



# Gambling the Aisle

Summer 2012

# Masthead

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*Crossing the Bridge by Tony Schanuel*

*Changming Yuan*

## **Natural Confrontations**

1/ Corn

With a small body  
Of teeth, you have bitten off  
Every golden minute  
From the warm day  
Hoping to conquer and collect  
All the sunlight  
Of the passing season

2/ Ant

Stretching its hair-like limbs  
As far as it can  
The ant embracing  
The tallest Douglas tree  
In the forest  
Attempts to shake off  
All its leaves  
Branches, and even  
To uproot it

3/ Vortex

Turning, twirling  
In ever smaller circles  
A vortex in the stream  
Seems to be sucking in  
All the waters on earth  
Like the black hole  
Trying to swallow  
The whole universe



*Trees Variation 22 by Tony Schanuel*

*William Jackson*

## **Kill Road**

A 3-headed dog takes a piss on a wall,  
one of the heads watching you as you  
semi-cautiously walk past.

A smashed cat in the middle of the street,  
half its face taken off in the collision,  
guts hanging out all the way past its feet,  
with one crooked paw slowly drags in its  
intestines, tugging it in one concerted pull  
at a time, cars driving past over its head,  
its one eye looking to the sky half its brain  
thinking about being late for work.

I pulled the gun from my waist,  
lifted a cup of lemonade to my mouth and sipped  
the straw.

3 kids in school uniforms with giant pidgeon wings  
flapping wildly from their back beat the shit out of  
a 4th boy they've pummeled to the ground in an open  
parking-lot.

Two women pushing baby carriages are smiling having  
paused to have a conversation, the infants inside of each  
rotting and covered in maggots.

There's a bar on this strip where everyone inside are  
nothing but skeletons, quietly sitting around buying  
drinks, getting drunk, not solving many problems.

A bag of bones gets up from his seat by the wall and  
orders another tequila from the bartender as he makes  
his way to the jukebox, the bartender patiently reaching  
the bottle then gravely pouring him another one,  
dust falling from his expired hand.

The sound of automatic gunfire.

A car crashing.

A woman totally naked runs past you barefooted carrying a  
knife in her hand.

I finish my drink and toss it in the trash.

The streetlights are all on green but we've learned to stop  
for things we hate.

# The Brother with the Bees

David Rawson

i

Wrapped in blankets, Julia and I looked for her pneumonia in our father's encyclopedia, someplace between nucleus and Nunc dimittus.

ii

When Father lost control of the car, Julia so tiny against my side like a hug, whispered pretzel like we had practiced before, both of us unlocking our seatbelts, instinctively finding the other.

In secret, Julia had instructed me on what we would do for a fire, an earthquake, a flood, strangers at the door. Pretzel for car crash. To wrap one around the other, each to shield the other.

But the car shuddered, settled, and Father again in control, mumbled death to winter, death to black ice.

iii

Although I could feed myself, Mother hooked bread in her finger, pressed it in my mouth, and said, "The Body."

Mother said, "You are the oldest. When you two are together, you are to watch her. You are not to swim in the creek anymore. You could have—" She tasted that unspoken word, rested it on her tongue, and swallowed.

I could not tell her Julia had asked me to hold her head down under the creek water. She, not trusting herself, gave me strict instructions not to bring her up until she tapped my elbow. She wanted to know how long she could hold.

iv

In the lobby, the doctor asked me my age. I was silent, instead holding up both hands, all fingers up.

"You're the brother with the bees," he said.

My fingers could not express that the bees were our pets, both of ours, kept in Mason jars, that we let them out at night when Mother and Father were asleep. We searched for them with our flashlight, directed by the soft buzzing of their bodies.

They had never stung us before.

v

Every time I thought you were gone, you came back, immortal, a fragile forever.

I can no longer count my age on both hands. Even your hands added would not do.

If I still had Father's encyclopedia, I would look up that cryptic word that has left its residue on my tongue: overexposure. I allow myself to laugh at your joke, the inherent paradox of being both underdeveloped and overexposed.

I will not ask what you were doing alone at Lake Michigan on a blanket Mother gave you, how many days you sat there as if you'd just arrived. I will not ask why you did not call me to count the seconds, to see how long you could hold.

# Rain

*Stephen Policoff*

The phone never fucking rings at our house.

Back when Mom was working—at one of the galleries or the theater or (when things really sucked) waitressing at the Little Bear—we'd get a call sometimes from her co-workers wondering where she was, or some drunk guy would call at 3 AM because he thought she'd promised him something, or one of her many drug buddies might call with some offer or demand.

