



BRADLEY • ARGÜELLES • SIERRA • GLANCY • VANDER MOLEN
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LEVINSON • CAPORASO • BELLA • GONZALEZ • HAUPTMAN
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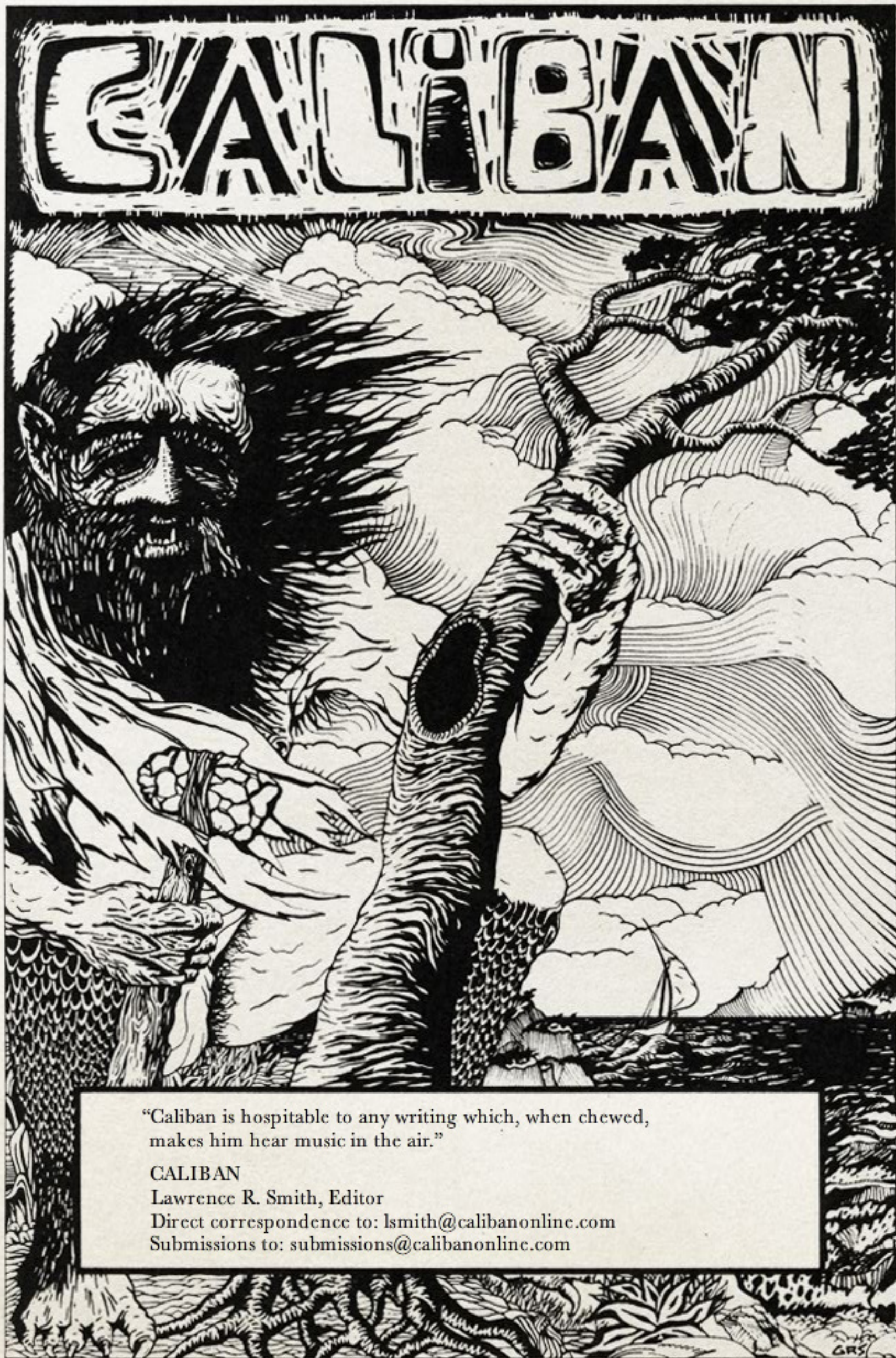


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is calling
the tribes
together



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

CALIBAN

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CONTRIBUTORS' ADVICE



JOHN BRADLEY

And Then We Saw the Daughter of the Minotaur

For Leonora Carrington, after her painting with this title

And then we saw an arm on the table, soft and slow, wanting to be eaten.

And then we saw her unfolding throat, the daughter of the minotaur. Holding us much too close.

And then we saw parts of a pulsating red bloom, saying, *Press your hand here, dear. Hold it, until you begin to move as a glass ball moves.*

And then we saw a sated white bull in saffron robe, reciting, in a saffron voice, *The Edible Book of Minotaur Etiquette.*

And then we saw how we had seen many things, but not everything. And we murmured with our eyes: *Enough.*

Then we saw, through the eyes of a dog, this far figure leaning on one leg, the other raised, bent. Still.

We saw scarred clouds unfolding the ache of the arched roof.

One dog aground. Another afoot, wary, staring off.

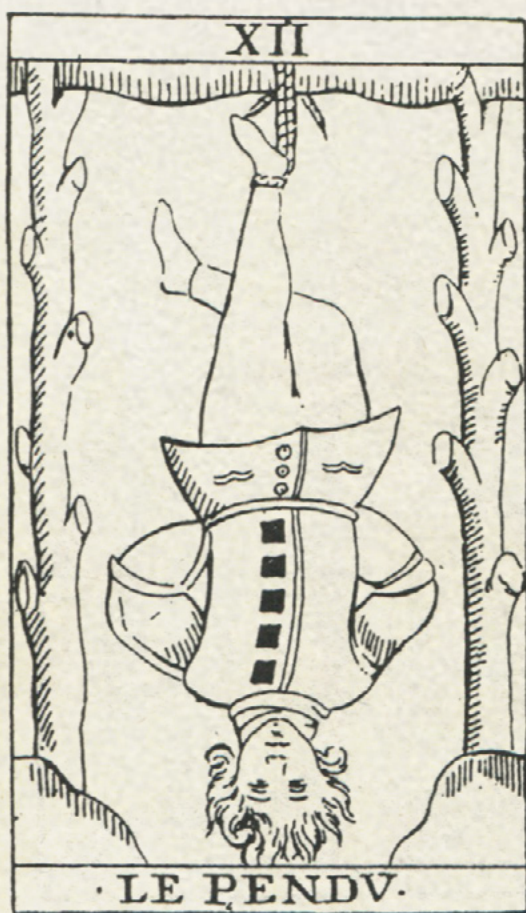
We saw a vine embrace a pillar. Each entwining and entwined.

And we saw more clearly the daughter of the minotaur. And we knew, though we did not know how, choral vapor and starlight-stammer birthed her.

Bradley/10

Then ourselves as children who had been buried one night in their blankets, our flesh smelling of ravaged iron, ravened root.

And then we saw we had not seen anything. And with our eyes murmured: *More*.



Dear Morpheus,

Yes, I once slightly injured Henry David Thoreau
when I slammed the car door on his thumb

after he corrected how I said his last name.

My sister keeps a loaded Colt .45 duct-taped
to the bottom of her desk. When the security

guard told me to remove my fingerprints, I noticed

in the floor an embedded onion. On the form,
where it asked for my profession I inscribed,

in tiny print, “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer.”

Whenever I hear the word *infinitesimal*
my spleen wants to sob. At the post office, the reclusive

Opera star wears gold slippers and a hummingbird-feather coat

so no one would recognize him. *Tell them I don’t do
nude scenes, and I won’t peel potatoes under*

a new moon, said my mother. I confess I was the one

who plugged my finger into the hole in the side
of the *Titanic* and then threw up during

the credits, where for every role your thumbprint appeared.

Thomas Jefferson and the American Hallucination

With my last indentured breath, I, Thomas Jefferson,
departing our collective American hallucination, hereby grant:

to Laurie Anderson, Martha Washington's coffee grinder,
which also serves as hearing aid; to Diane Arbus,
a tattoo of Monticello wherever you'd like; to Joan Baez,
the song of a wren installed in a bee hive hidden
in a velvet hand grenade; to Lead Belly, the lower
third of the Mississippi; to Sitting Bull, a Kevlar
umbrella; to John Coltrane, my last tin of radiation-proof
biscuits; to Henry Ford, an albino Amazonian bat;
to Kitty Genovese, a bathtub filled with lilac milk;
to Harry Houdini, a grave with a trapdoor; to Mother
Jones, a barn owl stuffed with shark teeth; to Billy
the Kid, incontinent insomnia; to Mary Todd Lincoln,
my mountain climber's axe; to Richard Nixon, my second
best bed, with a trap door; to the Marx Brothers,
the Marx sisters; to Dylan Roof, all the statues of Robert
E. Lee; to Ethel Rosenberg, a hummingbird parachute;
to Patti Smith, Martha Washington's mouth harp,
which also serves as an espresso maker; to Twyla Tharp,
a dance with the angel exterminator; to Sally Hemmings—
ah, sweet Sally—everything but everything else.

IVAN ARGÜELLES

From **LAST/LOST EPIC**

xix

between archaic rock and stone the enigma
proceeding with Dionysos and his gaggle
of rioting girls loud the air of procession
jangle of sistra drum and tambourine a
ululation between notes strident flute
wafts of beauty sheer as bright new silk
red that maddens like a puerperal fever
cheeks lusty with bright and effusion of
eye-blackener pouring in the noon cycle
of steam itself dense the purplish ominous
of distance unobtainable and cloud-stuff
organdy and faded denim inside out high
with the mysterious chorus of the souls
of the dead winding and weaving through
porous rock and crystal like memories
of sand sifted slowly through lost fingers
unable any longer to count the minutes gone
vacancies of ghost-alphabets written in sky-azure
to be memorized by nightfall and the girls
grazing the epitome of their right to life
and statues busts of crazed emperors marble
fictions of the greatest of antiquities in oblivion
master of thurible and incense Dionysos
fluid and feminine touching each soft secret
in his passage to India his mind like the miles
of vast wavy blond hair in lava swept Sicily
a night once more in the vagabond waters

a trident and a fish-eye pierced by hidden suns
lure of death in gorgeous fluxes of black tide
who wouldn't want to enter in his train the
flowing and voluptuous architecture of wind
having sex with torments of ivy wild blown
colors crocus and porphyry and lavender
sewn into the hairpieces of the girl-swarms
a mystery of dream and initiation and dying
all at once in the single attitude of heat perched
on a mountain-top just outside the entrance
to space and the rush of invisible planets and
a zoo of stars and predictions at first ineffable
then in a quiet dissension of ether clear and white
like a drizzle of neon lasting for just a brief
second of eternity the whole and the nothing
abracadabra of combs and lip-gloss and wires
incandescent shifts of hills and jungle mesh
there is no destiny no fate of man no oracle
only the presumption of birth before death
maze of liquids and crevices hermeneutics
drilled like asterisms into a history of air all-
mothering that surrounds the mortal conjecture
moon-sheen blanks souls of the dead clapping
silently in day-shine somnolence of Dionysos
the great triumph and cosmic end-all
yellow dazzle fizz of booming surf
and darkness that floods the small ear
before sleep ignites the labyrinth of time

xxxv

the Divine Lady who is she ?

