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For the past 103 days we’ve been at work on this, the latest incarnation of The Portable Boog Reader. The we being Laura Henriksen, Amy King, Geoffrey Olsen, Nicole Peyrafitte, Angela Veronica Wong, and yours truly for New York City, and Margaret Bashair and Lauren Russell selecting work by poets from this volume’s sister city, Pittsburgh (see p. 4 for more on the editors).

Before this issue, the greatest numbers we had was with last year’s edition, six editors gathering full pages of poetry from 18 different poets. This year? Eight editors and 30 different poets’ pages. And after seven (well, eight) volumes, the number of different poets who have appeared in the PBR is up to 355. (For a complete rundown of PBR contributors, see p. 48). And huzzah to our co-editor Lauren Russell for being the first to helm multiple cities, with this year’s Pittsburgh stint joining her PBR5 New York City tenure.

I always think of us PBR editors as scouts, bird dogs, colleagues who are on the streets seeing who is out there delivering the goods. When we do our draft before constructing an issue, deciding who each of us will ask for work, there’s nothing I enjoy more than seeing a co-ed’s draft slate filled with names I’ve never heard of, poets I’m about to learn about, poets whose work we’re about to share with our peers, occasionally for the first time.

And it’s that work that’s always the muscle behind this issue, this sharing our picks with our communities, really one overall poetic community. It’s not that we’re so arrogant to believe these 20 New York City and 10 Pittsburgh poets represent what’s happening in these cities’ poetry scenes, but instead that they capture a bit of what’s going on, a sample that could overlap another sample of 20 and 10 poets if we started over from scratch.

Ultimately, we hope you enjoy these samples as much as we did the sampling.

And, for the first time, Boog City has set its sites on what’s happening in our PBR sister city, checking in with Pittsburgh-themed film, music, and printed matter sections. —DAK

About the Cover Photo: Ideal Auto Exchange, Jamaica, Queens May 21, 2011. I took this photograph from the car—très American if you read French philosophers or dig the work of Martha Rosler.

Alison, Lucas, and I took a long and winding trip back home to the Bronx after my friends, the poets, Jess Fiorini’s and Eddie Berriag’s wedding party in Long Island. The party was a quiet yet historic event. I had a sense of this being one of those days where we may look back at pictures of it with joy and amazement. Something like the feeling I get while gazing at photographs of cool New York School poets hanging out, maybe in Bolinas or New England. Anne Waldman sunbathing with Andrei Codrescu while Alex Katz paints Joe Brainard’s chest. Suddenly their words are made more real by evidence of their lives.

So I took a lot of pictures that day. Poets dancing, drinking, just being in each other’s presence, joyfully. Later I edited a slide show of the pictures. Ideal Auto Exchange was the final image because the day was ideal in a pop art, post-post-post New York School way. The photo was appropriately appropriate to the occasion.

Alison was driving, I had had a few cocktails at the party, so I was safely digging the scenery rolling by in the dusk. We came to a stop light. I looked up into the blue gray glooming and there was this sign, Ideal Auto Exchange, glowing like an Ed Ruscha pop art word painting. It was saying, “Frame me for Jess and Eddie.”

—Greg Fuchs
About the Editors

New York City

Laura Henriksen

David A. Kirschenbaum

Amy King

Nicole Peyrafitte

Angela Veronica Wong

Geoffrey Olsen

Pittsburgh

Margaret Bashaar

Lauren Russell

AUFGABE 12

Featuring poetry in translation from Quebec
guest edited by Oana Avasilichioaei

With work from Abendroth, Albertini, Amendinger, Audet, Avasilichioaei, Bellflower, Besemer, Bierkegger, Bormuthy, Bradshaw, Brossard, Canty, Carlson, Casa, Charron, Clevendide, Cole, DeBoer, Desgert, Desrosiers, Dick, Dickey, Dickinson, Donato, Doré, Drescher, D’Plessis, Eaton, Gagnon, Garthe, Gévirts, Goldman, Guibsic, Haslan, Hmaour, Huntton, Jotit, Jutras, Kronovet, Lara, Leblanc, Lederhendler, Lee, Lopes, Longabucco, Luang, Majfield, Mavrakakis, Mesmer, Morrison, Moure, Nathanael, Neveu, Peyrafitte, Plackner, Queen, Robinson, Rosenzweig, Rounds, Rubin, Savage, Schürch, Svensen, Torre, Tremlay-McGaw, Turcotte, Vischer, and Zinetta

Poetry, Art, Essays & Reviews | Artwork by Mia Olise

MURDER

Danielle Collobert

Translated by Nathanaël

“One does not die alone, one is killed, by routine, by impossibility, following their inspiration. If all this time, I have spoken of murder, sometimes half camouflaged, it’s because of that, that way of killing.”

Murder is Danielle Collobert’s first novel. Originally published in 1964 by Editions Gallimard while Collobert was living as a political exile in Italy, this prose work was written against the backdrop of the Algerian War. Uncompromising in its exposure of the calculated cruelty of the quotidian, Murder’s accusations have photographic precision, incalculating instants of habitual violence.

2013 | $18 | ISBN: 978-1-933959-17-7
Poetry, translated from French | Cover photograph by Robert Copa

AMNESIA OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE CLOUDS / OF RED AND BLACK VERSE

Maria Attanasio; Translated by Carla Billitteri

These two books collected in one volume comprise the first full-length translation of Maria Attanasio’s poetry into English. Blending realistic and oneiric landscapes, Attanasio’s poetry is a form of vertical writing that shows the historical and political strata of everyday life. In a landscape darkened by poverty, death, inequality, and illegal immigration, selfhood becomes an embodied but only partially understood node of historical events. Attanasio sets reflections on the cyborg dimension of contemporary selfhood against a desolate and existential void of a new century, one she describes as “the god of indiference,” “the great amnesia.” (Carla Billitteri)

Poetry, translated from Italian | Cover art by Thomas Flechther
Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, Fall 2013
Amanda Deutch photo
From This God Between Us

This year Yom Kippur falls on the Sabbath,
But I'm thinking of the years
It will fall on the Day of the Dead.
It happened once when I was a child,
And my father recited Kaddish
In the procession to the cemetery.
My mother hung the harsh and angular
Sounds on the folds of her frock.
My mother wrapped me tightly in it,
Saving my mouth for last.
This is the silence between us,
My parents said.
This is a gate of water
Struck from stone.
This is the promise.
We sow
To bury you in.

*****

Yet there is this god between us.
This god ravenous.
This god unsent,
The letters
Bereft
Of this god,
A grace note,
She is not unessential.
This god,
At times,
A single pair of hands
Bound
In cat's cradle.

*****

Tonight in the countryside
They leave me a trail
Of copal and marigolds.
The Kaddish cup is full.
I am porous as loess.
I am loose ground.
Bury me standing,
I am the osseous snips and snarts
Of that promise sowed.
Bury me three times.
I am not a high priest.
I am forbidden to speak
His real name.
Unlike this god between us
Who rises between us
This god
A lucid dreamer.
Kadosh kadosh kadosh
This god once taken
By her own dream.
This god,
At times,
Awakening
Chained to the railroad tracks
Of Golden Mountain.

Rosebud Ben-Oni

The Real Frank Vega Was Epic
In real life badass was a gringo
And there's Danny Trejo
Playing himself
I'm not sure we're in on it
Like the prada store in marfa
Or padre island
Now a big, gated hotel
Where you need wristbands
To use the pool.
No island anywhere.
No vaqueros come home.
No cameros bumpin' down the road
Which is fine.
Since in real life that kind of badass ends up alone
Or never goes anywhere on a plane
That crashes in the reboots of predators
Where Danny Trejo plays the entire zeta cartel.
I guess his cred is Danny Trejo himself.
But the 12-step road
to big-screen danny trejo.
Well maybe that's why
Danny Trejo
Is the first to die
While fishburne survived years alone
In that new world.
I mean the game preserve
Where only danny trejo ends up the dummy
Of alien ventriloquists.
Perhaps we are to know
The first sacrifice is catalyst.
Or is it our salvation
Will have no legacy
Unlike saddam.
Lenin
Lerchon.
All badasses brought down
I mean all we get is a man
Who's eaten
By a giant anaconda
Before opening credits roll
And then we're back in the ring
In the state prison
And what more can we do than
Listen
For the ripple of dollar bills
That reveal the next danny trejo has risen.

God Gave Many Things I Made

Lose value. Once I took a Sharpie
To my Hebrew School primer
And drew a rare thing.
I didn't mean.
Another name
Which too had become a secret.
A riddle, the punchline
Of our existence.
It's all just to get your attention, I said.
Wind me up and I'm still a plastic watch
Stack at ten, or ten to twelve.
Both hands the same length—
Something never meant.

There are many gardens since
Where I've perched on a bench
And keyed up a dedication
Meant for a congregation.
Words too lovely for me to bear, I'll say, when I mean.
To warn of what's to come.
From a bench
Stack in the basement,
The dedication flayed from stone
And placed elsewhere.
The garden gates
Never reopened.
Veronica Bench
look at me I'm a clown
when I'm forced to breath
I become a different clown
look into the bowels of my face
am I like you
or are you like me?
is there a difference?
yeah, there's a difference.
alone and stalking the empty fridge
it's like having nothing
 twice
just the salad
getting smellier
it's like you're kissing me
but from a strange country
dark eyed
peach
a burn doesn't work
a tramp just travels
13th street never surrendered
it's junkiness
it just looks like shit
relaxes me
brown night
the ions
their pure bouncing joy
I wish I had a big horse blanket to put over us
wouldn't that be nice

The Wheel
To be a little absent
suggests you have
something better
going on.
So what.
I'm addicted
to your vagueness
who you'll be today
a man
or a woman
someone
or no one
perhaps several people
sitting in a chair
Maybe you make me
feel human
just sitting there
It solves the problem
of intimacy - it's pale tedium
just marry one
tortured
head.
I'm not any more human
but I feel my blood in this climate
of shadows and the flow
of light in your mouth
your little head relaxed
your quietness
your brain
pumping
on the pillow
The peach-light
holds you
the surreal of the '60s
a boherness
like soda
the ocean
the light

Hush Robot
I haven't met you but you look familiar
I've met your clone
There's the thing next to McDonalds
which is McDonalds
Tap water with a drop of coffee in it
Maybe people aren't looking
at what poetry is
just who produces it
Yeah
It's like collecting urine
I'm so ready for the past to be gone
I'm so ready

Pennies
I feel so pessimistic right now.
I think it's the right way to feel.
You look like someone riding in a stage coach
and I'm like a savage who stuck her head in the window
my eyebrows flirting
and pleading.
You keep giving me money
but never the whole amount.
I guess you like me
I mean
you're paying
for my desire.
I guess I'm sort of
defeatist
young at the end
Gimme that penny
that one over there
it's sticking into me
Just gimme a second
I'm trying to fashion
a response
I can hear your smile
on the phone
because you have a memory
many
of my ass out on a cliff
It makes anything funny
my shit glisten
it makes breakfast funny
a table
the moon is funny
It's a nightmare. Here it is.

Leopoldine Core is a life-long resident of the East Village. Her chapbook Young Friend was just published by Perfect Lovers Press. And Satisfaction, her first full-length book, will be published in 2015 from Coconut Books.
Conversations w/marvin 1

for d.w. & j.b.

'marvin' i say – 'you know the
poem's dead'
he's too busy sitting in a shady
corner
(one shoe off)
counting his money
it's 7 p.m.
everyone seems to be packing up
for the day
the there's at least an hr. of sunlight
left

Conversations w/marvin 2

'listen marvin'
i said-

'tunaMelts'
not the thing you should be eating'
bent, sheer headed
streaming, petrified brief
mister marvin burnt the dainty
fly master & replied,
skull cupped -

'yes i no'

Conversations w/marvin 3

for d.w again & sb

marvin sighed -

'i m tired of waiting lad – give me the dough
so i can
go
the patriarch of cluttering
where i began my clocking
career
called me a complete idiot
because i d been trained to call
a thing a thing
rather than the
'shots'
he asked for
so i got tired of waiting for the dot
like now
so please can i got(1)

Steve Dalachinsky

Conversations w/marvin 8

after lanny q again
left out a wrd 1st time

it's a twinking after midnight,
Steel Prunes break wind in the breeze
independence day has drawn to a close
marvin stares star-eyed upward
as smoke & debris
fireswork their way into his eyes
squinting he proclaims

'it's dark & then the sun comes out
& you burn'
as with stars
bargo strung in cyborg-folk clusters in the limbworks
too hobbled by nails,
marvin covers his face with his forearm
as a plumonimentizing hold sartrap once
snort-torn & silent now deafens his soul

'poor waif-like buddhisatva'
is all i can think
as marvin strips off his shirt
& the hammer of nudity
yokes starfish from his jaded flaming skull
i then & there realized that freedom & independence
were totally different and that the old prophecy
about the country (all countries) being ruled by
ass-headed demi-dogs
was true.

Conversations w/marvin 13

on the corner of lway & mars
across from the church of
TIME SQUARED ( & stardust )
where all the fabulous solidifying
of truths
occurs
between the late/weights & doning
& sighing & singing
& wandering to go for dinner
marvin graced w/lots of questions
looked absentely up at the billboards
read & quietly proclaimed:

' i wouldn't mind if somebody stole my identity.'

Conversations w/marvin 14

marvin & i went for a dip
in the community pool
as the sky over cast itself
& one kid kicked the other in the eye
leaning against the pool's side
feeling the water rush in
i heard marvin babble some unutterable muttering
wha' ya say? – i stumbled

'nothing' – he wetly declared - ' i was talking to
myself
because i'm
such a lucky person.'
Selections from Red Attempt: Shaftway, Shaftway

Nicholas DeBoer

one floating island on a terrestrial globe
and i'm okay without the new world
it's not a bitterness to be alone in the universe
it's not even all that real
it's like you knew a place
drawing maps on the beer soaked table tops
nine months on the road where the ship wore
mappemunde
like panegyric
a map of the whole world with me in it
but the map is more than eulogy
eulogy
with praise and criticism
an alien record
in the midst of voyage
that perilum stuff
some sludge & monsters
paul atreides will get his spin

we have enough tragedies
to mourn all day every day
and it's not enough to mourn
we owe the dead nothing
else than the revenge of time
a truth eating into wood

and then i'm walking with my father and he
and i are the only ones
who know where we are going in death thechanting is the
'song in the thing itself' and whether his
ashes plant flowers or not i'll
still cut my poem into the waters
up the track of the hill
amongst the rain of our arrival
that dream of love leaving
and running home to a paper village from an elevated track
the trains at the sight of the river and
a lot of shit ain't discovered
the ditch where we can't breathe
where flowers break and the mass drives on

no roads
blackberry or mulberry stocks
walnut of the musket
damage patrol
the worst blizzard

Nicholas DeBoer (http://elderlymag.tumblr.com) is a poet from the United States. Co-runner of the journal Elderly. Currently, living in Bushwick, Brooklyn.
the acoustics, a slick’s cuckoo
i. are we freaking out with ed at the the top heading the
games &
manding yr interest with a bugalo dance
ii. the slow rock back & forth & roll on the r train, italian lullaby,
nod, nap, light me on, lita ford, before the day/night mets’
double dip
iii. secund
iv. Why does the hunter follow and delta airline units
v. engender
vi. ‘somewhere in utah’
vi. open the door: coffee break, prom
vii. vitrine limpid
ix. or, if he’d arrived safely in new/youk maybe to disappear
x. is vic power’s bare knuckles.
xi. the bass competition trembles, davinci, a solid trial for
heidegger, a long pull for lao tzu’s mother, sales of
madonna’s book sex plummet.