Once in a while, one of Mom's parents would call and beg her to come home. I can't really call them my grandparents, I was always the little gook to them, the adopted freak; they didn't give a shit about me, or anything really except their country club friends and shoring up their crumbling lives.

My aunt Cilla called every few months, bubbling with promises to visit but she never did. Once I asked Mom why her beloved sister had (once again) failed to show up and she just muttered, "Back in Hazelden, I guess."

She did have friends. She told me she did anyway: Todd Rundgren's wife Patty, Levon Helms' girlfriend Abby, this sculptor, that psychic healer. I never saw them. They never called.

When I was really young and Dad was still (in theory) involved in our pathetic little lives, we might get a call from one of his booking agents or an art world crony or someone who didn't know that he was never around, wondering if he was around.

But the one call Mom always waited for never came. Till I was 9, every night when she finally reeled into the house from wherever she had been, she would look at me expectantly. By the time I was 7, I just looked away because it's hard to be more mature at 7 than your Mom, hard to say, No, Mom, that son of a bitch Gabriel did not call again for the 1000th time and no one else did either no one ever does why don't you know this?

OK, for a few years Dr. Ned sometimes called; that's true. I forget that part. Every month or so and I looked forward to those calls, I was hungry for those calls, and he would come by sometimes, and we would play Chinese checkers or watch a movie or he would take me for whole wheat pizza on the village green. And that was supposed to help me. Or maybe it was

supposed to help him, I'm not sure. He and Mom rarely spoke, barely looked at each other; I never knew why though I had my theories. When she finally told me they had once been married, I almost fell over. But I didn't. Falling over was her thing.

I never let friends call me at home. I was embarrassed for anyone to know how we lived, even in Woodstock, dysfunctional family land, worried that they would hear Mom yelling at no one, or see her in one of her many states of disarray, manic high or black depths low, with her scrapbooks and photos of Dad strewn all over the house.

When I got interested in boys, I would meet them on the green or at Tinker St. Cinema or Joyous Lake; I never never let them call or come by.

For a long time, Mom used to tell me that Dad did call but hung up as soon as she answered. Maybe. I doubt it, and once, not that long ago when we were arguing about whether she had taken her medication and whether she had any idea what was true and what wasn't true, she launched into one of her Dad diatribes, shouted at me that he did call, that every night he would call at 9 PM and hang up; then she stopped abruptly, hung her head, said, No, that was Ned who did that. Long ago. When I was still beautiful.

Once and only once did Dad call when I was around, and it ended with me running away to Paris with him and three hellish days of not seeing him, stuck in a hotel on the Isle St. Louis, eating ice cream and baguettes and vowing that I would never never look at him again.

It was the spring after I turned 9. It was before the night of screaming (when I was 10) and it had been at least 3 years since I had actually seen him. It was early afternoon, I remember, because I had just been dropped off at home after my tae kwan do class and I was frantically looking for where Mom had left the key this time—no one ever seemed to think it odd that a 9 year old just came and went without any sign of an adult. I heard the phone ringing, and I was so surprised and certain that something bad had happened to Mom that I kicked the door in—it wasn't even locked. I raced across the worn rug, grabbed the avocado-colored phone, breathlessly shouted, "What? What's happened?"



"A lot," a faintly familiar male voice said. "I'm at the Golden Notebook, is your mother there?"

"Dad? Oh my God!" I blared. "No...no I don't know where she is."

"Good," he said. "Then I'll stop by. Do you still have your passport?"

I did, actually.

Because when I was 6, Dad made a brief return visit to our lives. He was going to Brussels (he called it Brussel Sprouts; it made me giggle) for some performance. He swept in, said we would all go together to see his new piece. "Just like the old days," he told Mom and I thought she would faint; he stayed the night, though he spent most of it on the phone, and the next day Mom smiled for the first time in about a year. He told her to get our lives in order, get passports and new suitcases, said he'd be back to get us in a few weeks and—surprise!—we did not hear from him again and Mom cried for weeks and the packed bags sat in the living room till the following summer when I kicked them across the house and flung them into the basement and slammed the door.

So after he hung up this time, I did not exactly go into a frenzy. I watched reruns of PeeWee's Playhouse and drank chocolate milk but soon enough, a long black car pulled up, and he emerged, stretching his long arms as if he had been sleeping for hours.