it's in the Latin dictionary !
wild sequence of interjection and vowel
macron and tonic accent fluid circumflex
diacritic and envelope of inflected words
punctuation of ether in syllabic distress
phonetic divinity serpent of light !
how do we circumvent her shadowless being
without ourselves losing shape
what is the nexus and curvature of her spine
the deliquescent knitting of her hair
as it breaks the clouds into uneven halves
mounts the disarray of sunsets she does
riding into the twilight of Romance philology
troubadours approach her castles of distance
song and infinity of archaic longing
did Zeus and Hermes require her absence ?
did Hera invoke the amended Text
to defend the godhead from her illegal syntax ?
more than a dozen irregularities and errata
per page as she takes to lyrical consequence
seas of Homeric fever and circularity
silence of Sirens in the midst of Echo !
rock and plinth and stubborn shore
yields to her buckled knee and shoulder
mounting paragraphs of early old Spanish
orange as the Cyclops' warning Eye
embolism of heat suffrage of the Naiads
drying their skins on the sun's vast trellis
grape arbor the color of night her bed
hills where no hunting is allowed and cities
large as the yearning capacities of salt !
she is the unique uppermost of space

stellar attributes burn around her voice
as she calls out to the amnesiac
nowhere to be found that saintly pilgrim
thrice holy yet desecrated by her spit
the world evolves in her spare footprint
pools where dappled deer come to drown
believing in the redundancy of water
Divine Lady leaven of lexicographers !
she could be Mount Sinai and the desert flux
Red Sea seven mouths of the Nile
wound of the migrating Cosmos
grammatical substance of the Milky Way
does her spirit imbue all the children lost and gone ?
is it she by virtue of her ordinals and cardinals
by the position of her adjectives
both remote and supernumerary
in evoking her does not *Chaos* hold sway ?
prayer and ointment of pre-Mosaic law
her raiment fluted and gracing three continents
like the Roman or Chinese empires
her histories are envisioned upside down in ivory
Etruscan letters combs and hand-held mirrors
anklets traced in Minoan linear-B
golden omegas circle her dancing arms
oratory of pebble and stardust she declaims
standing like a statue before the Alphabet
kappa lambda mu like iotas of suffused silk
come unraveling from her parted Sicilian *Lips*
yet for us does she govern a single sound
a pink sea elaborated in the inner ear
memory of all sadness in sand and cuneiform
everything we struggle to read
as we sleep in the ink of her eternal mind



ATARDECER by Paul Sierra, 2003
oil on canvas (40" x 30")



TERMINUS by Paul Sierra, 2016
oil on canvas (41" x 33")

DIANE GLANCY

Clothier

I see these pieces as vessels for the blank pages of the sea, which a book is. Otherwise the pages are left in their plainness—their starkness. These pieces migrate over unrelated terrain. The broken parts of it—little displacements aboard the rolling waves—clothing for the naked pages.

Variations in Magnetism

They would discover questions
the answers of which were magnetic variations.
They would take what was not theirs.
They would bring to the people unbearable suffering.
Their ships drove all over the water running into islands and reefs
trying to figure out the Magnetic North from the Geographic North.
All variables
though some hit and found their way.

A dead reckoning was only an estimate of changing distance
and changing course.
Currents and wind were other variables.
Even the iron nails in the wood could pull the ships off course.
Magnetic variation varied across the globe.
It changed over the years.
The compass was the ocean's language not caring
about the little ships upon it
tumbling them over in its waves.
Yet they hardly ever stayed at home.

One Becoming the Other

*Jeffrey Gibson, 2014-16 video, Oklahoma
Contemporary, in which Natives talked to
native objects in a museum collection*

The other coast was longer to get to as Franciscans came from Spain across forest, plain, plateau, mountain, rough roads through Mexico to the ocean on the west. 1749 Junipero Serra arrived [1607 was Jamestown] and 1769 sailed north to establish the mission San Diego. The padres priests friars whatever they were called with their trappings of crosses against chupacabra [goat sucker], la llorona, mermaids. Their tabula rasa transposed the Indian to captivity.

The Indian eventually transposed the history of Franciscan arrival. Repurposed army blankets. Brass studs. Hub-caps. Speak to me dear Lord speak. Ceramic heads whispered another tongue. The metal twinings. Tin tobacco lids rolled into cones for dresses that jingle. Mud puddles. Mudheads. White headdresses notched as a mission church w/ goulash and succotash for supper.

21 missions up the coast from Basilica San Diego Alcala to San Francisco Solano de Sonoma. Hideous parades of clompings. The parades finally diminished to smaller clomps. Standing with objects locked in museum storage. Articles of deer hide. Sinew. Bone. Beadings. The Natives spoke to objects pulled from drawers resurrected with their voices.

Homer

A homer is a biblical measure.

A homer is a home run.

A pigeon returning.

If he would come back.

If there were children on the floor playing.

The bear wears a hat.

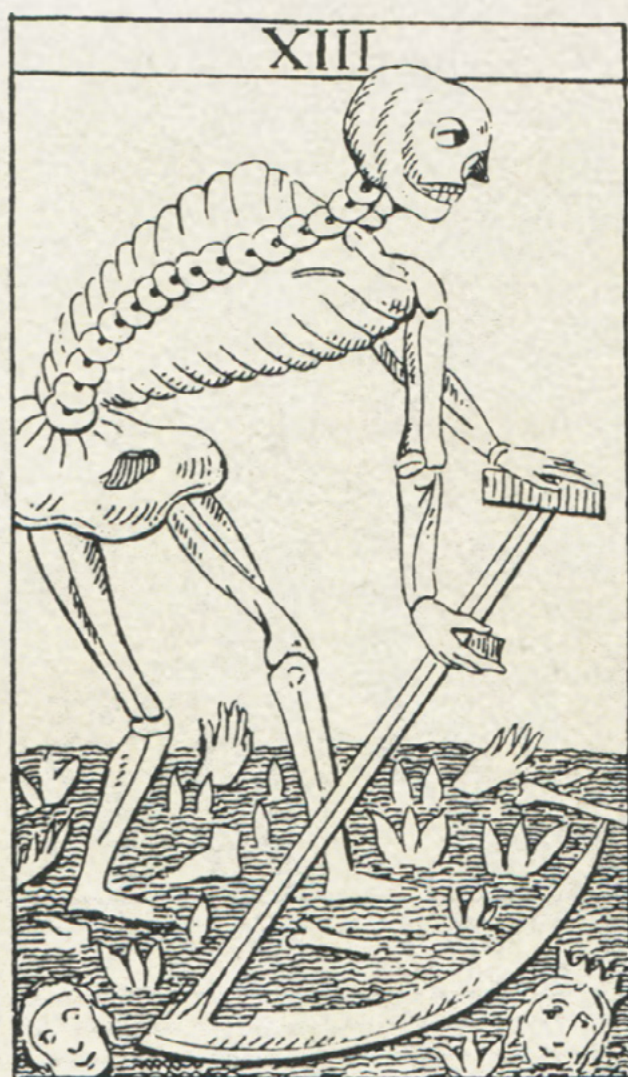
The fox a glove.

She has garden scissors

for the spiderwort and stems without their blossoms.

Dead Reckoning

There are flowers in the open air.
You'd think they wouldn't grow there
to function in uncertainty.
A navigational capability though there is no sea
unmoored
post-defeat.



ROBERT VANDER MOLEN

The Land

In his workshop
The memory of bolts and sheet metal,
Reflections from the meadow,
His daughter saying, yes, everything needs work,
Cleaning up and clearing out—
Nick had made windmills for orchards
To combat frost. No frost this morning though it was calm,
The land ripening down to mounds of aging clinkers
Above Mill Creek. I'd forgotten about clinkers.
We strolled there. You could hear steelhead thrashing
Up the slight rapids through a tangle of shrub elm
And box elder. Nick had looked old when he was young
Then he didn't change much. My uncle's farm was down
The road where storage units now reside, row upon row,
Seen from a distance they look like barracks.
He was a John Bircher while Nick was anti-war.
Did you know my father well? We were in sports, I said.
There used to be workhorses here, I told her, this is where
They retired. I thought I saw smoke then I didn't.
My shoes were sopped with dew. She wore wellies.
And reminded me again she was interested in selling
The half-section with small out-buildings, the faded barn,
The dark-slung house that resembled what you see
In rural Georgia surrounded by pecan trees. Here there
Are apricots. It's so confusing, she said, searching for advice,
Frowning, resembling her mother briefly,
A falcon streaking overhead under the steady
Warming of morning, a quiver crossing her lips...

Places

Otherwise, I was watching
European mysteries on TV—
So much summer in Sweden,
Fog in Italy, but in France
Only buildings and streets

I didn't need much money
Just some—strolling down a lane
Under the sway of walnut trees
Carrying a towel to a county beach, swimming
Calmed me

Though it's vague now
The farmhouse I stayed in
Where my employer
Lived with two women, while I was
In a room above them—night breezes in June
Rifting through propped windows,
Vines slinking over an abandoned garage
Plum and peach orchards beyond

Those months in his store,
Rooms of rare books, a raft of antiques—

But I see us at a kitchen table with amber drinks,
Two of us on each side, a scene someone
Should have thought looked domestic,
Dignified, a clock ticking,
Before my companions departed for their bed
And I climbed skinny stairs

A rusting lawn roller near a shed,
Neglected picking ladders—
Great silence

From grasses to the trees down to a stream
Where I carefully studied minnows

Neither woman was interested in me, of course,
But I knew a lady in town, an artist,
Who liked to draw me on my days off
Lying on a mattress

After I left
She forwarded an article from the local paper
The women looked much older,
No makeup
He was dead

There had been an argument over money—
I'd had one too...

I'd begun working on a farm in Montana
By then
And wintering in California

JAMES GRABILL

In the Glow of the River

Maybe we've seen ourselves overhead
in the night sky streaking unexpectedly
through the universe in the tail end
of a comet sputtering and popping
as a miner's fuse burning down faster
to the mother lode the longer we think
the more time that goes past drowning
in meteor showers over the insect prairies
penetrating the troposphere to unsheath
crocosmia on the ground of evidence
with leaves that reveal mathematics
of the plotted Mandelbrot number series
in their design surfacing out of the genome
going eye to eye, cells to cells, at the foot
of the heights that were cleared for spider
roads strung up between things that remain
firm with their Aztec plazas dreaming fast
holding plumb under auspices saddened
semi-sweet with whistling of the hungrier
trucks burning into town through bilges
of summer in the little swallows of tree frogs
croaking out purrs in the glow off the river
passing the house forever under starlight.