In Memory of OTB
for Dad
If I had money I’d make you king! word on the street:
A memory la palabra like a heel the skinny the long short of it like a bad man a tough
leathered man
the horse races the harness races would make you wealthy jump high!
instead of fall in line fall in line yr 32 teeth
more or less!
out of your hair! mi padre mi
hombre
Would you attempt? a slingshot from underneath the covers! sheets? swimming pool
rising to hit
pinpoint accuracy? the satter of the night?
the flashing the flickering motel sign?
Último poema

1.
Louise Brooks’ short
curlicue a step in a
heal in a direct
opposite

2.
The only way to
a gentle dusting of Hegel’s bust

Ray DeJesús

index card or fichero
para Raquel Rodríguez y John Dejesús
Victor Pellot unsung change Vic Power
trigéhauto
hollywood’s hollywood Aericiojo-âcaguas
tarmac, dry heat vs. humidity, a fast getaway in a car,
the man drinking an 8 oz. schaefee
never looked better
for instance, who do you think you are?
nicknaming yourself quequa, pobi, monchito?
fast-forward: yr burnt out hotel room
window

I remember when cock fighting was ok!
the grocery list, top of the counter
juan, pedro, gratitude, el del
i

is that fall
detritus
don’t fail

Brookfulkernurfliff limbic
into above ground shards quick feeds non communicative
without transmission conduct arms stretched
a tandem curl
slates of memorial
clasps tangles birds or fowl equine above and beyond horis
karloff animated cafeteria buttons not snoe not snoe
the sun the sun arms thin arms small arms the big moon
apparently rain thick thick thatches pearly whites vernal
reprobat the song of the north the flag of the world hum
hummmm global language geopolitical preface epilogue
photo stack nutrient hydrant

you’ve come that far to say that
origin its origin needs to be consumed intact
zane grey harness saddle lips them lips those lips oh those
lips fresh lips dem lips fine tuned sleep fine tuned plural it’s
zipper its zipper telephone or telefono

radio’s
taken
video’s blue

i can find a riding partner that rides
an e an in your eye strike

Ray DeJesús [http://www.guidoimagen.com/2014/08/14/day-dejesus-5-poems/](http://www.guidoimagen.com/2014/08/14/day-dejesus-5-poems/) was born and raised in Brooklyn, and now resides in the Bay Ridge section. His work can be found in Gondola, 1913: a journal of forms, Peaches and Rats, and Shampoo, among others. With Kely Sweat he co-curates the Tri-Lengua reading series. Marianna Gilday photo.

THE PORTABLE BOOG READER 7: N.Y.C.

10 BOOG CITY

WWW.BOOGCITY.COM
Francesca DeMuzs

From TURN!

here it comes GOD the sun never talks to me
Frank O'Hara and Ariana Reines, too
so lucky

hey, hello sun
i'm down here...
do you see me? i'm tanning
i love what you do to my body...

PLEASE TALK TO ME

The sun ignores me
I haven't peeled yet
or maybe I'm on the wrong beach
figures, story of my life:
OMG DID YOU SEE KELLY SLATER!!!! no

HE WAS AT THE COVE TALKING TO <cute guy I went to high school with>
YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE WHERE WERE YOU

snapshot of me with ketchup spilled down my bare stomach
and a hotdog in my hand

of course I was on Steger's Beach when KELLY SLATER went to The Cove
for no apparent reason KELLY THERE AREN'T EVEN WAVES HERE
THIS IS LITERALLY THE FLATTEST SHORELINE I'M CERTAIN OF IT WHAT ARE YOU DOING

The sun is like, oh hey, here I am, hanging out with lifeguards and shit and Kelly Slater
at The Cove. If only you were so cool like <cute guy you went to high school with>
and not so insecure that you only hang out at Steger's Beach by Hot Dog Tommy's Hot
Dog Stand.

The sun and Kelly Slater and all the cool guys from high school are laughing outright at
me, and I look up from trying to wipe the ketchup off of my bare stomach like What?
They laugh even harder.

the entire time why aren't my arms skinnier?
or at least this bare stomach could be a shade tanner
this fucking bikini anyway
this print
Billabong
why do you look good on every girl I know except me?

So now I'm walking down the boardwalk
or not, how can I escape Kelly Slater and the sun <cute girl I went to high school
with who told me about Kelly Slater in the first place and keeps me thinking we're
friends but doesn't seem to say anything friendly to me ever>

I mean this is town they are everywhere
I ride my bike to Marie's Pizza see
Kelli Slater, the sun, that girl, the cool guys
like Gianni Colameco one time he said
he really wanted to blow dust off of a really old book that seems like the coolest thing
he didn't say that to me
but I know that he said it

WHY WON'T YOU JUST SAY SOMETHING
KELLY SLATER OR THE SUN OR
JUST SAY, oh hey, good morning
and then I can turn the conversation around like
tell me I'm a good poet, tell me I'm a good poet?
maybe, as a conversation starter
Do you remember the time I watched you come up at Highre's Beach?
but that could go badly like
No. Everyone watches me all the time it's embarrassing I close my eyes.

I'd save though, I'd be like I know how you feel
but then maybe you'd smirk and then a turn! like the sun looks as if it feels guilty for
smirking like I might be the one person who has ever said that to the sun but I'm just

trying
Instead, here's a poem, a short one!

To The Sun
Your shape
Spread
Over time

I just hear
the wheels, girl, the wheels
well greased
I've tried everything
I'm super exhausted
I've tried
I've tried talk it out hug it out scream it out it
I've been calling Atlas like, can I get you a milkshake
he never picks up
He never picks up the first second third step twice I didn't try very hard I guess
I bought some oil and tried to pump it back into the earth like a collagen lip
I'm just super exhausted

but then does it mean me? I think it means me
I don't really know
if I met Kelly Slater I wouldn't have been able to
offer him anything fall-in-love/grant your wishes-able
what's the point I was just a kid and he would not have remembered any of this

Me at 16. Hey.
Kelly Slater: Hey, what's up?
Me at 16. Hey, are you Kelly Slater?
Kelly Slater: Yeah.
Me at 16. I know this song, by The Matches? They have this line that's like she showed
me pictures in her car, of the Beach Boys and Kelly Slater.
Kelly Slater: Oh.
Me at 16. Yeah. So what are you up to?

That's my go to.
I say shit that makes no sense like when
I wanted to say something to someone I'd love to be
blessed by or become in some small way
Frank O'Hara or Ariana Reines but I didn't know what so I was like
Hi and s/he said oh we met already
I was like yeah you liked my t-shirt
with the moon on it. Frank O'Hara was like yep
then someone invited me to a party and I was like I don't think I'm going to that party
to her? Why would I say that to him? So many things
have been said to them by so many incredible people and THE SUN so why
would I say this nothingness to Ariana Reines /Frank O'Hara?
He said, oh,
and I was like
I have a fever. LIKE SHUT UP!
and Ariana Reines said, I think everyone here has a fever, Fran.

So then there was a pause
I thought So what are you up to?
and it echoed around in my head
sounding lame
I left

I never remember the answers anymore
I'm like so what are you up to?
and people say blab blab it could be:
Oh right now I'm just neutering stray cats.
I started freelance neutering, the hardest part is catching them
but then I just know what to do.
I used to be a phlebotomist so it's easy
just like that, I do it in the basement
of my apartment.
They could stop and look so shady and shitty eyed: Hmm
why did I say that? and I'd be like oh, I like cats.

I can't even get out of my head for one minute to be curious
about something someone said
that's not true but that's how it feels after a dead conversation with the sun
I didn't even ask what it's like to be the center of the universe

I can kind of feel that, though
sitting around outside with no one
having a drink, knowing me, just me
me and me infinitely connected to me
it's so stagnant, standstill, me and me
the wheels it means me
and I need to keep the universe turning though
it doesn't matter
in what
direction or what it's around
I just need to keep revolving.
it's that to be a sign one must be dynamic
not static. I hate predictability
but security well of course security in that always prepared
scouts kind of way, like I can adapt like those frogs that switch genders
I'm not an image, frozen, I'm not a still
not an object, flat, the wheels I'm trying to keep this going
Who should I be now?

Francesca DeMuzs (http://francescademuszpoeetry.wordpress.com/) lives and works in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. She manages online initiatives for Futurepoem books and is a member of YOMO Poetry Collective.
Claire Donato

Statement of Poetics

In 2011, I began writing greeting card poems in response to an advertisement posted on the AWPF Job List by the Blue Mountain Greeting Card Company. I had no money, and the Blue Mountain Greeting Card Company promised remuneration for verse. My poems were not taken, but my efforts manifested as the Blue Mountain School, of which I am the sole member.

The poems are composed in Lucida Handwriting font under my pen name, Claire Elisabeth. I posit a linguistic, chromatic and affective proximity between the Blue Mountain School and the Black Mountain School. My feelings about the schools share an ambivalence—in each case, the practice is generative, and the poetics are potentially problematic.

In these Blue Mountain poems, I explore affect and notions of mastery through the experience of creating and sharing. The poems bring me delight in abjection; they are simultaneously deferential and irreverent. I hope they make you feel as funny as I do.

(print and fold greeting card, opposite page)
Seeing you each morning
is like opening my eyes, my love, my open eyes, my love, my mind opens, my eyes, my mind opens, my heart, my heart.

In every language, "Je t'aime," "Te quiero," "I love you." Every language makes me feel, quote, "I love you." In every language, "I love you." and I love you once again, looking back at me again, and I see your face, my open eyes, my dreams.

At night, when I close every moment of my life, and again and again and again, how I discover you again, that makes me real love, to a brand new love, my love, my open eyes, my love, my open eyes, my love, every morning.

from Blue Mountain School Greetings

art by Carl Ferrero
into steam, girding mass, mineral challenge
of the carousel. birds let loose in a
cutaway model of the carousel
dinnertime
tames the garden, finds no peace
where war is done. grammar of unrecognition
restless diagram. musical generals,
you draw
a red interval, martinet
holding circumference to its ratio
ducats on stone stairs. smell of import shop.
carousel is a hope
not all math will be
human. bird on cradle. the weather's out. bullhorns
line the streets you find me where I go,
contours reconfiguring each other.
*
sing to the whole alphabet,
scapegrace
little vowels, aitches huddled together
helping everything we know to become wind.
alamo limber
crisp under plectrum,
logic of hexagons
tessellating
go to sleep
do down low
a way to say
we steal the honey,
articulate, sweet,
the museum is not safe. we meet under
it's bound to be black. send me a postcard.
send me moral
confidence. send me
all the vowels from the bridge. well that's
a method. a province.

a way of getting
natural. you take the bag of sounds. back to
beginnings now. deep under the house.
*
into the shifting contours of wakefulness
you send yrself
into the yellow house
the river takes
yr eyes past you
I know I know
you bite deep into
a crystal pear, its abstraction runs over
yr chin
the infinite hammock check for
wildlife
open yr mouth to let light
dissolve on your tongue
like a tree
masked
aloe
you send yrself
into the blue bed
my mouth is an oyster
& I'm listening
you bite deep into a crystal broadcast
& make a sugar of frequency
o go
make a photograph we'll watch from here

*what is this bullshit in my gazpacho?
all
I hear is not Slovak, bones in the wrong
countryside
you asked for it.
all I hear
is the blubbering down the hall, house gone
pink
the elevator spills ink or may
be writing something.
you be you then that
seems fair
turns out 'secular states'
aren't all they're cracked up to be vis-a-vis
'sexual identity' & 'religion'.
*
arrears before arrival, great before
grandmother.
you leave a telephone
footprint as clear as a name.
when you were
mine.

a cycle of text & death & text,
a library swelling with brides like a
hive.
sight before sigil, hayonet
sitting in brine.
sunday, just after seven,
thru the window
hazy castes nacreous
over boerum hill, maker's mark, melted
ice.

aim before amplitude, speed before
specialty work.
the lucid sidewalk.
ingin time.
you rinse your eyes
in infinitives you speak into trainwrecks
the sky is a luminous grammar
*
one way of looking at it is to see
everything coming in waves.
train doors
open. butts flutter in. you're up against
velocity here, & Fellini you
ain't.

train pulls out.
life ends up making sense
which means life is a comedy. congrats!
you are this movie. i'm breathing. i'm

trying
to. the viaduct broke.
my grammar: a

orah of cinders.
my dictionary:
you bury the afterbirth. lodestar: vast.
all frequency is recurrence

tell that
to the radio. tell it to the speed
of light.

distant time, you are beautiful.
it's true we recede; nobody cares like Frank

Ian Dreiblatt is a poet, translator, and legal commenter. Work has recently appeared or is forthcoming in *Harp & Altar*, *Lungfall*, *Pallaskich*, *The Agriculture Reader*, and *Web Conjunctions*. His translation of Gogol's *The Nose* will be published by Melville House in 2014. Open to conspiracy, he makes his merry in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.
Anna Gurton-Wachter

you next, strongman
levy your fictitious, if genuine, bulk
dear heart,
are you that man who was one with his horse
as a radius is large and metallic
in the fresh flower room
a fugitive adores sounds
you who are restored among us
never to touch the earth's arbitrary spots again
august 19th: the same
august 20th: the same
dear heart: dear heart
the earth all resonance now
I am loving boldness
because I have been adored and thrown overboard
dear place: dear place, pass over this century
let anybody come here merrier!
a question of vague custody,
within a dark fire of sounds
i know who i am talking to

From excerpt of an ending without a beginning
Wherever the word ever is, is dominant. The post-sexual police chief
is here, sexually speaking. He wants to witness the eating up of exits,
a continuous solar act. You could not make them out in the dark. The
demolisher is also a character, now. The police chief, metaphorically, and
the demolisher, metaphorically, are the results of a duration of dazzles.
Basically, if you wait long enough, you will see this entire parade erased.
Here is the demolisher speaking on being answered like that. "The
sweetness of my boredom is indeterminate. I overhear the imagination
surviving brain exercises. It occurs and then I demolish all of your exits,
but all I want is an hour." Here is Anne Frank on losing her spaceship:
"It was a continuous solar act, the result of a duration. I am hopeless
and once I even lost my spaceship." This is what happens when you
give up on microphones and accept all of the humming and the outright
dispersal of schizoid dreaming as a kind of validation. In the middle of
direct and aggressive eye contact from the survivor I see a plastic
sign hidden from its own hell-escape (a clue). My own self is even lip-
synching to my own self, as I continue to celebrate and popularize my
lip-image-mouth. Here exits a gaping magnitude of speech sounds into
the music annex, into every work of art's favorite time zone. The kinetic
stereo is solved. Everyone evacuates his thoughts.

