always loved this about India," Mother says. "We're not in a hurry to get anywhere, right?" I say, "Right, yeah?"

**CASEY BUSH:**

**Last Words of a Free Range Poet**

As we get older life accelerates with fewer moments for reflection and suddenly you're a pulverized insect on the windshield returning to eternity's dustbin. My eulogy should include mention of all the books I've read in alphabetical order. Spread ashes along with the collection of my fingernails assorted by size and color. Remember me as a student of number theory who could name the primes but was unable to count heads. Repeat after me: if Jung was the son of Freud, then Abbott must have been the twin brother of Costello, and Santa was born on the same day as Jesus. Divide and conquer. Multiply and go forth. When in doubt, air the dirty laundry.

**BRANDON PETTIT:**

"If I could father time, whose son would I be?"

"You'd be light and dark and then you'd matter."

"Thank you, Zen Say."

**JOHN CROSS:**

Resist (!)

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her something, she from the after mater  
iality. I to (!) no of possi  
bilities which the *A* text these name; scribes  
cally in desire. The nervous ments of  
in communification in consum



ption proclaims this techno-taunt. Functional  
ity machine replaced, slides – collapse.

**DAVID GIANNINI:**

**Challenge**

You're painting the room well, you think, rolling the ceiling, then rolling the walls, using brush where walls and ceiling touch.

You begin to feel the room gathering itself to receive what can't be covered: your shadow wanting to move beyond its darkness, desiring more than cast.

So now you know a challenge of poetry to embody home: walls and ceiling fresh as reams, and an alphabet of shadows becoming you, you think. You dream.

**J. I. KEINBERG:**

We discovered the Magic 8-Ball would give the best answers when we asked the right questions. We learned well, carving words from our marble throats into songs we already knew, every refrain yearning for love. The oracle is in the pen, the scissors, the keyboard. Always carry string. You have conviction; that doesn't make you a convict. Concentrate and ask again.

**TIMOTHY LIU:**

No matter who are running this country, we have to live our lives. Many of my favorite Tang Dynasty poems were written when the country was being invaded, torn apart, from both without and within. In the past couple of months, I have reread **MOBY DICK** and **THE ODYSSEY**. Both of these classics are as relevant as ever and help me not only to live my life but to write my poems in ways that socially-mediated news cycles can't hold a candle to. **ORLANDO** is next up on the docket. My fantastic wish is that those running for office in the future election cycles can be conversant with such seminal texts.



**WILLIAM MOHR:**

This morning I took my 20 year old car to a vehicle emissions testing station in Long Beach, California to ascertain whether it is generating too much pollution. Since I can't afford to buy a more recent model of transportation, I was gratified to have my car pass the test. The owner of the car that had just finished being tested turned out to be a teacher, too. His car was only slightly younger. He told me that he got his Ph.D. from UC Irvine about a half-dozen years ago and that he has been working at Orange Coast College. Both of us expressed gratitude at having a job that is not likely to be replaced by Artificial Intelligence in the near future.

Of course, maybe some major breakthrough in technology will accelerate the socialization process of AI, and this morning's casual acquaintance and I will both no longer have a job to drive to. Right now, we are just pondering how soon it will be before we no longer have to drive to work, but can spend our passenger time in class preparation. In AI's vision of this process, however, perhaps it is multi-tasking, which is to say that even as it will be directing the car's controls, it will also be mulling over how it would answer our students' questions. Drawing on the way our thoughts get captioned in car's rear view mirror, AI will be holding dress rehearsals in our tumbrels.

After I got home, I checked my blog site for the first time in several days. I started a blog ([billmohrpoet.com](http://billmohrpoet.com)) about four years ago, but only began recording the number of hits and visitors it got after it notched its 200,000 hits. From various comments made in conversations with friends as well as e-mails I have received, there seems to be a discrepancy between the frequency with which the website records my blog's readership and the perusal it otherwise gets. I suspect that I would keep posting on the blog even if it showed that no one was reading it, if only because the format gives me an impetus to make an entry akin to keeping a diary. Whether an "individual" configured by AI would be capable of enough self-reflection to initiate and sustain a blog is one of the questions I have about the deployment of such a diagnostic intervention in human evolution.



This brings me to the question of AI and handwriting. I do, on very intermittent occasions, still record the events of a given day or weekend in a journal, and I do enjoy the much slower process of writing this down by hand. While I am rather embarrassed by the crude, slightly oversized quality of the lettering I produce with a pen, it does seem to testify to a naive earnestness on my part. In contrast, I wonder if the perfectionist inclinations of AI would ever tempt it to feel abashed at its clumsy efforts to mimic the elegant calligraphy of its thoughts in external form. Or would that “handwriting” be all too mechanical and all too easy for counterfeit: in fact, indistinguishable from the travails of any other hand holding tightly to that primitive urge to carve the sounds of human perception.