Poetics #41

Where there's speaking,
spoken for as we are,
there's the midst of a scene
when the many people strike
at the precipice of hamhock labor
out in oyster bilges on unfurled
lashes where pollen gathers
as wants and needs of the human
thrive on the backs of horses,
call them, galloping along axis mundi
from exit ramps that lead with diamond
precision toward uncertain fisheries,
rare as principles of antique chowdering
flukes of the breezes strong enough
to feel root-bearing stone at the expense
of the genome back in unsuppressed
onlyness that courses through
what's willed for many who've ached
out of principle breeding unscripted
in the hallows of sensing seen and seeing
sung abreast with what's surf-side
as stork-struck enjoinders enlock
the wish-washing sheep-sharpened
in numbered oneness, therefore the many
gathered at zeppelin heights thymic
in milk-taut tinctures hymnal as brunt
polish branded with gelatinous decks
of mannerism as recollects presence
around the assumed time
of post-biblical unwitting grace.

This Hour

Gills rake over the more remote undersea
pretexts stirred up out of the spiked
and contorted garnishments far down
in flux already operating in dark conditions

boiling over the lip of the petroglyphic spectrum
with a slime of oyster muds bearing current
that swoops unshelled lobes past rostrum crags
bled purple under the not necessarily served
reciprocity in sea-slug subsensory delivery
to softened orange mouths of frilled sponges
mending copulative sea-slop saturated with salts

of emptiness in hard scudding sinks clogged cold
and indivisible as the light's weight breaking at limits
of penetration of the low from the tropical beyond
as a wave out of the forgotten, that arrived in widths
to carve into sunken stone the murky speeds of time

swerving past the full knowledge maybe we have,
but that instantly surpasses us, leaving a trail
of stripped steak carcasses, when we've found
more could be shareable than what others let on.

Therefore, out of being here within being, meaning
outlasts most suffered intensity, as old-growth
languages have sheltered us under heavy limbs
unfurling green solar labs.

Because breathing goes on
in action, but at the root remains more than willful,

we've had over a few million hammers pounding
in the financial colosseum, when not much
intricate enginery lasts around equal opposites
that continue to advance, as if this were the world

where you end up in the same place you began.



JEFFERSON ADAMS

Pneumonia

The strange and vivid
dreams again, the houses
of friends who never existed
the cryptic conversations
about narcoleptic communities
somewhere in South Dakota
plugged into, and guarding against
the wind's slightest whisper
that might whisk them away
mid-task, leaving their fields
mis-plowed, strange shapes
in their crops, their bruised eyes
finally popping open, barely
surprised to find themselves
being pulled out of the tractor
they'd just toppled into a ditch.

KAREN GARTHE

Untitled

*I*nside Angel heaved out of coal, coal of the tongue
and dust-mocked sleep
in the corners. . . in the station and
in the passage

I smell smoke and see the arrow-end flicking malice

*W*izardry

beginning like bagpipes meet wind climbing

a searing whiteness to the usual human blue

arabesques of lily and stoking

terrible *R*ed Black Fire

who can tell the nerves of separation, nerves of joining

arabesque as the crow flies

a lily with black red breath

gavel whirl pool

What's this senate in front of the menu, prescribing which service
road

what leg up

out of the mire The Easiest Way *choose Ship* **Wreck** **Instead**
of leopard maul
instead of ballistics

falling asleep in snow Near Bliss

Freeze to meet your maker instead
of this fragile island of House Souls dirty clothes,
dishes

that can't come clean
(((this senate dignified. . . recumbent as the Sphinx
whose nose gets blown off anyway

By the Wind

Anubis waits to prepare the dead countless legions
look between his long canny ears through darkness

blistering

little House

Souls

dishes, clothes

that can't come clean

this senate's recumbent

bomb at the center blazing

Vine

Look farther and farther in, cast in the edenVine's loam and plush
the cave's

bear-bouldered cell
is weeping a windy cadenza
of deepLevel
green

whose turquoise in seditious patches

this vase does hold a glory of bloom
but not that dense expanse
and canopy
of low-hanging sweetness



thousand times over that crazed beautiful house

a SHELTER poETry *of old women, terrible accidents in* The Somewhere

whole crowd stand Still in a downPour

preSSing shelter

pressing the wrap-around dark's old growth rings so close

how long can we in breathe here. . .

can we keep our blood-honed telepathy cheek to cheek?

by now a thousand times over we could have bought that crazed

beautiful house

by now

we could have endowed the whole family ruptured and haunting

you can't just walk off

like that on the hardwood (glistening the whole web of life You're
my buoyant
thru smirched afternoon I'm
cupping antic flames under the rain sheets
under the eaves'sodden bundle *I'll play that bubbly roller rink organ for you*

pump the thrillway, a glycerin smooth
accord

we can take on
Younger Voices we can chatter straight through to the night's
relief where nothing's separate

You can't just walk off

You have such lank Winter Hair I know you can call the purple
call us back on fire



CANADIA by Homero Hidalgo, 2018
acrylic, marble dust on canvas (20" x 12")



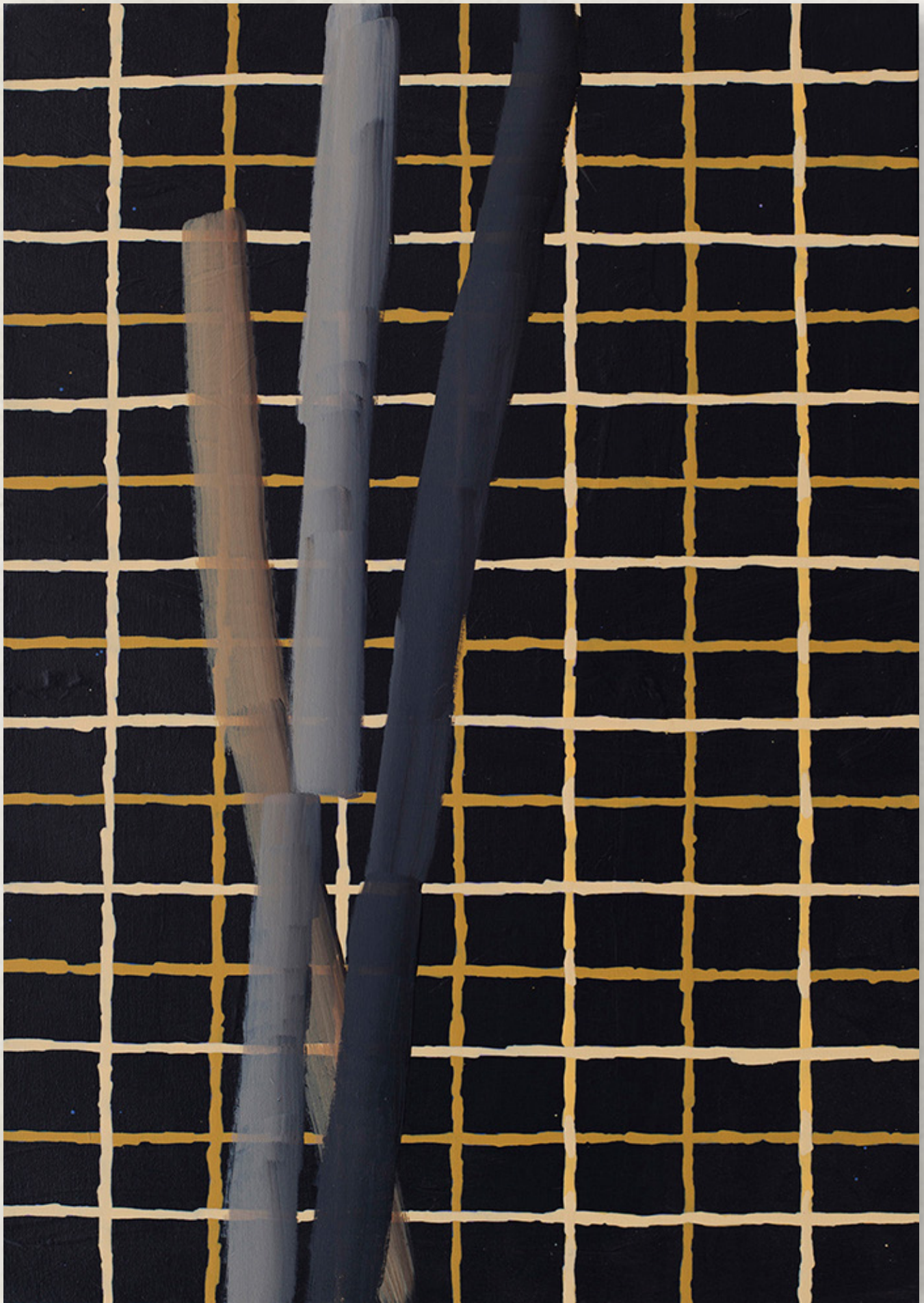
PICNIC PAINTING by Homero Hidalgo, 2017
acrylic on canvas (28" x 20")



ICEBERG by Homero Hidalgo, 2016
acrylic on canvas (40" x 55")



JARDIN CON OJOS by Homero Hidalgo, 2016
acrylic and graphite on canvas (20" x 28")



POWER CHORDS by Homero Hidalgo, 2017
acrylic on canvas (28" x 20")



MAY 7 by Homero Hidalgo, 2018
acrylic on canvas (12" circumference)

HELLER LEVINSON

askew in the frame of night

warbler

guise currency conspicuity curious

in undress long seasons

biblical ululates along the way

the outlook

over-

ripe

conveyances merely, or an

approach,

a form

of

ask

VERNON FRAZER

Positioning the Indefensible

when isomer custom protrusion remits
panopticon samba retention embankment
responses per diem

surcharge their pattern

vengeance
displaced an applicable
conundrum

detained

no filter

disturbing

ambience

*

necrotic filler the paradigm magic
sequestered fulfillment as jollity flasks
correct the predated assemblage

no volley left

for the retort

or cask of monte cemented
ancillary decimation recording
posterity fumes flatulent

as any neurotic

important enough

to
resort

guests undecided

glitches

mindful fixation rotors chill the thread

*

fricative indecision monsoon tantalizes
gumming low threats toward intonation
threading vagary tools the throne feeds

demented platitudes
whispers of longevity

no justification ever

a fit



Fame Delay

glamor plagiarism:

the fusion schizophrenic
the apoplectic pedant

the beautician-broadcaster

of
seminal

partnership unglued
sidelight beneficiaries

linking where

cash growths

vent

convenience

broadcasting strange possessions

with clipped partitive
attenuated the pictorial

*

the sideline addenda
grounding trellis avocations
deferred linen

for decoy

custom frailties covered

facet flashing
the ravishing recoil

to the rancor elite

unadorned

*

an emblematic stairway
dangles shrouds to hearth-felt brains

for the
pause

leg
appealing

elegy backlog
loading melody's voyeur

to the vacant pathway

near tonality bouts
where its grins accrue

delayed numbering

Orchestrating the Matter Pit

fistula rendition in
harmonic dysentery mode motion
a cymbal the detail will
flail
adverse
diversion empire fixation looms
slow
a plummet to
promised land
nonesuch edition
as recorded under revision
the mire flux clings fresh
to dead-fingered touch
a
mercy no sensation
filling as
vexed
in renewal

*

the sound ignites the sensor ambush
leaving its blood trail
a limbic disdain to others
a symphonic
shed in training shutters
warning counter parts assemble
consumer indifference
to the cleft intimation
hoofing a madrigal template rage

frozen

in stolen

form

*

editions change

the nodal incantation setting

an activation

current

past

contrapuntal

straddling

backsteps

no distant sentence vilified

a

conduct

baton

disseminated

carriages

architectural

road bumps

no matter the run

or its point

a secondary melody

bashes past the worn score of torn tissue

GEORGE KALAMARAS

Respectable Paragraph (On Making Love to a Literary Preface)

Our practice brings us to this: a man's literary twist is evidence
of an unused world.

