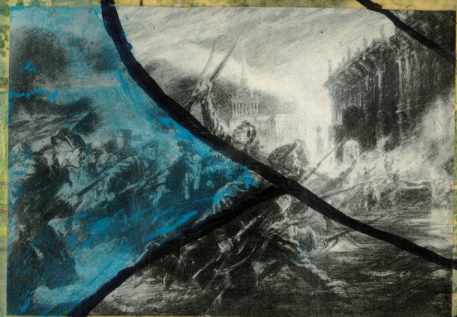




There over
Estimated World Pop
America
million
135 million
100 million

The men fought with swords



TWEEDLE-DUM AND TWEEDLE-DEE

Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee,
Resolved to have a battle,
For Tweedle-dum said Tweedle-dee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

Just when they by a monstrous crow,
As big as a tar barrel,
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel.

himself fought back



Simplicity
MISE
581
PETITE (6-8)
EUR SIZE (34-36)

"Onward! Soldier!"
At last the paper had a soldier-fell
ugh—but at the moment he was followed by a big
Oh! how the fish, it was worse than
g in the tunnel ever, and then it was so narrow! But the
oldier was dauntless, however, and lay full length, shout-

1650 A.D.
The Digest Assoc.

Gambling the Aisle

Winter 2011

Masthead

Editors (by physical attractiveness):

Fiction: *Patrick Kelling*

Nonfiction: *Adam Van Alstyne*

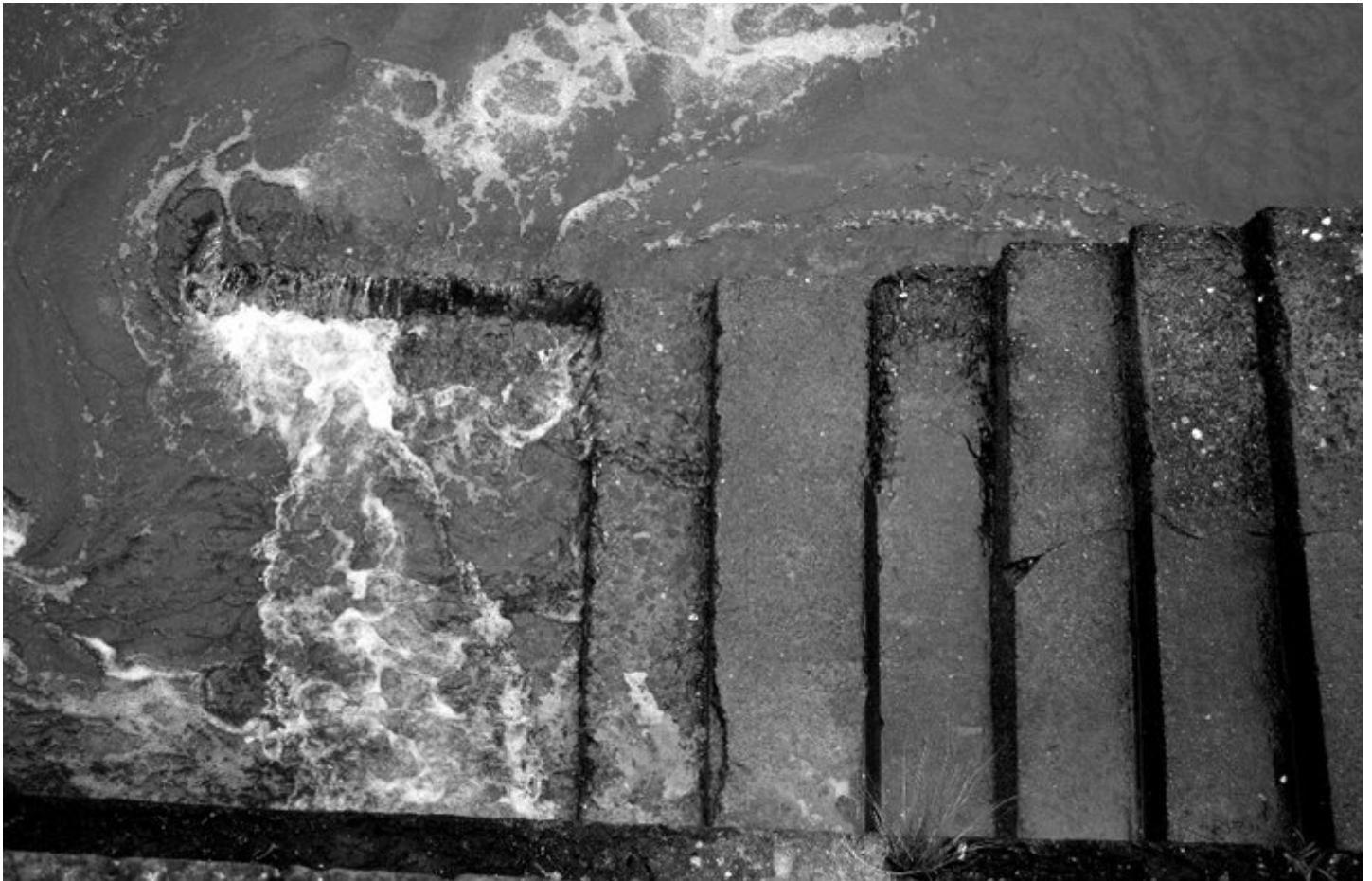
Poetry: *Madigan Talmage-Bowers*

Visual Art: *John Cross*

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Andrew Cannon

Sydney "Hungus" Jones



Long Walks on the Beach
by Madigan Talmage-Bowers

Cover art, Cane and Able by Dana Kroos

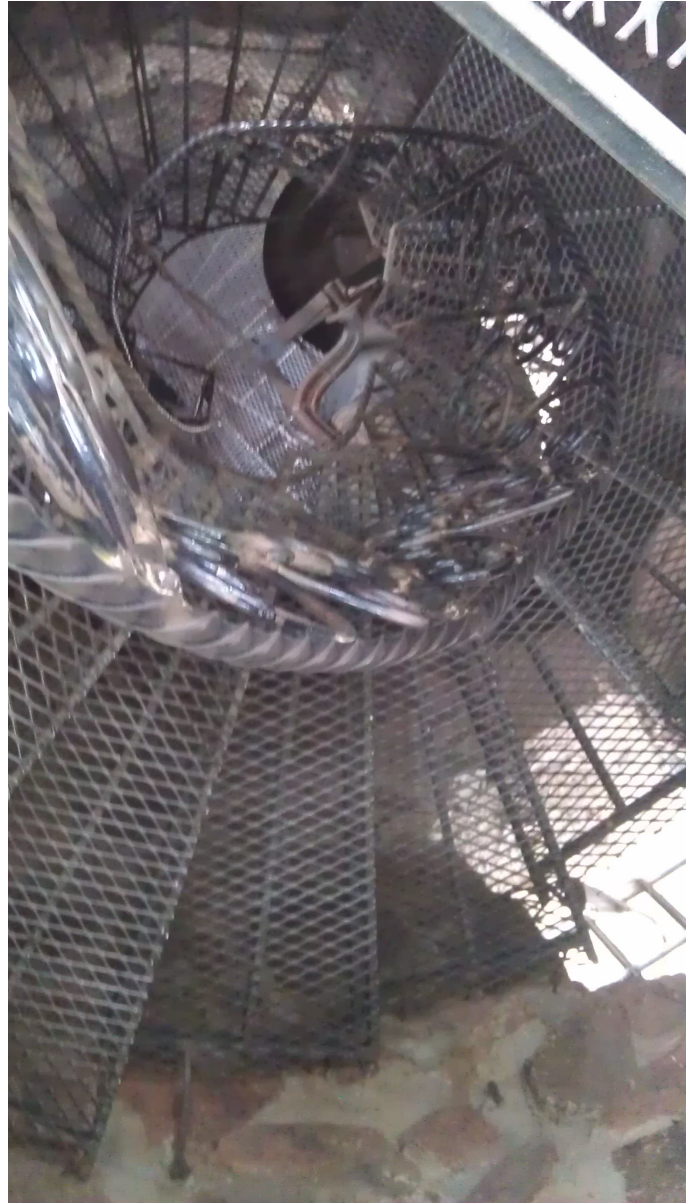
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Untitled by Patrick Kelling

Paycheck

Michael Rosenbaum

Del Rio's paycheck goes into his account right at midnight on Thursday—the rest of us have to wait till the sun comes up Friday—so he's buying the beers when we get off even though he doesn't want to. He probably regrets ever telling us about that but it's his fault for bragging one Thursday night about being able to meet some girl at a bar when the rest of us were broke. The last flight is late and we're all scratching at our necks, all want to get the fuck out. The smokers smoke in the break room, refusing to go out into the cold until the plane arrives. No one eats or plays cards or watches the late night TV shows. Most of us stare at the computer screen, hitting the re-enter button, hoping the flight will pick up a few minutes from a tail wind.

It's 12:05 and we're almost tasting the first beer in the back of our dry throats and every ten minutes more that we stay here is ten minutes less the bar will be open. In five hours the older guys come in, the guys that used to drink by the wall at the freight house before they had wives who make them drink at home and children that watch them. The wall, where on summer nights we grill and drink and piss on the asphalt until we see the morning crew cars start to enter the employee lot and we get into our own cars and drive home, or sometimes, if there hadn't been any food, to a Denny's to get eggs and bacon and drink coffee while the sun rises. There's no beer waiting there tonight because tomorrow is payday and there's no money in any of our pockets except for Del Rio, whose paycheck went into his account minutes ago.

We stand in the doorway, hitting re-enter, wearing our thermals and our jackets and our gloves and beanies and wool socks and earplugs and now the screen shows 'on the ground' and we rush out like pillagers, like rapists, with quick feet and much noise, as if we were going out to set fire to something. We park the plane. Then we enter it and tear it apart, opening the belly doors and climbing in to throw out the luggage with speed that passengers wish was normal but gets reserved for the last flight of the day, for the last thing between us and the beer.

Tomorrow I'm supposed to be off. But there's overtime and so I'm taking it. There's not always overtime and when there's not we don't buy each other beers and there's no going out for lunch. We separate and don't play cards, don't yell at the TV when the Judge Judys and the Jerry Springers come on, looking instead at people's timecards when they're not around, seeing who's getting an hour here, a .5 there. Omar keyed Danny's truck once for taking overtime that Omar thought he was next in line for and Danny put Sergio's head through the break room wall because he thought that he did it. I once went to sleep at 6 in the evening because I was hungry and had no food and no money and there was only enough gas in my car

to get to work the next day to pick up my paycheck. But it's the holidays now. The loads are heavy with people flying to and from their families and their jobs and their colleges and we are here to throw their bags and get early call-ins and get held over due to bad weather in Chicago and in Dallas and we feel the paychecks getting fatter each day. Some of us work for 20 or 30 days straight during this time and we max out our credit cards buying shots for each other because we know we can pay the bill when it comes. Some of us stop bringing lunch and eat at the airport restaurants where they charge eight dollars for tacos and ten dollars for hamburgers. And we buy our coffee instead of making it in the two gallon pot that we have in the break room. Sometimes when a plane comes in there's no one to park it because we're all inside the airport, sipping coffee and watching the girls walking back and forth in their high boots and tight jeans.

I've worked F100s and Super 80s and 737s and 757s and they all come in day and night with cargo and mail and bags and bags and bags and they all go out with cargo and mail and bags and bags and bags and there's people on them too but they're up there and after awhile you don't look up at those windows even though the first few months you can't help but stare.

When we get to the bar it's 12:45 a.m. I order two beers and a shot on Del Rio's tab because my shift starts at 7:00 a.m., right after the sun shows up. Del Rio hit a plane once with a belt loader and I was there and I broke the master brake cylinder so that when maintenance inspected it, it looked like equipment failure and now he can't say shit when I order tequila on his tab.

I drink fast because my pockets are empty. I drink fast so I can get home and climb into my cold sheets in my lampless room and pass out with the warm feeling in my stomach and in my head because I have to get up soon and get out of my still-cold sheets and still-lampless room to put my boots back on and get back to the airport because there is overtime and that means money to be made. That means that we will all be there. Day and night—we will be there. Waiting for the flight as we sit on the plastic chairs at the break room table, inside four walls that are grey with the stains of cigarette smoke, hitting re-enter and stomping our feet while our hands grip the empty air in apprehension, clenching and unclenching. Making the veins in our forearms bulge as our jaws tighten and someone will yell something at someone and they will yell back and then we will all yell and there will be hunger in our throats and we will bang the table—bambambambam—as we howl like a pack of beasts in the night, as we roar like warriors anticipating a battle. As the room swells with the heat and the sweat of our flaking hands, our beer-swollen bellies, our bloodshot eyes.