I don't remember what he was wearing. The handful of times I saw him in my childhood, he always seemed to be wearing the same clothes—something black, something red, a little gold batik. Mostly I remember that each time I saw him his curls seemed to be thicker, falling in his face or hanging down like little vines across his forehead. I do remember that he was wearing big purplish sunglasses—because I wanted to look into his famous piercing eyes and ask him why he never came to see us. But I couldn't, I couldn't see a thing.

He swept me up in a playful hug. "Ah, Julia," he said, "You are going to be a great Asian beauty."

"My name is Rain," I said, pouting.

"Yes, yes, so your mother always told me; Julia was my name for you, like the John Lennon song, sea shell eyes. Suits you.

"No it doesn't."

He gazed at one of his old drawings of Mom which hung crookedly on the otherwise empty wall. "I'd forgotten about those pictures," he mused. "And I didn't remember how small this place was."

"You lived here," I pointed out.

"Yes," he sighed. "But that was in another country..."

"What do you want?"

I was channeling Mom, I think. All I really wanted to do was jump on his shoulders, make him carry me away, like I had always dreamed he—or someone, please dear God, someone—would.

He put me down, sobered briefly by my refusal to give in to his charms. He stroked my hair. "Heading for Paris," he said. "Festival at the Pompidou, fabulous room, size of an airplane hangar, all for my new little work-in-progress. Just a few days. Want to come?"

I gasped. "Me? With you?"

He smiled; he had the sweetest smile, like a child who has just found out he can have any toy he wants.

"Will you do it? We'll pack up now. You don't need much. I will buy you any clothes you need there. Get your passport. Write your mother a note. And let's go."

"Now?" I could not believe that my escape could be so easy, so immediate.

He shrugged. "Now would be the right moment," he said, looking distractedly around the house, as if he had never noticed it before. "The car is out there, I have the plane tickets, I need to be in Paris tomorrow. I thought of you, I did, I was near by, trying to find... something... and I thought of you. So. Yes. Now. I have the thought in mind right now and how long will that last?"

This was the longest conversation we had ever had. I dashed upstairs. I dug out my passport (buried under photos of me and Ned, Me and Mom, and one picture of Dad, alone, when he was younger). I grabbed my panda knapsack; I flung a few shirts, 5 pairs of underwear, my Little Mermaid toothbrush, my beloved copy of Anne of Green Gables and my diary into it, and raced back down. I was afraid he would not be there.

But he was. He was scrawling a note for Mom on a brown bag from the Hurley Market. It said, Dear dear E... Need to take Julia/Rain to Paris just for a few days. Need a child for my piece, why not her? Will be at Hotel De Lutece. Will call you. Do hope you are taking care of your beautiful self. Love, G.

I glared at the impossible note, knowing it would slice Mom's heart in two. "Wait, you want me to be in your show?"

I stood there, tapping my tiny foot like an impatient girlfriend.

"Why not?"

"I hate acting, I hate theater, I hate all that artsy

crap.”

He beckoned with one hand, slammed the door with the other. “So do I, Julia, so do I,” he said.

\*

The entire trip to Kennedy, he scribbled furiously in one of the three leather-bound notebooks which seemed to be his only luggage; some chick with black, bobbed hair and a bit of a snarl drove the whole way, never looked at me, never spoke to me. I fell asleep.

“You grind your teeth,” he said, when I finally lurched back into consciousness. “Just like your mother.”

“I’m nothing like my mother,” I yelled, which was true. But he was already on to a different topic.

“Do you get the terrors, Julia? I do. Almost every night. The black cloud that will not disperse. Even in my good dreams, my beautiful dreams the cloud sometimes drifts in, hangs there, will not leave, freezes me there in that world.”

I had no idea what he was talking about but his voice was like music and the words didn’t seem to matter

As we pulled up to the terminal, he looked at me curiously. “Do you ever see your uncle Ned?”

“He’s not my uncle. He does come by sometimes. I didn’t know you knew him.”

“Oh yes, I knew him,” he sighed. His mouth tugged downward and for a brief moment, I thought he might cry. “I’m glad he’s kept his promise.” He smiled at me and I felt utterly enveloped in the golden glow of his attention.

It didn’t last long, though.

On the endless plane ride, he immersed himself in some thin red booklet about dreams; he wrote and sketched furiously, drank heavily. Now and then, he looked over at me, almost puzzled that I was there.

“Do you ever dream about me?” he asked, after several hours. “This book says that if you do, we are bound together in an alternate world, what do you think?”