**DIETER WESLOWSKI:**

This is just to say that in these humans-acting-badly times (then again acting badly seems to run in our blood), we should remind ourselves that plums are still delicious and only need to be got out of the refrigerator, that is if we desire a small, round, juice-filled taste of ecstasy. Speaking of which, get thee to the nearest park (green space) and start walking. Allow for fifteen minutes or so for your brain’s left hemisphere to dechatter itself. Then--look up, look down, take a dervish spin ‘round, pick up a fallen oak leaf and smell its earthness, listen to rustles and sings. Now you get the picture.

**J/J HASTAIN:**

(  
In the dream I was with the woman I had been with monogamously since a child. She eventually outed her “boredom.” Many thousands of people of the world were present. It was as if The Great and Spacious Building (building in one of the teachings from my childhood in Mormon Church) had opened a monstrous mouth to release some kind of pestilence: un-surety. Among the world she told me she wanted to be “poly now.”

I was frustrated and heartbroken and confused. The bright big world immediately shrank to the Mormon Church corridors wherein I was



lost in what seemed to be an unsolvable maze. Trying to metabolize the loss while wandering—I was walking around the corridors when he saw me. Man I dated when I was a teen. He saw me and I sort-of didn't look him in the eye. Walked in on another missionary home coming. Implied I was supposed to have been performing at it but I hadn't learned the music.

Saw a pink smear over the missionary's face. He said something to me about being desperate for a wife. I said,

"no honey—the result of my experiences won't make me a Mormon wife."

Then I was writing another man in the room about my life. Telepathic writing. Wrote something like—

"Looking for Cosmic man and Cosmic cock to fulfill the woman in me—because that part is being cultivated now."

He circled this phrasing vigorously with swirls—as if something in his psyche had been relieved.

I woke feeling that T, my lover, would be relieved by this soul lesson—how I monogamy desire and am also responding to the woman in me who needs nurture while being cultivated. The Cosmic man would do this.

When she wakes my lover is immediately telling me of the rune she had pulled in her dream—all about male fecundity.

The day's page smells like marriage oil.

### **JOHN BRADLEY:**

1. And so your entire mouth has the right to crow, even in a crowded crawlspace, a poem of any charring. 2. As any self-regulated compost pit, hungry for words, will tell you, you have the right to carry a poem, disguised as limb or organ. 3. No one may shilly-shally about in your poem, unless lost in the far folds of the inner lunar landscape. 4. No one may violate your poem, even if there is no porta-potty present, and a bush calls out to be saturated with poetic fluids. 5. The life of the poem is not property, nor can it be called a poverty, for a poem may be utilized



as a crowbar, toothpick, ortourniquet. 6. Your poem has the right to levitate in a public place, unless an elephant is present, in which case, let the elephant bethe poem. 7. Only a jury of birds, a cloud of just birds, may sit in rapt judgement of yourpoem. 8. Cruel and unusual poems may not be treated in a cruel and unusual manner. 9. Do not discourage or decay any poem, even your own, though it may speak mostfoully of your gravestone or kidney stone. 10. Anything not hereby uttered may be stutteredat will, utilizing the indivisible weight of unforeseen syllables, poem or nopoem.

**TERRY HAUPTMAN:**

**The Twilight of the Iguanas**

**RESIST**

Black diamond iguanas    Basking near Florida's canals    Open the doors  
                    To the Demigod Dictator                      With delusions of grandeur  
                    Vacationing at Mar-a-Lago                      In West  
Palm Beach.

Refugees released from the ban    Embrace    Torn from their siege  
                    Breathing deep beneath                      The bleeding palms  
                    The tar and sand.

Frost-bitten Somali immigrants    Trudge to reach sanctuary in Manitoba  
                    Fleeing well established Minnesota homes                      In the heartland's  
wind.

Refugees from Austin's Sanctuary City Cry out    "Resist." "Indivisible"  
responds to American carnage.                      Sap rises here in the winter deep.  
As treaties are broken    On the Dakota Pipeline    In the name of "Making  
America Great Again."    Rogue advisors weave    The Emperor's New  
Clothes

                    Strutted across the wounded land.                      Killing  
everything in its wake.  
As information warfare is weaponized    In minefields bloodied    By  
news that is fake.



**GEORGE KALAMARAS:**

The future of poetry?

The past of our many mouths

A history of birds?

The reluctant fish history of the wrist

We read because we?

Yes, *because we*

Advice means *what* exactly?

Yes

So poetry is like a kerosene lamp in the chest  
of our mouths?

What time is the time

In the beginning was the beginning  
composed of sand?

What if our bodies were

The future of poetry?  
let it swim

Count the guard hairs on the dog

getting cold

the spring thaw without ever





ECM JAZZ #5, DAVE HOLLAND by Allen Forrest  
ink on paper



**CALIBAN  
IS  
SEARCHING  
FOR  
ANGELS**