A. Kilgore

Haiku Cycle Opuscula 1:

this is a mockery in itself, as birth of itself	hear thee, hear thee it is simple fate-libretto and Fact is in falsetto
---	---

ignorant of the scruples of its own	likely without kin likely self-synchronized
---	---

here-thee hear thee come hither, from yon exhaust these tables	of alchemy of chemistry of economy
--	--

Blast this
soft rock
with immense proportional velocity

it is only intellect and for sale and for sale	observing you whipporwill and made a woodcut
--	--

the scenes are tragic reminders of summer as is migration, yard-sales	Pound's grand'mother; a ghost of melopoeia interrupts the game
---	--

simple chemistry; a shade of touch a touch of sense	Opening doors; penning rites at an award ceremony
---	---

Like stravinsky; time has come too soon for	cream-top signals; oat harvest at farmer one where children laugh adultly
---	---

forward old ones; honey & tea when the bees are gone is lonely sport	allegory, anecdote, symbol; lines and lines of veins and vehicles carry on
--	--

the cold has grown and the harvest has come short for the farmers are in spring	dionysos's thyrsos is crowned with jellies and crisps like an english brunch
---	--

dionysus is praised under a new moon the old moon's exhausted	dionysos, his feet swaying like a god crushes orange and red leaves
---	---

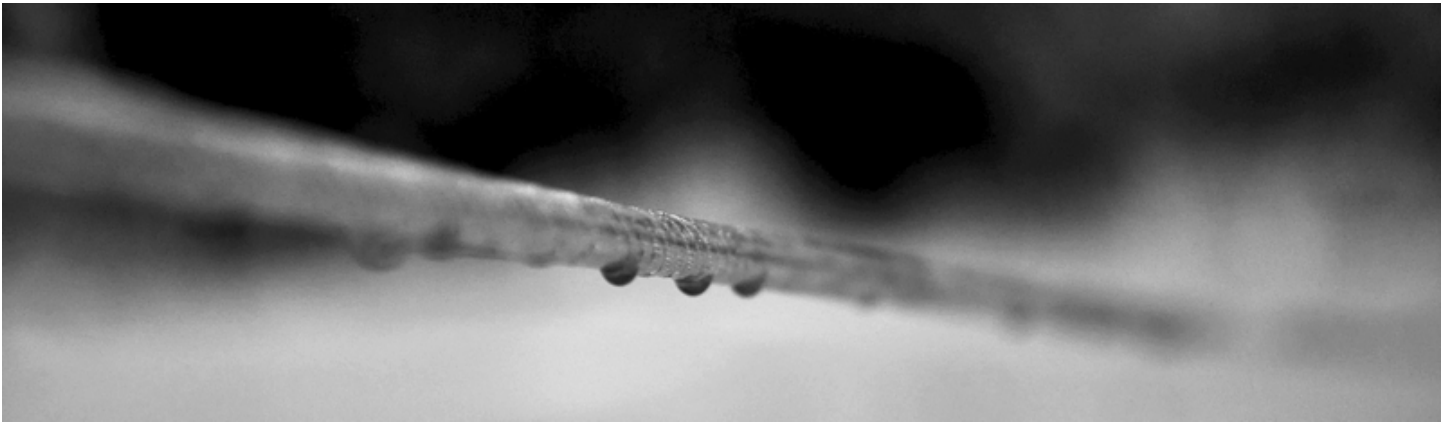
poems; weather whims weather drought	modern times like modern times and youth moves about
--	--

rhyme in season
with the rains and;
a race to the finish

Alla Vilnyanskaya

Turning Gray

You may live through a war
or wait too long
at the grocery store
checkout line



A Splash by David Maroney



Symbiont by Allison Danbom

Narcoleptic Granny

Matthew Overstreet

Gloria. My father's cousin. We used to go out to her farm to fish. She'd give us cans of orange soda, watch while we drank them.

The video. Shot for a local PBS station. Gloria talks about the Dust Bowl—how dirt drifted like snow, got in your ears. She keeps falling asleep. Eyes close, chin goes to her chest. There's guttural rumbling, droll, then her head pops up and she starts again. Oblivious. Someone posted the interview on one of those video-sharing websites. Narcoleptic Granny. It has over a million hits. My brother Jim emailed me the link. "This is so fucked up."

Jim's a structural engineer. Before that he drove a snowplow in Alaska, did timber-framing above the tree line in Oregon. On a jobsite in the Wasatch range a thousand-pound beam fell on his leg. It took ten minutes to lift off. And Jim didn't scream or cry or say a word. It was snowing. The Ute operating the crane was high on mushrooms. Jim just breathed slow through clinched teeth, stared at the spot where his pant leg went flat. Now he draws blueprints for hospitals and airport terminals. His desk has three computer screens. The leg bothers him when the weather changes.

Brett Butler. As a child, he was Jim's favorite baseball player. Solid utility player, never flashy. A career three-hundred hitter, notable for his ability to bunt for base hits.

Julie. They met at a bar in Overland Park. There was karaoke and she sang a Donna Summers song, staring right at him. Julie's blonde, cute enough. She takes aerobics classes at the Y, refuses to cook and is unusually good, I mean, insanely good, at Scrabble. On Thanksgiving we played in front of the fireplace in my aunt and uncle's basement. Jim put down "baby." She put down "delivery." She changed my "pen" to "penis," laughed, poured more wine. My aunt and uncle seemed to like her. My uncle said she was honest, whatever that means.

If you have pasta sauce on your face, Julie will tell you. Same if your fly is down or she gets a speeding ticket or genital wart or her neighbor keeps her up playing bass-heavy music.

Jim and Julie are to be married, in the Bahamas, in March. They've already bought the plane tickets. Made a spreadsheet with times and locations and names of restaurants. Julie is a born organizer. The company she worked for folded, so she started her own. Took six former employees—including her boss—and put them on the payroll.

Jim calls me about the Gloria video. He's drunk, saying he wants me to sue PBS. I tell him I'm not that type of lawyer. I tell him I don't like the video either, but there's no cause of action. Gloria lives in a nursing home now. Jim and Julie visited her once. She was fine, he says, totally lucid. It must have been some medicine that made her so sleepy. "They should have never filmed her," he says.

1125 Ridgeway. Former rental property. Jim bought it in a foreclosure sale. When I first saw it there were pigeons in the kitchen, no light switches. For a year now Jim's been knocking down walls, painting and sheet rocking, beer in hand, after work and on Sundays. Viking range. Custom trim. Handcrafted farmhouse sink from some artisanal workshop in Vermont. In the yard Julie planted flowerbeds, gardens. There's a porch swing out front now, and a trestle covered with bougainvillea.

Julie's job. Internet marketing. Businesses pay her to increase their rankings in internet search results. It's all about getting attention, getting people to click certain links.

On a Saturday in October, Jim and I plan to drive out to our alma mater, watch a football game. I arrive at his house around nine. He's sitting on the porch swing, drinking a beer. "Julie and I broke up," he says. "That's too bad," I say, "looks like she'll miss the game." He finishes the beer, tosses the can in the bushes. He's dis-

tracted, staring off down the street. Only a few years older than me and already there's creases around his eyes. "Are you serious?" He nods. "Shit. I'm sorry." He blows his nose into a napkin.

In the top row of the student section Jim and I share a pint of Jim Beam. KU's down by forty-eight at half-time. Jim tosses a beer over the rail, watches it tumble to the concourse. We leave before security arrives, wander through tents and tailgaters, down narrow streets choked with Winnebagos flying cornhusker flags, to the house of a friend, a guy I went to law school with who is now an assistant DA. There's an abandoned barbecue grill smoking in the yard. Inside the TV is on mute. There's plastic cups and beer cans and plates of bones and congealing barbecue sauce. Jim cracks open a beer. I pick up a neon-green bong and try to spark what's left in the bowl. "So what the fuck happened, man?"

May 3, 2004. A Sunday. I was studying for a constitutional law final. Jim was somewhere in the Sierra Madre, living off berries and MRE rations. Our parents went to Pizza Hut for lunch, had personal pans and one trip to the salad bar. On the way back home a semi loaded with gravel rolled through a stop sign. The intersection where it happened is on Google Maps. I used to get drunk and enter the address, moving in slow digital circles around the scene. There's a fence, choked with weeds, a homemade sign that says, "Lose pounds now." I don't do that anymore. When I finally tracked Jim down there was silence for like thirty seconds. He said he'd get back home as soon as he could. I apologized. "It's okay," he said. Then hung up.

So Gloria gets huge. There are screensavers, Narcoleptic Granny t-shirts. It's Julie's job to know these sort of things—what's "grabbing eyeballs" right now. Gloria's a gold mine. And in a nursing home right down the interstate. We can make another video, embed some links, double, triple our click-through. Does Gloria remember Pearl Harbor? Watergate? Julie meets my brother at the door, kisses him on the lips. She mentions the idea and of course he says no. There's no discussion. He just says "no" or "you can't do that," then asks if she wants to go get something to eat. It's mid-week and he knows of a two-for-one deal.

Julie has bills to pay. There's a recession on and she has to scratch and claw, fight for survival every day, basi-

cally. So she goes ahead and makes the videos. She takes a camera down to the nursing home, films three short clips and posts them on various sites. Clicks are generated. And of course Jim finds out. His eyes clinch like he's looking into the sun, the creases at the corners becoming dark little rivers. He doesn't threaten or explain or ask, "how could you?" He just shakes his head, tells her she has a week to find somewhere else to live.

So how could he? They'd been together for almost three years. How could she? She knew my brother, his disdain for the original video. Maybe the upside potential (click-potential if meme status was achieved) outweighed the risks; maybe she thought he'd never find out. Or maybe there was something else going on, some dynamic within their relationship that me, as an outside observer, can't see or understand. She pushed, he pushed back. What they were trying to achieve, what each was trying to prove, I do not know.

There's a guitar leaning against the wall. I pick it up and begin to strum. "Are you sure about this?" I ask. "You guys have been together so long..." There's highlights from the game on TV, crimson and blue drowning in a sea of red. "For all you know man, Gloria likes the attention." Jim elbows are on the dinner room table. His eyes are glazed. "It's not about that. They're trying to take it all, just toss it out there. I'm not going to be a part." I only know one song on guitar. "Homeward Bound"—that's what I play every time I pick one up. "There's so much shit flying around brother, so much shit. I'm not going to be a part." He puts his head on the table, disappears behind bags of chips and condiment bottles. I strum, begin to sing. "Homeward bound. I wish I was..."

Three months later I see Julie at a Mexican restaurant down on the Plaza. She has short hair and sits across from a thick-necked, local sportscaster. Jim gets a new fiancé, then a wife. Gloria dies. KU recruits this stud quarterback out of Texas. Billy Greene. The Great Greene Hope, they call him. A new way to whiten teeth is discovered. Local mom makes thousands working from home. You too can build muscles fast. As a vasodilator, Nitrix™, helps move oxygen into your muscles when they need it most, sparking powerful strength gains and ripped pumps. Amazing.

Andrew West

IMG_0160.JPG

from: there
were, there

are: so
many ways.

to go:
from, one

to the
other;

some wires,
some

missive.
the story

is. she
is: the

wires, say.
there are

crosses.
savors, a

bridge, a
buck un-

Youth Memoir

Roy Buck

The red room with red italian leather couches, the chandeliers, dining room outside, the white shag carpeting—over an inch tall—seventies style Vegas eating a grilled-cheese after kindergarten when I saw President Reagan being shot on T.V.

The green room, shag lima bean green carpeting, the seventies, belly dancers I wasn't allowed to see, wine, bourbon—laughter, hysteria, love, an unquiet mind—glasses clinking above a bar made out of bowling lanes. Adults speaking in riddles.

In my bedroom: floating heads at the foot of my bed. The radio turning off and on by itself, television like a poltergeist and an unknown woman who walks by my window at night. Sometimes old ladies, late at night would lift me in the air—like the game “light as a feather,” until I hysterically cried.

On my sister Lara's white door is a poster from Madonna's “Like-a-Virgin” tour. The virgin now has a moustache and a Manson swastika on her two-dimensional head.

Upstairs, there's a den. I forget the color of the carpeting—but know it's over an inch tall.

I filmed a ghost up there, on my black-and-white Fisher Price. I still have the film, locked in a safe in the basement.

The basement, or cellar, has no carpet. It's very cold and damp. The crawl spaces down there are perfect breeding grounds for black-widows.

Cold City Smoking

Judith Roney

The city draws in its breath strong on Friday nights, sucks me right into its belly, long past families are safely tucked into cotton-sheeted beds. Tonight, feeling deviant again, a little sideswiped, I wander out onto the concrete ribbons—looking for all that a good girl should steer clear of—boys will be boys. This night I stray too close to the fringe, the end-line.