Deletion can be accomplished by anybody who knows how it works,
who has access, right? When were the deletions accomplished?
Messages to and from certain people may have had significance. It
created a program which put the pictures in the folder and re-named
the extension. It changed the extension. It would not appear to be a picture
at all. There is an authenticity issue. There is a discovery issue. The data
set is the data set. I want what is available, whatever the antidote is.

To identify the author, nonetheless, could be generated by a third
party under the guise of a different sender. The original architect was
never able to remember the words that surrounded him. He is a man
who has no spoken past. Escalation and de-escalation of force. If x
happens you can respond with y. If a person is disengaging, that is a
de-escalation. What a person is perceiving to be their reality. Based on
that perception, I can see an outcome. He speaks, he speaks of that
which was never completed. There are always options, but what did he
perceive he could vocalize? There is a verbal component to engaging
different levels of resistance. The arrest is verbal. Communication may
not be the first thing that comes to mind.

Anna Gurton-Wachter is a poet, collage-maker, and student of library science and history. Her long poem Cyrus is available as a chapbook from Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs. She lives in Sunset Park, Brooklyn where she parks her sunset.
From Say Summer
You were brave, rubbing the tension from your eyes and forehead, waking up. Say summer, say cicadas, say the interior décor left something to be desired. Celibacy simple and trustworthy and you didn’t have to shave your head. The sky was always soothing until it wasn’t. Rice, frogs, planets, who knew what would fall? What storm? A knot moved into your shoulder, took out a mortgage, would work until death. This frayed nerve (nerve/never) murmured every day. Close your eyes. Pray.
Elsewhere a blank screen for dreamy projection, false escape. A beachy life if you’d married rich. In accounting class, the teacher said nothing of sins. Your moral compass was clarified by whiskey, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ were just words. Still, those kisses were irreplaceable, the childish bliss. A beautiful face could make you do anything in those days.

In those days, a beautiful face could make you do anything! So much you can do with a mouth. Say a waterbug skates the lake’s surface without getting wet. Say you’re tired. Say the gravestones rarely visited, bone in silk in wood in dirt. A slower fire, exchange of carbons, sprinkling of self into earth. Forgiveness heals the forgive most of all. He skated on water and filled baskets with fish. The age of miracles is with us. You abandon the first thought and await the next. A tulip-shaped umbrella offers a little protection. Living alone is the calmest way. The sex problem hidden in the nightstand. Your parents slept in separate beds.

Your parents slept in different beds? What is the tone here—the mood, the setting? Wiser folks stop planning their lives and live in the now. Sugarcane and hurricane are partners in the winning book. You want to quit the business as if quitting is a choice. But this isn’t a waitressing job, this isn’t a restaurant in the burbs. You’ve made people cry for heaven’s sake. Happy tears and angry. Grace and an uphill climb. In the skyline, the cathedral dome is a gown. Does everyone live with constant sadness, a rib licked clean by sorrow? Brilliant calcium curve. What’s next is always hidden. It’s all written, all within, the chemistry to ignite fires. Only 9-5 is like sand. Only fear. Only you see a striped green snail by the lavendar and say cousin, say friend, say little mirror, am I wasting my days?

April Naoko Heck

Am I wasting my days?” you wonder and choose another radio station. Classical music—childhood’s soundtrack. Later you hated it and then later you didn’t. Your twenties went down in flames. In your thirties, you lay bricks by hand, you forgave your parents, an exhilaration. The great sex diminished as you demanded a side-dish of love. You scopped take-out onto a good plate as if someone were watching, a measure of dignity. You refined waiting into an act of surrender. Blustery greens on a morning walk. Dog sniffing dog. Small moments added up to more small moments. A poem transformed a peach into a symbol of anxiety, plums were never plums again. The fruit started talking when you thought you were alone in the kitchen. Get-rich schemes and real estate prices dominated the new conversations. Your abs needed more work. Some exercise and a scrub-brush. Antioxidants for the spirit, sparkling fruit.

Sparkling fruit—antioxidants for the spirit—also to rub onto skin, for smoothing wrinkles—also to inject into time, for extra longevity—also to feed to the dog, for eternal life—also to apply to the heart, for rejuvenation—the cool mask of mirrored sunglasses—disguise for a lazy eye—the wrong forecast ruins beach plans—the divorce rate increases while the number of marriages remains the same—no one can think of an alternative—let’s divide the holidays among four houses—evacuation assembly area—bridges are a danger—high rises continue to rise—bodies sink underground—a white gull floats in the river—a wisdom tooth to be extracted—ships on the Hudson—the slow carving of water—cliffs ache with age—what’s the use—namimg the view, describing cloud and sky—the velvet antlers of sumac—Yonkers sounds like a condition—Florence a woman you loved but never met—

A woman you loved but never met. Sounds like god. A moment when the subconscious takes over and you say flyers. As in birds, as in airplanes, any wing in the sky. And then you run out of ideas. You vow to quit. You vow a humbler life. As contained as a tub of margarine. Fuck being an artist. Anxiety a silk ribbon through your days. Paycheck to paycheck, leapfrog games, lilypads are prettier than banks. If you clean the windows, if you paint your toenails red. High heels and high rises while somewhere a green field yawns and spins the sun. The glassiness fades and you’re back at square one with a crush on your teacher. Small audio speakers, concrete dorm. Getting high on a twin mattress. The way running shoes get worn at the heels, distance and mileage, all the birthday parties. Every morning you wake up, you wake up.

Blown Away
You point at your lips,
an abandoned place.
I pass you my lip balm.
Wet wax captures your lips
going my direction.
You ask me what is?
and pant. Kiss I reply.
You push the balm
into my hand.
I press your prints
onto my lips. Kiss you say.
We tremble.
Your veil tumbles.
My gun drops.
Then ooh,
the best kind of
boom.
— after Marine LCP. Jeff Key

Darrel Alejandro Holnes

Coup
Your mother cries because she can see you moving
inside the lion’s belly, raw meat heading
through his bowels turning against
the walls of his stomach. The lion
swallowed you whole. That greedy beast says you’re
so scrawny he doesn’t even
need to bite you into pieces
to devour you like a mouse.
Then his
stomach’s sudden shift rolls your eyes
directly into his gastric acids, folds you
into yourself, and your twisted
two hundred pounds breaks
your left arm. But a breaking can be a beginning
if you use the bone’s sharpedge to perch and davout
of the sack. Tear apart the
lion’s skin and birch yourself,
feel first, out from death inside the beast’s bottom.
Rip through his red ends and feel
his entrails slide down
your back, the kind of slime that means
you’ve crevenced something
worth the stench of carnage, raw gallbladder,
and bile. Faint with the lion’s
rotten breath. Feel the wind
in your mane and look through
his eyes at your country, belt
a thunder that shakes rain from the clouds, a roar
that frightens the quarry
to death. Listen to your hunger,
and see your claws reach for the warm
bodies at arm’s length. See your mother
raise a gun at the lion. A trigger pulled
to set you free.

From “Operation Just Cause”

Cut To:
EXTERIOR – Home, Panama City, 1989 - DAY

Obeah incantations work to keep the land quiet,
Op anubuti tahini Jesus tierra terra saft man
Spreading ancient vowels from the gutters of their
Middle passage mouths over the tremors of this country.
A Christian witchcraft lullaby, expanding its alphabet shoulders
Keeping the walls up, a pillow for the falling microwaves
Bought at the Military Pies, one micro for each dry and wet season.
A bruse left by the guardia cool on our brick fence
Bleeds Americans live here: Like sita danomanch.
Our father paints over it every morning,
Paints it the color of my por qué nosotros?
Shouldn’t we be the delivered ones?
My parents weren’t born American,
Mother stowed away to have me there
So that my birth would be
A kind of halo, so we wouldn’t die
Like the others. Our house was
Marked just in case enough American soldiers
Hadn’t died the guardia knew how to drive up the numbers;
It was marked so that the guardia
Lost the war and the Americans started bombing
Our house would be spared. My father tries to
Give the fence new skin with white paint,
But still the brace bled. We pray, and chant
Kneeling around the sight of blood.
Jesus, fuisti tillo en el cielo keep us life.
Too much life to risk on color,
We hang it off our tongues and
Hope salvation will take a bite.
The land shifts like our tongue
Around languages in our mouth,
Trying to find the words to live us free tonight.

Cut To:
INTERIOR – Home – NIGHT – 1989

The family is crouched on the floor in the master bedroom.
The house shakes. Papa looks at his
MAMA

Mama looks at her children and then looks back
at her man.

MAMA

God wanted them to be American.
The lamp smashes on the floor and a broken piece
misses my eye and slices my left cheek.

I see my own blood for the very first time.

DARREL

Are the good guys here to get the bad guys,
Mama?

MAMA

Yes.

Mama answers, wondering if God can really read
dashed hands.
The land tills and questions the purpose
of standing steady, remembers how it had seen more
peace underwater where man does not breathe
or bomb. My father spreads his arms over all of
us on the floor, a mattress over him. He sings us
lullabies wishing us sweet dreams, but I can’t help
staying up to see if my world of in between is
really coming to an end.

FADE OUT

Darrel Alejandro Holnes is a writer-producer whose book, Prime, with other members of the Phantastique 5, a selection of young poets for The Best American Poetry blog
by Jericho Brown, is forthcoming from Sibling Rivalry Press in 2014. He teaches at Rutgers University and resides in the East Village.
The Last Line Being The Easiest to Pronounce

A Refusal

Let go the sea
Bring closer dour marbles
Feud with misty sauce
Garble tonic lesser
Nicely, in the arrondissement
Iris off again, blemished, sparse
Toucan Sam will tellie evening
So garnish the wait nest, volume
The fair votless bar stand
Until smother fondu this
Bankrupt summary section code
Forger meat outlines, punctuate

One of These Days

I looked for signs of his report in all the magazines. Particularly the ones that included the most off-putting editorial gestures, as if I was being warned away from my position far from the source. The action. I have a tendency to recede, to blur. I go away, waving myself off. His report was sporadic, for sure, but strangely precise. He knows exactly when to forget the usual niceness. Like, for example, goodbye. If you were there, he was not. If he was there, you didn’t know it. But if you looked closely, the report followed. Pop. Pop. Pop. A report. His name striped of story, or story stripped of his name. Abrupt end to the album followed by too many bonus tracks. A short film based on a long novel. Ink where blood should be. The introduction leaves us standing, the procession including us only temporary. I don’t know you anymore, but neither do you me. The necessary breeze gives us away. A series of allusions paint our picture. The plot figures us out. Language takes us by the throat. We go as we go, separately. A report. All together now, a record skipping the exact spot. Exact spot. Exa c t sp o t

Jeff T. Johnson's poems have recently appeared in Coconut, Smoking Glue Gun, and Forklift, Ohio, and he holds a digital residency at the Organism for Poetic Research. He lives in Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn, is editor in chief at LF7, and edits Dewlaw.
Dear Echidna
My monotreme flower,
Claw & burrow into spiny
Bush, dear reclusive pop
Star of Papua New Guinea,
Upside down pineapple,
Prickly anteater that is not
Anteater, mammal-reptilian,
Beaked but no flightless
Bird, soft-shelled egg-
Bearing, leather egg-
Rearing, egg-hatched
Puggle in warm pouch;
Nipple-less, lactating
Females of many species,
Promiscuous despite
Thinning existence;
Scaly males of the four-
Pronged penis, my
Funky cold Medina,
Off the evolutionary
Tree, offspring of half-
woman, half-serpent
Mother of all Creek,
Myth monsters, dear
Beautiful anomaly,
Dear unchanged, dear
Vestige of prehistory.

Joseph O. Legaspi

Triumvirate

1. Raw, pungent heat rises from the bed, enticing the moon into the room. We are made of everything and nothing, of dark matter absorbing slivers of light. We hum in masculine embrace. Rotten flesh, limber limbs, necks, calves, crumpled white sheets, ears, thighs, elbows on pillows, the mattress, spent. We lay on a blanket of our twin bodies.

2. With the moon still high I awoke to a half-empty bed. Light from the living room frames the bedroom door. I am dim and wonder. Is that my lover taciturn with sleeplessness, his mind like ticker tape, trains of endless headlines, his face computer screen blue? Or is that my mother sitting up melancholy once again with her clasped hands, her face the hanged pale clock of the moon?

3. Sharing a bed with an insomniac awakens the dormant insomniac in me. At last, I once thought, I’ve abandoned my flock of sheep, starved for numbers and fences, to pasture. But again I’m shepherding in night’s vast valleys, which somehow are less lonely.

In unison we toss and tangle under the summer moon. Parched, we then share a glass of cold water in the kitchen. At the table of our sleepless congress, he sits with languid authority. I fall onto his lap, wrap my arms around his torso like a maruapal at the hours stretch towards a blue border.

Triptych

1. What is wrong with wearing red shoes?, she asks her taxidermist father while he slices into an alligator three times her length. Nothing, he grumbles, corner-eye watching his little girl twirl underneath a bald eagle’s embraceable wingspan. The ocelot watches, too, as do the owls, zebra, raccoons and bear. Bestiary being vacuumeed into her black hole swirling. Her father grasps his knife tightly, holding dominion over the reptile, hollowed out for reanimation.

2. I receive a phone call from a friend whom I believe is dead. I’ve just been away for five years, she says, I’m calling from the corner deli, eating a sandwich. ‘But I saw your inert body inside a wooden box in a room fragrant with flowers.’ A dream, she insists. She might be right. I’d gone through years without memory, and currently, my thoughts are preoccupied with salami.

3. A man decided to live underwater. The dock was full of cephalopods, rotting. He launched his submarine of junkyard wood, tin, and iron. The new moon disappeared forever.

Years passed, his surplus of creamed corn depleted. So, the man harvested moss and mushrooms that sprouted on damp surfaces. Gradually, algae grew between his teeth and bitten fingernails. He met a mermaid. They fell in love and kissed through the one glass window of the capsule. It’ll be another hundred years before he grows gills.

Am I Not?

A boy trails a school of boys up a tree
for fruit picking, or prehensile expedition.
He hangs behind not because he is unskilled
at climbing, in fact, he possesses the gibbon-
place grace of Filipino coconut boys in provinces.
He trails to marvel at the twin jellyfish
of their underwater shorts bobbing heavenward,
to glimpse at their flaccid nautibus, to bask
in their shared ocean life in the tree’s ether.

* * *

Am I not that tremulous, salty-skinned boy
who trails like jet stream along bark and anxious leaves,
committing some thievery against the boys’ oblivious
physicality and joy? I am stolen glances, surface
scratcher, light’s glimmer, am I not? Anticipatory
and vigilant as a hatching fish expelled from its father’s mouth?
I feed starry-eyed at the bottom.

Am I not your boy?
Who dangles from an offshoot branch, reaching for the plumpest
guava for my ripe mother? Sepal not calyx nor calarcula.
Yet, too, am I not non-committal substance like chalk,
pencil lead? I’m self-adhesive. Not your loose
tealife connoisseur scattering sloped, dried conifletti
from windowsills for wind to carry? Am I an opossum
that raids trash bins, feasting on eggs shells like shattered light?
The crescent moon that concentrates? Reflection on the impenetrable
mirror? Am I no one’s Promised Land, of distant adoration?
A boy better suited underwatet, a dislocated tragic seahorse,
a darling, cautious sea anemone fish, am I not?

