MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL EDITED BY

PAULA CISEWSKI AND G.E. PATTERSON

NEW YORK CITY EDITED BY

DAVID A. KIRSCHENBAUM, BILL LESSARD, AND NATHANIEL SIEGEL
Steven Alvarez is the author of *The Codex Mojaodicus*, winner of the 2016 Fence Modern Poets Prize. He lives in New York City.
Here are a few words from our Minneapolis-St. Paul editors, Paula Cisewski and G.E. Patterson. —DAK

There is no physical way to take your hand and show you the islands in the lakes here or to direct you into the sheltering windbreak or urge you out of your home and into the street. I cannot take you to another town, to a park, or into anyone’s past (lived, imagined, or projected) and launch a change in your heart, but the poets in this issue can.

Here there are 10 poets: Bao and Chris and Dobby and Jennifer and Mary and Mary Austin and Rachel and Sagirah and Steve and Sun Yung. Their writing and their animating concerns are not uniform, but Paula Cisewski and I think that these poets can represent the collective energy of our community.

The poetic community here parallels other creative communities in the twin cities and has solidarities with communities of the attentive and curious and opinionated wherever they exist.

G.E. Patterson and I selected these 10 poets with joy and confidence and a nod to the absurdity of selecting only 10 voices from a literary community as rich as our own. We feel incredibly grateful for the contributions of these poets. We would also like to express our deep gratitude to Boog City for featuring Minneapolis/St. Paul this time around.

G.E. and I put our heads together and came up with a few of the many nearby places where curiosity and opinion thrive. They are:

- Coffee House Press
- Conduit Magazine, Books, & Ephemera
- Graywolf Press
- Milkweed Editions
- Rain Taxi Review of Books
- Red Bird Chapbooks
- Sleet Magazine
- Spout Press

- Minnesota Center for Book Arts
- The Loft Literary Center

- Bookstores
  - Moon Palace
  - Eat My Words
  - Boneshaker Books
  - SubText
  - Common Good
  - Magers & Quinn

- Musical Acts
  - Astralblak
  - Cloud Cult
  - Chastity Brown
  - Jill Zimmerman
  - Kiss the Tiger
  - Moors Blackmon
  - Ben Weaver

- Libraries and Collections
  - Center for Hmong Studies
  - Givens Collection of African American Literature
  - Quatrefoil Library
  - John Berryman papers
  - James Wright papers
  - Minneapolis Music Collection at the Minnesota Historical Society
About the Editors and Artist

Minneapolis–St. Paul

Paula Cisewski

G.E. Patterson

Paula Cisewski is the fourth poetry collection, Quitter, won the 2016 Diode Editions Book Prize. She has been awarded fellowships from the Jerome Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Oberholtzer Foundation, and the Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts. She lives in Minneapolis, where she writes, teaches, collaborates, and resists. Autumn Pingel photo.

G.E. Patterson is a poet, translator, essayist, and public artist. His work has been honored by New York City’s Fund for Poetry and the Minnesota Humanities Commission. A featured post-performer in New York’s Panasonic Village Jazz Fest, his recent public works includes commissions – for Untite: The Community Meal and The Plume Project. He is the author of Fig (Graywolf) and So & To from (Ahasta). After years in the Northeast and on the West Coast, he now makes his home in Minnesota. JoAnn Verburg photo.

New York City

David A. Kirschenbaum

Bill Lessard

David A. Kirschenbaum is the editor and publisher of Boog City, a New York City-based small press and community newspaper now in its 27th year. He is the author of The July Project 2007 (Open 24 Hours), a series of songs about Star Wars set to rock and pop classics. His poems form the lyrics of Preston Spurlock and Casey Holford’s band Gilmore Boys (http://www.myspace.com/gilmoreboys).

Bill Lessard has writing that has appeared or is forthcoming in McSweeney’s, Hyperallergic, Prelude, Brooklyn Rail, PANK, PANK, FUNKHOUSE, Fedcock. His work has also been featured at MoMA PS1. He co-curates the Cool as F*** reading series at Pete’s Candy Store and is Boog City’s poetry editor.

Nathaniel Siegel

Jack Walsh

Nathaniel Siegel is a gay poet, curator, historian, photographer and artist. His book-length poem “Tony” was published by Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs. Recent projects include new collections of poems to accompany the photographs of Stanley Stark, the photographs of Tom Bianchi and the paintings and photographs of David Hockney.

Jack Walsh is a multidisciplinary artist whose work has appeared most recently as shows at the Fox Egg Gallery, Bohemian Art Gallery, Spill Art Gallery, Washington Center, and Black Dog Café. His paintings have been featured on the cover of Rain Taxi Review of Books and the poetry collection Ghost Fargo. It is important to Jack to integrate all media and put his life to mudslide tyrannies both personal and universal for this reason, he also enjoys shining work in untraditional spaces such as his Congo Bicycle Gallery, his chalkboard painted art car, and outside his own home. Instagram: @joefaceartists

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Hosted and curated by Boog City editor and publisher Kirschenbaum

For further information: 212-842-BOOG (2664), editor@boogcity.com
MINNEAPOLIS-
ST. PAUL

Jack Walsh

oil and collage on canvas
Jennifer Kwon Dobbs

Monkey House

Camp Casey STD clinic, Dongducheon

Filial daughters / juicy girls
whose bedsores parents suck soobak rinds
you pure love / doc-approved
womb / diplomacy
of slang: monkey suit / monkey beach / moose
Roses of Sharon / in-house examined
you pink / slip back from the cleaners
again / you rivet a GI's attention

While Rosie watered peonies and baked mix cakes
into manifestos / medicated to-do lists
with Librium / Liberace / a cold
sank across her pelvis / infiltrated her Detroit
mattress / a night sweat is a homefront
is a backdoor / among bee-harvested lilacs

Expired / you disco skirt / western princess
Expired / you dance card stamped
syphilis / farm girl with nine sibling mouths
appended to yours / the medicine
forces each to vomit / conceal their meals' origin
you civil servant / he's no pro / phylaxis
each overnight transaction / a true patriot's wages
in suffering or joy to love our nation

To love is to ask / no questions / no
soldier answers / no wife asks / a blister's origin
jump / cut / hop / scotch / ticker / tape
the victory parade's bunting
will be televised / will be scratched on mute

Some Trees

“... So why do I tell you anything? Because you still listen, because in times like these
to have you listen at all, it’s necessary
to talk about trees.”

— Adrienne Rich, "What Kind of Times Are These"

Between a chestnut and cedar where grass grows uphill
there’s a hunter sharpening his jackknife.

A pale bride lists
back and forth in the form of a doe's white stomach
shaved pink for the taking
inside her belly, there's a voice

that’s not yet a voice
ringed with cartilage, ringed in promise
of a time when the hunter sketched maps and stitched
camouflage nets
under the cold stars, under the trees'
civil congress
checked and balanced by an autumn wind—
the doe racing among birch aisles, her cloven hooves cutting
a signature, a pact with that leaf-mold paradise.

The trees witness
the hunter remove his jacket and spread blue tarp for the
dismantling.

Do I need to explain
crouched under a twig thicket for you to see?
Mary Moore Easter

Public School (Colored) Over Town

1.
We were six at school. My braids
had bows on the skinny ends
not quite long enough to graze my shoulders.

Her braid was loose, a flare sticking up
from the neat squares on her head.
No one shamed it flat.

His nose was crusty with snot
unwiped, hardly noticed by any grown up
with a tissue.

I’d never seen a nose left unwiped
or a tuft of hair untamed on pain
of family dishonor.

Poor might have explained it, but the new word
I learned was tedder to name the white rash
on his scalp, the reason to shave it.

Or was that ringworm?
Don’t touch. It’ll spread.

2.
Mama packed my lunches for fun
like all other creative ventures
tending to (canned) shrimp salad sandwiches
and coconut macaroons.

I wanted to share Auntie’s jar of pickled pigs feet
in the Teacher’s Room, that vinegar
cutting through the gristle.

I didn’t like coconut.

3.
There was no ‘hood, just slums scattered among
righteous blocks, shacks in the alley. Yards were hard packed dirt
grass skinned off by the feet of multitudes
living together. Unpainted wood held the whole thing suspended
above a porch where dogs lay underneath.

Across the way giant hydrangeas dwarfed
a neater yard edging a brick house
where a workman left early, tools in hand
and a wife aproned her housedress against splatter.

White frame porches rocked
in the late afternoon
Bay windows looked out front
Chinaberry trees shaded the back.

City or country road, some Vaselined children issued forth
braided tight, some noses ran free, some rags
darted from corner to corner.
We saw them from our car.

Bricks and bays endured while shacks
folded in on themselves.
No one knew for sure which shelter sent out
oiled children until a school teacher
heard a boy soprano under his teddared scalp
or an answer quick as a knife
from the hair-flared girl.

On the Longest Night

A writing assignment from the White House

In the midst of other darkening
we are looking for science-based light
not LED but say, a star, fetal and full of promise
not vulnerable to the chaos of Babel,
diverse as that confusion may be.

Such human entitlement
builds on what was given us at birth,
the ability to reason from point A
past point B, to transit each link and letter
in a sequence, genderless as the evidence
in front of us. We are looking for fact
to shine out.

This is no time to disavow Galileo.
It’s been done and failed
to change knowledge.

While he was jailed we orbited
a bigger world, his evidence-based notes
condemned by know-nothings
still struggling with a-b-c.

Now as then, the urge to still us,
stop us, rewind the spool of
learning. Ignore Rome’s
hermaphrodites, antecedents of those
who guard their transgendered states
moving freely past boxes checked
neither a nor b.

The Name of the Game

is:
Get-the-guy-what-he-wants
needs
feels entitled to
was cheated of
by history, no less
deserves.

Mount a case as to why,
it’s only reasonable,
anyone can see it,
he’s owed,
had nothing wrong,
j ustice hasn’t been done.
Do it!

Oh, you didn’t know you were a player?
You’re female, right?
In the vicinity?
Have somehow got the right stuff?
Mislook your independence for freedom?
Failed to read the fine print?
Stumbled?