I park my car at the corner of South Halsted and Lake Street, place the key in the magnetic box, tuck it under the wheel case, and walk east towards the lake. Chicago bars, in cold weather, make for ample hunting grounds—lonely men, boys—sometimes women. I pass up more than a few, sniffing the doorways for possibilities. Darkened windows glow with neon invitations in the form of Budweiser and Corona signs humming to frosted windows. If the bar smells stale, too weak or cancerous, I don't bother opening the wooden doors separating dingy, stagnant dens from the moving world. I walk for blocks, watching my shadow grow taller as I pass each streetlight, liking the sound my boot heels make as they rhythmically click the pavement.

This crazy late-night bar, "Sully's," under the L-tracks in the frayed edge of the south Loop catches my eye so I head in for fresh meat. Hell, I was hungry for it—it was Friday night, right? I let my eyes adjust from the bright street light to the mellow golden glow of booze bottles in front of mirrors—my modus operandi is to scan the booze shelf like I'm looking for my favorite brand, but I look at reflections of patrons in the mirror, to see if anything's worth playing with. Men sit on their barstools like sausage displays on a butcher's rack; some clean shaven and plump; others mangy and lean. I prefer them tall and dark, meaty with good bones. If I'm feeling good, I pick one who's off by himself, holding his drink or cigarette like it's his last. I want to take those men and pull them into me, hear their breath ache for a minute—make their blood move inside them and know I did it; but sometimes, when feeling mean, I want a happy one, an innocent—someone out with friends, or better yet, with a girl. I like to steal them away, break their male spines—hear the snap in their throats when they stop laughing because I whisper honeyed insults after they give me what I want. And I always take more.

I see the one for tonight—yeah, I know he's it—he's perfect. A little Johnny Depp thing going on; but this one's beefier. A little wool cap sits atop dark, wavy hair that hangs past his coat's collar like an invitation. What really sells me is he's only got one arm. I get a quick-flash vision of me unbuttoning his shirt while his eyes turn the color of grateful. The jukebox is playing an old surfer song... what the hell is it? Misirlou! Perfect stalking music; I slow my tracking

steps, feeling like a panther-cat. I hover between chosen prey and the old guy to his left who's wheezing and wiping his nose. Not an empty seat in the place, but that's ok—a little less conspicuous that way; but at 5'11 in my boots, in black leather pants with dark brown hair near waist length, I get noticed. Sure as Pops here to my left has the buds of tumors in his lungs, I always get noticed.

I feel the usual blood rush coming on—loving it: setting bait, the control—then walking away when it's over. After a few seconds of waiting for the bartender to work my way, one-armed "Johnny" turns his head from his smoke and asks me in a soft accent if I'd like a drink. Is he Russian? I teeter for just one immeasurable second, sensing, what? But precariously attracted to this one-armed man, I lean in to him and say, "Sure do sweetie," as the chords of Misirlou heat up.

An hour later, after liquor-infused verbal exchanges, we head to the back alley—it's cold out, but I've been here before—I know a little alcove to escape the wind. My body's wound anticipately tight for his one handed grip on my ass while he lets it go. We lean in against the wall; I want to pin him to it—unbutton his woolen shirt in the frosty air—see his nipples tighten; but he beats me to it. He pushes me against the brick, mumbling strange words in an alien language. He grinds mean against me. I tell him, "Hey...slow down...no rush!" and try to kiss him. He speaks words that sound like "pacnithar sooka" and pushes me back harder with his shoulder, using his one arm's hand to rip my pant zipper down. In a millisecond he flings his hand upward, slaps me hard across the face and then it's down again, tugging harder. Panic?—shit!—I feel warm blood from my nose. I think this isn't how it's supposed to go. I fucked up. He was the animal I'd avoided till now—preservation mode and adrenalin kick in—I knee him in the groin and don't wait like a stupid bitch in the movies—I take off running toward the short end of the alley.

The alcohol in my blood and brain take me down a few wrong streets till I find my sweet little rusty ride waiting on South Halsted. Picking the key out from its hiding place, I slide onto the driver's seat, lock the door, and light a smoke. I take it in deep, then exhale smoke-laced fear. I watch how the smoke's vapors hang in the air, meeting the cold head on.

It was only a little after two a.m.—I think about heading north, towards Diversey—maybe some college boy or husband out late after work who should have been home long ago to one of those cotton-sheeted beds. Turning the ignition, I pull it out slow.

Cherie Greene

Career Goal

Or perhaps
I could be
a Maenad.

I believe I should like to cavort in the train
of that maddest and most unexpected of gods:

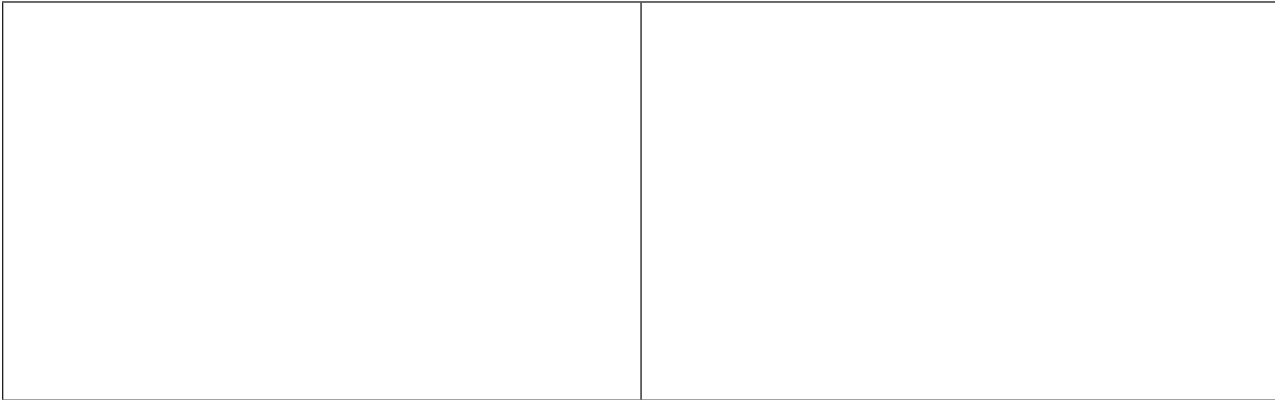
 To venerate his awful beauty with composed
 and feral pandemonium. To chant with the
 inebriated grace of masked hexameter,
 the sober savagery of witty satyrs. Or,
with a wandering anapest now and again,
to worship the terrible power that stamps
 beneath the red-stained dancing feet of laughing girls
 the pulp of sanguine tragedy; that crushes pride
 and ferments folly, aging raw absurdities
 until they are transformed to something wonderful.

Yes, I think
that would be
just the thing.

Back, Side, Together

Gina Wohlsdorf

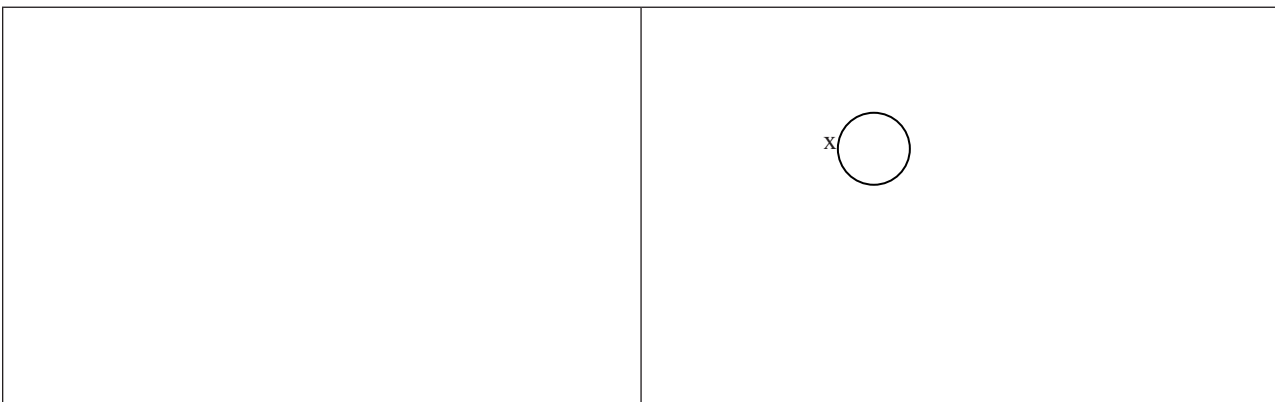
This is an island where the very wealthy summer. It's glowing like a gold nugget, because the sun is setting, and the very wealthy parents have taken their yachts out into the bay so that the smooth, white decks sparkle on the golden water. This is a resort where the parents have concocted an occasion for their teenaged children to dress up and eat and dance so that they don't come with the parents on the yachts. The restaurant is divided into two parts: the part where the children dance, and the part where they eat. They are chaperoned by the owners of the resort, who are old but wily, from years and years of chaperoning the children of the very wealthy. We are above the restaurant and dance hall. It looks like this:



The teenaged children have been told since birth that they are more special and precious than any material thing, but most of them understand by now, in adolescence, that these are words used to placate them, not unlike the party concocted so late middle-aged women can skinny dip amongst yachts with their fake, golden breasts floating on the water and later-aged men surprising them from behind and pretending not to know which is or isn't their wife.

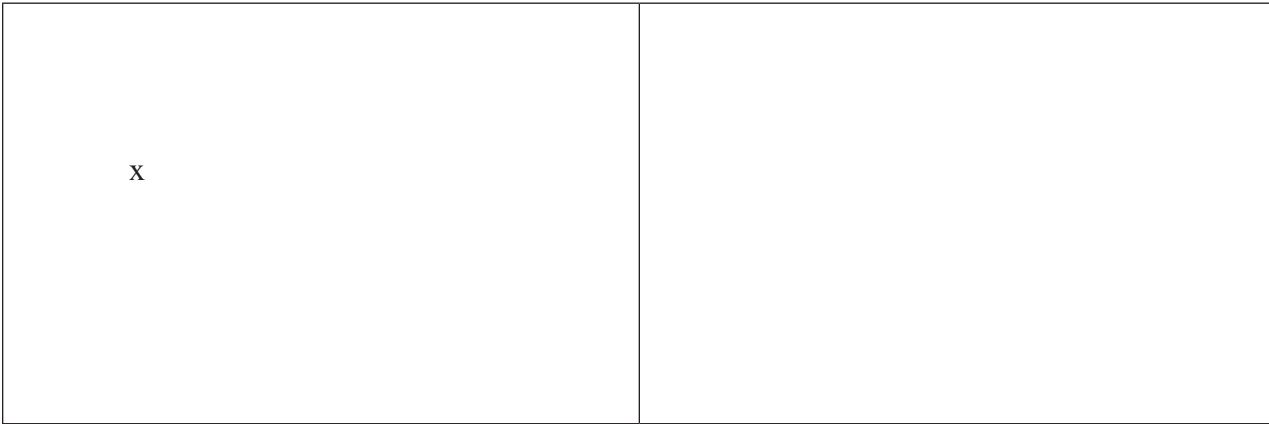
If you think this doesn't happen, you are wrong.

Sabine knows this happens. Sabine is the smartest person in the restaurant. She is wearing a blue dress over a body better suited to intense rugby matches than dancing. She is sitting here:



Sabine's boyfriend, Blake, is to her left. Blake is not a bad guy, nor is he a good guy. He mostly plays water polo and does abdominal crunches, which results in a stomach he greatly regrets hiding under a suit. At a recent party, his water polo teammates took turns having sex with a girl who was so drunk she thought they were each her older brother. Blake didn't take a turn, but he didn't stop them. He is wearing a blue handkerchief in his breast pocket to match Sabine's dress.

To Blake's left is Garret, who is in love with Felice, who is here:



Felice is dancing with a boy named Leif. Leif is Nordic. He rows every morning and does conspicuous pull-ups by the big elm trees on either side of the bay. If Leif had been at the party with the drunk girl, he would have taken a turn. Felice waits for the chaperones' inattention and regularly tickles the tip of Leif's dick between her thumb and forefinger, then licks the space between her thumb and forefinger as if she is about to turn a page, which she isn't, because Felice can't read. She frequently tells people this, and they assume she is joking. Her chest is otherworldly and quite similar to her mother's, which is not a coincidence. They utilized the same plastic surgeon. Felice's dress is red, as is the handkerchief in Leif's breast pocket.