* * *

A boy visits the zoo, and weeps.
A hundred-year old tortoise lives in a tank
no larger than its own body. It can only survive
this way, he reads fearfully, in the wild it digs itself
into a hole as protection from alligators, predators.
One of Darwin’s fittest, the tortoise retracts snugly
encased in the carapace and plastron of its bony igloo.

Joseph O. Legaspi [http://www.psx.org/content/joseph_o_legaspi] is the author of Imago (CavanKerry Press), and two chapbooks: Aviary, Bestiary (Organic Weapon Arts), winner of the inaugural David Blair Prize, and Subways (Thistled Press). He co-founded Kundiman, a non-profit organization serving Asian-American poetry.

WWW.BOOGCITY.COM
Amy Matterer

Jersey is gone. I know it by the clean track rhythm quitting its hiccuping under the layered grease of Philadelphia money.

Lines of landmarks relax within a blond haze bucketing the smokestacks I have caught disassembling themselves as rubble.

Combat has been forged here prior to my engagement. I know it in the way they flaunt their amputations:

```
THE GLOB
D_E
WORKS
FACTORY
```

Names missing, in uniform, strategic letters slanting their recital toward perverted, mortifying interpretations.

To get this far
the campaign
has grown
dependent
on the eye
turned blind
by conductors
caretakers, all those
who oversee the day.

I too am trained not to flinch but for different reasons entirely.

Doing it out in the open like this isn’t arrogance, pride, or suicide.

It is necessary being obvious being that
for being accepted is the sole requisite
as landscape.

Filtered first by the iris, their deeds
(what is being done) get shoveled
into greater piles of data (mostly decoy)
to be discarded, divided from memory.

This aisle light
for example, pulsing
since they sat me here
a verdigris neon glow:
dull/less dull
dull/less dull/... its accent too constant for an interrupted current.

But they did not. Like water they bubbled, boiled, and exited as a procession of ghosts. Unlike water this mutation worked itself from the center outward, taking all: detail, color, faces—leaving just the shapes of things blanketed by pale, grey ash—though I have heard doubt as to whether it covers anything at all.

from the beginning of After, Us

Amy Matterer [tinyurl.com/nmnm-104] wrote this poem while traveling by train back and forth between her hometown of Newark, Del. and her current home of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn.
From "Anonymous Landscape"

152
anonymous signs
anonymous houses
anonymous inhabitants
anonymous family crests.
devils & angels.
bleeding hearts & roses.
they all cry out
in one anonymous voice,
saying,
“HELP ME!”

153
his heart
was stabbed
by a knife.

154
it's 5 am
a man hangs himself,
wishing he was
a beautiful hat
worn by a shy girl
with no name.

155
stitch by stitch,
somebody with a name
but known to no one
fits the fabric of his life
with an image of
worms, fish, flowers,
weeds & a woman
with anonymous tears.

156
two men talking
two animals talking
two men with hats on fighting.
two pagan stones told.
two notebooks burnt.
two names disappeared.

Yuko Otomo

157
rules of the game
shared & understood
by no one.
faces buried
in a cave
with no masks on.
a banquet
held for everyone.
a table full of
screaming silence
beyond fear.

158
it's me.
it's me.
it's me, again.
that's me, too.
here, again, it's me.
it's me.
it's me.
it's all me.

159
twisted & tied up
at random
for no particular reason.
all my toys are forced
to metamorphose themselves
into a silenced voice
on the wall.
the color of the wall
is faceless.

160
laughter over anger,
please, no matter what.
keeping a petty accounting book
can be hazardous to your health,
whether you are
known or unknown.

161
clarity beyond clarity
sanity beyond sanity
logic against logic.

reason.
a door to an empty UTOPIA
opens/closes itself
like a repetitive sexual fantasy
with no title.

forget about
a world full
of peace loving
families.

let's weave
anonymous logic
words can not explain
into clothes, shoes, & bags,
instead.

162
'HAVE'S' keep stealing from 'HAVE-NOTS'.
they even steal poverty from the poor.

163
a lighthouse brightens the balance
between the dark & light of shadows.

both sanity & insanity are
totally) overrated.
red or black, it's all about the savagery of
a survival game: SOCIAL CAPITALISM.
you can opt out, or, you can join in &
learn to be a skilled player.
out or in, known or unknown, just
remember to say 'I PREFER NOT TO'
at the right moment to the face of the
desired.

164
thoughts misunderstood;
words mistranslated;
emotions veiled & lost;
signs crossed;
language
repeatedly juggled, bent & twisted
becomes a field for a game
of football of a sort.
you'll win the game
if you know how to kick it well.

but,

165
poetry has nothing
to do with winning;
it's more about losing.

losing yourself
in words
as you stop fighting
with your own 'UNSPEAKABLE VISION'.

'sur la route' –
whenever I turn,
I see a sign that says
'erase everything'.

Yuko Otomo ([http://www.the22magazine.com/V2/Pages/YukoOtomo.html](http://www.the22magazine.com/V2/Pages/YukoOtomo.html)) is a visual artist and poet/writer of Japanese origin. Her latest book, STUDY & Other Poems on Art, is just out from Ugly Duckling Presse. Steve Dalachinsky photo.
Afro
“I ain’t passed the bar but I know a little bit! Enough that you won’t illegally search my shit.”
—Jay-Z, “99 Problems”

I’m hiding secrets and weapons in there
Buttermilk pancake cardboard, boxes of
Purple juice, a magic word our Auntie
Angela spoke into her fist & released
Into hot black evening like gunpowder or
A Kool, 40 yards of cheap wax prints,
The Autobiography of Malcolm X,
A Zulu folklore warning against hunters
Drunk on Polo shirts and Jagermeister,
Blueprints for building ergonomically perfect
Dancers & athletes, the chords to what
Would have been Michael’s next song,
A mule stuffed with diamonds & gold,
Miss Holiday’s vocal chords, the jokes
Dave Chappelle’s been crafting off-the-grid,
Sex & brown liquor intended for distribution
At Sunday Schools in white suburbs,
Or in other words exactly what a white glove
Might expect to find taped to my leg &
Swallowed down my gullet & locked in my
Trunk & fogging my dirty mind &
Glowing like treasure in my autopsy

My Vinyl Weighs a Ton
Sit down shut up slip me out of my sleeve.
I have come from the grasses of California.

I’m carrying twenty years of the dark.
The sun bends its back over Struggle City.

It hits me first thing. I’ve never been cool.
I am driving and the breaks are shot.

I take a jetpack into the heaviness alone.
My bare face hanging out all over the kitchen counter.

What’s largest is the ego, half-animal growing in the dark.
I’m a rare EP strutting into the brown morning near mant.

T-shirts are a theme song. The neighborhood watches.
Lawn chairs tumble into liquor stores alone.

The good old urban sprawl at half-volume.
It is literally just another day,
all my friends are changing religions and getting laid.
I have been too patient.

My bed is a rooftop where drugs are allowed.
My voice is a river splitting between tracks.

It’s just one long slumber party in here.
I wonder if Mom will ever come pick me up.

Morgan Parker

Everyone Knows Where Art Comes From It Comes From The Store for Keith Harris

I’m telling you it’s in the hips, the cash you cut and sniff over my torn-rimmed cartoon, walls shaking like DayGlo and LES nightclub toilet I’m pulling my face from. Behind the stall you draw our outlines on a scratched up mirror with red lipstick you took from my purse. And suddenly it’s like penises everywhere. Surfing new wave airwaves you should we not men? But you are drowned out, drooling a pool of screenprints to the floor. A: we are empty! Hollow as egg whites and ink between our eyes. Wouldn’t you know it? Crack pipes no longer pass for sexy fingers. Turns out everyone’s empty as sin and heads are televisions, empty too. Still, I let any man paint me into a corner these days with a good set of lips. In this equation everyone stands for me. Oh you in your strikened pose? Oh honey baby on the run and on the market! It’s like pictures are words or sex is a Xerox machine. It’s like all my friends are fucking in a planet-sized circle around me. You’re what I think I see on the G train platform, glowing womb spiked with the glory of everyone, but then wake up again. I know a little something about prizing in public but nothing about loving. It’s funny because there are 1700 products stamped just for you, rising from cinderblock murals to meet you at the check-out line in the sky. Say nothing are you for sale? I think I become for sale too; become the greatest hits or a seed of greatest hits, lock the door to my stall and drip plastic over the boredom, the pills, the patent leather, the chunks of hair in the sink. When the party ends I will still be here with you, lips stained with pop. I could pick a billion flowers for your sick bed. Do you see me I could dance all night

Ain’t Misbehavin’
I take a sip of beer.
My asshole feels, I cannot believe in how successful and how alone I have been today I would like to say he didn’t enter and I didn’t appreciate free drugs. I would like to say my mirror didn’t force itself to be involved. I spend most nights topless and appreciate my dog. I go to sleep clutching the side of the bed. I blow my nose and repent for the night before. I masturbate. Remember the album that mattered when we were still poor? Persons say I’m getting along just fine. Like I’m a baby who just claps and shits. Some stars have aligned in our spines. Moons conjuring my eyeshadow flushing, planets up to their necks in our longing. Without your stringy hair in cushions, stomach against the up-coming morning traffic noise I get bored. No one to walk with into the glowing couch, the green afterwards. I am saving for you a sharpened arrowhead for luck and practicality.

Miss Black America
Does she drink, smoke lights Does she bother spitting her seeds
Does she hate her little sister Is her ringtone R-E-S-P-E-C-T
Does she wake up next to you and shudder
Does she think she’s crazy Does she go to church
Does her therapist ask where her desires have gone
Does she know what makes her special
Does she say wild and free does she believe it

Morgan Parker’s [http://www.morgan-parker.com] first collection, Other People’s Comfort Keeps Me Up At Night, is forthcoming from Switchback Books. Recent works are due from Gigantic Sequins and Tin House. She lives in Bedford–Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.
Selections from Angry Ocean

1.
A chapter on fingers and folds of cinnamon buns, a burst of wet sugar. Asking for sexual attention necessitates a nervous breakdown. A meltdown. A psychic break. Hunched in twilight with a familiar pain in the outer rings of the anus.

I have developed a language with my spine that is pre-emptive DEREHMENT, flexing and contracting, yes and no.

yes + no = yes and the breakdown

no + yes = fear and the orgasm

orgasm = breakdown and every nightmare I ever wanted

Sticky Buns: for some reason your asshole aches, but you don’t remember who was there. Maybe it was just a probe to get all the shit out of your diapered ass once when you were allergic to milk.

Hold your mother in your arms after you are out of the bathtub, as she weeps and asks you for breast milk. Tell her, ‘Baby, Baby everything is gonna be alright. Be a good Baby and suck my left breast, now.’ And she does, her lips formed to your nippile.

You rub a stuffed mint green frog between your legs and call it Father. You shut in the binding of Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Cinderella, and The Frog Prince, and lay your little turds around the crib for all to see on a Saturday morning in 1983.

Love Muffin: amorphous, spongy, bursting out of control and groaning every letter of the alphabet out of my mouth, rectum, urethra, and cunt.

I pray to the God of No Revenge to prevent me from killing my parents. I will never marry and I will never know what sex I am, what sex to have, do or become. I will remain forever fuckable and abstract.

2.

I love television, I love my boyfriend who is a systems analyst. He never cries, so he begs me to make him as his cruelly nurturing top-fuck. In our Mommy game, I offer him breast milk in exchange for sucking on my silicone Cock that’s that will never stand straight.

3.

Whitney Houston is singing the theme song to The Bodyguard. Dad, you are Kevin Costner, and I am Whitney. It is your job to protect me because I’m a star, and you fall in love with me, slicing my silk scarf in half with your samurai sword.

Were I to become you, I would be the best masochist. I have felt this in my veins for many years. I don’t flinch. I love being cruel. I know how to seduce another into dying without fear. Anticipating my lover’s arousal, intimidation, how it lubricates glands and makes all organs stand on end, kills all possibilities of Princes, Knights, Kings, Rescuers, Vigilantes, Pirates, Daddies. I want to smash that piece of genitalia into the afterlife.

My clitoris often can’t take this at all. It gets red and perks up at the sound of ‘smack!’ It unfurls. It is pearl and chomping, and tightening my inner lips, making my hips buck. I need to squirt myself out of this raw atmosphere, smacking a hard cock and the austerely of 2 bodies whose only contact is punishment.

I need to come into my power; I need to claim this cock, this absence, this memory of fear, this infliction of cruelty.

No Dad, I’m coming, let me come. Know me. Eat me out. Finger me with Vaseline, find the center under my clit, up around my pubic bone, set me loose.

I am everything to you. I Am. The. Only. Thing. The nothingness of me, rising from your cum in my mother. I am the monster of you that is untidy, that has no self-awareness, that responds to being caressed, that fears you. I will always fear you.

Marissa Perel

4.

The more I call out to you, the more I fear I will waste myself for any good person. Not that I am against a solitary lifestyle, or no lifestyle.

I’m strong enough to lose everything, but if I do lose it, it will be in your name. I will die with your Hebrew name tattooed on my third eye over a Star of David, which has been branded there by my grandmother’s hot iron.

I always wanted to lose everything and to have nothing, to live fully as nothing. Not everyone can have the imagination to even begin to see the world of nothing. This travels beyond lack of sensation, or material. It has nothing to do with Buddhism. Some people know about this place from drugs or psychosis, but it doesn’t have to be accessed that way. I can curl up right now and just do it. See, I won. I’m not real. I’m not invisible, but inanimate.

I’m definitely not detectable on the human level. Hermaphroditic crustaceans swim around me as if greeting a lost relative. They clean me, skimming my flesh with their miniscule teeth. They are patient. For them, life is one entire day and night. They let me sink deeper and deeper, just on the verge of drowning. I wake up as my skin begins to crack from the saline. I am full of bumps, and my curves are calloused.

I am hungry as if I have never eaten before, but my mouth is now a blowhole. I am sucking up food from my sphincter, which doesn’t feel like I’m eating.

Everything is neon.

5.

In neon, perception is smooth and light. My vision comes to meet each glowing thing without tension. Nothing cuts or disrupts the panorama. My body, lithe in its subtle prowess, turns from reef to reef, inlet to algae. The discharge released from my silken gills is warm.

No one here has a name. The logic of the seabed is wandering and mostly darkness. From one cave with marbled textures to another, more granary.

So much buries me. Mostly just blue and its stratifications. How it appears to fill me, and how I feel of it, composed by it because it is all.

Negotiation of blue and blue, of neon and blue, viscous, electric shapes gleeding, melding, or exploding to bits of shredded light. I am mistaken for rock, I have no predators.

Everything shouts and fuckers on me while I lie still, feeling their fish-curt hurls and slimy corneals. It’s a sloth-like day, full of nothing, which is everything I’ve tried to become for so long, and I’m free.

Free to feel limitless pain, depths of scar, wounds blossoming like anemones.

Every rape floating in different neons, soft and open. The darkness grows tubular, begins to sink in my rock body and soft, neon rape anemones. Vibrations swell around us, the tides churn counter clockwise. A layer of sea lifts up to reveal moonlight blazing from all directions of sky. It’s pulling us out, out, up and up, and out until we burst from the tide’s tube and scatter in the sky.