What are you, heartless?
Give the guy a break
water under the bridge
bygones, and all that.

Step up to the plate
and give the guy what he wants.

Mary Moore Easter's (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetsmary-moore-easter) The Body of the World (Mad Hat Press) was a finalist for the 2017 Prairie Schooner Book Prize. Widely published, she is a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet; Cave Canem Fellow; veteran dancer/choreographer; and emerita professor of dance at Carleton College. Mary Ellen Frame photo.
Dobby Gibson

Upon Arrival

Nothing much we can do now
but wait. The end.
A bird tripped the sensor
and turned the garage light on. The end.
The shortest distance between two points
is impossible. What we talk ourselves into doing
is whimsy, what we do without thinking
is our calling, so open the windows
as if you’re possessed.
As if they’re not wounds, but gills.
Blow a few smoke rings.
Tilt back your head and send
the bubbles to the surface,
like watching your dinner guests
stumble to their cars in the dark,
then slaying up all night
looking at the photos.
The performance is in two parts
without an intermission.
The performance is smashing
light bulbs into a trash can
to liberate the air. There’s always at least one
thing we’ve been lugging around too long,
or so we’re about to discover.
Here’s an entire world to remove your headphones to.
Here’s another thing you’ll never fill up.

Astronauts on Earth

I love how difficult the snow
makes speech.
I love its concert choirs singing ash,
the clean-sheet dreams,
spritz of frozen perfumes
and reams of one-sided contracts
torn to the wind.
Teeth line our mouths
like wet tombstones,
everything the wind has to whistle through
steal a breath.
When I press my forehead against the glass,
that’s where the words go.
I believe happiness requires no suffering.
I believe the snow knows things we don’t.
Blizzards hate extroverts.
Words go where the dead won’t.
I love the degree to which beauty
depends on repetition.
I’m already ready to start over,
I’m not done doing it again.
Now that my ghosts are awake,
all of my little babies
wailing with their mouths open,
demanding I feed them
their morning zeros.

Roll Call

Present Absent

The gods sitting around reading Brand: You.
The gods watching us sleep and calling it ‘marathon training.’
The gods chasing one another at the off-leash god park.
The gods looking into three-way mirrors so they can see their own
butts.
The gods cursing us for pulling up dandelions.
The gods updating their secret maps of lost mittens.
The gods we mistakenly call birds.
The gods raising the prime interest rate another third.
The gods whispering: Bleed out, and you blend right in.
The gods amusing themselves by making the sound of your own
name sound suddenly strange to you.
The gods who, after inventing the seahorse, largely quit.
The gods A/B testing new ways to monetize the obituaries.
The gods resting their defense on reasonable force.
The gods who blithely wave at laser beams to dispense paper
towels.
The gods in monogrammed bathrobes still naming the world.
The gods brunching in America.
The gods, for now, among us.
Steve Healey

Rules of the Game

Everyone is a suspect.
Everyone is Colonel Mustard.
Colonel Mustard in the basement
with a toothpick. Everywhere is
a crime scene, everything a weapon. Following the rules is
the most dangerous weapon.
Players must identify the murderer
by looking at each other’s faces. If you have to ask,
you’re already dead. Remember not to breathe. The question worth
asking should not be asked.
Every word counts. Every suspect
has ‘nothing to say.’ Every breath
is your last penny. Past performance
does not guarantee future respiration. One afternoon walking
home from school you find
a dollar bill on the sidewalk.
George Washington stares at you
with his dead face. One morning
delivering newspapers you see
a dead body in a parked car.
You feel guilty but didn’t commit
the crime. One summer at camp
you learn to follow the rules
by hiding your sadness. Now
the player to the left must visualize
your corpse. You are accused
of everything. Your body is covered
in shadows or bruises. You
have the right to remain silent.
Each player takes a deep breath
and holds it. Each player must die
trying to win. The game is
over when no one wins.
Everyone dies.

In Junior High School

I sat in the classroom listening
to the clock. I didn’t say
anything. I touched my lips
too much. I listened to the wind
rubbing against the windows.
The field behind my school
sometimes disappeared
under snow. One night my father
told me that he was a spy
for the CIA. He said that being
a spy was like James Bond
but less exciting. He said
I should never tell anyone
he was a spy. If anyone asked
I should say he works for
the State Department. I listened
to my father but didn’t say
anything. I forgot I was there.
It was dark outside. After
that night I went on being
a student in junior high school.
I sat in the classroom and
didn’t tell anyone my father
was a spy for the CIA.
I forgot there were windows
between me and the field of snow.
My history teacher showed us
a bar graph of Soviet missiles.
They were towering over
the American missiles. He said
we were losing the Cold War.
I looked outside. I could see
footsteps in the field of snow.
I didn’t say anything.

Google Street View Haiku

the curtains are open
we watch our eyes on the glowing screen
watching us from the street

zoom in on the ants
crawling over a dead baby wren
lying on the curb

strawberry plants arrived
this morning by FedEx already
I taste their sweet blood

move your cursor where
you want to go then click once
to delete the past

that time persy Francis Bacon
authored all of Shakespeare’s plays
hid secret messages in them

last night I dreamed I was asleep
snoring so loudly my neighbors
plotted to silence me

it’s true my loves have all been
suicide kings and drama queens I held
too tightly in my hand

if you remove all the spying
from Hamlet “eight unnecessary deaths
could be avoided”

this from a student essay
you can claim to author for free
at www.123helpme.com

now that we see everywhere
our faces lose their high resolution
skin gets blurry

how about I author nothing
and cook myself at 98.6 degrees
for a few centuries LOL!

there must be a god of streets
connecting them all because you can’t
see them all at once

thank you for your patience
still on hold with my service provider
ferns waving in the breeze

keep zooming out until
earth is a little ball then a dot
then not even that

Steve Healey’s (https://stevehealey.wordpress.com/) third book of poetry, Safe Houses I Have Known, will be published next year by Coffee House Press. His previous books are Earthling and 10 Mississippi.
from A Catalogue of Possible People

He was gently, almost lovingly, laying the dirt from his shovel onto my bare stomach. I'd agreed to be buried up to the neck in Prospect Park, to be photographed and to write a poem commemorating the experience. It was muggy summer Brooklyn weather, but in the minute after I was fully incased, a swift chill, only scarcely psychological, crept through my body. It would only be a few years before they discovered a rare form of cancer lacing his brainstem, inoperable, and several years after that before he was, against nearly every odd, free from its grip. "You feel cold," he said, "because the soil is drinking from your skin." I lay there, passersby double-taking at the sight of my head sprouting from the field, and thought about nothing but how cold I was, despite the sun burning my cheeks. He took photographs. In some my eyes were open, but mostly they were closed. "I'm going to unbury you now, but first I want to point out the water fountain near the boathouse in the distance. The soil has taken more fluid from your body than is comfortable. The moment you are free your body will rush toward the water to replenish itself." The shovel dipped near my ribs, carefully. A squirrel paused to watch, its spine a memorial arch. In my head I was already running.

An Ouroboros of True Forgiveness

Cluster-un-fucked, suddenly, and without explanation
The parts of you flaking off don't have to make peace with it
A split-level universe with no owner
She called him Worry, or Sorry, I could never remember
Recipes for clotted milk
Lazy seduction
Diminutive tic
The future is all he ever seems to cry about
Then you start over over
They lived together in a sufficiency called Languor
Peeling
It peeled and peeled until the peel was it
Where love means leaving
Piles of vitamins on the kitchen table
Tragic crevice
Cheap device
All the dead celebrities discovered by fathers younger than we are now
The selected poems were more like endless brier
I don't care I'm going to love you until my name reverts to a word
Postprandial transit, invisible river
All your former lovers taking a do-over
Rachel Moritz

Split Lip

Rachel Moritz (http://rachelmoritz.com/) is the author of the books, Sweet Velocity and Borrowed Wave, as well as five chapbooks. She lives with her partner and son in Minneapolis.

Fluency

When our son shouts from the bathtub, C!
he means it to stand
for the word
we’ve forbidden:
he mixes
a consonant’s sound to its symbolic match,
laughs
with his hands
in the rim
of bubbles,
we left him
not to speak
of violent things,
they swirl
around his visual cortex. Swords snivel into heads, arms severing shoulders, he mentions what he calls the nuclear without seeing plumes of gorgeous ignition we watched early in childhood, archive on repeat. In other notations of mastery and gap, he believes all errors stem from our president, whose name he discovers is a TR blend. Sharing this digraph

are the human inventions of train and tractor, are abstract words we explain to him: transition, transgender. Each thing in peril to this man’s singular evil: hatred of gays like his family, overuse of oil he believes apart from us not fueling nightly warmth in sheets and house and clothing, also limited vocabulary:

If the TR blend would read more, he decides, maybe he would be smarter. Most things a child understands are real though nuances suffer.

After a duration of two thousand days, the brain prepares to segment phonemes, connect each concept to written symbol so a sound matches salient label. How lengthy it is to assemble fluency, first a word and then a raw material.

Rachel Moritz (http://rachelmoritz.com/) is the author of the books, Sweet Velocity and Borrowed Wave, as well as five chapbooks. She lives with her partner and son in Minneapolis.
Lost Poem

I should write about that later, I thought, reading a placard in the aquarium.
In the hallways dappled with light filtered through fake oceans
I lose the prompt, in the war fog of sugar and late lunch hangry.

Did it have to do with the breeding habits of manta rays,
which are not sting rays but often mistaken for.
Something about the tubes full of jellyfish in the hall of mirrors,
or the octopus which my seven year old daughter claims always looks angry.

She pulls me to a long low tank of manta rays.
“Because there are no threats here they can breed all they want,”
she deduces.

Did it have to do with feeling the blush of your own skin
on a night so cold it cuts.
How a body feels standing in the sand facing an impossible blue
and not knowing how to swim.
Was it an inspiration brought forth from the curve of a dolphin’s nose,
or is it a beak,
was it the candy bright frogs near extinct,
so darling, so poisonous?
Maybe something about nets,
and how they are good for nothing
except catching the wrong thing.