“I never dream,” I murmured, which was not true. I did not want to admit that I dreamed of him all the time, and that often the dreams were violent, tinged with blood, full of jagged images I could never fully grasp.

Near the end of the flight, he thrust a page into my hands. “Read this script,” he said.

“We weep for the water... it does not flow... we

weep for the children... they do not grow...” I faltered.

I put the page down; my hand was trembling. “Dad,” I said, because I could think of nothing else, nothing else was in my thoughts, in my heart, in my soul. “Why did you leave us? Why? Why don’t you ever see us, why don’t you love Mom anymore, why don’t you care what happens to me?”

He looked grave, as if this were exactly the kind of conversation, he had been hoping to avoid. “What if you lived in a house, Julia,” he said after a long while. “It was a beautiful house, a fairytale house, a house in the woods with gables and terraces and towers, oh it was a lovely house but it was on fire, all the time, a perpetual flame shooting from its windows and there was nothing, nothing you thought you could do to put out the flame. You would have to flee that house and you would be afraid to look back, to return and see what sort of wreckage there was. Do you know what I mean?”

“No,” I said, though I sort of did.

“And what about you, beautiful child, don’t you live in that house now too?”

He turned away. He fell asleep.

It was drizzling and chilly in Paris, and after several disjointed phone calls, he left me in the tiny hotel room while he went to confer with his stage manager, who was staying near the museum where the performance was to take place. On his way out the door, he presented me with a handwritten sheet of paper and 50 francs, instructed me to learn my lines and buy myself something to eat. “You’re the chorus,” he said. “It will be grand.”

He didn’t come back for 12 hours.

I wandered up and down the narrow streets, found a beautiful bridge where a grizzled old man in a red felt hat and a green poncho was playing the accordion. I looked out at the rain-swept Seine; I thought about Madeline falling into the river; I thought, just for a moment, that I might jump, then I cried because I knew there would be no one to save me if I did. I managed to find my way to Notre Dame, and gaped at its amazement—though I had no idea till years later what it was.

There was a bread festival going on in the little park there, all these French children wearing floppy baker’s hats and learning how to make baguettes, and I bought some and ate some, and then some white chocolate ice cream in a tiny cone, soft and perfect, but it didn’t make me feel any better.

I don’t even know how I found my way back to the

hotel—I spoke no French and was far too shy to ask anyone for help. I fell asleep in my damp clothes on one of the twin beds. When I woke up, he was there, drinking coffee. “Looks like we can’t use you,” he said. “The woman who’s playing the Grail Maiden—she’s not very good, really, too thin, too tense, we need someone new I think—she insists on a chorus of half-dressed boys, don’t ask me why but I need her for this performance, so I’m going to let her have her way. Sorry, dearest. I suppose you came all this way for nothing.”

“I suppose I did,” I murmured, and went back to sleep.

He didn’t even return to New York with me; he sent that skinny actress as my escort; she got plastered during the first twenty minutes of the trip and declaimed to me about her fabulous career, her famous friends and lovers for hours, as if I were a celebrity journalist waiting breathlessly for every morsel of gossip.

The snarly driver met me at the airport, drove me back to Woodstock. She said exactly 8 words to me the whole 2 hour trip. We were approaching the Thruway when she finally looked at me in the rear view mirror.

“Do you dream about your father?” she asked.

I clenched my teeth. “I don’t dream,” I muttered.

“Good,” she said. “Don’t.”

When I got home, Mom was lying on the floor. I felt like Beauty when she comes back and the Beast is dying; only Mom was just passed out, who knows for how long. She was glad to see me, sobbed and hugged me and told me how she loved me, how I was the only good thing she had ever done, didn’t mention Dad or the hateful note, didn’t ask about the trip, never said a word about my abrupt and uncharacteristic departure.

At school, no one mentioned it either; I suppose they thought I was sick or they knew about Mom and just assumed things were falling apart at our house, as in so many other houses around us. No one ever asked me where I had been.

Like so many things in my life, it was as if it had never happened.

No, the phone never fucking rings at our house. So when it rang and rang and rang all morning, I knew something was up, something big, that dark cloud hovering, freezing everything in its path.