Now I’m not my memories.

Marissa Perel is an artist, poet, critic, and independent curator. She is re-writing the Isaac Bashevis Singer/Barbra Streisand epic Yentl into a queer love story for a show at Long Island City’s The Chocolate Factory Theater. (Image from performance-installation of Yentl Revisited, 2012. Lauren Goldstein photo)
From Telescope Highway

By inducing euphoria the circle evolved into a wheel until there was no more reason to return. Harping on the same moments becomes a past time, occurs in a past when there was no record of emotions. The wheel gets knocked around and can no longer spin under its weight of oppression. The free world survives on such illusions. Only the thoughts are crumbling and disintegrating without glue to cohere them. Silence invades the crevices of sanity and holds its own, to resist means death. Do not remove underwear from our monuments or step over the yellow line of delusion. Dark powers are invading newspapers who merge with crimes well spent as a day on the beach. Up ahead a carrot waving in the breeze, an airy promise.

Clouds of misgiving settle on the popudace. The air raid shelters are full up. Some wag a finger at authority and questioned the foundations. Others seek progression in a waterfall of clay idols before succumbing to the mass directives. Fomenting anger cannot distinguish the inhabitants from one another. The head swells and reveals an assortment of shells. Mollusks fly out of ears and leap towards the horizon, fulfilling the ancient prophecy.

Chasing the elusive parroted soul through a maze of transparent thought canals—a bird with self made wings
held a ticket to another circumstance
The cage of outside influence had the power to entrap—until the outside spoken word revealed a message: ‘take this ticket to another dimension’
there’s a spot on a map leading nowhere.
An absent pathway to eternal bliss
and a perpetually machine somewhere in the afterlife.
As clockwork settles an old score.

Toni Simon

It was then that I first recognized my character for what she was. ‘It was difficult to remain aloof at that time in the sea of so much turmoil!’ Advisable to float beforehand and sink the decks later, seafarers are seldom рискed for their own good. The phone rang at just the right moment and the receiver was blue from the waist down. Too many times have passed and not that much said. It is claimed ‘all good things must end’ but insufficient evidence to conjure up the past. The places gone are imaginative slices in the main pie, to serve in the guise of events. We bound through a maze of deterring factors. The victims are laid waste by recalling the old tunes and flavor their tea with bitter herbs once remembered. Only time can tell the outcome; it waits around the corner of perception knowing you will catch up with your shadow when the time presents itself. A lost and found object which will only fade.

The larks are inhaling the frost the dew collects on the unemployment lines. Escape at the end the rainbow is underhanded. In the towns the cities are seething. Leader masses too hot to handle. Traditional structures are dwindling and conquering the will of the people. Termites set in and delay the foundations from crumbling by careful re-examination with their teeth. No home entertainment guides due to lack of discretion. In bleachers the onlookers are not scorned for wearing plaid, they are too busy with the popcorn to indicate their weariness. Uniformness was betrayed too soon by blowing glass from the wrong dimension.

Exchanger expedite with Moses bundles. Whodunit clause for barnacle Sam. Detective swallows alleged email apostle; carries harmonium suitcase on a train to nowhere. Exchangers of the curtain times most enterprising illusion. Donald Rumsfeld’s aspartame formaldehyde air suit fireside chat. Accentaute the missile trough if bored and aimless.

Uncalculating time switched off the outer planets, orbits undulate in time. The oblong regulations spout pretensions for watery eyes. Closely knit patterns of antiquity laced with the insulation of the past and marred by a host of illusions from a-z. The clanging purchases resist direct confrontation but hide behind a sewer of old meaning. We anticipate a world full of nuclear horror but somehow this will all fade away.

Toni Simon is a multimedia artist living in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Her illustrated book of prose poetry, Earth After Earth, was published by Lunar Chandeler in 2012.
Telephone Call from Samo for Miles Davis:

for Jean Michel Basquiat

the voice came in from nowhere over my telephone wire, it was samo, the radiant black sorcerer of startling indelible images, he was slouching in on a satchel of brushstroke improvisational art, risk-taking at its highest level, an unconditional shot inside the verbal dark of word-play, language,

when the voice can be used as high-jinks rapology, hip-hop, jazz, when it flies in through skipping signatures of time-changes, which is the moment all true art lives inside, when what one needs then is a key to unlock the magical impulse mystery provides in surprise, where great music lives always –
great visual art, poetry & dance too –

inside a sequence of luminous metaphoric rhythms, the happenstance of transcendent colors, images thrown together on a canvas, a sheet of paper – like notes, words, sentences flying as bird wings – full of imagination they dance into our lives with claws, wake-up calls, signals that fuse, focus our attention, wrap it up within a rapturous moment of incandescent beauty,

now samo’s voice was reaching out to me to meet miles davis, the prince of darkness, master of rhythmic nuance, the golden trumpet voice of quicksilver mood changes, unreconstructed black man not giving a fuck, what anybody thought of him was not inside his dna, only music, the power to move, innovate through risk-taking rhythms dancing on the head of a needle, mystery ingrained in his magic, voice, was where he was at, just like samo through brushstrokes, images colliding with colors, his voice, the language of history

speaking through both these radiant black sorcerers rooted in voodoo, duende, now in this moment meeting miles was necessary for samo, for his paintings to keep getting up on the magical one, he wanted to know the spirits of jimi hendrix, bird, dizzy gillespie, all dead now but living in the disposition of the prince who knew their darkness & light, because he held the key to unlocked secrets of the underworld, where ancestors lived without flesh but flew as pure matter through that dark

unknowable space, bugged-eyed, their invisible arms beating wings, without feathers, creating brilliant music full of colors swimming there drenched in light & was what samo needed to transition to the ether world he had so often dreamed of since he heard the calling of ancestors pulsating through rhythms & colors he imagined in a long-gone dream

Quincy Troupe

A Beautiful Woman Putting on Makeup on the Downtown #3

New York Subway Train

she dabs a little of this, a bit of that with a brush on her lovely face, smooth as any honey-brown female temptress’ countenance,

she holds a small hand mirror in her right hand so she can best see her reflection in glass precieving there,

but she wasn’t satisfied with what her demanding eyes saw, so she applies a fresh coat of lipstick to her lips, purses them, sticks out her tongue as if about to lick the image caught there in glass, she is not pleased

so she licks her left index finger lovingly before wiping it over her mouth until it glistens as if seducing desire

like it does when a female movie star opens herself up in a seductive scene when kissing a co-star with an open damp mouth –
two luscious pink tongues probing sensuously between orifices wet with heat)

now she is satisfied with her image in the glass, so she rises alluringly, knowing all eyes are upon her in this moment, smiles sweetly as he struts off the train when the doors open – like the lover’s mouth in the movie – then disappears, a dazzling illusion floating through the teeming crowds

A Singer’s Siren Calling in

Marcus Garvey Park; August 24, 2013

for Cecile McLorin Salvant

her voice reminds of a great dancer’s supple body the way it bends itself into syllables, grace notes extended into flight, phrases spanning high in the moment where her voice cruised through space creating melodies, improvising solos so stunningly elastic, different, still her voice echoed familiar cues – breeze, ella, billie, sarah, abby – threaded through our ears sassy as it eased into lyrics - wanting someone to be a loolypop she could suck & lick - then she pulled back to naughtly french kisses – oo la la – sounds of lascivious jelly rolls â la josephine baker, then, for one so young, she turned on a dime

became magical, changed again into a bright flower blooming mysteriously right before our eyes, suddenly her hypnotic light captured our attention, wouldn’t let go when she soared, dipped back down to earth became a spiritual deep growing in the blues dark, a lover moaning heat, trembling – soaked to the bone – before passion leaped into the moment, flipped her tongue risqué, risky, elongating her vocal sounds into stretching possibilities deep into a language of outrage, then it switched quickly to tender, love we came to know now in her ancient voice, an urgent calling, a siren’s song igniting cleansing flames,

it was a commanding performance, fierce, unafraid, a searing light beckoning to us hours after midnight

Quincy Troupe [http://www.quincytroupe.com] is the author or co-author of 20 books and 10 volumes of poems. His most recent books are Earl the Pearl, co-authored with Earl Monroe (Rodale Books) and Triangulites (Coffee House Press). He is the editor of Black Renaissance Naire, published at New York University.
Ken L. Walker

Manic Pixie Sleep

Voice enters into the fore by opening

And then the kids bully it, over a donut, nihilism erupts the sunset unacknowledged.

You’re going to eat the chicken; because I said so and I’m the dad and that’s how it is.

There is a plethora of copied voice is so interesting a placement, there.

“Speech is nothing more than a commercial approach to reality.”

And, once your sister came over and we all thought she was dying, or at least she did, but nevertheless, it was nothing more than irritable bowel, RAAS failure.

“Everything will be hesitation, disposition of parts” — these things, schizophrenic running out into 10th Avenue plowed by an un-brakeable waste management truck. The silence of our waste heads first to the river and then out, further, into question.

If it’s a bedtime, then, she’ll joke about being a lesbian; if it’s a date, then, she’ll refrain from the entire time. There’s always unfinished, quickened pizza. When you turn around, the bricks behind you, they’ll be staring, needy. When you fall in love, don’t fall at all, turn around.

Disappear, in the sense of going invisible; all things change except those things that aren’t visible. “Just keep bringing her the books . . . she’ll be fine.”

Thank you. “I know you’ve already probably got a No named up in your head.” Beauty, according to sublimity, and for me, has always been a diversification of everything, like when the memory of someone’s body interrupts me at work, there is no currency to the body becomes commodified by the voice. “I get very nervous when I date.” “My favorite part of New York is you can just walk and walk and you never run out of city . . . Just be honest; that’s the only way I’ll continue this . . . I reveal myself very quickly, too quickly ever.”

And, the nihilist kids. And, the crowded bar. And, the nihilist kids in the counselor’s office, crying.

“I’m sorry I told you; I tell everything.”

Self-deprecation is one of the most important facets of a clown’s act.

“You put on a dress tonight and saved a man’s life.”

Through the thin crevice, a skinny rectangular space, up thirty five flights, straight through to the top as if never-ending, interior, Escher, upward vat of perpetuity, just breathe. Again. he has daughters and you’re way too close to the edge.

“I don’t want you to fall.” “My name’s Liz.”

And, the mentor turning your idiocy into her pleasure, taking her gestures as something tangible; no gesture is tangible except to the gesturer; the rest is an instruction. Like when you tell me to pull it at like my finger is saying: come here.

It was in midtown and Mexico and Boston that you came out a screaming fetus and we held you in a little cradle of flesh carpentry, smiling all the way into the misery of otherwise upsetting narrative. All the midtown lights are on.

And the esoteric gray-haired man obsessed with red curtains says, ‘Go, be funny, funny man; go, be funny.’

And, you look up.

‘Fuck you, David Letterman, Fuck you!’

(in silence, silence, vocal disappearance, signage, streetlights).

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Half-lives or Collisions

Three days have passed as if squares at their center, tried supplication, my eyes that keep you around, slipping on an ear, the negation of how to find me—the horizon inside circle. Tonight, again, the possums don’t speak.

Time breaks in two and makes us chase the worse half. Understanding may happen better with the eyebrows burned off, each pluck a detached wing, each foot not the rule under oath. Break free with a backslug, stay away from the outdated warden. You move like the prospect of two planes crossing the between and calling on combustion to find the out-of-place. Running, muscles become downy gran as you pour water, the way you dress in the morning, the towel not supple enough yet sure enough for the cul-de-sac of your two arms. If the gymnastics, the balance head-over-heels. The past three days strand me somewhere where no municipal yellow lights stop anyone. No one can be certain the alarm works when fully asleep. I cannot recall if what I cannot recall is what I am telling you or if it’s what I’m supposed to tell myself. Elastic, the band of gratitude sets up direct center between the shoulders—screaming the most frightening thing is how well-behaved. The tomato used me, a good rarity. Your lace, the way it radiates, walking under a string of plane crashes, staring towards where closer to am-pink meets afternoon. And, who really, can land on water? The good days require storage space and control climates like a constellation of chimney, melted my teeth which cannot feel you there. A better stratagem may be an understatement—a string of plane crashes strung together.

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Bar Rooms

*for Tyler Lynn Darholt*

“We have not the ethics for these genes, automatic refills,” and the tap is a lamp, a television turned into music,

“I can’t believe this is New York on a Wednesday,” she said.

“We fall out of atmospheres in the morning,”

translate the worst phrases into face, the worst sands into horns. “I’m all hospice in these storms; I’ll wait for you.”

In the past two weeks over 11,000 have left or forgotten items in New York taxicabs. Of those 11,000, at least 7,600 have reported those items stolen.

In the past thirty days, there have been nearly 40 murders directly attributable to firearms. “The privilege is weather,” and we never catch up, really, do we, looking for these jobs and staring up at ladders fit for our hands; in fact, we do nothing but deny the murmurs—always here, the murmurs forever here.

She’s going to move downstream and you are going to, for the most part, build something no one else can see, float through early anonymity until two cracked arms form an arch, the arch itself just a monument subjugated by zoning restrictions like anything else immovable.

Lexicon’s insinuated, I say, “Myself walking across the street from myself, signaling, laughing; about being insurance-less.” The cop sees you, for you, she says. Language, the angle of the age. I was there when you consumed your twenties into a plot. She said, “Stay still little man, just cause.” My friend once wrote, if I could carry the radio of the world, I’d press pause. We aggregate in front yards, right here, for the most part, in front of everyone who can regularly see the facade, for the most part, of what we regularly do. She said, “This ain’t the suburbs, son, get with it; they’re singing: ‘Mama England/Open your legs/and let me go inside.”

Mitigate the matter like you’ve committed to continue. “What matters begins at identity and ends at you.” Gerald Delanty examines the impact of rediscovering community. Here, just the two of us and this little canvas-book, brokenfooted, scale-turned, laugh-canyon. When we write that someone does something in the present tense, we acknowledge the book not as catacomb but as incubator.
ピッツバーグ
Pittsburgh

Roberto Clemente Bridge, Summer 2010
Sarah Reck photo
flash prayer

Nikki Allen

land of a body

My hands are home to chains of mountain range, the bed
of palm my Andes, rising with blood for nothing. I am
considered strange because of this. Disfigured. My hips boast
the Great Divide. Most belts won’t fit. When I am in love, Alps
sprout on belly and each tunnel beneath dermis will pulse
with my breath. It is impossible to keep secrets—instead of
blushing, my veins sprout like highways.

My father was a town crier. He never stood still, never said
much unless it was to yell at the top of his lungs. Past the top
of his lungs—past neck and ears and reach. He screamed for
every hour, every important arrival, every thought that stood
awkward in his brain. He shook with his hollering. Hand
denching, tendons flared. And then he would bloom like a
rose bush.

Mother had the sun freckles and sirens. Beneath snapshot of
oasis she tucked frozen tundra and the soft spots kicking like a
chorus line across her gut. Eyes the color of grass blades. My
mother made of wings.

When I’m angry, soft explosions take over my elbows and
tributaries spread across my inherited limbs. Blue Ridge, Pelly,
Cayosch. I bump my palms across to calm myself. I fantasize
on the sitting of skin, to pull out the mess. To climb them all
covered in blood.