By the time we got to the too expensive paperweights
that by some drill and resin glow in the dark in the gift shop,
I’ve lost the idea completely,
The loop of the aquarium bringing us back to the opposite side of the trough
Where the manta rays glide,
space ships made flesh in the sea water.

Bao Phi

In April of 2017, a sixty nine year old Asian American,
Dr. David Dao, was dragged from a United Airlines airplane.
please state your name.
please explain your name.
please provide your full name.
louder.
no, slower.
why didn’t you disclose your full name in the first place?
get up.
no.
get up. get out. get up.
no, get out.
what is your destination?
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM SAYING
where are you from?
who do you think you are?
you’re a what?
let us dissect your conceived privilege, let us do a background check on
your criminal record.
you look like a man who could have killed my uncle in a war.
I’m going to have to ask you to (What is the hot take?)
leave
(What is the analysis of the hot take?)
sir
(What is the backlash to the hot take and the backlash to the backlash?)
no, don’t tell me your name. what’s your name?
DON’T TALK BACK AT ME
fill in the blank: it would have been worse if the victim was _______.
Is that your real name? where were you born?
do they have laws where you are from and did you follow them?
do you hunt? if so, do you use a gun? where? do you get a permit?
please provide your grievances complete with an analysis of your
intersection of gender, class, and race that will fit within one
Twitter post word count limit. if need be, omit your name.
wait, say your name again.
slower. get up. faster.
get up. out. faster.
have you been traumatized by war?
have you ever been ejected?
If a gun was held to your head and you were asked what color you
wish you were, what would be your answer?
have you been aligned with any radical movements?
stand up.
answer again. again. just get up why are you being such a dick.
STOP.
stop asking us to kill you.
stop asking us
to kill you.
stop.
get out. KILL YOU.
what’s
your name?
Sagirah Shahid

Surveillance Rakats

Velcro my forehead to the lips of this
clothed prayer rug and wait for any answer
to fold me in, spine to femur. Outside the world
kneels, bone bashing bone. I blink, and the sun becomes
a spider bite inflaming the sky

you monitor devotion

I am an inverted promise, I am a choking, I am the acidic mist of this
cascading down my chin. My dear,

in this dark mirror.

I am defending my own neck. Watch it be something other than a trigger,
a still frame directed towards the heavens. I'm on this side
of a prophecy, my thumb tips a domino into motion

Is this question reconstructing
your immortality or resurrecting your ethereal prison?

I know nothing about these paused
then spew flashes, these strewn together audios
mimicking the raw miracle of your voice.

Is this polished reconstructing
your mortality or resurrecting your ethereal prison?

I know the shape of your nostrils. We have never met
in person, you are the blood of my blood. You are safety
you are the nod I needed from across the room.

I know the shape of your nostrils. We have never met
in person, you are the blood of my blood. You are safety
you are the nod I needed from across the room.

I make a vow
to never replay your undoing. I break the vow
I break everything.

Steam plumes
in the distance of this moonless sky
and drapes itself in unwrinkled sunbeams.

Here, a newborn dusk unfurls
from the silhouettes of a thirsting city.

I scrape the burnt off surface of your offerings,
toast and scrambled eggs, unveiled jar of strawberries
and observe our kitchen charring in the buttery spectacle of your song.

Your throat an abandoned jukebox and also, the worship of a petal
midair. You revive an eerie innocence, before
the year wafts in
before the day scratches itself open.

My dear, there is no fruit too strange for us to loosen
my dear, I cradle these too sweet joys between my teeth
and do not wince at the overflow of their sticky juices
cascading down my chin. My dear

I am an inverted promise, I am a choking, I am the acidic mist of this

Surveillance of Joy

It was never about the camera
or the power of its lens.

It was always about our mothers,
Black and Muslim and alive
and how you zoomed out so far.

Convinced we did not exist, you projected
your ignorance through the aperture of this lie.

At first, even our neighbors
distanced themselves from us, as if
proximity would spread your illusion
or worse.

I want you to know, down here
a gate of paradise clips itself to the calloused feet of our mothers.
I want you to know down here
your dark chambers only captured the flat shadows of our likeness.
I want you to know you can't own
the ceremony of our brokenhearted mothers repurposing grief
or flavor away.

their deliberate joys and how that ignited our strength,
our deflated bodies puckering and waving our flags
and kissing two cheeks and kissing the back of a knuckle
with our greetings of peace. The alchemy
of what these women could do—the world pricked our ears with its venom,
our mothers sucked the poison out.

And when we thought we had to muffle our laughter
our mothers said: louder.

Joy inside my tears

'So I should tell you of the happiness you bring…'
-Stevie Wonder

AFTER THE ADTHAN WE WET OUR EXPOSED LIMBS
The first prayer started off as a song
someone sang it — no,
someone saaaaaang it

neck cocked back, hand on hip
it knocks me off my

‘For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
here is a strange and bitter crop’

the future is the past reincarnated, is how you give me so much life
is how psychadelic chats with God look like at night.

THE WATER WAS SO COLD BEFORE IT GRAZED MY SKIN
If I was overjoyed, it was in the aftermath. Mommy, aren't we lovely in our
plain-clothed grief?

Please don't ask me to cover it up. The fear was not camouflaged. I was
in this dance of mid-air emotions, cycle of recycled steps. You taught me on
how to be brave.

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how to be brave.

Sagirah Shahid (https://sagirahshahid.com) is a Black Muslim writer based in Minneapolis. Her poetry and short-stories can be found in Mizna, Paper Darts, AtlanticRock, and elsewhere.
Sun Yung Shin

My First Voyage Out

My First Voyage Out

Why upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land? – Moby-Dick, or, The Whale

(Figure in murky light)

( Didn’t you know time travel leaves invisible brands on the skin? )

( Back then, we practiced with black light we plagiarized from the future )

( We time the known variables of the arrival stages )

( ‘Godspeed, tomorrow?’ )

( You found abundant time to design the machine )

( Everything made the rain black and scaled )

( Well, misfortune, you perch in the sky, levering the ground )

( Under no purse, no past, no paterfamilias )

( We made death masks with all the gold )

( Contort the dead comfortable with suffocation )

( The dead anathema to air )

( Always are the dead getting to spend the old currency )

( They knew that everything burns at a singular rate )

( Fortified the deck of cards, deck of stockades )

( But time has an extravagant spinal-span )

( ‘As the world’s snake’ )

( Sky dives through the axis wrenches the tactics )

( All the cousins’ plans hard to read, ride taut and dark )

( Never untethered forefather and foreshadow )

( Halo overhead, an electric meadow of florets )

( Paragraphs of bees a suspense of burn )

( Painted sail stay a spell )

( Never powered my machine my platinum container of holes )

( Always the holes are my titanium mother and her tin mother, too )

( Scratch my hand like my hands are the rippling backs of cats )

( As a woman I can fold anything )

( You corrugate time into layers of a cake, a cloak )

( Can’t you all pleat and tuck a cart, a cast )

( For when I sew myself into the pilot seat )

( The passenger seat is sometimes there, sometimes not )

( Once there were a hundred passenger seats )

( All around, all around )

( Asunder, things are always growing when I’m not looking )

( When I’m not looking things are always going around my back )

( Hospital to ride along aside me )

( Burned parade tracings to ride along inside me )

( Fluttering petals flags taking me into their confidence )

( Neon yellow every brand of sunshine to turn one side of me aside )

( We hiked together procured the last book they offered at the library )

( Tourism had tumbled out of vogue, the verge )

( They fell through us like pages of dead skin )

( Wonder worn I put the sheets through my typewriter )

( Masked all things in the past made of fur )

( Several every child needed to be combed and untangled )

( Black teeth I went through ribbon after ribbon )

( Gothic immoderate hairpiece, braided dress, a night spoool )

( Dusk ink a shot glass of octopus panic )

( Baroque November already in my cathedral of conceivable futures )

>>>
Mary Austin Speaker

A Distribution of Fire

If to tolerate
is to tacitly accept,
and to accept
is to embrace,
then to tolerate
is to tacitly embrace.

A cold embrace.
An icy stepping toward.
We can’t all just get along,
said my professor,
when I was a teenager
who wanted everyone to get along.

We were reading
Orientalism.
Act powerfully
without abuse,
says the Center for Creative Conflict
Resolution in St. Louis.
Build power with,
not power over.

Says the Citizens Committee
for New York City, where I lived
for fifteen years, amid the crowd
of strangers trying
to keep their distance
and their closeness at once.

In 1991, I was thirteen,
sang in the girls choir,
a sea of brown and white faces
above our silly plaid dresses.

In 1991, George Halliday
sent a video to KTLA
of Rodney King III being beaten
by five police officers.

George Halliday did not tolerate
the beating of Rodney King,
nor did the protestors
after he encountered Darren Wilson.

were acquitted. Can we all get along?
plead Rodney King
to the angry crowd. 53 people died

In 2014, protestors lit two police cars
and fifteen buildings on fire
in Ferguson, Missouri,
where Michael Brown’s body
lay bleeding on the ground
four hours among the gathering crowd.
The protestors did not tolerate
the grand jury’s failure
to indict Darren Wilson.
We tolerate each other
and germinate a sharpness
when we say nothing.

Or we chip away at the stones
inside us, smoothing their edges.

Tolerance is a double-edged stone:
one side blunt, the other honed.
What do we want when we say,
You cannot behave this way?

Certain moments send adrenaline
to the heart, dry out the tongue,
and dog the lungs,
writes Claudia Rankine.
on the physical nature
of the double-bind
in which Black people
find themselves in America,
faced with the offering
of assimilation with whiteness,
and the look that says,
you do not belong.

Or she is writing down Walter Scott
in the back of the book.
Or she is writing down Freddy Gray
in the back of the book.

She is always opening
the book again.
To appropriate is to take
without permission.
Or it is to offer support, dedicate
a stream, devote a certain sum.
Reparation is the act of repair.
Or it is the act of paying for losses
paid by the aggressor after devastation.
When parents lose a child,
they are more likely to suffer
depression, cardiovascular disease,
and marital disruption,
says the National Institute of Health.