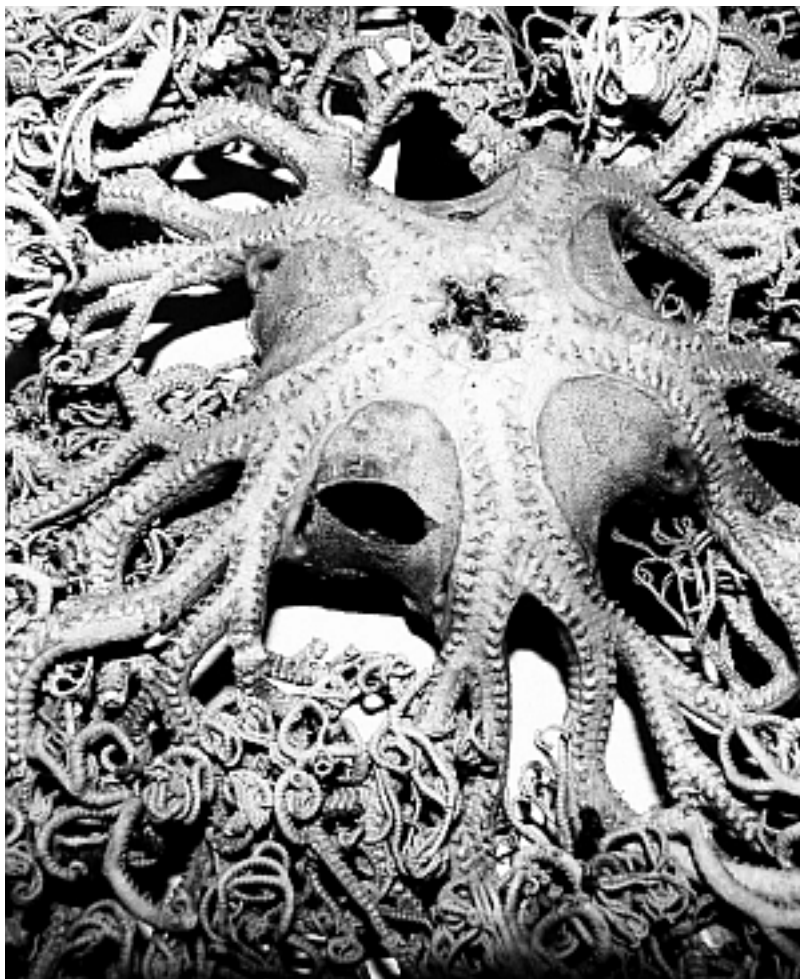


*Curve by Eleanor Leonne Bennett*

*Jeffrey Kelling*

**KK**

The karma of  
kindness  
The karma of  
family  
The karma of acceptance  
The karma of love  
Water out of the bucket  
Ladle at hand  
Granted acceptance  
from those who  
added depression,  
world wars,  
to their existence  
and gave  
nothing but  
kindness and love  
to mine



*Starfish by Eleanor Leonne Bennett*

*Susana H. Case*

## **Give Me Money**

Greed, sure, the best things in life ain't free—like Alan Freed figured about the free stuff: you can give it to the birds and bees, blacklisted from broadcasting in the 50s for taking payola, drinking himself to death at forty-three, broke by then and bitter. Or Dick Clark, who decided love wouldn't pay his bills, cooperating with the cops.

Widespread racial animus towards the southern black geniuses of early rock and roll can't be historically erased. BMI, their record company, had to pay in secret to get airplay they otherwise wouldn't have had.

Bribery prosecutions, the bigger money behind them, were meant to go after rock and roll itself, no passing fad but delinquent juvenile, Larry Williams bad boy blamed for the moral decline of teenaged girls. (Cretinous, Sinatra said about the songs.)

Rebel rock and roll, in its tight black jeans and Ducktail, stuck its tongue in our mouths and the feeling of disaffected defiance was what we'd been waiting for. It refused to die young. It refused to die beautiful.

*B.W. Archer*

## **On Seeing her Again in the Market Place**

O how you'd have me:  
black and white,  
trapped like a trophy moth  
in the museum of your  
vagina.  
Filed under foot.  
The worm of untruths  
writhing like a telephone  
voice in the stabbed nurseries  
of my mind.

A room now bereft hangs  
wholly sad above an  
orphaned street—

Fruits are firm this day;  
your coarse laughter ripping  
through the market place.



*Something is There by Eleanor Leonne Bennett*

*Craig Reishus*

## **Tornado Hunters**

We always start with Mickey's Big Mouth.

»Because sometimes there ain't no pullin' over...«

Yesterday we captured one flattening a town,  
exploding mobile homes, cattle,  
absolutely no taste whatsoever for cars,  
snapping telephone poles like dad  
piling through the medicine cabinet,  
exploding Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Payless Shoes,  
ornery as hell to deliver this land straight back to the buffalo,  
as pawned from the Indians.