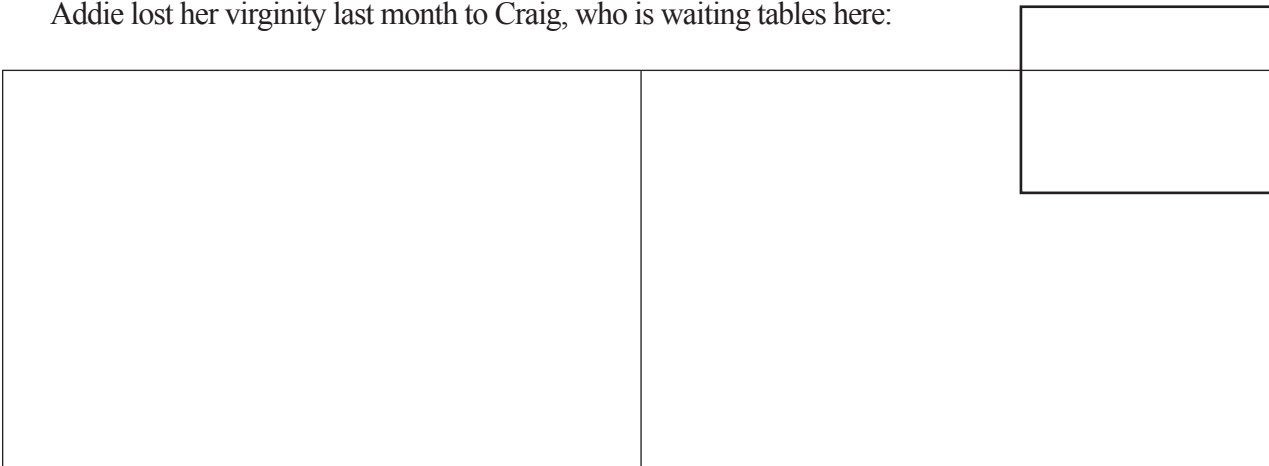
Garret, whose breast pocket flaps empty over skinny pectorals, is in love with Felice because he saw her in the window of her father's mansion pensively staring at the moon. This was two weeks ago. Garret takes long walks at night and writes poetry. His poetry makes audiences weep, but only to make it stop. He has written forty-eight poems to Felice in fourteen days and deludes himself Felice is pinching Leif's belly button. He is contemplating suicide.

What Felice was actually thinking, when she pensively stared at the moon, was how a large pimple on her chin refused to go away. She had caught sight of it in the window and scrutinized its red, round character, fingering its borders like an infant with a curled-up centipede.

To Garret's left is Malcolm. We don't care about Malcolm.

To Malcolm's left is Addie. Addie is wearing black. She wears black every damned day, never cuts her blond hair, and wants to be an actress. Her father is a movie producer, so Addie will have an acting career, just like Garret will get his Ph.D. and possibly, if his parents are feeling generous enough to wine and dine the critics, ascend to a stratum of literary notoriety where he doesn't have to read for the general public, which is good because they would weep to make it stop.

Addie lost her virginity last month to Craig, who is waiting tables here:



This is Craig's section. The stupid bitch who did the hostessing stuck him with the shitty tippers, because he fucked the hostess last summer on the shrimp boat his father works, the shrimp boat that Craig will work unless a miracle happens. Craig looks a lot like James Dean.

Sabine, Blake, Felice, Leif, Garret, Addie and Craig are sixteen years old.

We are drawn to Sabine, because she knows everyone's stories. She is also confident she'll get into Yale and excel at whatever she does. In fact, she'll be fine no matter what, because her elder sister died three years ago of leukemia, and that's

the worst thing that could ever happen, and Sabine was eventually fine. The other teenaged children of the very wealthy tolerate Sabine. They call her ‘Puppet Master’ and nervously laugh when they do so, because they want to believe they are wrong in suggesting that Sabine manipulates the circumstances of their lives with the ease of a bored god. They are not wrong.

Addie hasn’t touched her plate. She is watching Craig in his section. Two weeks ago, Sabine told malevolent waiter Craig that destined actress Addie was a virgin and that if he said, “I love you,” she would play Juliet by reflex and fuck him.

Garret hasn’t touched his plate. He is watching Felice pinch Leif’s belly button. Ten days ago, Sabine told vapid Leif that illiterate Felice’s ex-boyfriends swore her vagina tasted like single malt scotch.

Garret and Addie are the kind of people who need a dramatic, ridiculous set-up in order to ever notice one another’s existence, which frustrates Sabine, since they are perfect for each other.

“Is he looking at me?” Addie asks. Addie likes Sabine; she thinks it’s romantic that her sister died.

Sabine lies. “Yeah.”

“Laugh like I’m really funny.”

Sabine laughs; she would be a wonderful actress if she weren’t so off-putting.

Addie says, smiling as wide as her thin mouth allows, “I got my period last Wednesday. I cried so hard, Beanie. He’d have married me.” Addie sighs. She sighs a lot. It’s annoying.

“Why don’t you and Blake go dance? Blake, go dance with Addie, okay?”

Blake doesn’t even say ‘okay.’ He is massively, unconsciously relieved to have found a woman who will issue direct orders like his mother does.

Malcolm goes to the bathroom. We don’t care about Malcolm.

“Are you on the paper again next year?” Sabine says.

“What?” says Garret, who was watching Felice. “Yeah. Yeah, I am.”

Sabine and Blake, Garret and Addie attend the same private school. Garret writes a poem for each weekly issue of The Gazette. We won’t quote his poems, to forestall the need to weep for them to stop.

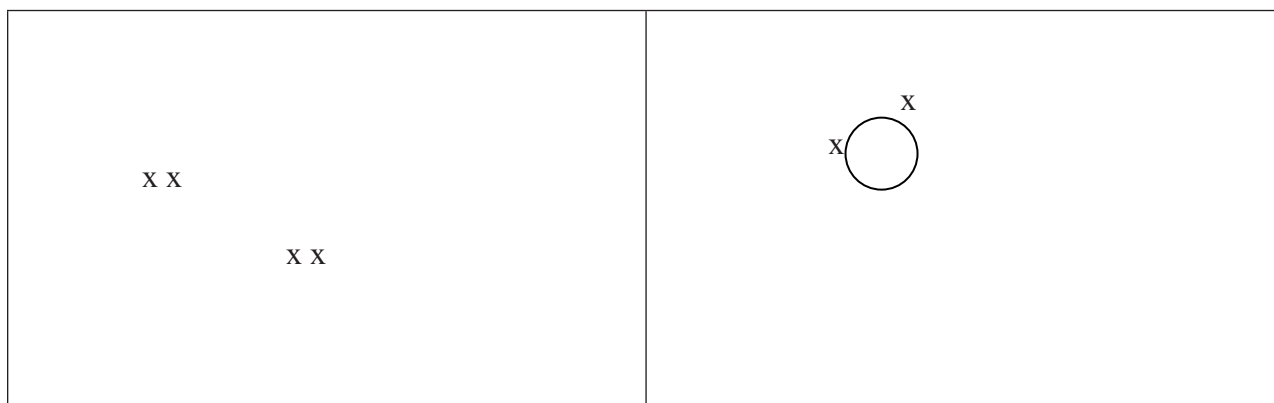
“What’s with Leif?” Sabine says. But she knows what’s with Leif. Specifically, with/in Leif’s breast pocket: fifteen hundred dollars. Sabine told him, Look at Addie tonight when she’s on the dance floor with Blake. Check her out like crazy. Why does money work as a form of bribery when Leif could go to his Nordic parents and ask for fifteen hundred dollars? Or go through the sofa cushions and find fifteen hundred dollars? Because those with nothing to fight for are easily conquered.

Why would Sabine pay Leif just to ogle Addie? Because Sabine is fighting for Garret and Addie, because Garret and Addie are fighting to feel.

“He’s checking out Addie,” Garret says, popping a shrimp. “She looks nice in black.” Then he watches Felice watch Addie since Leif is watching Addie. Addie is watching Craig, who is watching Sabine for the signal.

If you’re bewildered, don’t worry. So are they.

Blake is dancing. He is thinking: back, side, together; front, side, together. He wishes Sabine were there to lead him, but Sabine is still at the table with Garret, like this:



Fifteen hundred dollars worked even better on Craig. Sabine gave him half this morning, and will give the rest tomorrow. She checks her teeth in the back of a spoon. That is the signal.

Craig leaves his section. They’re shitty tippers anyhow. This will get his ass fired, but Sabine said she could make her folks hire him for lawn work. Plus the one-point-five large. If Craig were a type of intelligent that mattered, he’d think of the fifteen hundred as a start towards college tuition. Instead, he thinks of the fifteen hundred as a lot of beer. Craig will never amount to anything.

He dodges dancing couples and taps Blake on the shoulder. “Fucked your partner there.”

Blake says, “Huh?”

Addie is crying in under two seconds. “Craig, how could you? How could you, Craig?” Addie likes to emote repetitively with her speech.

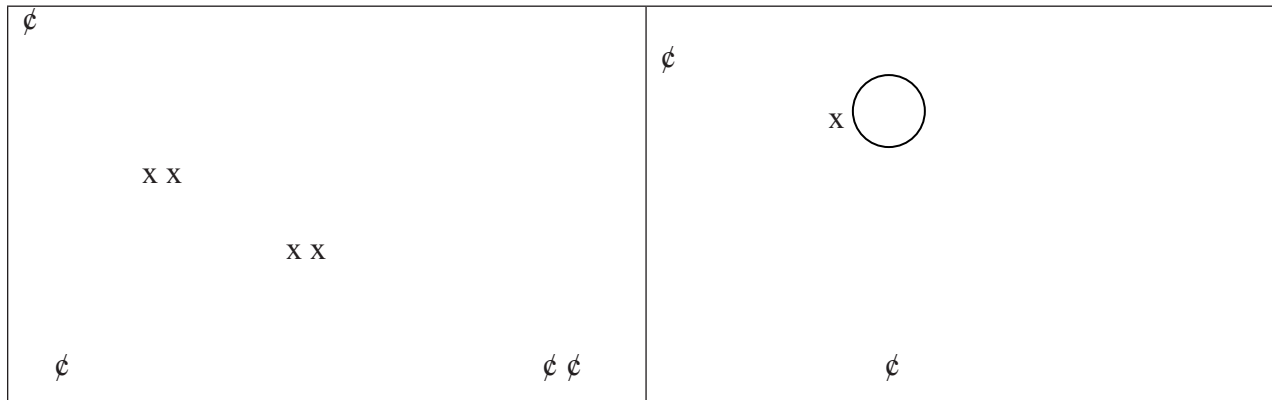
“She’s pretty limp,” Craig says.

Sabine springs from her seat. Garret follows her.

“She makes noises like a chicken.”

Sabine didn’t tell Craig to say that. Or to start strutting around, clucking like a chicken. Or to strut as if being poked in the butt repeatedly.

The chaperones, by the way, are here:



They are arranged like this because the owner of the resort was a sergeant in World War II, and he enjoys strategizing ideal flanking placements. He and a fellow chaperone are advancing on Craig, whom the owner of the resort cannot wait to fire. He only wishes Craig’s father wasn’t a trash alkie shrimper, since it means the owner of the resort can’t get Craig grounded, or preferably beaten, because Craig’s father will be too tanked to care.

But Garret gets to Craig first. “How about you shut the hell up?”

“How about you shut the hell up?” Craig says.

Leif is taking his role of perusing Addie too seriously and has abandoned Felice to console Addie in his towering Nordic embrace. Felice doesn’t do well without a male to cling to, and finds Blake by happy accident, fortunately not fondling his penis in her profound and habitual confusion. Which means dresses and handkerchiefs are now mismatched—black with red, red with blue, blue with no handkerchief at all—and it would doubtless upset the very wealthy parents if they weren’t engaged in an orgy of high-priced, spray-tanned flotation devices and a small African country’s GNP-worth of Viagra.

Sabine has lost control of the situation. “Okay, everybody calm -”

“Wanna go, rich boy? Huh?” Craig begins shadowboxing.

Garret has a black belt in an obscure martial art that favors smaller opponents. He looks at Addie. He has never seen Addie. He has looked but never seen. Her eyelashes are bunched and crystallized with fine teardrops. The stilt of her long neck sags to Leif’s sturdy body. The cut of her dress hugs hips and breasts that look lonely for Garret, and when the punch comes he ducks it, sweeps Craig to the ground and kicks him once in the stomach.

The owner of the resort thought Garret was a nancy boy before now, and shakes his hand. Felice forgets about Leif and asks Garret if he hurt himself. Leif has forgotten about Felice and asks Addie if she’d like to take a walk.

Blake asks Sabine if she’s okay; he didn’t intervene, but he didn’t participate. He thinks this absolves him of any wrongdoing. Blake believes most people think this way, and he is right.