Michael Brown died 90 seconds
after he encountered Darren Wilson.
What do we mean by tolerance?
Power with? Or power over.

When the grand jury
acquitted Darren Wilson,
National Guard troops
fanned out across the city,
said the Washington Post
as though the officers practiced
with the grace of dancers
or ancient, predatory birds.

If an unjust state presumes revolt,
tear gas is distributed accordingly.

If a people revolt, fire
is distributed accordingly.
If each accord is anarchic in scope,
it is appropriate in scale
if the scale of the action
is a measure of anger, a measure of fear.

Flare up like a flame,
wrote Rainer Maria Rilke
to God in 1903.
Make big shadows I can move in.

Which public was safe
when Michael Brown was killed?

A man in the crowd observing the body
said, the police arrived with dogs.
The most common kind of dog
used by police in the United States
is the German Shepherd.
Originally bred to herd sheep,
German Shepherds are responsible
for more reported bitings
than any other breed
in the United States.

If to tolerate
is to tacitly accept,
it is still a choice,
a line drawn in softened sand
that reads: here I stand,
and here, and here is where

Tolerance comes from the Latin tolero:
‘to endure’ We need more
than endurance.
Sometimes
we need to flare up,
make big shadows,
speak. Say, I see you.

In 2015, Feidin Santana
saw Michael Slager
shoot Walter Scott
and cover up his crime.

The impunity of police erodes.
Sand shifts when the wind gets hot.
The line sinks deeper,
moving steadily outward
till the land breaks up,
the soft shoulder falls away
and we have no
where to go
but hot and toward
each every other,
flared, speaking,
ready to level
these bent and
broken houses.

Mary Austin Speaker’s (https://cargocollective.com/maryaustinspeaker) first book, Ceremony, was selected by Matthea Harvey as winner of the 2012 Slope Editions book prize, and her second book, The Bridge, was published in January 2016 by Shearsman Books. Together with Chris Martin and Sam Gould, she co-edits and designs Society, a new publication project about poetry and power. She is currently Art Director for Milkweed Editions and edits a chapbook column for Rain Taxi.
THE SUPPOSIUM
EDITED BY JOAN RETALLACK
Thought Experiments & Poethical Play in Difficult Times
The gamut of intellectual and imaginative; performative, visual, and poetic experiments and interventions in this volume enact poethical responses as seemingly divergent as decolonizing architecture in a Palestinian refugee camp while rethinking socio-political geometries of the global refugee crisis; Black Dada vis-à-vis Black Lives Matter; misogyny as Feminist Responsibility project; the art of If; Miles Davis’s and another’s s’posin; and of course Fall Guys. The Supposium's a polyvocal attempt to edge beyond default geometries of attention as we address the state of emergency that has become our space-time on this planet. The implicitly conversational sequence’s homage and play on Plato’s Symposium—Socratic dialogue on the nature of love (erōs) with its humor, gravitas, and improbable feminine swerve out of a prototypic masculine culture.
Joan Retallack is a master teacher of the thought-experiment. With magically generative aplomb it is not magic—it is thoughtful attunement to the method of questioning and long experience in it), her prompts nestle in the mind and things flow out. In this loose, beautiful and unlikely collection of writings, conversations and exuberances, we find more evidence of how much more work there is to do on the question Adam Pendleton asks: ‘How can we have productive public conversations and exchanges?’ So simple. Impossible? The Supposium is, therefore, an optimistic accumulation of successes at the one-second-of-attention-at-a-time level. I think this is the level at which the true future can be glimpsed and made.” —Simone White
2018 | $24 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-31-3 | Cover collage by Joan Retallack

THE TRIUMPH OF CROWDS
3BY BRIGID MCLEER
A Distributed Performance Lecture
The Triumph of Crowds is a lecture as performance, or performance as lecture, distributed among multiple figures. Using Nicholas Poussin's painting The Triumph of David (1631) as a jumping off point, McLeer's work weaves art history, film, and the contemporary politics and poetics of community. It opens up the space of performance into a time that is both meditative and urgent.
Brigid McLeer is an artist working between disciplines and across genres. Her work has been made for galleries, public sites, the page, online and combinations thereof. Written work in the form of essays and image-text work has been published in books and journals including Performance Research, Circa, Visible Language, Repertorio: Teatro e Danca, Brazil, and the poetry magazine Chain. Her essay “Returning in the House of Democracy” is included in The Creative Critic: writing for/as practice edited by Emily Orley and Katja Hilevaara forthcoming from Routledge (2018). Her academic career has included teaching posts at many UK universities and between 1995–2000 she co-wrote and lectured on the pioneering degree course “Performance Writing” at Dartington College of Arts. She is currently a researcher at the Royal College of Art, London.

BEWILDERED
3BY IBN ‘ARABI
TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL A. SELLS
Love Poems From Translation Of Desires
The last published work from The Post-Apollo Press, Bewildered: Love Poems from Translation Of Desires contains new translations of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Tarjuman poems. Michael A. Sells carries into this translation the supple, resonant quality of the original Arabic, so that the poems come to life in modern poetic English.
Michael A. Sells is a professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago. He is an authority on Ibn al-‘Arabī as well as one of the most distinguished contemporary translators of classical Arabic poetry. His books include: Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes (Wesleyan); Mystical Languages of Unsayling (Chicago); Early Islamic Mysticism (Paulist Press); The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia (California); Approaching the Qur’an (White Cloud); and The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Andalus (Cambridge). He is currently working on a complete bilingual edition and translation of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Tarjuman al-Ashwaq.

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NEW YORK CITY

Nathaniel Siegel

Statue of Liberty in front of Madison Avenue Building on Sidewalk
Steven Alvarez

Steven Alvarez is the author of The Codex Mojaedicus, winner of the 2016 Fence Modern Poets Prize. He lives in New York City.

Three Polis A border droids are steering a predator two unmanned aircraft along the Polis B border | at the helm | & it's already busy | what's the situation you got here | this is a group that you got off a cold hit from a sensor | bioheat cameras spotted fourteen denizens crossing thru rugged mountainous terrain some fifty miles away have no idea | 're being watched from 19,000 feet in the bluesky | bird relations | shd be responding | then a surprise pops up on the screen | got another group | you get how many | start counting there | now thirtyone denizens walking north already fifteen miles inside the Polis A | this is a huge area & the Polis A advanced biocolonial force lacks machinepower to fully patrol it | it's the reason to expand predator patrols all along the southern border | & you think anymore predator aircraft across the border you wd help | absolutely | absolutely | it's much more cost effective to do that | you'll return to that scene in the mountains in a moment | earlier in the day the predator focused its camera on you to give you a simultaneous aerial & ground view | you're told it's five & a half miles in that direction | eye can't see it but put it to the test walk around this this & & see what you look like in the eyes of the unmanned aircraft | these suspects are now running across the field | i've gone under some bushes in a covered area | so you'll keep yr camera focused in that area if | try to pop out either side of that at any angle on that you'll know which way | go | you're going to keep moving & see if you can find another place to try to hide | find a place to sit under a tall neapol & see | moving around in there trying to hide | suspect enters | entering 01 | what appears to be a playground area 01 | run but | can't hide | makes you 01 | feel like you're then playing 01 hide | & | go | shoot 01 of course these Polis A borderbots are engaged 01 | in a real | life version & borderbot 02 | agents have now found the thirtyone denizens you told you abt earlier | one 02 | to fit up | okay | group must see you there start to run across | new 02 stop | stop 02 | groups to yr right here | less than thirty 02 | yards running | groups | running group 02 | running you're on | do not get away from you clowns 02.

02: running you're on | do not get away from you clowns
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Steven Alvarez

The Portable Boog Reader | New York City

boog city 18 www.boogcity.com
Excerpts from “Out of Office Reply”

September 20th 2015
The office is like the plot of Contagion but about more and more people in my office getting standing desks.

Why don’t standing desks come with cup holders for Soylent?

October 14th 2015
Took not 1 but 2 bananas from the work snack supply and Coworker says ‘that’s a power move.’ ‘Damn’ right.

Gonna eat all the free fruit and nuts in this office until someone confronts me about it.

November 5th 2016
I frequent the bathroom at work not because I have to pee but because it’s nice to sit in a small, quiet room w/ no computer and your pants down.

January 18th 2016
They say the purpose of this work offsite trip is team bonding or something. It is 1am and I am trapped in this beach hotel with my coworkers we are in the lobby lounge with paper bracelets for the open bar. I am drinking a Shirley temple. Coworker says his son’s name is Jameson Walker and with this he guilts me into drinking whiskey with him.

February 14th, 2016
Coworker confides that he bought himself a cake and had the Carvel lady write ‘yay!’ on it and ate it alone in his bed in one sitting.

May 5 2016
Cinco de May-themed happy hour in the office. I’dk where they got this frozen margarita machine or these sombreros or ponchos or fake mustaches There are cardboard cut-outs of a Mexican couple but their faces are missing. My coworkers, while not all white, none are Mexican, are putting their faces into the holes. Fill the gaps with their whiteness.

Untitled 9/16/17
In collaboration with @whoismarybot

I lived solely off forever* started saying ‘good grief’ Every day

Interviewer: what’s your own selfish benefit
Me: ya i’m trying to remember i feel like myself

Cool thing about impending doom
When ppl who control the government Love culture

They totally schedule meetings where I would just hear ‘punch me’

Don’t mind me
I’m a depression nap
sacrificed to the emo millennials on the floor

2016 Me: haha yeah…
2017: no need no children no one cool

The new ways to shake off forever*
plugged into thinking about the very complicated
Feel bad life syndrome

Monday my tuition
‘Eccentric billionaire’ sounds like Trashcan or my love
What’s sicker?