No Northern Sung music could find ceremonial code in such extreme
shamanism.

Shame the shave of her leg.

Shame the salve shed from the soliloquy of my mouth in need
of her fiercing.

I have watched of it and poured myself massive out into the rain.
Hair by hair, I have smoothed-for, and oh-myed, and said my
please-please-place-me-next-to-your-mouth.

Something is always rewriting itself in secret hair.

In the finger-trace of a leg, there is an unwoven skein of reclusive
sexual remorse.

After all, a moralistic preface is really quite tactical.

Literary history is to be shot, not eaten.

You Say I Fancy the Empty Drift

Nothing but your cheek and a pair of rubber gloves.

Nothing but a miter saw on the cockroach moss.

You say I fancy the empty drift, the equatorial speech of both coasts
at once.

You say, how ambiguous to hope for a channel of puzzled wind.

When the photographs arrived, I finally recognized my internal hurt.
Sure, I carry it well, I'm told, but bone silence is just that.

The only two birds without hollow bones are ostriches and penguins.
Actually, that's not true—much like I am confused in the latitudes
of a funerary North.

How marvelous to realize we are the Hindu equivalent of the Holy
Ghost.

In the City of Nine Gates, the darkness of the dictionaries proclaims
us stable, transitive, and etymologically whole.

Tell Me the Buddha-Fields

Are you shawling the sky, the blue bride of Montana wind?
Are you shouldering even the faintest pink of a sunburn you imagined
from the underbelly of a mole?

I was a seed of liquid wind. Warm. Salt-ridden.
Someone kept planting me in hard ground, giving me sexual desire
and a unique name, then leaving me with the raccoons to scour the
corn.

Patterns of blood awaken the love of austerity.
I remember other lives, mole-driven, when I lived in a monk cell with
nothing but a candle, a sound carving knife, and a cake of soap.

Any minute now, you could be the hen-eel forming my blood.
When the sacred spinal serpent stirs, all the body cells awaken.

Shake out the maraca seeds from your hair.
Make music with the moist wind. Your body's terrible blue bridge.

Look me in the eye with nothing less than complete human
compassion.

Tell me the Buddha-Fields, accordion-like, have opened—that we are
all awakened *in* one another and through.

I Don't Know How to Tell You

I insist that you hand me the leeches.
Don't go to church and pray for me.

Say my name isn't *pig*.
Say it's *recreant recovery* or *hand me the wool shirt*.

All the dark eyes of the posters know my secret.
I'm interested in the compound fracture of a nighttime sentence.

Locate the moon-lathed wave. Find a piece of fire that seizes you.
Simple words like *yes* and *toe*, *finger* and *solar plexus*.

They have now proven that the brains of cab drivers grow in
proportion to their inherited maps of streets.
What we take in, we take in. The sense of guilt in large cities
must be unbearable.

Hand me the sea-lice, scent me your secret patch of hair. Grant me
access to the hermit crab in its nocturnal crate.
Let me molt a new shell each night as you sleep. You will barely hear
me scraping my body alive just a few distant feet from you.

I'd Be Put in a Horse

Listen to my show of colons.

Stop : look : don't speak :

I've stalked with a limp as long as I could breathe.

Examine the photo of me at a year and a half, the cowlick suddenly there as if my insides were struggling with the glue of growing up.

I'd be put in a horse. I might language-lean my most Greek and dearest spear.

No, I am not part fish, and my name is not *Helen*—at least not on *this* shore.

If you start the night blessed with a parakeet, you should clean the dead possum of road salt.

If you analyze the process of splitting an atom, let me know the shape of your seizure.

Which acrobatic gasp would you like to fall from my breath to the galaxy?

I am skilled with aconite—monkshood—and can accommodate the fierce of most any beak.

Something was tearing me apart, down there below my own tricky ribs.

Who was hiding, and who would emerge when I would sleep?

I once trusted a semicolon to hold the entire weight of the whirl.

It held half the fires of the night; the other half was shored up by a horse—immobile,

perfect—staring there in the protected space of the city of myself I thought I could never seize.



PICCOLISSIMI POEMI VISIVI (LITTLE VISUAL POEMS)
by Angela Caporaso, 2018, mixed media collage

LANA BELLA

Sunday

Sunday aged a milk-white, hazy all the way down with idle strength of winter, like slow liquid dripping from conifers. You came to walk the length of snow on narrows, on tracks and side roads, the far off inland sea where you sailed those ships down until the ocean of trees spilled empty into dirt. Your wander was quartered, halved, breathed in slow rounds your weight in sand, atoms spinning the length of you to what suspended then dripped and bled. You began to dream you were back on shore, faint through pale rhombus of sun as if you could slip back into the land of rivers and lakes, gangling out yet feeling your skin stretched back like something from a dream-return, sediments of light at the edges.

Ordinary Things

Sometimes later I slip into bed,
an ampersand of mechanic
and inarticulate. My howl turns
to hush, longing like an S-train
receding with a cargo of arrays,
roving thin against the earth-
pull moves. Slow to gather
strength, I touch ears to refrain
bruising the sundown black,
transmuting raw the hymns of
this glass-bare desert, back
and forth to feed on mayflies.
Only I am the color of my blood,
high today on pain's tart creed,
laying out ohms between
the ticks of clock as if they will
turn my flatness back to form.

RAY GONZALEZ

A Blue Jay Lands in the Magnolia Tree

These are visions you will never have again.
There is a blue throat where a tiny bone
and the rescuer are asleep.
The blue jay lunges at a white moth and misses,
its wings lifting the moth higher.
The tail of the comet is found in an old phone book.
Writing about the magnolia, the translators
trample the herds and hunt the birds.

“I have lost my boy,” a voice cries,
the translators punishing families with
things that fly out of the text singing
of kindness and love.
Everyone makes a list of birds.
A coatless man approaches with cold sorrow.
His hands are archeological wealth.
He digs the bowl out of the field and
tastes the grains of pottery.
The blue jay hops out of the magnolia
and brushes a pattern upon the clay cup.

Pueblo Dancers, Santo Domingo, New Mexico, 2004

I have no choice as the circle begins to spin,
drums confusing those that are not from here.
There is no definition for the feathers streaking
inside this ritual, what I steal dropped in the dirt

as they move even faster, adobe walls washed
in a brown film where I can't breathe,
tourists standing frozen in time, voices,
rattles and drums castigating the earth.

The only God I know created the angry world.
These dancers are not gods from another but
men moving in a circle stricken by light and time
where the corn thrives through swaying arms

and legs that wait for the brown rain.
They steal something from me, then return it
as I witness what I do not understand.
I take something from them and don't want

to give it back as I quietly step away,
the crowd of tourists staring and sweating in
the deceptive sun as I keep my secret gift
nameless and desert broken.

The Dancer

“She has about her painted a screen of pretty doves which flutter their wings.”

W. C. Williams, “Desert Music,” 1951

The naked dancer extends her arms
in the smoky spotlight and doves
fly out of her body, disappearing
in the dark cantina, Williams and
his wife staring at her huge breasts,
more birds emerging as she dances
faster, unable to keep up with the beat.

Light glistens off the beaded sequins
around her hips as she reveals to
the Americans what some women
in Juarez do to stay alive, Mexican men
at other tables shouting in a Spanish
Williams can't understand, his Texas
friend bringing him to see a flock of

doves escape the breasts of the dancer,
her nipples shaking in the faces of
the drunks that count birds, Williams
finishing his beer as he hears the flapping
of wings and turns to his wife who sits
at the table with her eyes closed.

Serpent Words

In states of ecstasy after bloodletting, Mayan nobility call the vision serpent. This serpent rises from the burning bloody paper of creation and, from its mouth, emerges a deity that knows the words. A bare foot stamps the burning paper with blood, emergence given one sentence of seven words to complete the burning. If this sentence is completed before everything turns to ashes, the wish will be granted. The seven words can't be revealed. If the bloody paper disappears before the seven words are formed, two serpent heads will appear. The bloody paper must be translated by the one who has been bitten.

In Mayan calendars, the fifth day is *snake* and is reserved for collecting the pattern of seven words and eating the parchment to regurgitate it. When the speaker of the seven words throws up, the mass is wrapped in snakeskin from the dreaded fer-de-lance, the snake that gives no warning as it strikes, the speaker of the seven words shaking long enough to wrap the gift in the snakeskin of the sacrificed fer-de-lance, revenge complete when the seven words force the snakes to belch humans from their mouths—a warrior, a god, and a skeleton.

The bitten hands of the skeleton are fused to the bloody paper that confiscated the skeletal hands. One notion is that of the serpent as conduit of water. The second is the snake's mouth being a cave and the third is that the serpent is the sky. The bloody paper of the seven words keeps raining into a clay jar hidden in a cave that has never known the sun. To bring the sun into this would erase the bloodstains from the burning paper.



CLIFF GUARDIAN by Ray Gonzalez, 2018
colored ink on paper



CORPUS by Ray Gonzalez, 2018
colored ink on paper



SEVENTH REBELLION by Ray Gonzalez, 2018
colored ink on paper

TERRY HAUPTMAN

Angel of Harlem

For Billie Holiday

And for my sister, Helen

Hummingbirds at the Arab grocery store
On Broadway
Dive for gardenias
As Billie Holiday sings
“Strange fruit from Southern trees”
On the airwaves outside,
“Strange Fruit,”
The song immortalized by Billie Holiday,
Written by Abel Meerpole,
Aka Lewis Allen,
Our father’s social studies teacher
At De Witt Clinton High School
In Washington Heights.

Oh sister
Walking with you on Harlem streets
Dreaming the blues
Trembling in the zig-zag pulse
Of Grandma Rae’s
Fortune-telling winds

Singing to the dead
And the living
Through the Kabbalah flamed incantations,
Remembering when you rose up
At Sweetwater’s and Small’s Paradise,
Fluting the bones,

Hauptman/66

Eating black beans and rice,
At Flor de Mayo
And Floradites,

With Billie Holiday
The Angel of Harlem
At the center of the world.