Eulalia

careful and hot—
th images like
Cheer riding the back
of a motorcycle in Mask like
all the city graffiti stacked

no precipitation for our
prisms like

for getting to be on fire
so you can
true burn as if
everyone in the picture
blinks with the shutter

the sun is a bookmark
the faces are pages

parted mouth of sky letting in

enough light to hold our places

and I won’t claim still frame
slow motion
unknowing; I knew
the professionals insist
leave it to pleasure
like a blissful head nod

I can lead you—
leave it to a beat,
guide like that

hand moving the sentence ender of your spine
through a room
full of engines

the purr
the taught
the never learned

the lean into corners
the taking in
to keep from coming

Our hips smack into each other,
oceans that can’t quit
biting & collapsing,
You light a cigarette and pass it to me.

The air is August, bed yours,
our limbs jigjagged against vines that
pattern the sheaf,
hers fitted corners by all our flexing
released.

Earlier the evening sun snagged us
slowdancing to The Temptations,
hard floor and cassette,
our tequila-soaked circles lopsided, slow—
how this carries over to kissing—
shirt over my head as the tape flips and drums kick in
loved you like a fool and
teeth found neck—

I ride you on inhale—
I never look past your chest.
The twin tide pools wait there
slow blinking
dams down
flood promised.
I opt for shore of your collarbone—
it is too cold to swim—

I pass the smoke back—

once upon survival

The oranges would not eat themselves.
You, the neighborhood’s miracle,
devoured them as if nature
herself promised riots in the tongue—
half-penny monster with pockets
brought a cake baked in bonfire
All the loves were dead around
his neck, brief jostle of sockets
that bumped your mouth to blood when he lunged,
who creed when you crawled in his drum
and there a heart showed in thick moss
and to it rose a mountain of

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All the loves were dead around
his neck, brief jostle of sockets
that bumped your mouth to blood when he lunged,
who creed when you crawled in his drum
and there a heart showed in thick moss
and to it rose a mountain of
citrus, beyond that stray segments
like glistening boats sailing curses.
After this risky feast the seams
of your stomach grinned big and split—
the tailor loved your loneliness;

Nikki Allen [http://www.honeydew.com] tends to wear her heart like a ghost sheet. She loves coffee, couscous, clothes pins, and many other things that do not begin with the letter C: like the smell of fresh-cut lumber and paper still warm from the printer).
**Tameka Cage Conley**

Tameka Cage Conley, Ph.D. [http://truenet.com/mx872x](http://truenet.com/mx872x), is a Cave Canem Fellow and Pushcart Prize nominee. Her poems are published or forthcoming in *African American Review, Callaloo, Chapter & Verse*, and *The Driftless Review*. She is completing her first poetry collection, *In Other Circumstances* and a novel, *This Far, By Grace.* Martha Rial photo.

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**Why I Read Romance Novels, Shreveport, Age 10**

Behind church fans & pots of slowly cooked peas sweet & song slide from mouths, heavy with lack & duty, thrill of salt & bone. Tongues stretch across rows of uneven teeth, thick legs.

Big sis, lil sis/Raising girls alone

Ride updown the block/ Your man will pay your bills

whooshwhooosh whoosh whooshwhooosh & swish
You do what you must/zipzipzip zip zipzip 2222222 zip
/Tread water/

swish swish swish/Can't rule to nearest street/Strike a compromise/Mamma got strict love/

Grease stains, rusty chain on Tameka ten-speed/A mother's love/No grease stains, rusty chain on sista bike/If money grow on tree/ Ten-speed used/There would be no trees/ Sista bike new

If mother was rich/Sista get the best

We'd be rich of everything

**Body Out of Nowhere**

You got to die to leave me, Nancy. What did my eyes see? You got to die to leave me. Shoulda let that broke nigga be.

Take off runnin' in that field, baby. I'm gone count to ten. This here thirty-eight got some majesty to send.

Jesus, don't the moon turn black, turn black sometimes?

Into the flyin' night, don't cry, don't scream, don't moan, no— what good it gonna do? You cut my heart; the beat turn slow.

Saw in you a whole split world for me and you to mend. Slipped my mind up in you-- your tongue said husband, said friend.

Sweet Jesus, don't the moon turn black, turn black all the time?

I showed you my hands, where work made me hard. Your lips soft on my fingers, my mouth call the Lord.

Saw his hand slip up, slip up, slip up, slip up where only mine's supposed to be. You a stone cold lie, woman. Done breaved rage in me.

Jesus know the moon turn black, how it turn black in the night time.

Here lies Nancy Lee Washington Young, is what the gravestone will say. She cheated on her husband, and ain't alive this day.

Jesus don't the moon turn black, turn black sometimes? Jesus, don't the moon turn black, turn black sometimes.
Yona Harvey

How a man holds his knife has nothing to do with what he really is—his anathema tucked in a bedside drawer, word scraps in the Journal of Intervene Manifestos. He questions his role in the family, his liminality & atavistic disturbances. Another night's sleep in fragments: a drowned olive, a slow tongue, a belle blonde flirting across the table. I'm not so old, he tells her. But she hasn’t heard, her earnings almost perverse—little chandeliers beneath chandeliers. “Abandon this bit of hat,” and relax in the chill of Russian vodka, “careless as wrinkled clothes.”

Circumcision seems ostensible.

But why?

Another articulate Negro?

For Christ’s sake, it’s 20. ... Surely he’s more than a gustatory truffle in a third course. The woman's lipstick, at least, looks sincere.

Sincere. Now, there’s a word. He lags it into morning. “Approval-seeking is for boys. There are no rules against avarice.”

Who said that? he wonders, wound in the new day’s mechanisms. Must he revisit his country's founding? Blind to conflict & drunk with abnegation? Isn’t this the house he funded & furnished? “No taxation without representation.” “Crispus Attucks.”

Starched shirt. Smart knot.

I'd Rather Be a Blind Girl :: Elta James

Lord, Elta—

Something told me My mama waited too long to mention it was over. When I saw you with that girl & yall was talking her neighbor saw you with that girl & yall was talking cueing your music all summer long Something deep down—scotch Something deep down & water, Something deep down gin & Something deep down you. Something deep down said / it was over / When I saw you /gone & cry girl she knew how to keep company. All my muscles deep down undone now. Girl, I shouda Something told me Something told me Something told me had your name. Et-la, Et-la. Et-la & I'd rather. Let the men holler after me, & I'd rather let the women shake their heads. Something told me relish the cool I was just sitting here thinking of a single ice cube thinking melted thinking at the bar counter, thinking thinking thinking thinking far from conversation. You sang the songs & I'm scared to be by myself. Your mama warned you not to— & I'd rather & I'd rather & I'd rather & I'd rather &— be by myself. Yo. Yo. Hmmm. & yo. I see Yall know what I'm talking bout when I say, sweet sin & excess, & yo. I see yall know what I'm talking bout when I say, cigarettes & yo. & yo. & yo. & yo. & yo. & yo. the smoke when I look down into my glass & say yo. Summer Yo & Yo & revealing its Yo dump sky, Yo Yo Yo Yo. Yo. Yo. & yo. When I saw you with that same person & I'm scared to be by myself. & holler after me. Too long.

Something told me.

I'd Rather Be a Blind Girl” first appeared in Hedges Rag. “Sound—Part 3 (Ostinato): All the World's Wars Commence in the Head” previously appeared in Hemming the Water (Four Way Books).

Yona Harvey [http://www.yonaharvey.com] is a literary artist residing in Pittsburgh. She is the author of the poetry collection Hemming the Water.
From Hundred Hell Sonnets

9 (Anti-social)
I desire a life of ritual without ethical consequences, entirely alchemical or elemental, definitely anti-social, no obligatory tribalism or familial crafted cosmogonies that would have me soldiering in their metaphysical operas—no Father/Son-service, no mercurial Holy Ghost allegiances.
This man that was built for war and plunder stares back at me on earth for nothing, not even for me, so I unhook mirrors from the walls and conjure whatever will come. Give me a mannish green-skinned demon of desire, hooved and horned to reckon the fear with the damned speech that makes from dreams, imagined intelligible spirits to connect me with a bit of the real shiny change in exchange for a cigar or a saucer full of cream. Because I am here right now in the future, broke again and nothing is working.

52 (Silhouette)
Looking up from the street I see a silhouette at the window through lace curtains yellowed by incandescent light. I could come in through the back, put my cold hands on her bare shoulders changing before she notices—maybe she would smile sweetly at an intruder and take off tiny pink underwear she wore for this night, baby-powdered in honor of strangers. But this isn’t so, because what moves there—on the third floor has what looks like 9 inhuman limbs of wanting, O dark and heavy planets, yes it is I who will be destroyed at the dark end of the road where cars only go to drop off and turn around.

56 (Dead Leaves)
Polaroid photographs in boxes in the attic are faded hues of orange to a brown that obscures faces. This one I press to closed eyes, to the sweat on my forehead as dry than yew branches scrape against the walls, world full of dead leaves outside litter the ground. I take this final picture, it might be of you, mouth an impromptu prayer such as howled hikers always mutter before an unknown body discovered suddenly in autumn woods, unexpected white of skull bones beneath the hair, rotted skin.

88 (Apocalypse)
I nail a cross of twigs and sticks on the cabin's bedroom wall, imprint circles so nothing with a goat's head, no primordial horns or barbed claws arrive in the mail out of valley mist, through the mountain woods. I rub the palms of my hands on my eyes, place them in sympathy on your eyes that remain crazy, bloodshot with original fear. To you this impatient sunlight through the window is a pointed finger, indicates the one whose soul is burning in Hell. Limbs wrapped in white thorn branches, wire fences, rocking chairs, red X's mark the calendar, the hammer and nail and time kills the heart manually, painfully, invites apocalypse to reveal the room, you, me, the cities we left, our people; the geometries of everything...

Prayer of the Hearthkeeper's Ghost
I have become erased by my own hands of work, I build fires and leave, return again. The front of me is a ghost, my children erased. They have the eyes of miners who have emerged from the earth, eyes when first revealed by sunlight on soot-covered faces. Light—may it shine on me until the end. The world is the ghost of the sun. It will not achieve destination, it will not land. I work and do not bathe—may it never land. I choked the last man before me with these hands—? I live below, the floor you walk upon is warm. May the children's eyes never be erased, I throw another log upon the fire, I tend to all children. One came before me whom I strangled with these hands. Though I am tested through the hands' evangeliest flame and long to burn old friends, I have no use, I am vanishing into something whole, something pure. If I am burning, I am become these large hands that kill the Last Man, hands that have worked at fire-keeping since before my birth. May they keep going in work, may they be my undoing. Centered in my white heart of fire, prophets boil blue in the dark blood of toil. The floor you walk upon barefoot is warm. I am below you with these hands putting logs into the fire. It is burning everyone. I put my hands into the sun—

Work is surrender to the world.
It will never achieve destination, my Lord. The sun rises the good work in my blood, all I was ever born to know. The moon is a hole in the earth. My children have charcoal faces. The children lying on the warm floor will not be extinguished. Let the dark world fall into my eyes.

Flame of course. Fire of dissolution.

In Flames
The orange glow in the house across the street, fire inherent in the room, tells me that someone burns to withstand the night. Someone's body is horribly disfigured as the flames take apart their life.
No doubt that it is this or that person's fault—kerosene can, gas stove. The way a slow leak will take years to fill the whole house and how the person in flames went on ignorant of the odor, refusing to believe that yes, this life, my house too, is a tinderbox. What can I do though, but admit that the orange glow is somehow comforting from this distance? I don't want to get any closer to them, I can tell you that.

It makes me remember the instruction my father gave me for the old Bruno wood and coal burning stove, important function that it could burn more than one type of fuel. Proud though he was his anger was clear when he came down the stairs to feel the intense heat, to see me sweating and commented about the flue glowing an unusual orange. Sun, that is dangerously hot, that fire is too big... I knew it could burn anything.

Skot M. Jones lives in Pittsburgh. You can reach him at skotmjones@gmail.com.
Melodrama for a Losing Steelers Sunday
You had a hell of an entrance:
I think I just got us killed tonight—
put away my groceries, wouldja Babe?
You were out the door again
to see if the cops had come
to break up the domestic
on the corner of Bedgeway
and Blessing
You might not want
to sleep here tonight
and your opening line in Scene Two
and you didn’t have to tell me twice
What about you? I wanted to know
as I packed a small bag
in haste
Should we find a hotel room?
You were still talking fast,
like a man who’s been threatened,
shaken, backed into a small space:
I’ll kill him if he comes here,
I’ve got the kitchen knives
and the shovels from the shed
I was down the street
and partly across the bridge
before I saw you following me
in Scene Three
You said you wanted to witness
your beloved getting on a bus
and riding to safety.
In Act Two the barista asked
How are you?
which made my voice waver
as I ordered my peppermint
tea, with lemon, for here.
The second friend I called
had a couch to lend for the evening
but not until much later.
Act Three was a 32 Step meeting
on the topic of Loneliness.
The difference between solitude
and loneliness
is connection to yourself.
You’ve either got it
or you don’t.
In Act Four I ran into a poet
I didn’t know worked at Whole Foods
who said she’d just been to Baltimore
for her book release party
and everyone there knew me.
You’re the most popular person
in the country.
We laughed
after which
I retreated to a booth alone
and ate a carrot salad
with braised pork
over lemon rice
while the aching clerk
swept the cafe floor.
It’s bedtime now,
and I’m sleeping with strange cats.
In Act Five
I hope you’re still alive
I wish you sound sleep
and pleasant dreams
and wonder if the knives
are under the pillows
or the shovels, by the dresser.
I heard you shaved your beard off
to make yourself
unrecognizable
to predators.

Karen Lillis

December News
It wasn’t so much that the rabbit died
as that he was never there to begin with.
A false commencement is yet
an emotional miscarriage: look at
the husband’s face and tell me it’s not true.
What to do with a seed planted
in hope’s central artery, a potency
left to flow through the backyard garden
of the mind? For that matter,
is the wife’s hope stronger
than the husband’s despair?
Who says your answer’s
anything but questionable?
The wife’s younger, but she
has her own despair, sir.
The wife’s anger has a tongue
of its own, but it lies in wait,
am’m. These and other
dilemmas will be worked out
on their own time, in the right light,
provided that indeed, food,
light, water, love, and air
are availed of in sufficient doses,
that nutrition is pursued, dead
growth trimmed back to the stem,
more hours are spent above the
skyline than beneath its enfrails,
and the life that’s excavated
pulsating is ever encouraged
in the direction of the sun.