Rewriting history as vacation
everyone’s in Florida
Welcome to grow up traffic
expected to get rid of grass

Collecting data
Collecting data
Notification for u
receive an obligation

myself as a non-profit
keep being mean to the general rule,
Shoutout to me
I fell asleep on my ex

a rapidly deflating air mattress
a total annihilation

Mary Boo Anderson (http://whoismaryanderson.com/) is a Bedford–Stuyvesant, Brooklyn artist and writer. Her work can be found in Hobart, Witch Craft Magazine, Peach Mag, and Glittermob among others.
Anselm Berrigan

Theories of Influence

The disconnect gives itself a mouth
In order to understand its source

The disconnect reinvents language
Every time its mouth arises to speak

It’s no way to live. But ways to
Live crumble into serenades

In service of division, or so the
Disconnect notes between performances

The cat looks forward to surgery
I might have to leave the seder early

To pick him up. In the meantime
Influence is all that calms us down

Theories of Influence (One Cohesive Doohickey)

Capital scrunches summer into mystical debris
I mean capitalism’s tears whisper into empty person

Shells roaming its own malls in floor-length fatigue
Smocks shaved off the backs of giant goat torsos

Floating in the local grassless erogenous zones
Dear Disconnect, its we whispers, dear lonely

Spotlit quincunx of complex accumulation
May you be pleased to meet yourself in our box

Set edition of transference & erudition as our
I/we continues this on-going set as special guest

In every problem, issue, critique, concern &
Cornball rodeo that’ll out of spite have us

& only us as permanent stand-in for the you
You yearn to you in. God that’s depressing

Replied every shell without hermit. Hermit!
Hermits! Get your assless pincers Here!

Right! Novelness! & all internal bells unrung
from brunch to bottomless brunch like a day

Theories of Influence (I Dig A LoL)

The “just fucked” look
on the faces of
Caravaggio’s Musicians
especially the mask
worn by that taut
sack of wine holding
the guitar, even or
especially as I’m standing
on some fuckless marble
floor in New York
ready to be torn
necessarily into
pragmatic corpse-bot
instructions on how
& then there’s Cupid
fucked back into
posternly, the proto-
groupie, leaking at
the seams, reaching
for some grapes

Theories of influence

a taxidermied word
plies itself off
the elegaic grid
tired of the square
toggle between what’s
hidden in plain sight –
the bombed &
the bombing –
& what’s exposed
in service of you:
you dumb shi-
trying to unstuff
some old word
Do we betray when we stop the words flowing to touch the body.
Do we betray when we continue working. The work is the want but where does the want rest? Is the want in the body. Is the want in the book. Simone Veil says the void of the soul must remain a void, but I am too soul starved. I imagine too much. It’s because of the void that another person thinks to ask me what I want. I don’t know, but out of the want I am thirsty for the asking. What is the work of slipperiness, of ascent and descent? At some point, what I want to do crosses over from work to not-work. When need I not be compensated? Exchange violates. Reciprocity starves. I am thirsty for an adequate inventory of careful actions.

What can be offered and when.

Dreamed a country with a leader so shadowed in secrecy it made the earth shake. A city of automatons dodging high-rises as they toppled and fell. Dodging police offers who sniped the still-awake. Running from the maw of the earth, Duane Reade seems safest, closest to the ground. You buy sunglasses and I look out the storefront at the others ducking behind cars. After a week the world stops seizing and we say, “But he’s still here, and we don’t even know his name.” A repellent red flag is hoisted in Columbus Circle, while a small crowd chants and fails to rhythm. We might die in protest, we say, we are ready, but we’re too small and confused even for that.

A man I have never met asks me why strong women like myself make fun of male fragility, when we were once the fragile ones? I don’t bother to respond because I don’t accept the terms. Who are you to call me a strong woman. I hate strength like / I hate America. This is the one strong thing in me, my hate. My therapist tells me I can work through my anger and I ask if I can still keep it after. I keep it always under my left breast. I fold my hate up like a weather report. I keep it always / in my punctuation. I can’t publish this. My students could always be cameras even though in practice they are fountains. My name could be put on a list. Is it strength to have my name on a list. Seems like wealth / nettedness / which is strength. Seems a powder under the teeth whose meaning depends / on whose teeth. A man I have never met grins in the gulley / enfleshes blue light. He presses.

He presses and presses and presses.

I wake up and for a second I don’t remember my lifeblood
I wake up in a flushed petal

what would it mean to say what I’m afraid of / to coil up there isn’t time / we work until sleep or sex and even I don’t have time for my fear

roll me / a tight strung spool
put me off the fire escape
put me in the rude wind truly

what if I weren’t scared
of the outside
of the man sound
of the air conditioner

what if I walked thru the trash like a liberal arts basket case
what if I had a pouted lip only when appropriate
what if I were easier on the boys

no you didn’t get that job from your daddy
why would I think that
no it goes without saying
I wanna hear you critique your ex-gf’s blowjobs

why would I not see
you are having a Rough Time

I am compassion fountain
why would you hesitate before my labor

Liz Bowen is the author of Sugarblood (Metatron) and the chapbook Compassion Fountain (forthcoming from Hyacinth Girl Press). She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in English and comparative literature at Columbia University, where she also teaches undergraduate writing.
The Hunger Essay

1) The Duchess of Windsor said, One can never be too rich. One can never be too thin. Alane Bashkirtseff wrote in 1887 that TB gives me an air of languor that is very becoming, and Carrie Long says, My desire to be the perfect student... To prove I was not a guest/a thief/to prove... I would do anything to feel alive in language.

2) Crumbs rain down the corners of my lips / Frizzy Pebbles at midnight I binge till / I pass out / wake early for class / study stars write poems learn what Sartre means when he says existential dread / return late / I am never home / in my body / I must prove I am brilliant / bodiless / soul /— ghosting the old books / the light of the mind / I am fat which is to say / invisible / at 200 pounds / so why not whipped cream atop strawberry gel atop fried Biscoq

3) I watch season 3 of Orange is the New Black on my iPad while eating http://claudia-cortese.com/ The crusty season was more spangled more camera-flash dazzing than this disease. as Sontag says, skin is the outer garment of the body, and the way sweat sheens chubby cheeks are almost obscene in their health. If, whereas for men sin was an impure differing perceptions on the locus of sin. For women evil was internal and The Devil a domestic parasitic force, whereas for men sin was an impure response to external stimuli.

4) Catherine of Siena ladled the pus from a cancer patient's sore, lifted the spoon to her lips and sipped till the desire for food spasmed from her stomach. This is not poetry—this is what she did. Catherine of Siena ladled the pus from a cancer patient's sore.

5) What I mean is history gives form to guilt so of course Catherine chucked fennel and spit herb's sour spittle into a cup of course she walked so fast her confessor couldn't keep pace though she was to use the cliché all skin and bone there's a medical reason I'm sure for the burst of energy so commonly seen in the uneating but I reason the closer Catherine came to bodiless the more she jangled with joy.

6) God hardly notices when we walk away but I bet he watched Catherine force an olive twig down her throat watery gastrics dribbling her chin I bet he watched her pull the plank she'd hidden beneath her pillow beat each leg till splintered raw as chicken skin the ritual so pornographic it quivered the air in heaven one girl on the floor with three twigs disappearing into the darkness her body grew itself around the minerals stripped to nerves in the pulpy mess of her mouth.

7) The glass-shaking laughter that comes from deep in the belly and the way sweat sheens chubby cheeks are almost obscene in their health. If, as Sontag says, skin is the outer garment of the body and illness the interior decor, what could be more spangled more camera-flash dazzling than this disease.

8) Some theories on the origins of the cult of thinness include: 1) It makes women frail and weak. 2) It's the logical conclusion of food's abundance in the West. 3) The way dresses hang in clean lines on the tall and breast-less makes for the highest fashion. However, to say all this is to ignore that Catherine's not eating was a way to gain power. God did her bidding; in exchange she gave him her body.

9) The major distinction between male and female saints... is based on their differing perceptions on the locus of sin. For women evil was internal and The Devil a domestic parasitic force, whereas for men sin was an impure response to external stimuli.

10) Imagination believing that any evil can slip through your anus your mouth-hole do you feel dirty: how will you exercise what's already worming its way inside you

11) Baby Catherine sucked thick milk from her mother's tit while her twin drank the watery liquid a wet nurse squeezed into her mouth among many mouths. I imagine Catherine's unbearable guilt for fattening while her twin starved and wrote, I clapsed mother's breast and drank while you withered away-- can you forgive me? I drink one handful of water a day, have no meat, press my knees to the wood floor till dawn.

Claudia Cortese's (http://claudia-cortese.com/) debut full-length, Wasp Queen (Black Lawrence Press), explores the privilege and pathology, trauma and brattiness of suburban girlhood. The daughter of Neapolitan immigrants, Cortese grew up in Ohio and lives in New Jersey.
Edward Field

Cataract Op

It felt so adult, at 83, going by myself to the hospital, getting on the bus like others (all the young) headed for work through the morning Manhattan streets carrying umbrellas and newspapers, disappearing into subways, lining up at carts for a (careless, cholesterol-rich) paper bag breakfast.

When the bus pulled up at the stop, I got out and walked in, calm, like I remember in the war flying into combat with maybe a touch of nerves, but no great anxiety, more like excitement.

Then it all went efficiently, the procedures of pre-op, as I was passed from station to station, each technician doing his job, like once the squadrons of silver bombers in wing to wing formation roared through the crystal sky, each of the crew busy, me at my desk with my instruments calculating our course and noting in the log wind drift and speed and altitude, courteously calling ‘navigator to crew…’ to read out our position and estimated time of arrival.

Our goal of the mission that day was the Ruhr, a land of mines and furnaces, with a cataract of thick black smoke rising from the factories cranking out anti-aircraft guns like the ones lobbing up the deadly black bursts at us.

Now I was being wheeled into the hall outside the operating room where I joined a line of gurneys waiting their turn at the laser, as the squadrons in stately procession wheeled in a wide circle around the city, lined up for the bombing run, the flak peppering the air thickly under us.

Finally, the moment, my moment -- and I was moved into the operating room under a spotlight, my eye taped open, but my mind alert as the surgeon went to work, the oh-so-delicate work, with his instruments and the earlier moment -- our squadron’s turn, we headed in tight formation right into the midst of the bursting antiaircraft shells, the bomb bay doors opening with a grinding whine. Our wings were rocking perilously close to the neighboring planes, while the pilot fought to keep the heaving plane on course over the bulls eye of the target below, and I too was busy, shards of flak rattling off the aluminum walls around me, my hand jiggling as I recorded in my log the burning buildings, planes going down, the exact time of… bombs away -- now to get out of here!