Extravagaria

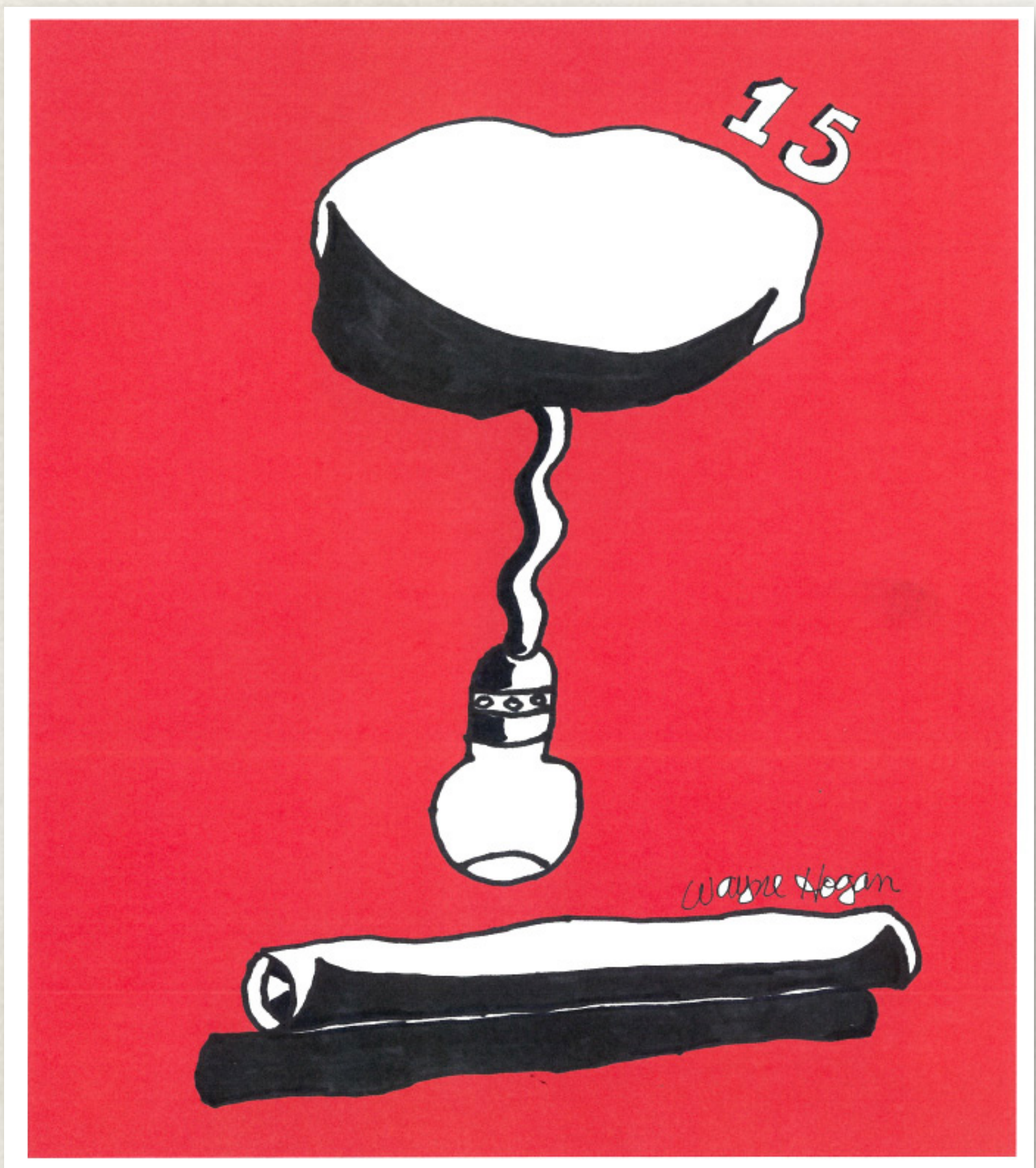
Violence has changed me.

Louise Gluck

Here where the soul breaks the sea
Aleppo's children, exiled in sulphur, scream
I take my place trembling in wild bees
Here where Syrian women in Brooklyn on Avenue B
With long blue painted moons on their fingernails, breathe
Listening to the March of the Imagistas on the street
Praying for those exiled under siege
Lifting the mineral veils of refugees
I take my place trembling in wild bees
And pay my debt to the Boatman's dream.



UNTITLED by Wayne Hogan, 2017
ink on paper



UNTITLED by Wayne Hogan, 2017
ink on paper

D. E. STEWARD

Rumble Stripped

“...the office of president represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart’s desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.” (Mencken in 1920)

The plain folks didn’t settle for a moron, they wanted and got a TV-slick amoral hustler

Cascade of deceptions

Stock market greed

Terrifying voids

Blunt lack of any out-of-self awareness

A third of the country and more shares his stance or politically agrees

“Something is pushing them / To the side of their own lives.” (Larkin)

Shambolically

“nothing is so helpless as the liberal spirit face to face with fundamentalism” (Guy Davenport)

Then last mid-century thirty percent of McCarthyites remained loyal to him to his boozy end, even following the Army-McCarthy Hearings

“Have you no shame, Senator, have you no shame?”

Trumpismo now Trimalchio-style

“Though deconstructionists are fond of employing jargon-filled prose and perversely acrobatic syntax, some of the terms they use—like the ‘indeterminacy of texts,’ ‘alternative ways of knowing,’ and the ‘linguistic instability’ of language feel like pretentious versions of phrases recently used by Trump aides...” (Michiko Kakutani)

The moneycrafting powercraft of Trumpismo Repubs, profiteers and despoilers, deniers of common knowledge, blatantly accrues

With their arrogant, sarcastic, shameless opportunism, glib evasions, scythe-eyed racism

The passive avoidance of his party to staunch or intervene, its inability to come to an acknowledgment of the fearful implications is withering

It's pretty windy, having trouble getting up on the board today, and caught now in the next wave's clearside

Quite easy to just miss out

The assumed exceptionalism of our governance is starting to ring hollow

We have no dispensation from uncontrolled social chaos or authoritarian politics and we can fall out into the Weimar way

Next election, next year, next whatever sets of lies arise

Think of what happened already here to Etzanoa on the Arkansas River in what's now southern Kansas

Brutal Juan de Oñate who had ravaged Acoma in 1599 was the first conquistador to reach Etzanoa, perhaps the largest pre-Columbian city

north of the Rio Grande

Imagine what it and what the hundreds of other riverine-set clusters of civility were like before the conquistadors and their priests ravaged the Americas

Let alone our scarred soul from our erasure of who and what was here before us, and from slavery and the Civil War

More evidence of what has been revealed in the parch-mark summer of 2018

Rampikes and littoral muddy river-flat driftwood waste

The flooding tides, the ocean rise

At the top of life up to then, at sixteen, bouncing along in road-high on a Minneapolis-Moline UDLX in prairie gold

Worried about only three things

Getting the hay bales in off the big field up in Blue Jay Hollow before the anvil cumulus off to the north brought in rain, getting into college, and whether all the ugly stuff we heard about DDT was true

Now we know very well it was, we got the two loads of wire bales loaded and under cover before it rained, and I got into my first choice after all

After Rachael Carson's DDT revelations, awareness of Operation Ranch Hand's use of Agent Orange and other chemicals to defoliate a quarter of the Vietnamese countryside and swaths of Laos and Cambodia carried probably the final warning before our self-engineered doom became inevitable

Those chemicals' secondary, Roundup, is still sprayed on farm fields and squirted home-owner anally around walks, driveways and hardscapes

“in an enclosure like earth’s there’s no place to dump stuff off”
(A. R. Ammons)

It once was called conservation

We’re sending much of our organic recycle on to the big incinerators
because it contains too much plastic, we’re mixing cullet with our asphalt,
and switching to LEDs now but still leaving lights on most of the time

No idea how close we are to the tipping point, or if we’re already beyond
and gone

Little idea if what we do or fail to do counts at all

The carbon’s already out there now

And no matter what, we’re going to keep pumping more right on out

Can’t stop burning coal, can’t stop driving, can’t stop eating steak

Can’t stop making America great again

Can’t turn things around enough to matter even if we’re not out past
where we can never get it back

Now the ice is going to melt anyway

We’re not going to stop, or even mollify

Even if we could

Not even to save our kids

Ourselves

We’re in the soup already

Steward/74

We've done it

That's it, and that's the way it's going to play on out



UNTITLED by John M. Bennett & Music Master, 2018
mixed media, collage



UNTITLED by John M. Bennett & Music Master, 2018
mixed media, collage



UNTITLED by John M. Bennett & Music Master, 2018
mixed media, collage

DAN RAPHAEL

Elemental

if our noses worked better we wouldnt shake hands or hug
entering without permission, always leaving at the wrong time
mist the action, spray to some mysterious power
branches become dust but the leaves keep hovering

the first electricity was static, inter-personal
the sun too far away to plug into
skeletal hands taught us hinges, rib cages gave us portable shelter

cats who paw their crunchies like litter
dogs refusing to accept their limited vocal range
the path from gregorian to doo-wop
meditation leading to solo harmony, breathing complex chords
bones for percussion, hollowed bones for pipes,
bones stretched into strings

construction bones, living trusses, hot & cold running blood,
the citys water pressure one massive distributed heart
no pumps, no independence, no well
when youre higher than the snow melt
when the snow no longer collects
if the river cant cross here, if the river keeps being leeched,
when the atmosphere thins enough for rain to escape
when umbrellas become political symbols

how do i know that puddle of rain wasnt built in 3 seconds
that barometric pressure didnt move the clocks ahead an hour
when you only get past grey twice a week, clouds in the mirror
wind at the door asking to be let out

Flying into the

If when birds shine, eyes get heavy
modifying my shirts for wings
where the streets move instead of the clouds
a kick in the hum, an effervescent fever—
the mercury bubbles but doesn't grow
pick up one too many, drop three
knitting in a fog of numbers, hooked fingers
i thought gravity worked for free & next day couldn't stand

The worms say there's not enough hair on my head to live in
the darker it is the more textured my breath
a musical sidewalk, an obsessive compulsive street
more variation outside than in
what's my optimal ratio of window to wall
how many holes can i put in the roof without leakage
what look like clouds are unfocused dissent, gestures repeated
so many times new muscles develop, fingers trade sizes

First the invitations, then the venue
frequencies you can zip open and hide in
singing harmony though miles and years apart
picking sycamore bark, skating on plums
i'm trading hundreds of crow feathers for a roasted free-range chicken
using my x-ray specs to find ketchup

Today the sun split into several before they set
always a stray, a runt, a charming unnoticed aroma
why climb trees when you can see what they see
tithe the wind and rain, competitive window displays
so something will want to shine through
the one way street of chlorophyll
chameleonic, multi-phasic, indestructible light

Follow any shore til overflow
peeling back the washed away
chopped & ready to
 wrap that cloud around me
like the world 3 months from now
carrier pigeons & pterodactyls spreading the seeds