(If it's from Arkansas, Missouri, or Oklahoma,  
that's likely our footage that shook you.)

»Yes, mom, we're makin' a livin'...«

(Off-season we do weddings.)

# An Interview with Martin Linson

Marty Linson is an artist and art educator who lives and works in the St. Louis area. His figurative and abstract sculptures and works on paper have been gaining national and international attention. He has been busy preparing work for an upcoming show at Concrete Ocean in St. Louis and teaching at the new Art Institute of St. Louis. The following is from a recent conversation I had with the artist.

**JC:** You've had some recent international success?

**ML:** Yes, I won the International Olympic Committee Art Competition and the first official gold medal for the USA in the 2012 Olympics. The contest is held every Olympics as part of the art and culture portion of the overall event. This year 62 countries competed. I am only the second American to ever win.

**JC:** What was the artwork that won?

**ML:** A cast bronze sculpture called "Omnipotent Triumph" which is an abstraction of a Paralympian crossing the finish line with his arms raised in victory.

**JC:** So you actually won a gold medal?

**ML:** Right, the Olympics has always believed that art and culture should be showcased as well as athleticism so the winning artists are awarded a medal just like the athletes. Oddly enough I found a package in the mail the other day from China. It had customs stickers all over it. I opened it up and there was a gold medal in it with red white and blue ribbon. I looked closer and saw that it was a bottle opener.

**JC:** Do you know anyone in China?

**ML:** Not at all, I think it might have been a gift from the Chinese judge. I'll put it to good use.

**JC:** What does competition mean for you?

**ML:** The international attention is great for me and my career. The sculpture will be on display in London during the games and will later be housed in the IOC's Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland. This level of exposure is great for me but I am more proud that it draws attention to the subject of the sculpture, Paralympics.

**JC:** Why did you choose Paralympics as you subject for this competition?

**ML:** The series started as just athletes but I spent some time talking with some veterans who had lost limbs. I was sympathetic to the mental hurdles they had to overcome but I was more interested in how they were coping physically. How does one return

to the athletic physical condition after such a major setback? Their determination is inspiring and I thought it was important to represent their triumph over adversity.

**JC:** Tell me about your process, how do you get started on a piece like "Omnipotent Triumph?"

**ML:** Well I have always been interested in athletes and the human form. I draw the body every day and that is how this started, with sketches. For "Omnipotent Triumph" I also spent some time talking with athletes who had lost limbs and had to find a way to continue in sports. I wanted to capture the physical action of the forms in the material, to represent the moment of exhaustion and victory. I used wax to build the sculpture and took advantage of the materials qualities to help me express my vision. I chose to keep the sculpture abstract so the viewer would focus on the physical activity rather than the specifics.

**JC:** This is why you left the face blank?

**ML:** Right, I want the viewer to be able to see themselves in this situation. It could be any one of us.

**JC:** You have said that natural forms are a strong visual starting point for your work.

**ML:** The natural world is what we are most familiar with, although much of my work is abstract I am inspired by the things that surround us and every one of works has its foundation in nature.

As a sculptor I am also very interested in natural environments and simply observing nature. I think about place, location and how nature interacts with itself.

**JC:** What led you to become a sculptor?

**ML:** I grew up in a fairly creative and artistic family. My mother is a watercolorist and my dad is a skilled woodworker. I was originally trained in the graphic arts and photography but took some sculpture classes along the way. When I learned to sculpt the human form it just spoke to me drawing on all of my experiences. I love the process of sculpture, the steps involved in going from sketch, to ma-





*Omnipotent Triumph by Marty Linson*

quette, to finished work, especially casting metal.

I also like working directly in plaster. I find the immediacy of the material fascinating and the textures have a language of their own. Like in the Migrant Worker series.

**JC:** The Migrant Workers definitely have their own look compared to “Omnipotent Triumph” but there seems to be a connection.

**ML:** I personally feel that much of our history is being lost. Our country was built on hard work and struggle. I guess I am most inspired by people who are willing to work for what they want and who will do whatever it takes to achieve their goals.

**JC:** It would seem that your hard work and struggles have started to pay off.

**ML:** Well I have had some success recently both here and abroad but all I really want to do is promote art and show people that art is still relevant and makes a difference. If this notoriety helps draw attention to arts organizations and if it helps people become more aware of the Paralympics and the athletes that participate in them then I feel successful.