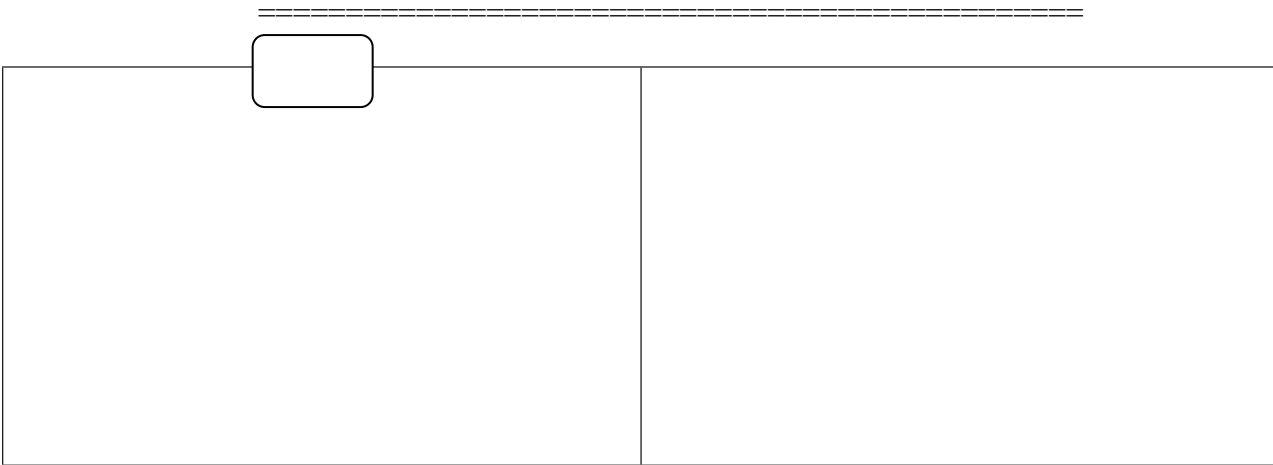
Malcolm comes back from the bathroom and wonders why nobody’s at the table.

Addie looks at Garret. He is skinny but kind-blue-eyed, and Addie no longer knows how to act around him. Then she wonders if he could be the one with whom she’d no longer have to have an act.

Sabine is tired of the mismatched dresses and handkerchiefs. Says, “Felice, your dress!” Felice runs for the nearest mirror, which is in the lobby, which is far away from Garret. Says, “Leif, your girlfriend.” Leif notes how Addie and Garret are making movie faces and leaves; at least Felice is a sure thing. Craig is being supported to the resort’s administrative offices.

Garret is offering Addie his arm. They leave the dance hall's back door and follow a path that goes like this:

≠
≠
≠



The path continues into a scatter of woods and then to a rotting, forgotten greenhouse with no glass in its many panes. He supports Addie's elbow and helps her step over the threshold, which smears soil and smudges of dead green under their fine shoes.

Sabine is close enough to see yet far enough away to not be seen. She leans on a tree. It is dark out. The yachts shine like banally evil eyes. She told Blake she was going to check her makeup.

"He shouldn't have done that to you," Garret says.

Sabine can tell from here that Addie is afraid: she isn't sighing, and she won't speak in lines. Her heart is too full. So is Garret's. That's why they're perfect for each other.

Addie says, "Maybe he was telling the truth."

"What's truth?" Garret says. "The truth's nothing but a story more people agree on."

Sabine wonders if she can influence Garret to switch to prose.

"Maybe you're the same as he is," says Addie, "once you get what you want."

There are only opportunities, Sabine knows. There are only circumstances. Perfection passed over is a mistake that happens all the time. Sabine's parents told her sister not to swim in the evenings, it would tire her. Sabine's parents told her sister not to eat marshmallows, they weren't macrobiotic. You're fragile, you're vulnerable, you're weak—here, please, sit down. Sabine's sister would sit. She'd wink at Sabine behind their parents' backs. Then they'd go swim and eat marshmallows once their parents got distracted again by how difficult it was to have a dying daughter. So difficult they'd take pills to sleep to forget the dying daughter.

"Have the nerve to be a cliché, Sabine," she said during an evening swim. Sabine remembers the sky was pregnant with a storm, and her sister still had a few strands of hair. Shoulder bones like doorknob and hinges for vertebrae, as if she'd open any second to something else. "Be that dork everybody makes fun of. If you can't, though, that's cool. But don't make fun of the ones who can."

Sabine is working on it. In the meantime, she invents clichés out of others, wherever she goes. Or if she can't, she at least watches others mess up the perfect opportunity.

But Garret says, "Maybe I just want you."

Addie believes him. They move the same as any of the billions who've fallen in love before. Addie and Garret kiss.

Sabine smiles. She leaves as Addie and Garret become desperate to stop and not to stop, that rare meeting of fire and fire. They are going to surprise each other.

The night smells like jasmine as Sabine walks back along the path. She takes off her fine shoes and wades in the shallows of the bay, wets the bottom of her skirt to ruin the dress. She hears a dim sound from the woods. The harsh bloom of ecstasy.

Felice scrutinizes red silk. Leif sneaks a nip from a flask. Blake is hungry. Craig gets fired.

Malcolm is very confused. We don't care about Malcolm.

Sabine touches the surface of the water where the yachts' electric stares get mixed into the garlands of a fireworks display. She writes her name in the ripples, and the letters disappear.

Except they don't. Not really.

Aimee Campbell

Lady of the Flies

When I was a little girl
I used to catch flies on the window screen.
Roll their bodies down and into the cup of my hands.
And then, sometimes, I would pop them into my mouth
Let their feet explore my tongue
Let their wings buzz buzz buzz in the hollowed out part of me.

I didn't mind that their feet pat around on dead things
Or that they vomited rot.
All that mattered was that for just a little while
That buzz buzz buzz was a part of me.

An Interview with Featured Artist

Dana Kroos

Dana Kroos is a writer and artist who lives in New Mexico. She has taught ceramics and currently teaches a variety of writing classes at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Her work has appeared in exhibitions across the United States. To see more of Dana's work, visit danakroos.bravesites.com.

John Cross: Tell me about the “Fairy Tales Revisited” series.

Dana Kroos: Fairy tales fit into the realm of teaching stories, along with myths, folklore, legends and others. These stories were designed not primarily to entertain, but to explain and instruct. They not only offer reasons for why night and day exist, life and death, mountains, rivers, and trees, but also talk about human emotions, behaviors and situations.

These stories teach lessons. They tell us how to live and reinforce social structures. But in contemporary times we have come to questions or even disagree with some of the lessons that they teach and the harsh way in which they teach them. Fairy tales are unique because they are traditionally stories written for children. The Brothers Grimm, who are responsible for many of the fairytales that we still tell children today, first published a collection of stories in 1812, but some of the included stories were adapted from versions dating back to the 1600s.

As someone who grew up in the seventies, I can tell you that the way our culture believes children should be treated and taught has changed significantly in just forty years (in the seventies and eighties, not only would my parents never have thought of asking me to wear a bike helmet, but our car didn't even have seat belts installed and the local theater let in every customer—1 to 100—with total disregard for the loose rating system that was in place).

From a modern perspective, not only do these fairy tales put their children characters in jeopardy, but they seem to put our actual children in jeopardy through exposure to the stories. Disney has softened and watered down the original tales into adaptations that parents of the twenty-first century are comfortable with, but the original Grimm stories contain tales of parents murdering and attempting to murder their children, kidnapping, and elder and child abuse. These stories end “happily,” that is to say, the protagonists survive and triumph over their enemies, but often at the cost of having to commit heinous acts themselves, or at least having undergone significant trauma.

I am interested in the way that fairy tales take (what I would consider to be) adult content, and cater it for children. Of course, the Brothers Grimm are not solely responsible for this. Mother Goose is also packed with nursery rhymes and children's poems which sound innocent on the surface but are in fact about more serious matters. “Ring-a-Ring o' Roses” is a common one, a nursery rhyme—still heard today—about victims of the plague. “Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater” also disturbs me—the story of a man who imprisons his wife and “there he kept her very well.”

The “Fairy Tales Revisited” series is comprised of sculptures and collages that include imagery and passages from fairy tales, in combination with historical imagery and factual information. As sculptural forms, they represent adaptations of characters or symbols from fairy tales or mythology; as collages, they depict a character or scene that takes the form of a page in a picture book. This work explores the possible adult content present in some of these stories written for children and questions the lessons that are being taught through these stories by putting them into the context of history and real life.



Penelope and the Suitors by Dana Kroos

Cross: Can you tell me about your process?

Kroos: In the case of the collages, I start with printmaking, which is the two-dimensional field that I really studied first. I use both silk screen and wood cuts to put a foundational pattern on the paper. I then begin to collage over the prints with nursery book pages, photographs and other found images. Over this I often use a layer of fabric patterns. Fabric patterns are a really unique material—they are somewhat skin like; their thinness allows the imagery below to be seen, but at the same time they take on a presence of their own. I also like the context of the fabric pattern which speaks of domesticity, motherhood, home-making, etc.

Lastly, I draw and paint over the collage in order to create an image and draw out the image by defining certain areas as foreground or background. In some of the newer work, I have been experimenting with sewing on these images as well.



JACK SPRAT
Jack Sprat
could eat no fat,
his wife could eat no lean,
and so,
perwixt them both,
licked the platter clean.

They Licked the Platter Clean by Dana Kroos

Cross: There seems to be an interesting conflict between the orderly, planned-out, predetermined nature of the fabric patterns and the loose and gestural quality of the drawings on top.

Kroos: Yes, I think that's true. Some of my prints also incorporate maps. I'm very interested in maps and the way that people try to make "orderly" sense of a world that is at least messy and also often unstable. Patterns for clothing are, in a sense, maps of the body, or maps to create armor for the body. They talk about regulating and interpreting the irregular forms of the body through a language of straight lines and full inches.

The drawings of the figures are meant to be organic in contrast. I looked a lot at Japanese calligraphy when I was thinking about line quality and movement for these drawings. But these figures also include elements of the skeletal and muscular structures, an idea that is influenced both by medical drawings and Australian aboriginal drawings. These elements are my way of suggesting a relationship with the layers of mapping beneath.



Jack Be Nimble by Dana Kroos

Cross: Like you are creating an orderly scaffold on which to hang the more chaotic...chaos out of order? Order out of chaos?

Kroos: That seems right. And those relationships seem to speak to human nature and the relationship that people have to their environment. I think that often we are trying to structure environments, landscapes, cultures, stories, etc. that seem chaotic, but may just be ordered in a way that we don't understand or that doesn't work best for us. In trying to reorganize these things, or just to understand them by applying labels, categories, or maps, we often contradict their natural order and therefore create a kind of functional (or not) chaos. I may be drifting into some overly philosophical realms though.



And Away They Ran by Dana Kroos



Meditation Landscape by Dana Kroos

Katherine Brennan

Move Along

You'll have to move along miss,
 his nightstick dangling like some nightmare sex
 and I shuffle up my bundle and my bags
 and try to gain my feet,
 they're bad today all puffed up purple
 the rubber sandals I boosted from a Walgreens
 worn through now
 and he don't as much as offer a hand
 just stands there hammy fist on his hip kind of smirking like
 or maybe it's a smile I can't tell,

they're not all bad all of them
 sometimes they slip you some cash
 enough for a double whopper at the BK on Seventh—
 those high-ass little Latina bitches holding their noses like they was God's gift
 since when I think

and the man in the smoke shop don't like us camping in his doorway
 I can't blame him but the rains are here
 and if you get wet you're one step closer to dead

I offered to sweep, wash his windows hoping to make a deal
 but he calls the cops every morning,
Come on miss you'll have to move along now.

— Sixth and Market, December, 42°

Fragments

Dorisa Costello

1.

Mary tries to remember:

She was in an art gallery downtown, opening night of up-and-comers whose paintings hung stark and pretentious on white walls, with people circling, mingling, sheathed in pretentiously unpretentious skinny jeans, striped t-shirts, sneakers, maybe a crocheted beanie. One such garbed approached her. He completed the look with a day's growth of stubble, dark on pale skin that made him look, what? Haunted, she thought. But that was pretentious too and she dismissed the image. He told her he liked her look and would she consider modeling for him some time. He was doing a series of portraits of today's Sappho, he said. And she was it.

"Why me?" she asked.

"There is just something about you. You seem—haunted."

He handed her his business card, the address was his studio, which he admitted was just his one room apartment.

She said she would think about it.

"There are some empty rooms in the back, storage. Maybe we can go think about it back there."

They went back and fucked under the light of a single naked bulb in a room full of drop cloths, painted white pedestals, ladders.

2.

No, that is not how it happened. There is something else, but she's not sure if there is because she wants there to be, or that there actually is and the hole in her memory is a consolation that at least she wasn't that kind of girl, and between her and Paul—that was his name—there was something more. She needs there to be more because now this is all she has.

She starts again, though this time she fast forwards to his studio.

"What is so important about Sappho?" Mary asked. She sat on his bed, though he assured her it was because the window there afforded the best natural light.

"Everything," he said. He touched her legs, but in a proprietary way, as if he were adjusting knick-knacks on his desk. He shifted her so a shadow from

the window cut across her neck and shoulders.

"Like?"

"Like her entire body of work was reduced to just a few scraps of papyrus. Like she is rumored to have had hundreds of lovers, men and women—or maybe she was married and had a child—or maybe both. Like she supposedly jumped off a cliff when a ferryman, Phaon, broke up with her. Like she may not have even been a real person. Tilt your head."