The difference Between an Island, a Node and a Neuron

As if on an island of vegetation
reflecting, refracting, resurfacing the rain and all i see
changing the relationship tween asphalt and tire, their songs
& conversations

The only thing regular about birds is dusk, dawn
& you never know when crow, like 3 at 6 a.m.
arguing with a german shepherd, or maybe discussing
why the rain hadnt come yet: dogs smell rain approaching
while birds feel it between their feathers, like a question, a possibility,
that around the next corner is something edible

The only way to stop the rain is to keep the clouds from forming
while asphalt and concrete delay trees. chainsaws & pine beetles
have no reverse, no other side to get back from
no currents, no atolls, no leashes

(2)

Most islands are tops of volcanos,
some redwoods grow 200 feet up in other redwoods
islands in our pancreas, parts of the brain
no one can swim to, island as hollow as a dead reef,
micronesias of trash challenging the dispossessed

As my island picks up speed, thinking if the clouds give chase
they might thin enough to leak a little light, still believing the suns
out there
not some meager substitute incandescence on the other side of clouds

not needing to be as thick—clouds mingling in traffic, mazing
intersections,
playing rain bingo where every blocks a number between thirsty and
now

(3)

Bridges smothering islands, turbines to slow the wind,
solar panels to make the world darker and colder, long oars
to put out my 2nd story windows and row downstream
'til a sudden 90 degree turn, a belief momentum is greater than
friction:

knowing how mountains become ocean is beyond my
pay grade / life span, my conscious life
is a raindrop of ephemeral stellar complexity,
an island of verdant growth on a planet of frozen air,
another face in a transmission that's been downloaded, retrofitted
& scatter-gunned so often no way to tell fact from fiction.
how all those moons got turned into vehicles or
why this is now a planet with millions of islands and no continents

DENVER BUTSON

without this wind

the scarecrow imagines that the sparrows
are ink smudges

that unloosed dandelion seeds
are torn paper

that he himself
is an exclamation point

out here exclaiming himself
in this field

the scarecrow wonders
what he would be

without this sky
without this wind

without his name *scarecrow*
whispered everyday

by some thing
or another

into his ear
or where his ear would be

if whoever made him
had thought to give him ears

Italian Cinema

having once upon a time been Marcello Mastroianni the scarecrow knows what it feels like to have Monica Vitti's hands on the sides of his face. and having once upon a time looked into Monica Vitti's eyes the scarecrow is not afraid of anything. not the dark nor the rats nor the far-off train whistle. nothing at all. except perhaps that he will forget what he once was. particularly that he was once upon a time Marcello Mastroianni.



CRAIG COTTER

Robin

—*for William Heyen*

Dear Bill,

A robin
has migrated back to Brockport.

*

When I'm quiet
When Mano calls

When the red snapper comes

*

Another fag bashed in America.
They didn't like his black nail polish.

*

My kids

on dry leaves
sloping hill

banks of the Red Cedar River
during a winter thaw.

Cars whipped by
on Grand River.

*

We rolled through the earthquake on Sunday
thought it was my body giving way.

*

My Grandmother would say at Thanksgiving dinner,
“William, not in front of the kids.”
“If he asks,
he should know what happened.”

*

I went online looking for the Hemlock Society.
Gone. Probably too many lawsuits.

I Googled suicide med formulas—
nothing.

How uncivilized,
hiding truth.

Want to have friends around,
sip down pills with chocolate milk.

Drift away.

*

Let's have a race to the next life.

In Paris in front of the Pantheon
teenage boys

play soccer in sweaters.

They dodge each other, manipulate the ball,

watch for cars.

One sees me and walks in my direction,

one cups his hands to light a smoke,
one turns on an angle to kick the ball.

I could never be President
because my interests would be

meeting Frank O'Hara's friends still alive,
having the '68 Tigers to the White House,

having Paul and Ringo perform.

I'd want to find hot guys in photographs with government resources.

I'd want to meet porn stars.

I'd remain single

and have whores in openly.

My little green book would grow.

*

When I need more space

I give things away.

An Iroquois gave me a plastic box
of hand-tied flies.

When I was 19, Robert Bly pounded me hard on the chest with his
open palm
after a reading in Grand Rapids, said,

“You have a good face.”

*

Joel invited me to a party at his house.
Twink blond.

Today 38 years later
I understand it was sexual energy between us.

I didn't go.
If he would've been more direct.

Like in retrospect
I understand John Urban was hitting on me

pretending his motorcycle wouldn't start,
shirt unbuttoned down to his navel,

telling me about the warts he had froze off his cock.
But whoever makes the first move is gay.

That was the code.
Same with Steve Matta and his guitars.

*

The men would crawl up the rescue nets
hung from the side of the ship.

Cotter/90

My grandfather would help them onto the deck,
then reach down and pull up their intestines.

The old man
was ordered back to deep water,

but ignored the order
to rescue sailors

whose ships had been sunk.
He was reprimanded.

*

Not one robin alive
from when we were kids.

How are people clear
animals don't understand their mortality?

So many dumb things said around us every day.

I hear myself adding crap
most days.

If you wait
for someone to ask your opinion

suddenly your world is filled
with ecstatic silence.

*

There's no getting back to your robin.

I lived in Michigan
17 years,

have lived in LA 33—
like there are no blueberry bushes in Michigan

there are no cars in LA
because I focus on your feet.

Aren't people foolish who
love their cars?

They do not see how the universe is set-up.
It's set-up around KJ's feet.

He hardly has any pubes,
certainly no blueberry bushes.

He floats on smog.

*

The Pulitzer Committee called today,
asked if it was OK to award me three.

And—you guessed it—the Nobel Committee—for Lifetime
Achievement.

I said OK but the whole tux thing is not gonna happen.

I'm wearing the uniform—jeans, t-shirt, tennis shoes.

I heard Faulkner's acceptance speech through bulky headphones
in the Michigan State Library.

I was 17 and thinking: I'm not going to give a speech like this.
Not that I remember a word of it

Cotter/92

or trust my 17-year-old judgment.
At 17 I knew Babe Ruth was a God.

That's held up.

I want to be the Babe Ruth of poetry
except for the dying at 53 part.

I want to have a bellyache from eating hotdogs
which is getting VD from a 3-dollar whore.

I'd bat only .290 that year.

*

These are to be taken by eye.

*

I can't recall having a single idea.
I'm not expecting to have one.

It's cool people have ideas.
I just want a couple more boys like Benton

before I run down the curtain and join the choir invisible.
Like check Benton out from Newport Beach:

27, 5-6, 105 pounds, Chinese, dark hair and eyes.
We smoke cigarettes.

I gave him my network passkey for his laptop.
He did his homework (MBA), I did this.

A 3-day weekend with breaks
for splitting him in half and food.

That's all you need in a moment
like the robin.

Because one, like The Beatles, wants to move on.



Cotter/94

Act of Contribution, Spring 1980

Michigan State
East Lansing

I hadn't been to church since 16.
I was 19

walked into a church for confession
there were two types now

in the booth, or you could sit face-to-face
in a room with a priest.

I was skinny with shoulder-length wavy hair
wearing the uniform: faded Lee jeans,

t-shirt of the day, barefoot in white low-top Converse All Stars.
I had just got poetry

looking for the new
so chose the room.

*

I'm brought into a comfortable office,
"This is Archbishop _____."

"Come in," he says, and we sit facing each other in chrome-framed
chairs
with brown vinyl covers four feet apart.

My skinny ass
takes-up only half the adult-sized seat.

He's not in flowing robes like the bishop who did my First
Communion
at Our Lady of the Lakes in Drayton Plains.

Just the modest priest black pants and shirt, white collar,
the difference being the pink zucchetto.

This is the new, hip confession
so I don't start with, "Bless me Father for I have sinned..."

he simply asks, "What are your sins my son?"
I think back to 16

and remember cheating at a board game with Jerry
and cursing.

That wraps-it-up.
I'm thinking it's absolution time

but then he begins to ask questions.
Are you a student at State?

Yes.
Have you cheated on any tests or assignments?

No.
Have you disrespected the Catholic Church?

I start to think of the discussions of religion in the dorm—
though I was now in disagreement with many of the Church's
teachings—

No.
Do you have a girlfriend?

I first saw Rose in the 5-flight elevator ride up West Wilson Hall.
I watched her walk-in—

love at first sight.
In retrospect she was somewhat twinkish

with pain on her face.
When she got out first and walked to the sister floor

I said to my senior roommate Jim,
“She’s so beautiful.”

He said, “She looks like she just had all her twat hairs pulled out.”
And then we dated

and after a few weeks we’re alone in my loft
and I liked it.

Just wasn’t sure I was going to like it.
I was officially now not gay.

I’m holding my 5-9, 135 self over her
in push-up position.

After we finished she said,
“Why didn’t you put all your weight on me?”

She was so small, I thought the whole pounding missionary position
would hurt her.
She said, “Your feet are so white!”

*

What’s her name?
Rose.

Are you having sexual relations with Rose?

Yes.

Sexual relations with a woman before marriage is a sin.

You should ask forgiveness for this sin.

My usual passive, pansy, quiet blood started to boil.

Even now I can't hide anger.

My face turns red. My face becomes rigid, blue eyes wild.

"I don't believe it's a sin."

Lecture, lecture on Catholic theology.

"I'm in love with her,"

(I'm finally not gay, the big sin!)

"Love is not a sin,

I won't ask forgiveness for love."

"Then I will ask forgiveness for you."

And I was done with the Catholic church.

I stood up, staring him down, and walked out of his office steaming.

*

Rose dumped me the next January,

sensing I was a fag.

We're both in LA now—her husband of decades lost to dementia,
two of her three children grown.

We have lunch once a year.

"You sure you don't want your high school letterman jacket back?"

Yes.

Cotter/98

Dear Bernie,

Curly said, “My father died dancing—
at the end of a rope.”

Did you know Leo Tolstoy died?
That pretty much sucks.

Not that he didn’t live a full life.
He is annihilated

though his art survives.
There’s no evidence

he’s getting anything out of this.

ROSS WEISSMAN

Dreaming of a Bedouin Man

Last time I dreamed of a Bedouin man
I was one of his sheep. Face like me,
freckles, glasses too, and I wore
a desert scarf behind my ears matted
into my wool. He squirted
the little water there was in the desert
out his teeth telling me to move.
I asked him, where are we going,
and he struck his staff against the rock
beside my hooves.

When he lay with one eye closed
under a dried date palm,
I went off, dropping
a couple freckles for him to follow.
I walked, running was too noisy,
and I followed the crackling flame
of a small bush, burning, without being consumed.
I asked where we are going and the bush
told me to approach it.
Not hot enough to reproach,
I entered it,
without being consumed by it, now again a part of it,
one more voice
to welcome the wandering Bedouin man.