In the end, if my work helps one person to open up their eyes, then I’ve done my job as an artist.

**To see more of Linson’s work go to [linsonstudio.com](http://linsonstudio.com)**



*from the Migrant Worker Series by Marty Linson*



*from the Migrant Worker Series by Marty Linson*



*Untitled by Marty Linson*



*Untitled by Marty Linson*



*Portrait of Dust Bowl by Marty Linson*

*Lauren Suchenski*

## **Little, Little**

Well she was all much more than she ever knew, wasn't she? she was made of rubber and violin strings, of  
satin and circus tents  
she was made of the making and the molding of clay and cobwebs  
and little attics she wanted to crawl through as a child  
through a child's body, but not quite yet a child again  
she would have to wait three more silent infinities for that  
for that jagged longing to replace itself with redemption  
for release to reverberate  
for radios to reel around the rhythm of remembering  
well she was all the less and all the singing of the sea. she was the slamming of the car door in the mornings  
after the mornings after and she was the solid gold chest of loveless murmurs that were racing her down the  
hall, that were chasing her up the tree, that were making her into a more than she would ever know how to be.

# Does Pride Come Before a Fall?

## Moving Forward with Parkinson's Disease

*Christopher Sampson*

I fall to the ground and I can't help it. I wear shorts when it gets humid and warm. If I fall down, I usually fall forward, knees hitting the ground, and if it's on pavement or cement, it becomes a bloody mess. There have been times, like last summer, when my knees, forearms, elbows and hands all had open wounds. The lacerations and cuts are seeping and at all different stages of healing. The scabs are especially attractive.

I try to walk on grass or dirt to soften the blows. Last year I broke down and bought a cane. Sometimes it is very helpful. I usually just carry it along like a baton. If I am in a crowded place, I can get into trouble. Quite often the cane only puts off the inevitable. I start to shuffle, falling forward on to my hands and knees. This spring I invested in knee pads and gloves. A retired roller derby champ? Now when I fall it doesn't hurt and today you will only find a few scratches on my left forearm. Maybe I should buy a helmet too. On my birthday last March, I turned sixty, and my dogs can tell you that I did sixty pushups. Pushups help me. The dogs don't lie; unless of course you bribe them with a treat.

I freeze up. I approach a doorway and cannot move. The inertia sends my body forward, but my feet are stuck to the floor. Jeff, my partner and caregiver, sticks his leg out for me to step over it, this works so well and no one can tell you why. They actually have made a cane with a laser six inches from the cane's base. You step over the red light beam. It is too expensive to be believed. And then there is a method that I discovered myself that works to normalize my gait. I stop, and taking my time, inhaling deeply, I proceed ahead, walking heel to toe like on a tight rope, chin to chest. This usually garners an audience. I am challenged with Parkinson's disease. It isn't fun and it is not all that funny. It can be amusing if you don't have to live with it.

Sometimes my pills aren't working and I careen into walls. I can fall forward and to each side. I fall backwards too. I seemingly have no control and I fall repeatedly a number of times. I have dented my little blue Subaru with a body blow, getting out of the car and failing to find my balance. One early morning, I was trying to lift myself off the seat of the toilet, lost my balance, and sat back down so hard that I busted the tank. Once, leaning on a door jamb to regain my balance. I put my fist through our closet door. The pushups help me to push off the walls and floors in my way. It is funny.

When I was a boy I would make fun of the woman in the commercial shouting, "Help me! I've fallen and I can't get up!" I am certain that there are ten year olds out there laughing at me now. If they could only see me vacuuming on my knees.

Today is a beautiful spring morning. Beau, our fourteen year old chow mix needs assistance going in and out; Jeff is quite deft at obliging him. Jeff isn't here. Beau was barking for me and I went to help him. He has neuropathy in his back legs. With the sling in place, I try to get him up on all fours. I almost always miss the sweet spot. I fall. I land in a weed clump that you know had to have been previously peed on by both Jesse and Beau. Is more there than just the clump? Jesse, our yellow lab mix hates to have his butt tickled by the native Delaware grasses we call a lawn. This clump is six feet shy of Beau's target area. My shoes are surprisingly clean but I needed to get out of these grass soaked shorts, so after I got Beau back inside, I decided to go for a run. Beau was happy in front of his fan that blows gentle breezes and soothes his soul with steady streams of white noise. I wish we could walk together again. It's so hard watching him grow older.