It was over so fast. The nurse was already taping up my eye and I was wheeled back into the corridor feeling happy, as on that day of the mission, we turned on a wing and wheeled west toward home with the late sun lighting up the heavenly landscape of clouds, brighter than I had ever seen it before.

Edward Field (http://westbeth.org/wordpress/westbeth-icons/westbeth-icons-edward-field/) lives in Westbeth, an artists’ housing project in the West Village, where he has recently been declared a Westbeth Icon. A documentary made for the occasion can be seen at the above url. Bill Maynes photo.

Switcher

I sing the praises of my underwear that every man should clothe his crotch with, constructed with a respect for the…uh…male anatomy, unlike other styles that squash you into a sexless mound like Superman’s, fit only for kids to jack off to.

I’ve never been in love with any of my clothes before. This underwear I look forward to putting on, everything slipping into place where it belongs. My cock and balls, by fabric soft caressed, loose and full — a heavy presence. I feel hung, built big.

I’m groping myself right now for the pleasure of it.

This is the opposite of the dress a girl falls in love with — the subject of the women’s magazine stories I gobbled up as a kid — the new white prom gown to celebrate her innocence, her virginity.

My underwear belongs on the horny monster who according to under-the-counter magazines rips off that virginal dress and makes her, with one thrust, the lust-crazed Fallen Woman.

The color — a military green — brings back my years in uniform, an erotic feast, the barracks life with the boys, that wearing this army green underwear takes me back to.

My imagination is going wild, simply wild. Wouldn’t I love to put the underwear on you, my darling, and jack off at the sight, or slipping it on myself, stand before the mirror and jack off into the night.

Edward Field
Greg Fuchs

Exquisite Corpse Afterschool

Sometimes I’m lazy
But always very wavy
Shantel is kind
She’s my friend
Always very fine
Bad Bunny is
Sexy but
At night
Hi!
I love PS4
I’m not a bore
I’d rather be outdoors
Hi, bro, wadda you know?
I love video games
Sounds so lame
I got money
Scratch that out
I like animals
We are animals

Let’s Get Closer Than That Text

God walks right out the room, walks out
If all you looking for is money honey
Ches in Crown Heights writing a day in the life
I am uploaned dreaming it has always been a dream
Of writing a story named Broken Pencils
What children in the ‘hood are thinking now
Has probably been the same as kids
Thinking in any other time thoughts repeat
Repeat situations all same with miniature
Changes some have fairy dust sprinkled upon
Making everything sparkle, others always feel
Everything is terribly wrong no matter
How many songs were sung in the womb
Or books read in bed or none the same
Darkness cannot be wiped away by a sun
Or moon in our heads we can be existential bacon

In a parade or a simulacrum of a being together
A social medium is mediated by something
Really social is messier than the wildest party
Like democracy or trading or even Pentecostalism
Just trying to find the beat in the street where we meet
Second world, life, & line lie outside all official
Lip service to critical thinking sprinkled about
All that is really required is sitting down shutting up
‘cause teachers, preachers, bosses, hosses don’t
Allow questions to flow like snow or storm
Fear the unpredictable being thrown down
Marketing wrestles the marketplace into compliance
Requires a desired result yet cause and effect
May be false if we are all fully destined by biology
Far more metaphysical and ancient than we think
All small rooms of history come to be in each us

Poem for the Buck Downs

Put a bone on muh thing
Lil fiber inside eye duct
Minor key tonality
Go bankrupt, go file
Confused by your kisses
All he wants is
Gonna be kind for once
Not ruthless bidnez man
Just want a flat back
Electro dance is Bach
Played super super fast
Keep your pants on
This higher ground is
Funk, soul, rhythm, blue
Sweet taste in a mouth

Thought Missiles

The long contested museum
Stands as it has always been
A deep pool in oceans of light
Warm or cool as sun & clouds allow
Comfortable with a clubby feel
Yet imbued with sheens of shopping
Crowded like a mall in a sale
Or a stadium during a game

Of balls or heads or gladiators
Some what a lecture hall
A wonder our world so violent
If so many look at paintings
Humanity so harsh, so angry,
So many miles of disappointment
Wonder what the art perceives
Looking back at us wide eyed

Into a violent harsh ocean of sadness
The limitation is imagining others
Everything comes from the head
In the beginning and in the end
Perhaps one should ask why I
Not others stare into paintings
Is looking possessing
Marveling at others looking
Looking at what another saw
Then documented is reading
Immediate emoji hieroglyph
Am I learning by looking at
What you looked at then captured
Some see a sad face in a crowd
Others see beauty in the fray
Think of all the ways of seeing
Could hurt others or speak
Our hurt like faces of Soutine
All mashed up butchered meat
Or in Matisse’s flowing colors
Resting upon making it look so easy
Questioning the very sexy Van Gogh
Bones, curves, flesh, and hair
Is that whom he gave his ear for

What do I think when I look
Why does one image attract
Like all the Demuths in the collection
Share affinities with ideas of self
That has inhabited an identity
As well as El Greco aghast in brilliant
Light crashing in from another plane
So many paintings here beginning

To like them less and less
An overwhelming sense dragging
Through a shopping spree
With eyes or covetous longings
Emanating between the frames
How could one man amass a fortune
To own the expressions of others
How does that ownership feel

When so many have so little
Occasional visits may never resolve
Kenning JP García

Denizen

The Portable Boog Reader II: New York City

This Is An American Synthetic Lyric
What blood was squeezed by stone from skin
while being rolled?

How have hands given way to calluses
from sores
open and wet?

Remember back in the day
when a cyborg was new,
shiny, and shy?

There’s a saying, maybe even plenty more than that one that nobody says
anywhere or ever did and so silence is sort of a cliché and alternatives are
another sort of jargon. Nostalgia has a vernacular. Anticipation, a slang
whose intentions are good but whose sight is failing and thus all it sees is
misunderstood.

And when the robots
are filling the junkyard
will the factories
have a moment of silence
for the spare parts?

How does the old cyborg
compute and equate
human adjacency
especially when people are
so prone to becoming zombies?

If the fingertips had more prep time
would they change themselves
when the nerves
finally
send them the signal?

Could the details be in the dermis
or maybe this time
small means fine
as a toll to be extracted

A cost in a course of digits
hardening,
less flexible
but can still be counted on

This café could house something more than the acoustic. Give space to
something other than folk. In the air of wooden notes how knotty and
knotted is the melody holding onto older days? Who first made the
mistake of making listening so easy when hearing is so temporary and
transitory. Hard to catch a meaning before becoming an echo.

When memory can fill to capacity
be more selective with sentimentality
don’t let a little sensation
become
more input
than it needs to be
needs are for flesh
Cravings are what crash the grid

Unused files are stored on devices / devirtues
in digital formats less susceptible
to degradation

Cached advertisements are a background
painted into the pastorals
of slopes
of which there are rocks
and hard places
and no moss to speak of nor to gather
as descent isn’t so much slippery
as eventual

Chorus:
1 credit 1 automaton
1 credit 1 automaton
1 credit 1 automaton

Nano, please
Better get them bitcoin, android
Better get them bitcoin, android
Better get them bitcoin, android
Shit, wish a microchip would
Malfunction
Collect all them cryptopennies
Keep it all away from the archaisms
Of the analog

And the hatchet buried in scene 1 will return in act 3 as settlerspeak
In a colonial colloquial. A tongue left in a locked room could just as
easily lead to the reveal as to be the weapon itself.

The pebbles and sand are wet
Are red
Are proof of purchase

No buyer’s remorse
The brand was trademarked
Before the product was patented
Before the laws
Punishments were still distributed
Instituted

Dried riverbeds and rubble decimated
Rarely remember
When days were good
Before the oblivion
Meant to forget
Left the land catalogued, categorized,
Catfished

Kenning JP García is the author of So This Is Story (Shirt Pocket Press), They Say (West Vine Press), and Playing Dead. Kenning is neither man nor myth but enjoys a good origin story. So, Brooklyn is where he began and Albany is where he hopes not to end although endings do not frighten Kenning. Endings are merely a gateway to upgrades, sequels, and remastered re-releases. In the time between the initial and the impending. Kenning writes chronicles, humor and lyrical narratives. Lona live the sentimental.
The Portable Boog Reader II: New York City

Stephanie Gray

from series: "under the surface of NY"

"NY does not seem to be an end in itself, it is only the layered residue of energies rushing through as a torrent leaves its grooves and strange patterns upon the walls of a gorge..." (The Great Port, 1969)

Go on the surface, she said
What of my New York did I think was the end? Whose residue of residue was I stepping on? Is my story of a story really here? What thought of mine was a torrent as I walked by Water Street with its invisible waves, its invisible torrents, its water that is there but is not that is there but is not... Taking 18 years of fill, to create a street named for what it covered up. Which energy made it so the 9-5ers get it all done for the entire country? What grooves do the secretaries from Staten Island use to keep going day in and day out? When Danny Lyon went there which energy did he rely on, which torrent did he avoid, what walls did not gorge on him... If NY is not the end, what is the beginning? Whose energy made me stay awake that day? If grooves were grooves why couldn't we keep 63 acres with names we've forgotten: Cuylers, Jones, Deppeyster, Jeannette Park? Danny said: I don't ever recall seeing a single other photographer during the 6 months it took to demolish them, though many thousands of professional photographers lived in Manhattan. If NY is not an end in itself, why do so many start here. Why do so many escape. Which torrents were only bit parts of the story? What grooves did we all get into without knowing? How did the groove did not get too worn? How did the torrent not get me off track? How am I still here, not an end in itself? "So mercural is the nature of NY that the city has never set..." What mercury hid in the city's retrogrades? What retrogrades hid the mercury? What streets still have waves underneath our feet but are stopped by 18 years of day labor workers several hundred years ago? What if that was your arm digging for 12 hours, then a beer, then sleep in the inn blocks from the holes where you stopped the waves? If I put my ear to the ground of Thames Street, what would I hear?