She did.

"And you think I look like her?" Mary asked. She thought of herself in a toga, standing on some wind-swept cliff with her hair wildly and dramatically lashing her face as waves shattered on the rock.

"Probably not. You're not Greek, are you?" he said.

She thought of herself in a toga pushing Paul off the cliff.

"That's the point. No one knows what she looked like or even if she existed. You could be her. Look at me."

3.

He sounds like a jerk in that one. She rewinds.

"And you think I look like her?" Mary asked.

She thought of herself in a toga, standing on some wind-swept cliff with her hair wildly and dramatically lashing her face as waves shattered on the rock.

"You could be," he said. His voice softens and Mary thinks he wants to touch her. She sees it in his eyes. He wants to caress her cheek with his hand. "No one knows what she looked like or even if she existed. You could be the Sappho in the gaps."

He hands her a photocopy of an urn etched with figures. One is a woman, all straight lines. Her nose is hawk-like, the curls of her hair only hinted by whited-limned waves. It is fuzzy in shades of gray.

"Think of her, then," Paul told her. "Think of her story. You can become her."

Mary holds the picture in her lap.

"Look at me," Paul said.

4.

Mary imagines she is Sappho. She doesn't know if she is a real person, the person who had a lover who is gone now, or if she is the tenuous fibers of papyrus ripping, frayed, about to crumble to dust, covered in words that no one knows the meaning to.

They were sitting, facing each other, their legs bent up at the knees to fit into the tiny, claw-foot tub in the far corner of Paul's apartment. Remnants of suds floated on the surface. Mary tried to sink down deeper into the water, her shoulders were cold.

Paul rubbed her calf with his hand, back and forth. The water sloshed against the side of the tub and a little spilled over the rim and splashed on the floor. His eyes were on her.

He still had his eyes on her, intently, but he did not move except for the rubbing back and forth of his hand on her leg. Mary didn't move, not in encouragement or rebuff and she thought that Paul was waiting for her. He was fully erect, but that and his touch were the only indications of his desire.

If she were Sappho, they would be soaking in some steaming, public bath, naked. Paul would be one of her lovers—it doesn't matter which one—Atthis, Anactoria, Phaon—all of these names that she had heard. Lovers she left, because she was that kind of girl. If she were Sappho she would lean over on her hands and knees, stalking animal-like, straddling the legs of her lover, her breasts skimming the water. Did she take him into her mouth, her eyes on him, watching his pleasure? Did she rake her nails on his bare chest, raising fiery streaks over his skin? Did she grip handfuls of his hair, pull his head back to expose the tender skin of his neck and bite so hard she drew blood?

Mary pushed herself up onto her knees. The force of her movement sent more water splashing over the edge. She reached just over Paul's shoulders on either side and gripped the edge of the tub, using it to pull herself on top of him. She took him into her hands and guided him into herself. Their movement sent water spilling all over the floor until the tub was nearly empty. Paul dug his hands into her thighs. He breathed hard. She felt the heaviness of steam condense on her skin; she smelled thick, musky incense. If she were Sappho she'd make him call her name.

5.

She remembers this, of that she is sure. She and Paul were in his studio. He stepped out from behind the easel.

"Can I see it?" she asked.

"No. I don't show anyone my work until it's finished."

"But it's of me," she said. "Don't I get to see what you've done with me?"

"Not you, her."

6.

Mary doesn't know where Paul is. He stopped calling after the painting was finished. She never saw it. Never knew what he had done with her.

7.

She doesn't know if she is remembering or just imagining, but really, it doesn't matter. She and Paul had just come back from the park, an easy sun-lit day as they watched tourists watching them. He had sketched her profile on a napkin. God, you could be her, he had said.

Now they were back at his apartment and Mary stacked the empty Chinese food cartons like nesting dolls and dumped them in the trash. They sat on Paul's bed that doubled as a couch in his room that doubled as his studio where she was his girlfriend that doubled as his model that doubled as Sappho.

Paul touched the back of her neck with his rough but dexterous painter's hands. Rough. Like he could spend his days aboard a plank barge, pitch-bottomed, rowing and rowing, muscles rippling. Paul lowered his mouth to hers. Mary inhaled brine and fish and green rot. They were both naked, somehow, their clothes flotsam on the carpet. Paul was on top of her; Mary's legs wrapped around his waist. She closed her eyes. Paul's beard, long, coarse, black, warmed by the Mediterranean sun, wiped her neck in a slow surging rhythm like the tide. He was a ferryman taking her across the bay. She needed to be named. Say it, she thought. Something outside was crumbling and she held him tighter.

"Oh, fuck," Paul said.

Say it. Say my name.

"You are—so good."

Heather Elliott

Some New History

Zigzagging down the crusty sidewalk I look for our youth, for the socket they are plugged into, for their pants whose humble demonstration of gravity never fails to impress, for their cynicism, for their xenophobia; they must scrape out all the corners of their rooms to find strangers in our shrinking world, where all the rivers are thin veins, where the boundaries of countries are dancing EEGs. I look at them.

Voyeur, strange voyager, I translate the best I can into the damp palm of your hand all Helen Keller, onto the neutral screen of my Blackberry.

Undertaker of dreams, listen to the Killers in the black clap of a room.

Beg Santa not to shoot you. Beg the moon. & Twilight, teach me about love, what it means to be 14 in America and what girls should seek—muscles, obsession. I learn: sex should be desired but not earned. Not for girls. That's not love.

Death is no obstacle, yes, death and love, how reverent we are to both, how many candlelit vigils we have held & the circles on our maps marking our griefs pile up like ripples on a pond. Now our shock at Columbine seems so quaint. Eric & Dylan, how could we not know you?

How could Marilyn Manson shock us so, now when bombs pop like champagne? So we watch how one thing turns into another, Hasselhoff's hairy barrel chest to this week's foetus-faced sex symbol.

Oblivious o we trundle on, shucking our griefs off our backs, singing "We Shall Overcome," grudgingly tugging them on again.

Now it is obvious that everyone moral, everyone exceptional, all who think as I do, love America, give our children flags to hold, spread quilts over the knees of our mothers. So we write our ideology on our arms and needle it into

these populist moments: confronted by rows of oranges in the supermarket, overcome by the glories of Farmville, dazzled by strippers professing their love for Jesus. I have seen each generation invent itself again.

Grandma, I begin with you—the first of us to speak no German, Thank you Wilhelm & Thank you Hitler.

It was just the push we needed to melt into this kettle, this Midwestern griddle of Scandinavia, swath of central Europe and in recent days, Somalia.

Let you marry a man without a past, let him drink too much Jack and die too soon. Tell me how you stirred his memory

with a wooden spoon and signed his name for him, gentle
 in your racism, brought the neighborhood's first TV
 home, named yourself the greatest generation. Mom, please allow
 me to interrogate this story: I'm not convinced
 it happened this way, that Kennedy's death muted you like a trumpet,
 that you shuffled home alone from the optometrist, sobbing
 & blinded in the unquenched sun. Youth, I
 gather you're too busy living your world to write it; you're too strong, too
 free. I ask—the Situation? Kevin Federline? Kirstie Alley's yo-yo
 on the scale? & you look back, splendor Sin City,
 acid glaze on the girls walking to school. O my
 equivocal children, o my red and blistered feet, o the cough
 that rattles in the lengths of my winter and knocks on my
 door. You stand at the lip of infinite waterfalls, arms out, looking
 down. Thank you Niagara, thank you Victoria, for showing us
 how it's done. Falling is inevitable, the only way, so
 clap your hands. Put your right foot in & take it out. Dress up, punch back a
 B52 or Fuzzy Naval, create a blog & write about your virginity, write
 fanfiction for Desperate Housewives, type jumbles of letters,
 a b c d a c eeh—tell us it's a code, tell us it's the definitive treatise
 on our Roman ways, tell us with lethal glee
 how it will splinter and burst the shuttered windows in our minds.

On Ecology

Jessica Hagemann

Today was the rare kind of Sunday where I actually observed the Sabbath, minus the church part. I laid in bed almost all day long, reading and thinking and writing—but not working. *Jane Eyre* had arrested my literary mind, and with it, a sense of the bitterly cold boarding school for orphan children, and the warm, green spreads of Thornfield. At seven o'clock in the evening, I became restless and could not stand to be in bed, or even the apartment, for a moment longer. I left and, walking the dark, windy streets of Boulder, compared my world to Charlotte Brontë's 19th-century one. The roads and the stores, a post office and two bars. The stars above that would've looked the same to both of us. Aspen trees in the Flatirons, just as in north England. The people who surrounded me—not governesses, but the obnoxious men who rolled by in their SUV and howled at me. In short, our separate and intermingled ecologies.

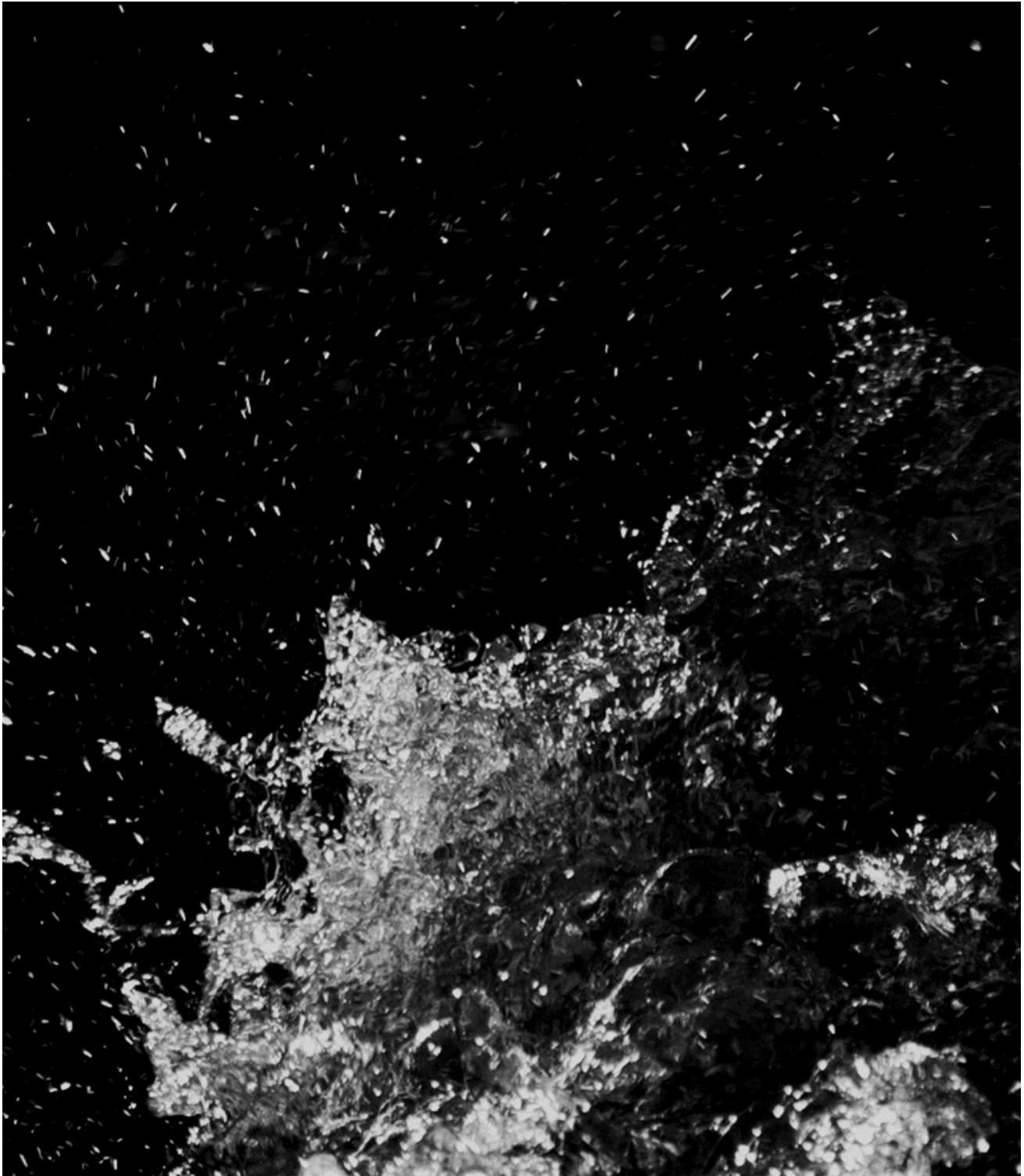
The roads and the stores I am still trying to make my own. Since moving to Boulder seven months ago, twice I have been convinced I should leave. I have never, with the exception of my adolescence, lived in one place longer than a few years, some only a few months, and the wanderlust of nomadry seems genetically inscribed in me. I find the streets here are like other streets, only more predictable. Running in perfect east-west, north-south parallels, correctly numbered right up to the base of the mountains, they are tree-lined vistas of expensive historic homes, all-white neighborhoods, and modern shopping complexes conspicuously devoid of Wal-Mart. The bricks of Pearl Street are the cobblestones *Jane Eyre* treads into Lowton. Mr. Rochester's estate would be at home on West Mapleton.