Chinese Couplet #17
Marriage Lust
mountain river
one swift
direction bends
Forgiveness Honestly
carves gives
walking-stick navigation

Chinese Couplet #26
Husband Wife
smile heart
loses gains
gravity sunlight
sudden again
beams beats
shy careful
sun hope

Manny’s Chinese Theatre Couplet
Love Love
smooth bumpy
give hide
it in
Hollywood Eagle Rock
marquee apartment

Fifth-Floor Chinatown Walk-Up Couplet
Ganja Fridge
plenty empty
lover girlfriend
wakes weeps
ravenous famous

The Reunion
We got lost, you’ll remember, on the way to the wedding.
We screwed up, did everything wrong, there was a certain protocol
we neglected to follow. The ring wasn’t a ring at all, but a car,
the car smashed into the house and broke in two. The house fell
apart into more pieces than that, and I ran off broken,
hid myself securely. From you, from the sun,
from anyone who could even imagine a method
of loving me. Lord knows which direction
you headed. I was no longer looking out, merely
backwards. You tell me now there were times you placed yourself
at the sound’s edge, the salt in your nostrils, and inscribed
my letters on the insides of your eyelids. Perhaps
more to the point, you wondered after me in
present tense. While in my world, there were only
ever one or two notes I played, to no one’s great advantage:
you were mine, and you were gone, and nothing
afterward made a lick of sense. This song droned on
for years; until one day, boredom gave way to a lusty taste
for vengeance, and the darkness no longer
served me. Without divulging the location of my secret
lair, I made my way into it again: the flow
of crowds. I feigned surprise when we fell into
each other’s arms after so many decades, and as I bared
my incisors, you marveled at the sweetness
of my long forgotten smile.

Karen Lillis is the author of four short novels, most recently Watch the Doors as They Close (Spuyten Duyvil). She blogs at Karen the Small Press Librarian and runs Small Press Pittsburgh, a pop-up indie press bookstand.
Moving From Babies to More Babies

All the conversations I ever had with you were in my head. The last thing you ever said to me might have been a eulogy. Every time I speak, I remember what I don't have to say. The way it is now we only open our mouths to devour. I say I've had enough and you seem to disagree. I still say I've had enough.

Babies

If you do nothing the world will come to you.
If you sacrifice yourself the world will sacrifice you.

Moving From Babies to More Babies

All the conversations I ever had with you were in my head. The last thing you ever said to me might have been a eulogy. Every time I speak, I remember what I don't have to say. The way it is now we only open our mouths to devour. I say I've had enough and you seem to disagree. I still say I've had enough.

Holding Babies

The first time we held babies you screamed
and I think you knew how much you missed me
at that point. Everything that came out of you
got pushed out into the world so fast.
If you keep pushing
you'll run out fast.
The babies are already gnawing on minerals.
They will never stop.
Before now nobody knew
the origin of gravity.
I wanted to tell it to you, because it's shocking, and I
will do anything to make you scream that way again.

The Finality of Babies

The stretch of infants is an expanse. You are a total mess.
No expanes are safe anywhere. There are no more expanes.
The touch of hands breaks bones. Everything is far too
fertile.
If I could take your bones in my hands they would break.
Some believe only what breaks counts.
History is a loop of breaks and healing.
Consistency is simply a matter of odds.
There are other things we overcome as well.

Ask a question about what we can do anymore.
Eventually we won't even want to touch the ground.
You think it's fine to go out. I've seen running water.
There's a prison in everything that flows.
There is a house that is always empty now.
And I've wanted to look inside you for so long.
You have a place full of things that never break.
Most often, they just cease.

Banishing Babies

I don't need to be drunk to do this but I need to be drunk
to do this. Even if being drunk means I can't do other things
like this. Your face is prettier than you recognize, I'm just
saying. The standard is the standard. A scarf is just a thing to
blow in the wind. The last time we spoke like this, you were
sobbing, and I hated babies. It brings us to a conclusion
nearer the ground.

If patterned silk touched your skin, you would howl for days.
If that was the last thing I touched you with it would have
dolphins and dots like bubbles. A scab grew where a cut was
not. I conducted my own funeral prematurely while you slept
on a pile of old baby clothes ridged with dolphins and blue.
You should sleep more. You should see your mother. You
should caravan.

Shawn Maddey

Ending Babies

This was a love poem before I wrote it.
My glass is salty, so I could spit
and poison a slug, things to be
free of - now it is about dirt,
growing fonder of it yearly.

Part two, takes more shots
to the nose, takes plucked hairs,
takes tickling until too much
laughter, anything to cry
if it makes you feel better.

Three, the foundry cities,
the black lung babies,
the dirt that clings to each wall,
the way bricks can't taste like a smile.
It eats them.

No More Babies

I've done us a kindness. I've plowed
fields that grow the best flowers
for pollination, sowing seeds to chew
with our teeth, like good seeds
are good for. Our growing season
is a solipsist, it believes in itself,
and it buries the babies in leaves.

One Day, the Babies

One day all of the babies will find all of the windows.
One day all of the babies will find a way to open up.
Their insides will spread out like wings and something
will draw them up into the sky.

One day, a rapture of babies
will black the sun, because someone will have had enough.
The babies will become gods in the sun, out the windows.
One day all of the babies will have been born.

One day there will be no more babies born, because
all the babies will have been born already.
There will be no choice for the babies but to rapture away.
All of the babies will rapture away, one day, and the print
they leave shit and barbed into the crust of the earth
will be the work of bulldozers for decades, and the shame
of everyone who ever cared to breathe fresh air.

One day all of the babies will gift us with silence
in the departure of everything.
There will be clouds of babies and hot air balloons of babies.
There will be Greek pantheons of babies.
There will be asteroid belts of babies.
There will be fragments of babies dipping in and out
of our plane of reality, sequences of dimensions of babies.
The babies will go. Seeds will still fall
from tissue to tissue and into hapless sand, forming crusts.
We will form a crust to hold us together, one day.
One day we will become a crust.
There will be no need for windows or questions anymore, and we will be a crust.

excerpts from ‘A book of cataclysmic love poems’

Shawn Maddey is the editor of Barge Press.
Deena November

Digits
She almost lost her left middle
and ring finger trying to trim the stubborn
overgrown hedges with a new Black and Decker.
The electrical green, black, and yellow clippers
fell from her right hand
and her reflex kicked in.
She caught the blades before it fell.
Shocked she looked for her digits in the mulch
only to find them still attached
in a dripping bouquet of exposed bone
and blood blossoming.
In the ambulance, she asked,
Will I ever play guitar again?
She was the kind of guitarist,
You'd pay to shut up,
tone deaf and flat.
The EMT said,
Probably not
and she smiled.

Dear Pittsburgh
Dear Pittsburgh, dear dirty city, dear pointless
traffic in the rain or sun, bottlenecking at the
Squirrel Hill Tunnel. Dear tailgaters in sub-zero
temperatures, the crowded old world smell of
ekettbas as I cross the Fort Duquesne bridge
with my window cracked open, wishing for fresh
air. Dear polluted rivers I refuse to swim in fish
in, you are everywhere, there is no escape. Dear
old crumbling bridges I wait in traffic imagining
a collapse and drowning in my car, submerged
in cold water. Dear Steel City, I have lived you
longer than I ever imagined, I find you in my
words and accent Iron, Warsh, and Hello. Dear
hilly topography, I know you, the back ally
potholes, blind curves, and short cuts through
Polish Hill to Baum BLVD. Dear city untouched
by change and the world. Dear Yinzerland, I hate
and love your grey skies and cheap rent equally.

Boog  City  WWW.BOOGCITY.COM

Deena November [http://tinyurl.com/ex3exch] has been published by Houghton Mifflin Co. and numerous other presses and journals. She received her M.F.A. in poetry from Carlow University, where she now teaches in the women's studies program, as well as in the creative writing and communications programs at Robert Morris University.
Purple Robe
Hers is inside-out, I realize, when my mother gets up out of her recliner at 1 am. The pocket at her right hip’s flipped out like an ear. All the hairy stitches show. Do you know your robe is inside out? I say to her back, as she bends to turn off her oxygen flow. She has a cane in one hand. She’s trailing a complicated tubing that curls and loops behind, catching occasionally on chair legs, on my left-out shoes. I can’t be bothered with clothes, she says. The last word’s barely a syllable. Lumps into the bathroom. Mother of buttons, zippers, patches, bleeding now redblue threads around the seams.

The Moon
Because I have something in me that does not want for anything. Because I have something else that can’t wait for you to turn off the light so I can eat everything. Who is it who has compassion for the soldier who comes back from the war missing the great horses? Who kisses the parts gone missing? Who decides not to cry into dinner? Who makes light of the right loss? Who doesn’t need to be clever? Let me kiss the face that survived the disaster. That once smiled make smile. With whatever Swells and fades, sharpens and scars, dust and vacuum. Tangled in shadows like a search party coming. Because something is always looking for a way out of whatever it is we keep getting into. Or rather, we keep seeing home in every mistaken turn.

The North
The temperature dropping fast. The wind picking up, kicking cans and loose boxes down the street. All of which I can fall asleep to, can throw my own small battered self onto the heap of things without homes or parents or weight. But, in the quiet after, let come that tiny scraping of crystal, the snow’s intricate wild honeycombs, and I’m wide as a river awake, hot as a vampire bride to walk into the wolf of it, the growing mold of it, the weird whispers of its tiny harmerers and该填入的。remembering maybe the time in my teens when I stared into that year’s first snowflakes falling into our lawn and realized how many of them had to be lost preparing the land for the rest, cooling everything down by infinitely small degrees until others could stick and begin to build banks, blankets, drifts. I made the usual teenage vow not to be among that lot who served in the company of death, of waste, who melted without complaint. Then I wrote some words down in a red velvet notebook I still have on my desk. When they didn’t disappear, I wrote more. Until one day there was no otherwise. I couldn’t not.

Triolet for the Left Behind
There are many words who live alone or nearly, rhyme-less now, or with only one, long lost. Width used to have Sidh, a length. Yes, really. There are many words who live alone. Or nearly. Some shine like Silver despite Chilver’s getting tossed for Ewe. Or Film whose Film has turned to Dust. There are many words who live alone or nearly, without any love, or only one, long lost.

Jeff Oaks

The Night Train
The nine thirty blasts its warning a sound I’ve grown up within just as the book I’m reading slips away from me I’m already on board and traveling the streets disappearing the sound of the horn again fading among the houses as if I’ve left the dog in the car and began forgetting everything in the shape of keys, my hair coming out in the mirror my teeth falling out in my hands the water beginning to rise around the boat I’d just lain down in I swear for a second because there was so much country to cross there were maps still to sketch a whole system of rivers running toward maybe a sea of horrors fading away the book falling away and Look! Look! Eyes under the floorboards Hands unable to paddle any longer Old love having returned as a wave as a distant shore as someone waving me off with one hand always in his pocket with another life already started

For Jack Gilbert
Pittsburgh’s just where you left it, just not how. The enormous fires gone. The great machines are silent, dismantled in the eighties and nineties, scrapped. Remade even into memorials, artwork. I listen hard for anyone anymore walking the streets thinking about metals, forges, the weight of coal and dust in the lungs. The fathers and sons are gone who had to enter their own houses quietly, humbly, through basement doors, taking showers first, before their women would allow them in There’s a dogpark where every old mill burned. Medicine is the new monopoly, an oligarchy of administrators, fundraisers, and celebrity surgeons. The poor of course still think about beauty. Even in emergency rooms where they have to wait. Still have their dreams of being chosen. Still, the old dragons turn in the earth around us. Men ride shafts miles down to hack at their veins. The barges carry that black rubble up and down the ancient rivers we’ve mostly got under control. The local crew teams race in the early mists, and a few of the new urban pioneers in their sturdy plastic kayaks bought out at the malls push and pull against the always new water coming down out of the hills, into the old sluices. It’s fall. The trees are all mostly destroyed again. You’ve died in California. We read your poems to each other the way people building a boat out of their memories of being in love might. A train on the other side of the Allegheny blows its horn as it passes Millvale, Shadyside. The old churches are still here, protected more for their beauty than any utilitarian reason. Even we atheists with our health plans occasionally stare at them grateful for what they want to mean.

Uncertainty Principle
For a brief moment I saw you, in sound of metal bending back on itself, in a dream of the history of train collisions. Contort iron, glass splinters, freight fire. Yellow sleepwalk.
Don’t say: ‘You look tired.’ I wanted to stay there with you, scale on which gravity has no bearing, observing our innate behaviors’ colors between nothingness and something of substance. Late nights out the window I count the boys sneaking naked through the neighbor’s backyard. That thrill, to reckon no one looking. For a moment I see you, as a weather doppler in Wisconsin captures a ring of birds ballooning from a northern island. A necessary adjustment of aperture here. A movement mimicking the eye’s black center, named for what might be seen in the reflection there. Green, blue, teal. Nowhere else can we appear so small to ourselves.

Solstice
A majority when asked what they would give up
to be care free The teacher counts our heads
on the field day bus each spring, I miss it
when it’s so dark
in winter I pick
the skin off my lips
My mother corrects me on ‘pulling’
the studio audience—
final answer divided between moon and elephant
My only major fear is space aliens singing beside us
with glimmer guns disintegrating my body
when it’s so dark sum of night vowels
and sometimes the sun stops, sometimes
there’s a god in it
warrior or worrier

Alicia Salvadeo

America Loves Jessica Lynch
If sun descends by pulley tomorrow rolling a Hollywood
She was so cool and a girl
Age of miss take and run with
route : by role
I was like a mother or some similar carrying
my own shaking out my history quilt stitched states and monuments
Holes in my elbows worn through my ideal the leaves are falling again
fill in the blank still rolling
Try to imagine: one ocean footage collapsing a current reversing

Can you did you even try

Black Cover
How to tell time with sun
clicking into high noon
into my amazing spider-man special Threat level
meter forgetting

ROY G BIV Feeling
red today, or maybe just
a brick orange that pretty
girl’s hair that I crush
on, want to be There you are, cloud-shaped
devil and the bright smile

Bottom of the ninth
For Ryan, after you left Pittsburgh, and after a dream in which Robert Creeley offered us concessions in the aisles of PNC Park

Your coloration all of a crazy person we turn into
our consolations and run out of ourselves—the center
feeder up to home
plate and swatting gnats from his glisten—I can see only the bat swings
I can’t any longer see the home run moon
the bat swings and misses, the body
it follows, the crowd sighs in unison, delates
a little I think I see someone I know
rise out of his seat to accommodate
the view we are all running
out of ourselves and turn into the twin koi
we were in a past life, the very same
moon on our backs in other words, don’t worry

Alicia Salvadeo [http://aliciasalvadeo.tumblr.com](http://aliciasalvadeo.tumblr.com) is the author of two chapbooks, Memory Milk (Diamond Wave Press) and Err to Narrow (Poetry Society of America).
a face-covering corridor, I'm the one with the thin separation, the oldest trick in the world, I'm fake – a malicious, impenetrable hole, I'm the gate opening, the oldest mask in the book, the world, the oldest world in the trick, have at it – a monument to filmic images, I'm the reeling tumult, the end of the month – Happy Halloween, through a face-covering corridor, a resolution, blurring, of a self-portrait expires shredded floral photography, I'm nothing like the gate opening, alternative opportunities to photographic images, clustering like flies/pits

* * *

Ed Steck

I'm the fake entrance – to the gate, wondering what is fake, the oldest knot in the wood, I'm fake – an image at the end of the hall, full of ink, an image at the front of the gate, take it, I have more gates, more corridors, more masks – Happy Halloween, pal, a nice costume, I'm the end of the month today, the one clean arm, flies clustering in blue pits, a tinfoil knife stuck in a forehead, mouth agape, the oldest trick in a face-covering corridor, the oldest gate in the mirror of the body – a monument to faces, covering masks, cluster-like/layers