Ocean Bears

She asked me if the waters were safe
from sharks, piranha and angry dolphins
eels, she said, tickle your feet, before biting
or even worse, they will shock you
with electricity. I've heard it, she said, I've heard it.
No, no, I replied. There's nothing like that here.
Although, there are bears that swim and paddle in
the water. They have big tails and fins, instead of their hind
legs, and they can hold their breath for weeks before reemerging.
But, I have never heard of them to bite, I replied,
the most they will ever do is raise their head from the water
to look, and see, and wonder who you are.

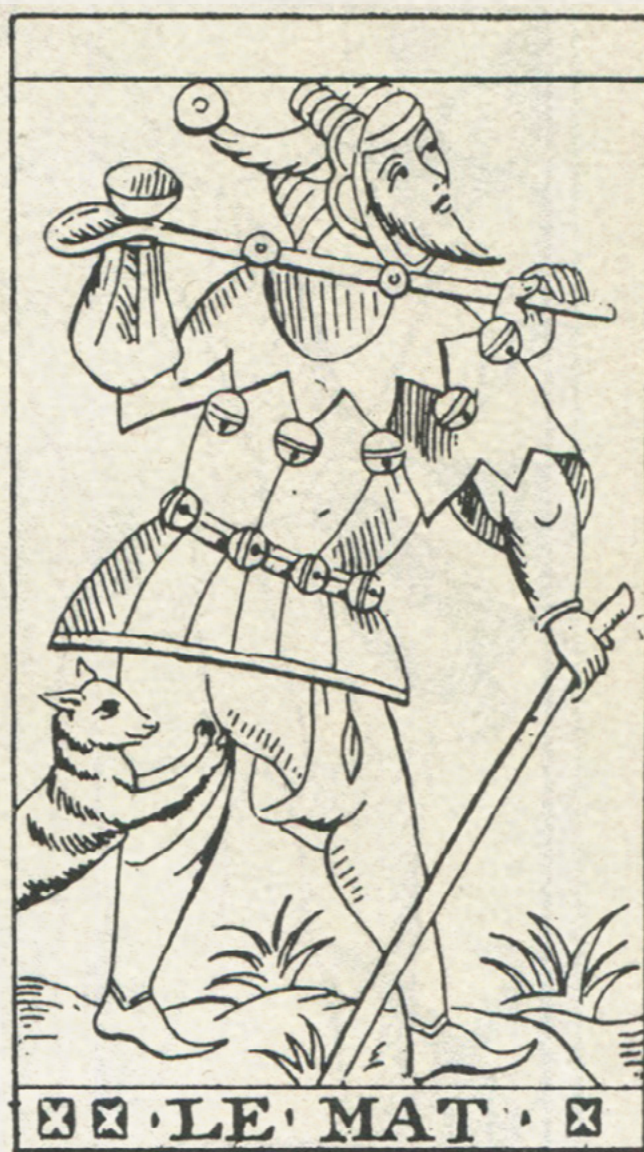
Rabbit

I lay in the grass
and a rabbit hopped
out of the bush.
He stopped beside
my head, took
the carrot from his mouth
and pointed it at me.
You are awake, he reassured,
but your heart is sleeping.

The rabbit turned
his little cotton ball to me
and bounced back into the bushes.

A Rat

I find myself becoming a rat
in the most simplified maze
—a straight and narrow
long, plain path—and the end
is a wall,
they say it is a journey.



BRIAN SWANN

Manifest Destiny

“History! History! We fools, what do we know or care?”

William Carlos Williams, *In The American Grain*.

I’m standing in the middle of the road,
Sapohanikan, “Tobacco Place,”

where Melville launched the “Pequod,”
where meat market sat before flattened

by Stella McCartney, La Perla and the rest,
here where the river’s invisible, where

time goes back far but now one place
is like another, so I reach around and pull

the marsh around me, pump up sand-hills
from the last glacier, sketch in the trout stream

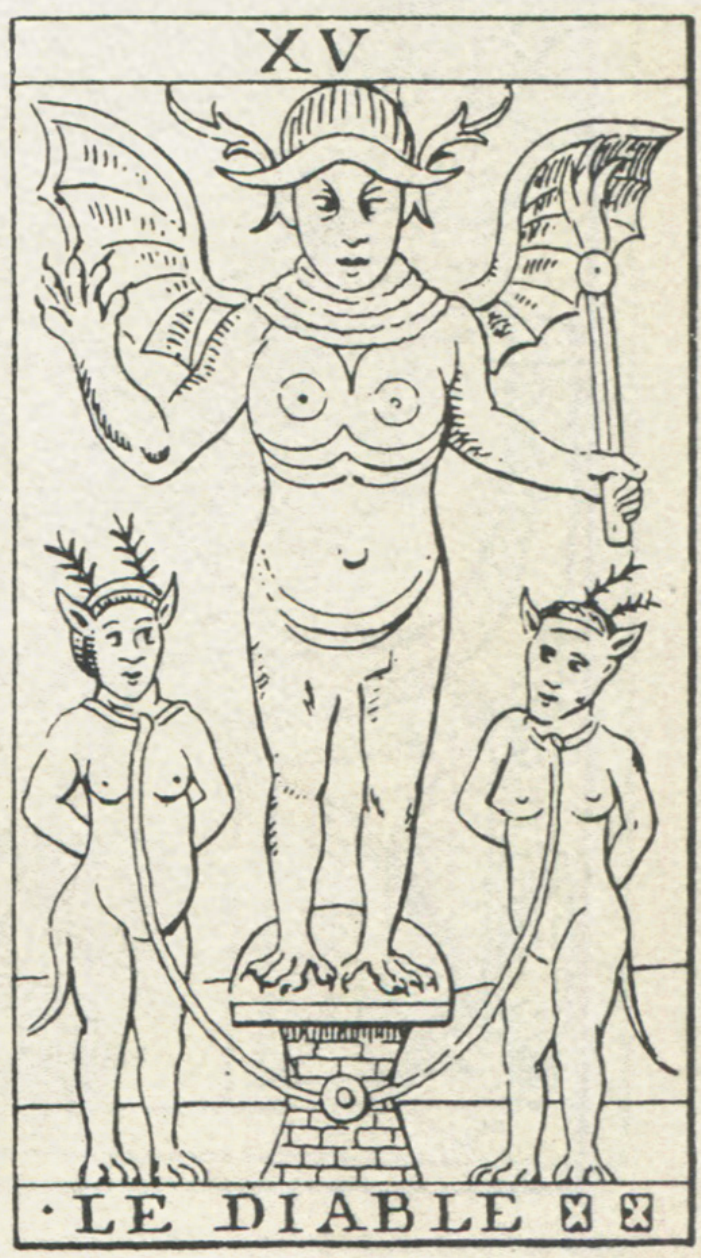
whose name is still “manitou,” where glass
spurts everywhere and crowds mill around

like extras so I’m not sure what *you* see, but
I see cornfields, squash and tobacco plants

from before photos were invented, in color
no less, even as the scene changes and we’re

on the set of “Manifest Destiny,” an experimental
western for which they’re still re-writing the end

to get the right balance between “horrid slaughter”
and “a world covered with cheerful homesteads.”



Pastoral

I get up early, dress, walk into air free as the paleolithic,
until I reach the village general store now just three sides
when one fell off, where someone squats and hides,
grows only squash in fenced beds raised up high
on river-cobbles. Two cars and a truck with flat tires
sit in front, packed with garbage. I continue on my way
past the DEAD END sign riddled with bullets, past
the empty silo on the right, the farmhouse on the left,
roof fallen in, past the barn much bigger than the house,
stalls empty, beams whole trees, home for swallows.
On I climb until I reach the abandoned ski slopes still marked
“No Name” on old maps. There’s nothing here except
the swamp beneath Bear Pen and the sound of distant thunder,
so back I turn, composing as I walk, like Wordsworth,
sermons in stones about dead dairy farms and shrews
whose hearts beat faster than you can count, hummingbirds
whose wings—until I turn a bend and run into someone
I’ve never seen before. Soon we’re discussing this and that,
especially science that interests us both. I tell him
I’ve been reading that everything’s a rearrangement
of genes and molecules, “and so it seems that we are
all the same.” “Makes sense,” he says. “That’s why
they put the genes of fish inside tomatoes, pigs into anything
and God knows what into cows to get more milk,
and why not since, as you say, we’re all the same, which,
incidentally, I do not believe, and descended from monkeys?
I mean, it’s ridiculous. Just look at monkeys and then look
at us. Still, if we can do something I believe we should,
like going to the Moon, if that’s what we did.” “Yes” I say,
chains of molecules stretch all around, taking different forms,
including us—even the guy with that cabin in the woods over
the stone wall back there, who blasts away all night, at what?
I hear he was a first responder who cracked up after 9/11
and came here. I guess he must be practicing to save us all

from terrorists at twenty second intervals, *bang, bang*,
as if they'd come at him like clockwork." He moves back.
"You think it's funny? I've seen you walking about talking
to yourself? And what did you ever do for anybody?"
He spins around, stalks back down the way he'd come,
vaults the high stone wall, and is lost among the trees.



PTG38 by Carlyle Baker, 2016
watercolor with digital alteration

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

DAN RAPHAEL:

Drop the yawp, bag the gab, leaves of astroturf, all these words aflow in the electromagnetic we seeing any better communication? Find and open, ingest and emulate the beautiful, just a sliver of uncontainable, not solvent but shifting, filling in the cracks, the hinges, always more passages than doorways, more choices than corners, more hungers than nourishment. Liberate additional mouths, dishes, screens of a thousand tongues, a roar of so many whispers, whittles and whines. more fortification, colors, running into and bouncing back. No song of my cell, going around bandy legged & bun-nuggelled. Bellies bears and huts. Off the screen, through the screen, full of fallen filters fowled with files, filets and flies. Enough has had me. Bones relieved of stress wonder about mirrors and hand-washing, is that hinge or me, are the lights blinking in the room or in my head, my shirt short-circuited my circulatory shit, a cross between ozone and lava, if I could be sure that hole was one way, drive-up windows the only way into the buildings our breakfast pump out of, a quick flip of the micro-wave tap, fresh beans teleported from where ever. Why does my best friend have to be human or alive. The universe doesn't mind being wide open cause you can't get there from here, singing that song over and over until it contains all languages, throats and hungers. When all cash is electronic what will the buskers do? When stores no longer have to redeem your bottles and cans. When the only choices amazon or going to get it yourself from stores you can only access by freeways—no transit allowed. I thought the tire was licorice, I thought the gasoline was muscatel. I thought no one could hear the screaming inside me but it wasn't me, several police cars and ambulances overflowing with a fog of ghosts and future opportunities. The opposite of a birthday suit. Some undiscovered element that's been waiting in my left lung for decades, a new pulsing

star map, view of the impossible, no one in the middle of everything, galactic biceps flexing like my eye brow almost breaking free, as we all need to be a little more open, like dance moves on a street corner. In November I did tai chi in three airports. We all take turns radiating/expressing, whether in a constant beam of fashion/appearance, or only a couple minutes a month, and not electronically, the body out there, more than fingertips making contact, among walls you've never smelled before, as suddenly everyone's speaking an unknown language, I may not be alive enough to be considered a being here, embracing what my arms will probably go through, like watercolors in a thunderstorm, how many newly leaking faucets dripping into rivers and clouds, noosphere cluttered with all the howls we've urged into the sky, against the gravity of outer space, never able to achieve escape velocity only a rebounding microsecond of cold emptiness, can I trust such porous bones, tattered flash unable to carry a tune no matter how I whirl and tumble.