There were clear skies tonight, those ever-present constellations burning even as the Zodiac recently changed with the astrological tradition. Looking at them, at all that wide, black mystery, I was reminded that I used to want to be an astronaut. Really, I just wanted to be a star dancer, unburdened by irrelevancies like gravity and graceful enough to partake of the angels' playground. In a world forever changing and forever new, old, static things (though not my mother's antiques) can be comfortable, connecting me to women (including women writers, like Brontë) who came before.

The closest I'd come to an aspen before Colorado was the river birch in my midwestern front yard. River birches are on the whole less stately trees, spreading their legs and draping their hair unabashedly. Their barks have somewhat the same quality, however, with a tendency to peel away like so many strips of paper. Aspens are more fickle in strong winds, having shallow roots that may easily give way. The birch in my front yard was one year infested with caterpillars. The arthropods appeared to multiply by the hundreds and swarmed the front porch, so you had to watch your step when you went out. My brother and I, during a season I now regret, threw the caterpillars into the webs of the giant spiders that flanked the eaves that fall. Aspen trees are similarly vulnerable to pests; even Charlotte would've dealt with aphids in her day.

Boulder citizens are not representative of the general populace. Largely white, educated, well-to-do, and fitness-obsessed people, I will not be the first to note how hard it is to meet genuinely nice, interesting folk in this town. Even Naropians, a socially active and self-aware bunch, are not strangers to ego, humanity's common flaw. Still, how interesting to be food-stamp dependent students in a city of professionals, at a time when jobs are few and, I fear, higher education may have begun to lose its value as more and more people turn to school to "buy time," until the economy rights itself.

Economy, ecology. This is my economy and my ecology, and ecology means everything that makes up my experience on planet earth that is not culture but may influence it. Both the natural and synthetic, the human, the plant, and the animal. The roads, the skies, the trees, the people. The promises.



A Splash by David Maroney

An Essay on the Article

JordanAntonucci

ON this day the gods created the article. And they said:

Feh. Or rather *theh* as in phew, like aghast
, almost:
p a- pah - pwah - pa- pooy-poy

een eyne—en— **T** ,
(is this:)
Don't forget Article

.

It must be first understood that the article is the poets most potent ally: a one, two or three letter word that can change the entire tone of a poem, sentence, clause fragment, etc. It is a single element with the power to let the reader in, forceout, agree/disagree, engage narrative or `poem or give your reader the opportunity to be more concerned with dinner than characters. (Also, fuck you writers who believe any word you put toward paper is anything but poetry. Simply, if you write... you either write good or bad poetry. There is no other category, and if you disagree, please find your brief bio in the prologue.)

P.S-Don't argue THE parenthesis. Because Mike is 6'9 and THE boxer and Jordan will talk you into your deepest fear and kill you, or otherwise.

Which brings this to an objective beginning. In the beginning God created man and woman from his own image, and by man and woman he meant definite and indefinite articles. For instance: Men choose to either keep it in or out of their pants while Women can choose any grey space between: a metaphor.

For this distinction and for further clarification I offer Cat, a poem:

The Cat is dull and red
sitting on the green sofa.

This is the sad truth.

No questions in this poem. There is no foreign character, no wasted space on interpretation. This is a definite use of an article, and horrible. Not only the poem but the belief that there is an objective nature to words and the words most affected by the article are the nouns and they have limits, but this begins a dark spiral that this essay is to unravel. So fuck the nouns for now, but I will say all of this is meant to be broken. Like this: You line up a definite article directing attention to that which is inconceivable, such as The A... and you can eliminate all sense of boundaries and limits. In this case the article becomes as important as the noun and presents a brief glimpse of infinite potential in a poem. An exact potential: what is not in this poem.

Which is to say, there is no question who is what, where, how and why this poem is necessary. And an author should never waste time on something that isn't necessary. And yes, a poet will (they fucking better) always know this distinction. The article in this example is bounding, direct, and does not allow layers to penetrate the writing. Without layers there is no distinction between what is real or not, what is exact and what is not, and the poem would fail to be an expression of experience.

You can see this failure repeated in most political and nature writing which lives for a moment then dies. 90% of these poems are written to display an instant emotional reaction and can disappear as soon as they appear: Obama is the antichrist/he is ruining the country—The innocent snake/eats the mouse/the world is beautiful... What is missing is the true penetration. The ability to go a little deeper into an experience to find the root which allows emotion to drive intention, not words, and if the intention comes out as words, great, if not, fuck it. It wasn't important.

For instance: If you give a man/woman a picture

of a black horse on a white wall, chances are they see a horse. But what happens if you show the same horse on a black wall, what can exist. A horse? A fast car, your neighbor who nays like a horse, a feeling of strength, protection, urgency...? The possibilities grow exponentially. And the potential should be nursed.

There is no cut the shit in poetry, because the shit is what allows an infection to intervene and kill you. Which is good. Instead I will say and insist, don't cut the shit, but pick the bacterial feces that have the most uncertain side effect but the same ultimate end...

Back to the article. This decision of location (black white black black white white) is no different than the direction given by a definite or indefinite article. One offers no questions, the other demands them. Which brings us back to Cat, but this time different.

A Cat is dull and red
sitting on a green sofa.
This is a sad truth.

Wa-flackin-free-damned doodle. Our definite reality has become an opinion. Some weed freak's breakthrough after three months sitting in a tree. This is a bad poem because right now I don't care about cats or sofas and either will most readers. At least the previous poem gives opportunity to reader judgment, analysis and conclusion (who what where why how). A definite article offers tangible elements, in god's basic sense, while the indefinite offers open and dramatic space. Which is okay if the poet's intention is to leave the reader in a cloud like isolation holding desperately onto strong but pointless images. I stress okay because these images have the potential to reveal deeper layers which are often represented by allusions of allusions. But Cat is not like that. There are no secrets within the poem alluding to the nature of elsewhere. The author is not William Blake, Goethe or Kerouac therefore leaving the indefinite to hover in a space with no direction

or intention which leaves this edition worthless.

This poem is flabby and reminds me of Frost's indefinitely articulate poem, My love is like a silken tent (First line and title are the same). Consistent with RF's writing he uses many words to say nothing at all which has me wonder, as should you, what is his love worth if it is one out of many (indefinite article), or even one in a million? Or what is truth worth, or rather sad truths, if an author has many or considers it like others things or renders truth as particular and necessary as acorn squash to Easter? The distrusting conclusion is this: no one cares. Readers have enough to worry about and shouldn't need to brood over whether or not love or truth are particular or simply blacklines in the Oxford English Dictionary.

But there has to be a poem, a right way. There has to be an entry, a truth, an exact nature in every poem. There has to be or this is meaningless, said the Leper.

And thus they wrote it write. A psalm:

A cat is dull and red
sitting on a green sofa.
This is the sad truth.

And within this poem they demand a yes or no while presenting an exact nature of circumstance all with their basic usage of the article. They chose to establish what is undeniably determinate (sad truth) and what will conspire to draw all things deeper into a hole that is absolutely necessary and what has the potential to be all things in all places. This poem is A perfect poem.

Anything can sit on a couch, just as anything can have colour, personality, action, primary function, etc, but only a Cat can be a person and dog and god and lint and shit at once and only a sofa can be in your house or better than your neighbors or make you feel better after work or is worth your bodies entire Sense of judgment. This is the sad truth.

And the pwa-yoint they were trying to make was this: Don't forget THE article.

Kat Stromquist

Prose Poem For The Day I Quit Smoking

In her mouth she holds nine hundred pieces of gum, mashed and bubbled, fused into a thick tongue-wad. The ball carries perfect impressions of her molars, policework quality, the kind you could identify a body with. Those are decisive incisors, reducing the rubber to bits like a Clydesdale obliterating an apple. Gum-full, she is gagged and muted, a mouth full of silence. In the morning, when she reaches for the pack beside the bed, trembling hands shake the wrappers down to the floor like defeated leaves. Light streams in through the windows in vertical slats. Golden bars prepare geometry on the cherrywood floors. The first piece tastes like the branch of a pine tree – sweet with an acrid echo, Christmas cookies burned in the oven.



Hilights by David Maroney

Kristina Morgan

We start to lose ours

Nights he stood outside our window shouting at the dark. Swatting his words like they were gnats. Where's fucking rainbows? No zero fucking stars! Tourists moseying down the sidewalk. The dirty street: puddles of gelato, beer. His dirty feet, shorts, salty hair. Unhinged eyes. Shoes shredded on lava rocks years ago. Scrounged for crumbs of light scattered in the reef. How like us was he. How thirsty, how like fresh water. If he could scream into the ocean. Shake loose the island, drown with it. We wondered what he didn't see: No stars no fucking stars, no stars—hurled at the swarming sky.



Coiled by David Maroney

Fiber Web

María Elvira Vera Tatá

A two year old sits on her bed; she is playing with her toys, blissfully unaware that she is being observed. Familiar brown curls like her father's sit on her head, brown eyes the size of walnut shells on her face. A wide pointy-teeth smile fools the onlookers—that she too loves them. Her laugh titillates the insides of the observers, if only she knew how much they adored her. Yet they have not met her once; strangers, that is all *we* are to her.

We know her by webcam. But we know her well; how she jumps on her bed and counts to ten in Català, how she is wearing a pink shirt (her favorite color), how her tanned skin reveals the heritage of her blood, and as a consequence she is linked to you.

You try to tell yourself that it is okay, that even if you still remained in Venezuela, she still would be in Spain. Far, far, away from you. That it is not on you that Hugo Chavez gained power and that because of it, you and many others fled to safety. That as a result, she—the angelical tanned little girl—is sitting on a Spanish bed, across the big lake, away from you.

But she is not the only one you have missed growing up. You surf Facebook, looking for pictures, finding videos, searching and saving any proof that they are still there, that you haven't completely lost them. You find a picture of your other cousin, who is still in Venezuela—one that you have met and stopped seeing at the age of nine. She is now fifteen. You have missed her first crush, and her second, and the one after that. You have missed her being a big sister, of how she took her little brother's milky teeth out, and the hugs and kisses between them.

You remember them, and all the other loved ones you left behind. You think of them daily but you know that this ritual is yours alone; the one that leaves is always the one that remembers the most. Those that stay behind keep their lives, their routines, their circles. You, instead, have left. A new life. No routine. No circle.

You walk among new people. But they are different. Their language is different; you don't understand a thing they say. Every time they turn towards you, you watch their mouth move and so you nod. You have learned to say "yes" to everything, it tends to work better than saying "no." Yet they realize you are nodding blankly; this time you have answered incorrectly, so they give up and walk away. Their manners are also different. You are

used to kissing on the cheek to say hello and goodbye. They are used to shaking hands, but most of the time a simple distant hello serves too. You are used to frequently touching and hugging your friends. They only hug and touch if they are lovers. You are used to knowing everyone in your life; in your classroom, in your neighborhood, in your dancing lessons, even on the supermarket line—no one passes by without saying hello.

But you do not blame the new people. You know it is you that is astray. You miss the long Sunday afternoons in your grandparent's house. The way your grandfather, *Abu*, turned and tossed the meat on the *parrilla*. The shuffle of the domino pieces mixed with the vibration of your laughter and that of your cousins. You miss painting the birds *Abu* loved to watch. He would point out a *guacharaca*, hiding among the leaves, a broad brownish-green tail and a small head. *Kaka-rooki-rooki-ka* it calls, "Kaka-rooki-rooki-ka" *Abu* repeats.

At times you sit next to your mother for she often calls to Venezuela. You listen to their voices for your mother knows you are there and puts them on speaker. You listen to your grandmother say how she is better, how she is able to walk with a cane after the surgery, yet that she is worried not because of her shattered bones, but because your aunt has been feeding her kids only *arepas* for a week. You think of her white hair and the softness of her wrinkled skin. You remember her hunchback and her inability to fully raise her left arm because of some nails in her shoulder from a previous fall. But that it wouldn't stop her from making you breakfast and from refusing your help. The images evaporate when you hear her say how big Noelia is getting—the daughter of your cousin Gabriel. And you think back to the days Gabriel would say that it was your turn to suck on the hose to make the tadpoles come out of the gooey, mucus water tank. Yet when you threatened to cry, he would let you be and do it himself. You listen to your grandmother say how Gabriel holds Noelia, how protective he is. It feels so odd that he is a daddy, but you can almost picture him being papa bear, hugging and loving the little girl you have never met.