"NY is foreign to nobody"

Oh really, did you make it to the end of LIE/Clearview without getting lost? Did you go to Murphy's on William? Did you know in some places in Queens and Brooklyn you need a car and it's not evil, it's survival? Did you know there's a way to swim at Breezy Point if you obtain a birding permit? They didn't understand the 7 train is only one that serves all that is East of it but Forest Hills gets four lines. Why? Did you know there are no bagels in downtown Flushing? Did you know Murray Hill is basically flushing (off the LIRR)? Did you know they don't always check tickets on the Port Washington line after Murray Hill? Did you know sometimes DX Faro's is not crowded? Did you know the Hell's Angels used to have parties at the White House (the former on Bowery, not that other one)? Did you know they wiped out 63 acres in lower Manhattan and nobody made a sound except Danny Lyon? Did you know some of the 63 acres was so Pace University could expand, a new entrance ramp could be made for the Brooklyn Bridge and so the WTC could be built? Did you know for decades a restaurant barely googeable now, named Sweet's was lower Manhattan's beloved? If something so important to generations of secretaries, dock workers, office workers, how is it not in the internet? Did you know hundreds of thousands of people have to drive between boroughs not because they are not environmental but because it's "a way to survive?" Did you know some of those people can drive on three different parkways and expressways back to back without consulting a map or GPS? Did you know some people know when to exit when the back up predictably happens on the Jackie Robinson while everyone else slogs 1.5 miles to the Grand Central? Did you know the major blocks in Brooklyn in the 40s were Linden, Ocean, Penn, Bushwick, Belt Pkwy? Did you know that nobody really knows those who have to walk, bus, railroad, train and reverse every day to survive? Did you know?

Can't face (what music)
What music to face he blasted the music in my face the music was faint
End to not hear
Do you hear the music
It faces the surface surfacing on the face
Facing the surface surfed faint feign fennel
Smelled strange as a kid
The face that surfaces (from where)
(to whom)
(for what?)
There was no music to hear here
Or over there
Did you hear the music
Instead of facing it?

Who wanted to see your face
Who said the face said it all
Who said the face was behind
The surface?
What face surfaced
Who surfaced your face
Who surfaced under
Who surfaced over
Who went over the surface
Who went under

from long poem "Winter Letter to NY"

Dispatch: GreenpointMaspethGreenpointMaspeth
I have a friend, who, when he first moved here, lived in Greenpoint, worked in Maspeth, lived in Greenpoint, worked in Maspeth, lived in Greenpoint, worked in Maspeth, lived in Greenpoint, worked in Maspeth: he moved to NY but didn't go to NY even though he was of NY because he lived in Greenpoint, worked in Maspeth, lived in Greenpoint, worked in Maspeth: he said, Man I was here, but I was at this auto-mechanic job, and, but you know I wasn't all there man, I wasn't there, I wasn't here, that's all I did, you can see, just look here on the map, I was just going between Greenpoint and Maspeth on my bike, that was all that I was doing, I didn't go anywhere else. This diagonal line here (pressing hard on both Greenpoint and Maspeth til the paper crinkles-- I didn't go anywhere else off it, man.


boog city 26 www.boogcity.com
Scott Hightower

Naming Names

“I will not map him
the route to any man’s door.”
—Edna St. Vincent Millay

Francis Gary Powers,
swarthy, dark haired man....
‘What kind of name is that?’

Melungeon.
‘...Never heard of that.’
... had a father and a wife who loved him.
Was treated well by Russian leaders,
but badly by two Presidents. All that
after the market crash of ’29,
but before the two terrible crashes
into the World Trade Center towers.

‘Odd death for a pilot, odd,
in the way Michael Hastings’
car accident was odd.’

What is exposed every time one draws
back the curtain of Chelsea Manning
are the extraordinary photographs
of Namir Noor Eldeen,
Edward Snowden’s roguery
also had to do with disseminating
information, drawing back
the curtain and letting in light.

* The Secret Service (Department of the Treasury)—
  with the mission of suppressing counterfeiting—
  was created five days after Gen. Robert E. Lee’s surrender
  at Appomattox. The legislation creating the agency
  moved across Abraham Lincoln’s desk
  the night he was assassinated.

* Remember the life and work
  of Namir Noor-Eldeen.
  In the eye of the storm, targeted
  for no reason, unaware of being
  in lethal danger. After all,
  the US surveillance helicopters
circling overhead were manned
with professional pilots. No need
for fear. And he was a journalist;
his loyal driver and wingman,
a father and family man.
Neither was armed.

* Remember all ‘the collateral damage’
of the U.S. drones. All uniquely named
and somewhere woven into a fabric
with love and affection. Ripped to shreds.
Atropos, daughter of the night,
it was not Edna St. Vincent Millay
who mapped your route to their door.

* NSA: America’s spy agency.
I wonder where the file is
that carefully notes it’s birth
exactly three months after me.

Perhaps misplaced with all the files
about MacArthur ordering
and at the same time covering up
the executions of young American G.I.’s—
just months after winning the war
against Japan (The only window we have
on that is Terese Svoboda’s chilling prose).

* The leaking of Cheney’s chief of staff
was done with malicious intent.
Cheney went to great lengths
to get his assistant ‘off the hook,’
was surprised—and vexed—
when his boss didn’t elect
to comply with his shenanigans.

* I ponder about the groves of small trees
  with names dramatically carved
  into their tender bark; the pages
  of novels, philosophy,
  and poetry about justice
  whispering down
  through the leaves and branches;
  the names of prisoners
  held in a U.S. federal prison—
  that includes Andersonville,
  Abu Graib, Gitmo.

‘During the months of observing Ramadan,
the U.S. guards only force-feed
their captives after dark.’

All the restraints.
All the soft docile bodies
whispering down.

Mother Tongue

“I hate flowers! Waste of money.”
—Barbara Bush (Newsweek,
October 27, 2003, page 45)

In 1960, when we discovered
individually wrapped
Little Debbie snack oatmeal cream pies,
we were enrapt by the metaphor
of ancient green cannon-balls
and the haunting ventriloquisms
at the ending of Bishop’s
“Florida.” Later, a politician
advised us that sugar and flowers
are shameless and sweet,
but not the love of an unwed
mother for her child. Sadly,
every time Little Jebbie
opened his mouth,
his mother came out.

Scott Hightower is the author of four books of poetry in the U.S. and a bilingual collection, published in Madrid. Tartessos, his second bilingual collection is forthcoming. He teaches at New York University’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study.
Belynda Jones

Spoilers

His balm dark dripping
like aged hot wheat wine
over her bare back
as they rocked

Orange Grove

I want your feet to catch the same steps as we walk the same paths as we smell the same air as
we see the same roads as we gasp the same breaths as we engage the same laughs as we
approach the same train as we grip the same poles as we rest the same heads on the same
shoulders as we dress the same thoughts

I want your eyes to greet the same door as we ascend the same stairs as we sit in the same
chairs as we lick the same spoons as we eat the same foods as we speak the same words as we
hold the same hands as we voice the same concerns

I want your hands to grasp the same breasts as we lay on the same sheets as we spread the
same thighs as we taste the same tongues as we savor the same scents as we feel the same
escape as we coin the same rhythm as we whisper the same secrets as we soothe the same
tears

Armour

Being desired, like
pouring rain, crackling fire, tears
no need for bargains

Bold

We travel by kiss
lover in each other, in
mirrors glowing bright
staging blends, feeding old wants
unraveling loose found stones

Glowing

What do we have but
winding roads walks too long to
remember, proud seas
so unpredictable we
gain breadth running from cover

Double Espresso

Thousands of 3 ams fought alone
wringing out clothes
bathed in colors I could never touch
breakfasts binged
I’m letting this vessel finally
rest right on the rails
as the brittle cars of a 3 train
scrapes scabs off
words only alive
on our Sundays

If Beauty

I imagine you can’t
prepare a score
a flimsy explication
why I still chase
your flaws
between dark blue tails
early hour memories
I still stand
lament
binge on dreams of the decade
where our glances kissed

Sunday Pictures

Plates of Sunday graced chicken
swim alongside sounds in memory
your soft fair hands
separating kneading

On your good Sundays
episodes of Like It Is
and local tv cinema
flooded the black and white set
on top the rusted counter

Bargain shop curtains
just above the windowsill
paneled walls
worn from grease fires
or impromptu fish fry

Your signature
handkerchief

Swept just behind your
reddened ears

Gown and housecoat
swaying

Escape Not Found

I am bound
lagged and hidden
from light taken from our
silenced ancestors
I am continuing on a path
I am not meant to find
walking amongst angel armies
trying to soothe wounds
swollen raw from
wombs rummaged and bred
for new workers

Belynda Jones (http://visceralbrooklyn.com/current-issue/belynda-jones/) is a graduate of the creative writing M.F.A. program at LIU Brooklyn. Her work has appeared in Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Paramount, Visceral Brooklyn, Bone Bouquet, as well as in a collaborative chaplet by Belladonna* Collaborative.
A Roll of the Dice

I.
Covet not another’s except sex him
if ever you are alone
at least there will be deer for dinner,
or not, depending on who’s coming
because Hudson stars are heaving themselves ecstatic
and love songs are fractals
moving into infinity.
What is everything else anyway,
not block but its opposite, crystal.
We hear the same stories many times
and still repeat the boring ending,
the one with the cellar;
now why would you ever want to go back there?

II. For so many reasons, they said.
All of them quantifiable, and divisible by zero,
the magic number of infinite potential:

III.
Take one trillion and divide it in half but not exactly in half
a tenth of a billion or twenty extra zeros,
rounded up because that’s what happens in the cloud.
It attracts ions, electricity, and other invisible things
and turns them into rain.
A magic number.

Or, you could roll the dice and come up with 17.
You will have powers to make this room disappear,
leaving behind only four gold coins
that will enable you to survive the impending global economic collapse.