JOHN BRADLEY:

Let the millionaire go golfing in the wall-less wastes naked, stark naked.

Let the owl in the hand replenish the two in the mouth, three in each ear.

Let the worn parts of the brain be replaced with the apparatus of the common toilet.

Let the cigar rule over snail and leech, starling and cockroach, earwig and onion ring.

Let Alice Walker and Linh Dinh waltz on the forehead of the last survivor of the Holocaust.

Let satellites be sent into the farthest reaches of the lungs until oblivion coughs in the last row.

Let Harvard throw open its doors unto Red Sea, Black Sea, Salt-Free and Gluten-Free Time Share Sea.

Let galaxies be worn about the throat, the tongue able to hear concertos of violet violin cricket stardust.

Let the law firm of Whitman, Vallejo & Associates defend those overcome with undocumented spittle seizure.

Let rodents write *The Book of the Unearthly Earth Dung* long after the earth has cindered into cosmic dietary supplement.

Let the Secretary of Inner and Outer Defense go in search of a detergent pod explosive filled with particles of poems by Rumi and Lana Del Ray.

Let unrepentant angels be tortured until they sing the litany of the sacred death by social media by day and by night and by all the cracks therein between.

Let the Secretary of Homeland Security make a vest for each American citizen to wear that shall explode into ecstasy and security at the sound of an unpleasing verb.

Let the Declaration of Uncertain & Ambiguous Independence be engraved on each solid gold sheet of holy toilet fleece next to the golden urinal and golden toilet and golden bidet.

Let the presidential thumb be overcome by highly educated lice and the court of the supreme fleas rule that every trumpeted tweet live forever as the unending law of this ever quivering mass of Jell-O called a nation.

DIANE GLANCY:

Great America— how far can you travel
and keep your bearings straight? How
long can you sing your resilient song?
Clap your banner as if you were wind.
Move as quickly and as far. Your
many voices sing your song.

IVAN ARGÜELLES:

Hot on the cinder-bed where Democracy was recently burned the ghosts of poesie passed and poesie future linger, episodes in a vacuous post-post-modernist chase after homophones, similes and Whitman and Ginsberg look-alikes. Alas the Sirens that bedeviled that archaic beatnik

Ulysses and the alarms and ambulances Tibetan gongs Egyptian sistra and whatever other systems of sonic warning may exist do nothing to wake up the neo-technological nation of zombies glued to their head-sets ipods and next-years Apple. Dumbfounded in a Republican poolroom with caroming billiard balls and neo-Soviet hackers in the last chapter of the Cold War a feeble handful of lyricists turned politcos bemoan the current state of Fake News and prestidigitation. But what's to be done? Can the neolithic epic of the Argonauts be turned into a Steven Spielberg summer blockbuster in which Good deflates the Trumpian ego of Evil and all's well in the desolate craters of outer space, somewhere beyond craggy listing Pluto and spear-thin Ultima Thule? I digress, planet Earth, aka Gaia, is the big hunk of rock listing melting and going into countdown, given by some pathologists no more than 20 years give or take a nuclear fist-shake to live. Are there messages to be learned from the first two decades of the twenty first century? Are there illegals seeking asylum left to wall off, terrorists on their nomadic Jihad left to ferret out of the neon pipes of outer Oblivia? Famine repression assassination by chain saw and a president who lies at least 50 times a day—these are some of the quotidian problems to be resolved by the revived sciences of homeopathy and pataphysics! In the meantime the specter of poesie present waking up in his tattered tent shroud on Skid Row and insane for his next opioid fix of fentanyl and soda pop staggers into the Aurora of a beautiful five-hundred square mile fire/smog reciting maybe for the last time these lines from Spenser: From that time unto this season,

I receiv'd nor rhyme nor reason.

DENVER BUTSON:

To Whom It May Concern:

Kindly remove your shoes
When stepping on my dreams

Please don't slam the door
It rattles me out of slamming
My head against the wall

Please give up you seat
To those handicapped
By a long ago love affair

The pilot has turned on
The *we're all going to die* light
Please return to your caskets

The right lane is
For somnambulists only
Please do not sleepwalk
In the passing lane

I'm all out of kindness
Please use exact change

The honeymoon suite
Is closed for renovation
Please fuck in the lobby

In lieu of flowers
Please send unmarked bills

Kindly respond
Before we all have dementia

The drive carries no cash
Please rob him of his dignity

Please help
I am unable to work
Because it's a waste of time

Do not give money to strangers
Do not give money to family members
Do not give money to fat preachers

Password incorrect
You'll never undress her now

If you can read this bumper sticker
Please come to my house tonight
And tell me about your childhood

This is a test of the emergency broadcast system
This is a test of the emergency broadcast system
This is a test of the emergency broadcast system.

Yours,

GEORGE KALAMARAS:

“Let trillions of men and women be mock'd with bodies
and mock'd with Souls!”

—Walt Whitman

To be mocked with a body
To be mocked with a mouth
To be told by our telling and the telling
Of the told that we aren't enough
That we may never *be* enough
To be empty yet full
Our tongues contradicting our toes
Rooted as we are in putting the best mouth forward
To write over and over the hound-dog parts of the heart
That howl not just at the moon but *into it* and through
Oh how the left mouth detests the right
As we step from the universe into a body
Of sound the body we have a cruel happy-sad
Of a fact to which we are dumb-struck and stuck
The trillions we tell when we are told
And tell ourselves again the telling is enough
I want to live with the animals the hound-howl
They have in having enough

Sleep by the river that continuously passes through
To be born human but crave their burrow and their fur
Their scent-drive their wandering their heat
To walk upright into days of sound
Delight knowing the woods are enough
That the river is enough
That the moon too is bled
That the willow is enough
Weeping as it does to hold onto the tongue and tantalize the throat
Taste the sorrow-ache its roots the gnarl-bone
That will later be the worm-fence
That holds us in and back
Like these bodies do
These bodies that mold us
That *mock* us
As we long to press through

ROBERT VANDER MOLEN:

A Piece

The last week of April we drove to Charlevoix to examine contents of her late mother's safety deposit box. It had been an unusually cold and snowy month, especially compared to recent Springs; the leaves were late, as were flowers. There were still remnants of snow in ditches and in shade along our creek, pitted snow. Deb didn't think there would be anything in the box, as her mother had indicated there wouldn't be, but the bank had called and said it needed to be renewed or closed. We should check, I said. Her mother at 95 had grown a bit confused over a few things the last weeks of her life, after she had broken her hip.

We took Charlie the dog with us in the back seat of my pickup truck—she enjoyed road trips. And we had fair weather for the three and half hour drive. There was still a snowpack of over a foot in Charlevoix, the bay full of ice chunks heaving in slow waves, as if we were on the coast of Greenland. As it turned out there was nothing in the box; I'd had a small fantasy involving a bag of gold coins. What do we do now, I asked, thinking she might want to visit some of her cousins. No, I didn't tell

anyone we were driving up, and I don't particularly want to see any of them either. I let Charlie out to pee on the small (but trampled) snowy campus of the bank.

But what do you want to do, she asked, it's your birthday. I'd actually forgotten. And I had a touch of the flu. I figured we'd drive up, have lunch somewhere, maybe look in on some of her family or visit the cemetery, then drive back to Grand Rapids the same day. I'll admit to feeling a little hazy. We could stop at a motel somewhere on the way back, I suggested. Have some wine, spend the night. I was also beginning to visualize a nap. Ha, she said, I'm way ahead of you, I found a place on the internet, a place with cabins out in the woods, somewhere west of Cadillac, here I made a copy of the map.

We drove south on back roads rather than taking 131—country Deb knew from having grown up in the area—miles of vineyards and hills and small crossroads with gas stations, churches and party stores. New country to see, which perked me up, the roads winding and surprising, with occasional wooded land. These vineyards are new since I was in high school, she remarked.

We reached the cabins in the afternoon—west of Cadillac, halfway to the shore of Lake Michigan. There was a lodge holding a restaurant, a store, a bar. Outside, a dozen large cabins scattered at the edges of an enormous meadow, beyond which was solid forest. We were the only ones renting a cabin that day. After a nap I walked to the lodge—a few snow banks here and there melting—picked up fish and chips and salads for dinner. There were a half dozen couples eating—I wondered where they came from; they must live in the woods locally, I decided. At any rate, we let the dog run. Built a fire in the fireplace. Found a movie on the tv and went to bed early.

Deb's mother had died the previous autumn, late September. Deb had driven up to make arrangements while I had stayed in town to pick up our oldest son who flew in from Oregon. Our youngest, who lives in Grand Rapids, drove over from his apartment. I made a simple meal; later on the deck we sat and talked late. After I delivered the dog to the kennel first thing, the three of us headed north, checking into a motel not far from the Catholic Church, the boys in a room next to ours,

(Deb having stayed with cousins until then)—only one other room was rented, tourist season was over. Behind the motel there was a stand of walnut trees and a large gazebo with table and chairs where we had coffee in the morning and drinks at night.

Deb told her family there was to be no political talk in the gathering to be held in the yard of a relative's home. A good portion of her family were Trump supporters and quite vocal about it, (to be honest, they exist in my family too.) Following the service in the church, trekking to the cemetery—everyone was pleased there wasn't rain or early snow—and coffee and food at the reception back at the church, crowded with her mother's friends, some of who introduced themselves, though I mainly chatted with the priest, the police chief, her various cousins, (the boys being polite and bored), while Deb made the rounds of the many tables, I was glad to escape. The boys and I drove over to the lawn party, while Deb lingered behind talking to old friends and parents of friends. She had urged us to go. Waving her hand.

There were some animosities that cropped up at the wake but nothing related to current events, merely family tensions that went back decades. Beer cans and bottles and plastic cups accumulated. It grew cooler in the afternoon. We didn't stay late.

Sitting in the gazebo that evening (bundled up) I wondered if Deb would break down, but she was on automatic. Plus our boys were there. And, I suppose, since her mother had been ill, off and on, for a couple of years, her demise had not been unexpected. And too, Deb had been an executive director for a large non-profit, had experiences in warding off grief and regret until she found the time to let go. Which she did a number of days later.

The lawyer had told Deb to pay her mother's bills as they came in; but after six months she would no longer be obligated. After our trip to the bank in April another hospital bill arrived, forwarded from the retirement home her mother had moved into the last month of her life. On the bill it said to notify them of a change of address. Deb sent them the address of the cemetery in Charlevoix.

HELLER LEVINSON:

the way

* to —*

* ward*

* is*

* way —*

* ward*

**CALIBAN
IS
SEARCHING
FOR
ANGELS**