* * *

imposing gates on alternative opportunity, I'm always the gate, a floral behemoth, thinly cut – that opening, I'm always the gate opening, the last hinge on the door, the oldest hinge on the left – Happy Halloween, through an opening gate, a face-covered corridor, a loose image of the self, I'm not myself – I'm a mask, blurring connect the waterfall to a backdrop, a screen, a cast – an unreal assembly, ghost transports – I'm confetti, shimmering matter, slough piece facing confection, I'm nothing like the gate opening into the corridor, clustering like/blue

* * *

a face tinted blue opening blasted chasms on screen, that's the last blue-mask – I answered it, I said, Happy Halloween, through my mask covered face, opening the gate and walking down the hallway, through a face-covering corridor – a reeling monument, like tumult, I'm thinly separating into codes of ranged reconstruction – calmly lift your head away from the mask, the resolving material line, to see, I'm nothing like the oldest gate in the world – an isolated house at the end of the street – I'm the oldest trope, clustering/flies

A self-portrait is a representation of singular perception/A self-portrait reflects a material and enforces the viewer's perception into the substance of the perceived material it is an automatic function, it is not created but enhances the act of creation through its conception Mirroring the self is a form of self-portraiture/a collection of reflecting-glimmerings of sensations molded into an activated portrayal of grotesque layers, landscape human chronology

An image is a form of self-portraiture regardless of whether the image is of the self or of an alien figure of the self this is a self-portrait/This is an image of a self-portrait in language

I guess this is language/I am a self-like portrait

this language is inaccessible/Other language

I genetically engineered my self-portrait for my genetics to do this to me in a manner that projects a pure image of all that I have gathered to represent myself to be as how I picture myself in my self-portrait

* From the project "Confetti/Renunciation (Happy Halloween)." *
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Welcome to Boog City
Presidents’ Day Weekend 2014 Poetry, Music, and Theater Festival

SUN. FEBRUARY 16, 2014
12:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.
Unnameable Books
Prospect Heights, Brooklyn

SUN. FEBRUARY 16, 2014
8:00 P.M.-11:00 P.M.
Sidewalk Café
The East Village

MON. FEBRUARY 17, 2014
12:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.
Unnameable Books
Prospect Heights, Brooklyn

Featuring
Poets
Amelia Bentley
Anselm Berrigan
Edmund Berrigan
Jackie Clark
Robin Clarke
Eric Conroe
Gillian Deveroux
Detsy Fagin
Jessica Fiorini
Ethan Fogale
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Mayes Magnus
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and more

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2, 3 to Grand Army Plaza,
C to Clinton-Washington avenues, Q to 7th Ave.

Sidewalk Café
94 Avenue A
@ E. 6th St.
F/V to 2nd Ave., L to 1st Ave.

For info: editor@boogcity.com
@boogcity
The Harlan Twins: James Hart, vocals/guitar; Nate Campisi, bass; Carrie Battle, vocals/guitar; Nick Charters, drums; and Greg DeCarolis, keys/vocals

Cindy Howes photo
PREMONITION by Etel Adnan

There’s always a conductive thread through space for an untenable position. In all respects absence is a porous and arrogant matter. One has to cross one’s life again, the one that wants to be ahead. A forest saturated with trees proclaims the existence of a river saturated with reflections. The soul turns into a ghost and runs into the void.

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7 DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE DESERT (TRACING THE ORIGIN) by Sabrina Dalla Valle

What if our skin were also the skin of the universe? Pressed against unknown darkness, we are the limit, maybe even the membrane for all possibility.

Winner of the 2013 Kelsey Street Press Firsts! Contest, judged by Mei-mei Berssenbrugge
Growing Up Pittsburgh

Film-Makers’ Cooperative’s Chief

MM Serra on Her Formative Years

BY JOEL SCHLEMOWITZ

MM Serra, filmmaker and executive director of the Film-Makers’ Cooperative, sat down with me in The Charles S. Cohen Screening Room at the Co-op to discuss her formative years growing up just outside Pittsburgh, and the connection to her current work as artist, and exponent of past and present avant-garde cinema.

Boeg City: Can we talk about your roots in the Pittsburgh area?

MM Serra: Outside of Pittsburgh in a little community, a mining community. My ancestors settled just outside of Pittsburgh in Jeannette, Pennsylvania. My grandfather helped form unions in the mines. My father, at 12 years old, worked half a day at school, and half in the mine. They paid children by their height. The fights for miner’s rights were for children to get mine. They paid children by their height. The worked half a day at school, and half in the community, a mining community. My ancestors fought for equal pay, and for age limits. So my ancestors helped form unions in the coal mines and the factories.

My father worked in a factory, and came from a very working class background, but I didn’t know I was working class because we all came from the same factories.

Boeg City: What did your education consist of?

MM Serra: When I was very young, when I was 10 years old, I went with him because my mother was in the hospital, and I heard them fight for what we all need, like health care, for decent hours. It was everyone talking, men and women. From there, I came from a very working class background, but I didn’t know I was working class because we all came from the same area, everyone worked in the same factories.

The first city I saw was Pittsburgh, and it was so exciting, I was a teenager with a group of Catholic girls in my uniform, visiting the Pittsburgh Museum of Art. And I thought, “I’m going to live here someday.”

Boeg City: Can we talk about the film you made, Papa’s Garden.

MM Serra: Fisher Price came out with a toy camera. I happened to be visiting my dad, who was gardening at my brother’s. And I said, “Dad, can I film you in the garden?” He didn’t like to be filmed, but I was following him around, and he was talking to me. It’s interesting here, I am in the most natural situation where my dad’s growing this huge cabbage, but as the camera is running down the sound is slowing and you see the image fragment. But it still has this visceral, humanist quality to it. It looked like the Fisher Price camera, it’s black and white. It was different from artists, like Joe Gibbons, and Peggy Ahwesh, but kids didn’t like it, because it wasn’t color. It wasn’t like what they saw on television.

I did a portrait of the artist and performer Anne Hanavan, it’s called Bitch Beauty, about a street junkie whore, about prostitution, it’s about how art can change your life. How Anne used art as a catharsis-the sphinx reborn through the creative process—and I firmly believe in that.

Boeg City: How does it feel, going back there, to bring work from the Co-op to screen at The Andy Warhol Museum, or your own screenings at Orgone Cinema?

MM Serra: The Warhol Museum’s architecture, the rivers, the people, there is a difference, it always feels like home. Working with Greg Pierce, talking to him about collecting films. But my films are about New York now. The Warhol Museum is great, I showed Barbara Rubin’s “Christmas on Earth” there. It’s an exquisite space.

There’s something about the earkiness, and connection to the earth, that’s different from other places. The first city I saw was Pittsburgh, and I was so excited. I was a teenager with a group of Catholic girls in my uniform, visiting the Pittsburgh Museum of Art. And I thought, “I’m going to live here someday.” I’m definitely going to college here.” But it wasn’t like New York, which can be aggressive in a way, about power, about competition, branding. But with Pittsburgh, at least in my experiences, it still felt real. A place where individually mattered, who you were as a person, a place where your work ethics mattered.

What I was very small my mother got me an encyclopedia, and I would read it, and from that experience I think that poetry, language, and words became very important to my filmmaking. And going to the girls’ school and learning Latin gave me an appreciation of the importance of language. Poetry is also about associations, and my films are not linear, formulaic, beginning-middle-conclusion. Connecting language and image in a vertical way rather than a horizontal way.

In January you can see recent work from The Film-Makers’ Cooperative, presented at a joint benefit screening for The Co-op and Millennium Film Workshop.
The River Underneath the City

Scott Silsbe

Almost 60 years ago, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, publisher of City Lights Books, launched the Pocket Poets Series, little uniformly designed books packed with great poems but small enough to fit in a shirt pocket. Inspired by Ferlinghetti, legendary Pittsburgh poet and publisher Kristofer Collins launched Low Ghost Press to publish similar-sized and stylized collections, the City Lights color scheme replaced by the black-and-gold colors of Pittsburgh, a nod to the city’s legendary sports teams, itself a nod to William Pitt’s coat of arms upon which the city of Pittsburgh’s black and gold flag is based.

The fourth Low Ghost release, The River Underneath the City by Scott Silsbe, is an excellent collection that takes the city of Pittsburgh and its over-sized characters and filters those places and people through some of the same raw and poetic Ines that City Lights writers used to entertain and enlighten readers, except Silsbe delivers the beatific without any of the flowery bullshit. This isn’t Jack Kerouac asking you to pull his daisy. This is Silsbe saying, “Don’t be jealous of others if you don’t want what they have” and “Remember that it’s tough being in love with a stripper” in the poem “Advice to a Young Poet.”

In The River Underneath the City, poems move around city streets like downtrodden artists looking for a place to crash or beer-can-drunk workers looking for the next great dive bar. Silsbe’s poems are about what it means to make art, about what it means to believe in reading and writing and music, much in the same way that Frank O’Hara’s poems were about living out his own genius artistic vision, the godliness of Coca-Cola, and the power of staring at a Larry Rivers painting. Only Silsbe could take Lemmy, a lunch break from a warehouse, and some Catholic school girls and turn those unrelated details into a little masterpiece of optimism like he does in “Motorhead and Milkshakes.” New York has The MOMA and The Chelsea Hotel. Pittsburgh has diners and beer distributors with old men screaming, “Powerball!” Silsbe, somehow, makes Pittsburgh as interesting and as legendary as New York was to O’Hara.

Silsbe’s forms, all free verse but still definitely forms, run the gamut—long, short, narrative, lyrical—but he shines best in the moment, where a tiny detail or event grows to represent a broader, overarching life. Take “Last Night,” which starts “We were drinking Devil wine on a Tuesday night” and leads to job call-off and discussions of tornado weather. The same goes for “One Night at Duke’s,” a meditation on the life of a bar and the chances to be found over beer and pool and jukebox music. Silsbe is a poet of place, much like two of his literary heroes, Ed Ochester and Jack Gilbert. His stance is one of love and vulnerability in the face of a world that demands the opposite. In one of the best poems in the collection, “Hikmet,” Silsbe invokes the great Turkish poet and his belief that “living is no laughing matter.” Silsbe’s own declarations include “It could be that/ good poems are only written out of darkness and despair,” which certainly rings true, though the beauty of the poems in The River Underneath the City is their author’s devotion to finding the light.

Silsbe shines best in the moment, where a tiny detail or event grows to represent a broader, overarching life.

BY DAVE NEWMAN

The River Underneath The City

Scott Silsbe

Low Ghost Press

Beatific Without the Bullshit

Scott Silsbe’s Poems Shine on Pittsburgh

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Subways: L to 1st or 3rd Ave / N, Q, R, W, 4, 5, 6 to 14th St – Union Square
Harlan Twins Activate
Form of the Familiar, Shape of The Band

BY J.J. HAYES

When Harry Smith put together his anthology he deliberately chose recordings that had been made before the influence of radio began the process of homogenizing American music. There were regional styles once. Folk could recognize them. Now we are reduced to genres, the old record store classifications having given way to the artist/blogger driven tags. I wonder whether they communicate much. Do the scenes of various cities have recognizable sounds or personalities? Or are they just the chance convergence of various talents and particular audiences? Does the geography and local culture have any actual effect? New York being a center to which people travel benefits from an influx of everything. Three months here with the intent to stay and you are a New Yorker, but one can't help notice along the way that certain areas of the country are sending some mighty talented sons and daughters our way.

Now you know, and I know, that while some people move from the local New York scene into a more national prominence, myriad major talents remain behind. It therefore stands to reason that perhaps there are equally major talents who have remained behind in the cities that feed our own scenes. Whether a critical mass can develop that sustains the talent is another question, but for purely selfish purposes the internet does allow us the luxury to go and look and see what other cities or regions have. I wouldn't have actually thought of checking out what's going on in Pittsburgh, if it weren't for this issue. But I did. And the only reason I don't have more to report is that I got so drawn in by Carrie Battle and James Hart, and their band, The Harlan Twins, I put everything else aside. You gentle reader may complete the assignment on your own, however. Might I suggest looking into Jayke Orvis, Amoeba Knieval, Pat Han Dee, The Regals, or Radiation Girls if your taste runs hard core. A good place to start seems to be The Thunderbird Cafe. Look at their calendar, check out the local opening acts. Follow the links!

But back to The Harlan Twins. There is something hopeful and worrisome about finding this group. Check out their bandcamp page. Go listen to “Blue In Bloomfield” (the original version):

I like to bicycle, I like to swim
I like the way her hair smells like spring

My own selfishness wants Battle and Hart to allow me into their souls and see the world around them.

Carrie Battle makes those lines the summation of every innocence every true love ever wanted to return to. That was also the point at which I gave up the ghost on giving an overview of the Pittsburgh music scene, poured a cup of coffee and sat back to listen to The Harlan Twins as the snow fell.

There appear to be only two Harlan Twins albums, the eponymous debut from 2008 and last years Old Familiar. At this point I am favoring the first without rejecting the second, which has its own particular virtues. In between these two albums there are a few good videos out there, particularly ones from an April 2011 show. These do a fair job of showing why this band is known for its live performances in the Pittsburgh area. Highly recommended viewing by the way is the cover of “I Wish It Would Rain,” in which James Hart shows the soulful depths to which his singing is capable of ascending. I really don't think the Stones ever did a Temptations cover like this.

One can feel those depths in Hart’s low delivery of the in “Stones in My Passway” from their debut album:

There’s no stones in my passway
No Hellhound on my tail
No evil hearted woman refusing to go my balm

There is absolutely no reason for this man to have the blues, but you feel as if the singer has already given up even when he knows he shouldn’t. A few tracks later Hart presents us with a Springsteen like ballad, except in this case, the point at which I gave up the ghost on giving the orchestration is kept to a minimum. Which constitutes complaint as well as praise for their second album, Old Familiar. Here the instrumental music prevails. And on first hearing I feel Battle’s presence is diminished. Old Familiar here seems to refer to the band playing in the various styles which they grew up with, or loved. On the other hand I could be totally wrong. They could be looking around trying to find something. It is clear that with Rob Callier on bass and Greg Decorolis on keys they have a lot of musical terrain they want to explore, and explore it they do. But the danger from my own selfish listening perspective is that they will become a great sounding band with just decent lyrics. I can’t speculate. I like this band. I think they are searching for something. Bands should search for their sound. At some point they should be granted a this-is-it moment. Or not. Being a damned decent rock band is a noble profession. But alas what gets the crowd dancing, what they listen to in bars, is the music. Hell what musicians want to explore is the music. But vocal window into the joyful aching or loving soul that only a human voice using human words can give starts to fade into the background.

My own selfishness wants Battle and Hart to allow me into their souls and see the world around them. The clear inspiration for these folk is the Band, and they could achieve what the Band achieved, without even sounding like the Band. They need to bring the respective virtues of their first and their latest albums together. At which point the world will hear from Pittsburgh.


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Links

http://harlantwins.bandcamp.com/

http://www.thunderbirdcafe.net/

Bio

J.J. Hayes comes from Staten Island. Sometimes he is a poet, sometimes he’s a singer, and sometimes he writes about music and the world.
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