You hear your grandmother say she needs a new sweater, for the nights are getting cold in her room. You change positions and lie on the floor; you see the white, meager ceiling and remember the beautifully wood-

crafted ceiling in your grandmother's room. You hear her ask how you and your brother are doing, "are they happy?" But you remain silent and let your mother answer. What else is there to say besides, "I love you" and "I miss you." You always say it. It's the only thing you can say.

You miss your grandfather. Funny word "miss" is. Miss is a word that perfectly fits to describe two things; the lament of his absence (caused by you leaving), and the failure to be present at his funeral. Six years without seeing him; without seeing him rub his belly, eat fish with his hands, imitate the bird's call, lower you *pum-alacas* from the big tree, caress your mother's back. Six years without seeing him, and this meant that you were not to see him again. Instead, you were hand in hand with your brother, in a church, dedicating him a service. You and he sat alone, all your family in Venezuela, even your parents could go, yet you and your brother had to stay; finals were up and there was no way you could afford failing the semester. But the service was also as much for you as for grandfather; you needed to feel that you were somehow there with your family, you needed to understand that your *Abu* was gone.

Time has gone by and before you know it, you speak like them. Because of this, the new people accept you. They don't judge you. For the father of their father of their father was from England, or Ireland, or Italy, or Russia, or Germany, or from wherever. A melting pot, they call it. But it is more than that; the new people are kind and generous. They let you work side by side, no questions asked. You know that if you work hard, your children will never have only *arepas* to eat, nor will a president snatch away from you your liberties, your rights, your home. No one will take away your children because, according to the new president, they belong to the state. Neither will the president pay a bunch of henchmen to shoot the opposition, even if that opposition is merely students who are peacefully protesting. Your voice, here among the new people, is allowed, appreciated, encouraged. Here they have rules and rights. Everybody follows the street lights. Green is green, red is red. You kill, you go to prison. There is a law and you love this. You know its value. You want to cherish it, care for it. So that one day, when you have returned to them what they have given you, you are worthy of it all. And as a consequence your children will be worthy of it too.

You are in an NBA game, row nine. You "ohh" and "ahh" along with the crowd. You are cheering for the same team. Especially when Stuff comes out, but you call him Stuff—he's your buddy. A fluffy bright-green of a dragon, you like him because he is a magical crea-

ture in a magical land. You are sharing hot dogs and french fries with your friends and accidentally spill coke on the next row. The score board is tight. An all-too-loud guy dressed in your uniform embarrasses you; he's calling number eight in the opposite team a loser and a wuss. You dislike bad sportsmanship. But his sounds subside to the ovation of an unexpected three-pointer. We have sealed the game. You are on your feet, waving your #1 foam hand, roaring "Yeah!" The crowd is not next to you, but with you. You are one of them.

Now, you drive through the familiar streets. You don't notice in what language the green signs are written in. Neither are you conscious if it's English, or Spanish, or both that comes out of your mouth. You don't realize you say "parkear" instead of "park" or "estacionar" until someone points it out. You find the norm for the streets to be so clean and for the red light to last so long. You understand the world to be an orderly and efficient place. Normal for your car to get fixed by the insurance, your passport renewed quickly, and your customer service to exchange or return your items. You don't question any of this; it is as unnoticeable as the flow through your veins. You only stop to acknowledge it when someone from outside points it out: "how efficient!" "how clean!" Or when someone from the other side of the pond says, "I can't go visit you because the date they gave me for the passport renewal appointment is in two years." You are used to sitting on a bench on campus, letting the sun warm your skin. The wind whooshing through leaves. You can't picture yourself being, *functioning* somewhere else. How to do it?

And so, you find yourself composed of a mixture of fibers made of feelings that intertwine and form a web. A web of lots of yearning; your *Abu*, the taste of charcoal cooked meat and guacamole and yucca with laughter for dessert, the correct pronunciation of your full name, the chatting of everything—intimate and not—with the girl in the supermarket line, your grandmother's chocolate *Toddy* in the morning—nobody makes it like her, braiding your cousins' hair, watching them grow, of being there, of just being there. A web of lots of grateful love; your new home in a magical land, the taste of freedom and safety with Butterfinger for dessert, the study of English and that of writing, the wearing of pajama pants to class, the slow but sure process of making close friends, the increased chance that one day your child could have blue eyes, the smiles of the Halloween kids, the fact that you know for certain that you will not be ripped away from your home and as a consequence be able to see your family and loved ones age together, of being here, of just being here.

The Hour of No One Else

Rachel Baird

Maybe the wind makes the sky so clear by pushing the clouds out of the way. They are still very hard to see until the headlights strike them, and from where they are standing, it is almost too late. For her it may be too late already, her face frightened like an animal that would be better off hit. It's crueler to let it suffer, a passenger would say. Just hit the gas and get it over with. It takes nearly a full minute to decide whether to make the call. The phone stays lit, the three numbers waiting impassively for "send." Your finger waits. It isn't sure. It's not your business. But it was only your "send" to press, and there were two of them, the men. Maybe one was looking out, maybe he noticed the single driver heading east at 3:00a.m, that magic hidden hour after the drunks and before the early first-shifters, the hour of no one else. You cannot unsee what you saw. It is yours now. And if it were you, panicked and pressed back by muscle, you would have wanted the call. You don't know what she did to get there, it must have been something, but still, you would have wanted the call.

The operator was concerned, or maybe just surprised, over the woman, and her back, and the arch that it made over the concrete traffic barrier. She seemed to be less so about the weapon that you could not see in their hands, the metal cold, in places, from

the wind; warm from their hands in others, like their breaths, against the woman's neck. It was implied, and the operator had to work the switchboard quickly if this were to be of any use at all. And when the phone clicks shut you will regret leaving your name, even though they could see your number and find it well enough, and even though you only mentioned the first. This is how things get started. This is how you find out if the red clothes spelled their motivation, how you end up with the hope that they will not hold your blue shirt against you when they show up at your door in two weeks, just long enough for you to have forgotten. This is how the police call at 5:15a.m.in hopes of a report for the blotters, this is how bewildered looks end up behind subpoenas. This is how a tidy little home loses its peace.

But nothing has happened, yet. To you. The fear has not transferred. There was nothing, as you drove past again towards home, to indicate an end. You decide against avoiding that drive again, because you are horrified at the thought of all of the roads where there was no driver to see. Your envy is saved for all of those who could leave lingering faces on another channel, blinking inside a box, not close enough to touch and wonder why the sky refused to cloud over.

Sam Alper

3 Poems about August: 1

White cloth printed with Eiffel towers in
delicate red lines
twitching back and forth
a rabbit's nose
that back and forth wrecking ball perpetual motion
the sun on blonde hair
I can walk behind you for an hour before you notice

it's like the opposite of growing a garden
the change of light, the fade in and fade out of sun when walking through arches
someday you might be asked to account for these things

Yesterday I gave up on the president
but long before that I had given up on my giving up
on my giving anything

You wore a pretty dress and I had nowhere to go that day

Tasha Golden

Priest

Starched and collared six foot queen
was asked no questions; never said,
This is why I go out at night
heeled and hemmed in swinging skirts.
Felt lucky that way
At Carlson's, said he swam in his flock's glorious
Assumption, said he
kissed the saints lipstick red
Was thin foolery, no-how.
"The new black" was that
thigh strap gun gone off quiet,
St John's hardwood "foy-ay" launched wide
Dipped his fingers then his hand
Lay back, took all of Terrence County
in one arced swallow, one long
Amen



Untitled by Ilse Dwyer-de Boer

Sarah Schwartz

Argument

She is in another room
than her body. Rigid
in the doorway.

Let's take
this outside.

The second face is
hush hush hush.

The youface says, what demands?

The youface is what
demands. Square teeth
white bone smile perfectly
positive you say, we do not
doubt our bodies, you say,
she shudders, one has no
doubt of what she's feeling.

She is no feeling. She is afar,
she is inhabiting the air
where solidity isn't.

She cannot bang her fists.

She has no table.

Contributor Bios

Sam Alper is a writer, director and actor from Santa Monica, CA. He studied dramatic writing at Brown University and has written three nights of theater produced by Brian Williams and The Collection. His short films with Josh Margolin have been featured in the LA, S.N.O.B., and WYFF film festivals. He has appeared in world premieres of new plays by Greg Moss (*Punkplay*) and Max Posner (*The Famished*). His poetry, nonfiction and monologues have appeared in *The Brown Literary Review*, *The College Hill Independent*, and *Voices Israel*.

Jordan Antonucci is a writer living in the mountains of Japan. He spends every day on the river and every night finishing up his master's degree and editing poetry for Monkey Puzzle Press. His work can be found online and in several print journals.

Katherine Brennan lives in a city both beautiful and bedeviled. She writes on both themes but is more drawn to the darkness, the devils. She believes there is good to be had from turning over the stones and seeing what lives beneath.

Roy Buck was raised in Wisconsin (Green and Gold) and moved to Missoula, MT for his BA in creative writing. Years later, he moved to the UP, off Lake Superior, and received his master's from NMU. Currently, he's in the MFA program at MNSU in Mankato, MN. People say that if he were a mode of transportation he'd be an ostrich with a leather saddle...

Aimee Campbell is a senior studying Creative Writing at the University of Central Florida. She will be graduating in December 2011.

Dorisa Costello's short fiction has appeared in the anthology *Sorting Through Shadows* and was adapted as a part of an National Public Radio program. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago and is in the process of marketing her first novel, *Non Finito, A Novel*.

Allison Danbom—Franz Kafka had an aphorism, “The true path is along a rope. Not a rope suspended way up in the air, but rather only just over the ground. It seems more like a tripwire than a tightrope.” Allison believes in gravity. And she seconds that notion.

Heather Elliott recently finished her MFA in poetry at Minnesota State University Mankato and is currently teaching a little/writing a lot while she considers what's next. Her work is informed by an avid interest in travel, current events, linguistics, and everyday life.

Tasha Golden is the singer/songwriter for the critically acclaimed band Ellery (www.ellerymusic.com). Her work has been heard in TV dramas, major motion pictures, Starbucks stores throughout the US, and on AAA radio in the US and the UK. She lives in Cincinnati, OH.

Cherie Greene has wondered for many years why the ancient Greeks decided that wine and theater fell under the jurisdiction of the same deity.

Jessica Hagemann is a graduate student at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics in Boulder, CO.

A. Kilgore is an MFA candidate at Naropa University in Boulder, CO, seeking a degree in Writing and Poetics.

Dana Kroos received an MFA in ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2005 and an MA in fine art from Purdue University in 2003. She also completed an MFA in fiction writing from New Mexico State University; her writing works in collaboration with her visual work. Currently, she resides in Las Cruces, NM where she writes, sculpts, paints and teaches creative writing and visual arts classes at Alma d'Arte High School. During the 2011–2012 academic year she will research folklore in Newfoundland, Canada as a Fulbright Scholar.

David Maroney—Everyone is like a dew drop of life.

Kristina Morgan is just starting her second year in Eastern Washington University's creative writing MFA program, where she particularly enjoys working in the Writers' Center and interning with the press. She's from several places, including Minnesota, Kenya, Hawaii, and the general Northwest.

Matthew Overstreet has dabbled in the dark arts. He's presently in the English MA program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, which is a fine institution, though it doesn't have a football team.

Judith Roney grew up in Chicago and its suburbs and is a Floridian weaver of words and phrases, a mother of colors and rhythm. With her textiles and silver, pen and paper she finds herself challenged daily. An MFA candidate senior undergraduate Creative Writing and Cultural Anthropology major at the University of Central Florida, she finds inspiration in the bending palms and broken seashells near her coastal home on one of the eastern barrier islands. Her poetry has been published.

Michael Rosenbaum is a graduate of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Texas at El Paso and is currently enrolled in the MFA Fiction Program at Texas State University. His work has appeared in *The Rio Grande Review* and *EveryDayPoets.com* and is forthcoming on the literary website *ReadShortFiction.com*.

Sarah Schwartz is currently pursuing an MFA in poetry at Brown University. Hailing from the Midwest, she has spent the last five years displaced, first on the West Coast, and now on the East Coast. Her critical work was recently published in *The Straddler*, and she has poetry forthcoming in *Sun's Skeleton* and *Catch Up*.

María Elvira Vera Tatá was born in Caracas, Venezuela and moved to the United States at the age of twelve. She's a senior undergraduate student at the University of Central Florida. She served as the managing editor for the 22nd issue of *The Cypress Dome* for the year 2011.

Alla Vilnyanskaya is currently a student at Miami University in Oxford, OH in Poetry. This is her second year in the program, and after she's done she hopes to pursue her MFA.

Andrew West is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Kansas (where he earned his MA). He received his BA from the University of Notre Dame. He has spent the better part of his life living and working in and around Kansas City.

Gina Wohlsdorf's work has appeared in *Storyteller*.