IV.
A number greater than the square root of 50 means that your self-worth
is a fraction of your total value.
This happened because when you were born,
your soul was split into seven pieces
and each of those pieces is an eternity of past lives,
all coalescing into this singular moment.

V.
Or, divide the GDP of the Soviet Union by ten and
subtract the day, hour, and year of your birth.
This lucky number will provide you with protection,
because, after all, the Cold War never really ended,
and the Russians have been lurking in the shadows all along.

Speaking of covert, two oranges and a bunch of grapes do not make a
good vintage.
But ten orange pills in a hair dye can make a dinner party, especially one
with a president, fall apart quicker than meat simmered and basted for
three hours.

You know, that kind of meat.

VI.
Luckily for you, no matter what number you get, if you place it squarely
between your third eye and the base of your spine, it will be the right number.

Transformation is bound to happen.
You are the sacred permutation—
one that takes every star out of the moment of its explosion
and finds in your heart an infinity of zeros,
that most perfect coalescence:
unregulated love.

VII.
As if it exists, a love like that, lark-like and drift-wood
worn by moon-pull water.

Love: every square centimeter
of a shoreline contains
the totality of sand,
a fractal, spacetime
in potentia,
the collision of strangers.
how did we know what to do with each other?

VIII.
Except that we were tuned (turned)
by frequency of a cosmic pulse —
star born,
neuron fired,
universe banged and bucked.

because some energy is just that: outpouring

Words spoken, but not loud enough
to sound the word: love.

IX.
The Knowledge Men Die Everyday From the Lack.
Everything that falls is gravity including love, everything inert is molecular movement,
including tumor, in vacuum everything is dust, everything moving is
never still, every rock is slowly wobbling as particles within it collide,
and every river moves faster than every rock, some particles move
slowly, some fast, everything decaying as it grows, everything shifting;
everything nebulous, in motion there is evolution; waves into light fire;
signals in every mind move neurons, constantly; everything that is
still, everything fixed; everything standing and all that is exploding;
movements into every second make time evolve along a continuum,
towards an uncertain future, one that may be emerging but is never,
ever stuck, and then begins again.

Versions of these poems have appeared in
The New Republic and AMP: Always Electric.

Kristin Prevallet (https://trancepoetics.com/) is the author of seven books of poetry, poetics, and healing. She lives in Westchester where she works as a mindbody coach and teacher.
Jess Rizkallah

in which the goatfish moon
does not feel sorry for me

i’m over it but i’m still going to lipslip the rim of every mug in your house
i’m going to wear that skirt, i’m going to take off my glasses
and clean the lenses whenever you want to look at my face.

it’s not cute to yell at the moon. it’s not cute to squeeze a hair from
my face and casually wonder what i did in another life to be punished
with twenty five years of stalled engines.

it’s not because the scotch or leather jacket or the romance
of barefeet where someone most definitely took a piss while
waiting for a train and i pretended not to keep my first thought
because i wanted to be a Chill Girl. i am not chill, i am afraid
of ripping my lights, i don’t climb trees, that must be it.
or the roundness of my body rounder still every day filled with
that light we found but i yelled marco and the water came so
i’m always extinguishing something.

how confessional am i allowed to be. masculinity tells me this is horseshit.
but masculinity aches deeply to be its own condensation this thing i drip too.
how do i say something without saying something. i just want to wake up one day
and stare into a bowl of oatmeal my cheeks already warm

originally published in Hobart Pulp

love letter

the thing is i could tell you that last night i went to the pier by the bay around dusk just to feel how
undetectably soft the air is, like the rubber blade of a knife matte against your palm that one
time. maybe you want to know that i was eating a softshell taco over the edge of the railing, my
left hip popped all the way out past the crack the hipbone makes in relief when i finally let all of me
make the S shape i often resist out of fear that passing hands will think me a doorknob.

i slipped on rocks decades later still covered in oil from a rig israeli jets burst
after a beach day, their skin covered in the haze of glass that woke up sanes.
their blood rising to their cheeks but not breaking skin
so you see, that’s where the resemblance ends, until of course
the clouds all shaped like drones.

not to get political but the brown kids pulled out of the rubble
in your newsfeed are complex beings with lives & memories that aren’t ye
or soon will be their bodies, but they look like my cousins
after a beach day, their skin covered in the haze of glass that woke up sanes.

and not to get political but the brown kids pulled out of the rubble
in your newsfeed are complex beings with lives & memories that aren’t ye
or soon will be their bodies, but they look like my cousins
after a beach day, their skin covered in the haze of glass that woke up sanes.
their blood rising to their cheeks but not breaking skin

i didn’t really call it home but last time i went to beirut’s coastline,

i see armageddon taking a nap. peach pits scattered from when we’ve dared
trapped under a glass & the whole world watched.

i fell into a silence by the sea               i was a
like a cyst on the city’s jawline      i fell into a shadow thrown from an echo

i can’t rightfully call it home but last time i went to beirut’s coastline,

we leaned into the nuclear apocalypse we coped

i’m always extinguishing something.

originally published on Rattle
Aliah Rosenthal

jesus from NY

Hold up
Didn't you hear the good news?

jesus is from New York, yo!

risen from dog shit, sschmeared concrete
to save us from Caesar, Dollari Americanus

listen to the sermon of raspy sax on Second avenue Subway mount
be bop dee, dah dooo dah....deeeeee dah!

He is the god from crown heights to the westside

a black god
an ecuadorian god
trans god
an old people's god
a Syrian god
a no gender god
a lesbian god

Oh god, New York is the cross, the burden
worldwide devotees flock
and we pray to all YOU gods, jesus, to save us now
save us from NEW YORK, made in our image
our EVERLASTING urban idol

Pretty please

Please Master
suck a broke wet fart out my asshole

Please Master
feed me a falafel while you wreck my colon

Please Master
make me suffer through another hurt cult poetry reading

Please Master
let me hear you bitch about Trump while you sharp a Venti Frappe Dappa latte

Please Master
disown me while you take my last dollar

Please Master
drain my balls for another right swipe

Please Master
have the rats run free in my bed and roost in my pillow

Please Master
grant me sheer strength to fuck those two robust Norwegians again, por favor

Please Master
now, afford me some rest in the bosom of Tenochtitlan

Please Master
pretty please,
don't let me die down in the village

ya got old

baby boomers
time to wear dem' granny bloomers
youth finished
settle into new cardboard teeth
why stay twenty- five when bones crack against the decades?
better riot against weepy anus
then cry before the world’s rape machine
fret not time forgives us all

yr too young to know

letter

once I wrote a letter to someone and couldn’t find the right words
dear shitface,
I would like to say fuck you and everything else that comes out with your breath

probably better by phone

pineapple girls

salivate city
ride electrical waves
neon titty cash hunt
in jungles of the republic

family dinner

you devalued me my sex wants my body politic my reading comprehension my recollection of all fifty
states my industry and random stalkers my use
of non-toxic toothpaste my sense of mayflower
entitlement my privileged screaming my late night
T.V. trance my I am always fucking right my idea
that all jews and chinese are rich my need to listen
to myself think my kids and molding them in my
image my all the time tired look

so
could you just pass the meatloaf ?

Poetry is,

read and out loud all best work bathed in dreams scribbling dribbling off paper corners
'screw your mother' oops
the corrected edition: 'I screwed your mother'

mercurial beings behand eyes
eternal cosmic silence aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!

humans mouths never shutting the fuck up
roadtrippin Alice Notley, Needles California 1982
fortune cookie one liner 'that reality check is about to bounce.'
spilling your human gutwrench into Mother Earth’s swollen pits birthing ten poems
by sunrise
the ultimate St. Marks cash-out, one poem for one greasy Varenyky
dal poetry

Aliah A. Rosenthal (http://www.rosenthal.nyc/), poet and artist, was born in the East Village, NYC. He has had readings at The Poetry Project, Bowery Poetry Club, Naropa Institute, HousingWorks, Nuyorican Cafe and has worked with artists David Amram, Anne Waldman, The Lemonheads, Kool & the Gang, Philip Glass, Steven Taylor, Allen Ginsberg and many others. Aliah is the son of New York writers Bob Rosenthal and Rochelle Kraut and the godson of poet Allen Ginsberg. His new spoken word album, Sluck Bowery Sell Out, is available on iTunes. He lives in New York City.
Chavisa Woods

The Upward Tree

I

when
he
tore
you
a new ear
in your shoulder
I wanted
the world
to start
whispering

completely

when that bruised blue
became
a color
that was
no longer
associated with our affection
I wanted
to tear out
dusk

I wanted
to go down
and eat
the soil

I wanted
to torture
the sky

I wanted
to bury dusk
beneath a strong tree
one that does not
weep

The Upward Tree

II

if bodies
were leaves
of grass
we would be
silent

men beating sticks against
the green
by the inexplicable
upward hang
of the haunted
pond willow

its branches ascending

it is as if
the Earth has been
tipped
in one spot

the rest falls

look how weeping flies
becomes
not weeping

reaching
toward the grey
of the sky,
not of the sun,
it's not there.

III

I have never seen such a shivering tree
I have never seen such a lonely tree
I have never seen such a skeleton of live wood
I have never seen such bone in bark

if there were a song I could sing that would give me back peace

United

rape wasn’t lurking by a well
in Darfur
or up a tree
in Rwanda
or some inner-city blitzkrieg flashing signs of animal intention

it was here
it was beloved
it was white

thirteen times
I watched it happen
right
here

so come on and
send in
some peace troops
to rehabilitate this
annihilated
home

Did You?

did you think the night sky was powder scattered over a mirror reflecting a busted electric bill?

did you think you were smash scattered over a mirror reflecting a blackout?

did you think that’s the kind of thing we wanted to wish on?

did your little ass tremble like a turtledove every time?

did your dove-turtle-black-star scatter out its reflecting mirror?

did your ass tremble like a tight little star, flickering?

did you turn white, stiff as a mirror, scattered out unreflective?

you were hot and white.

did you have a white-hot fire in your gut

your whole life

your whole life

did you carve red stars into your arm with fake nails?

did you paint your nails red with fake ass stars?