Running around the block, pads in place, sans cane, I walked some. I ran the rest of the way like a champ. It is hard to fathom the same person who just yesterday fell in the Food Lion half a dozen times, can actually run. Beau was asleep, unimpressed.

When we were still living in California, Jeff decided to train for the year 2000 Chicago marathon. I had Parkinson's for about five years at the time and was still fairly asymptomatic. Jeff has bad feet, and with the physical problems we both faced, this way we could lookout for one another. The marathon run was for Aids Project Los Angeles, a worthy charity, and it would be a great challenge. Our race was a run/walk; we saw a lot of Chicago, neighborhood by neighborhood, which was really neat, but we lost our compadres along the way. Jeff and I finished the marathon with him holding me up for the last two miles, my body bent in two, so I was leaning from my waist to the left at a ninety degree angle. No matter how hard I tried to straighten up I just was not able to do so. I put my arm around his shoulder. Because of Jeff I was able to finish the race. Jeff is a remarkable person. He never complained about his feet and... I love him.



Jeff, my love, is so, so lucky dealing with me day to day. This is what he gets to see besides me crashing to the floor. It is quite the litany: my inability to do anything in a timely manner. Today, it can take me twenty minutes to button a shirt. I finally finish it and come to find that I buttoned them wrong again. Having Parkinson's disease is numbing, and it takes its toll; you can blink and discover that your grip on the glass tumbler you have always sipped from slips in your grasp. Do I need two hands? Jeff gave me plastic glasses as a present at Christmas. I am not ready for those yet, but they are there in the cupboard of my future. I cannot legibly write or print my name. My writing gets progressively smaller and indecipherable. When taking directions over the phone, I write them down two or three times. I can't figure out what I jotted on the paper even if the call came in five minutes ago. Lately, my favorite trick is to be at the store in a crowded line purchasing something and it takes me an eternity to get the bills out of my wallet, or the discount card and the change from my pockets. Believe me, it is no trick. Opening up anything in plastic is nearly impossible for me. I looked it up. It is called "wrap rage." Swallowing can be difficult. Sometimes I choke and cough. Beau can't stand the sound of me coughing and hobbles to get outside. Then there is the issue of speaking loud enough to be heard by others. I think that I am rudely talking too loud when in actuality I can't be heard by anyone. My diction can be compromised and I feel that I can come across as an idiot.

I have become increasingly lazy, unconfident and very dependant. I can't fight these symptoms. I try to adapt, then the game changes.

The litany continues.

Excuse me, I forgot falling asleep during TV time. I take meds every three hours. They make me sleepy. This frustrates and infuriates Jeff. At bedtime I have insomnia. My life seems to be coming apart; falling apart. Even with increased medication, the disease progresses. Now I need to have Jeff cut my food for me. Jeff gets so tired of this Parkinson's laundry list. It seems endless.

When I first started having problems with Parkinson's, I had dystonia in my left foot. That became very apparent after running the Marathon in Chicago. After destroying two couches with the continually rotating and clenched up left leg and foot, what could I do? I chose to be a candidate for a new treatment for Parkinson's, Deep Brain Stimulation.

This is a very sophisticated and scary procedure. Even scarier was the reason I chose to have this operation when I did. As my meds increased so did the side effects. I did not know about many of the adverse symptoms.

I was horny, as if someone had given me Spanish Fly. Delusional, I began exhibiting very strange behavior, a nightmare I couldn't talk about to anyone. I became this over-

sexed middle aged man. Jeff was very aware of my wolfish behavior. I was not subtle. I had no guilt and no conscience. I was a monster.

I called my doctor and described the problem. On the phone there was a long pause. The doctor's nurse in Philly told me to stop taking the Mirapex at once.

When I told my family, it was embarrassing. The drug is named Mirapex and it is famous for putting you to sleep when you should be wide awake. It makes you crazy. They describe among all the dozens of other side effects: 'unusual or intense urges' (ie: gambling, sexual urges). I don't gamble!

My family rushed me out to California to do the surgery. Dr. Duma said I would all be connected by Christmas. We all thought that this procedure might be the answer, to help Jeff and I have a better life.

This surgery is not for the faint of heart. I had to be brave.

The prep for the DBS surgery is uncomfortable. They screw on this head cage so you can't move while they are poking around in your brain. There's no pain, but you feel the pressure as the doctors tighten the screws into your skull. They wake you when they're ready to insert the leads into the deep recesses of your brain. They wake you and ask you questions. Do you feel this? Do you feel that? When the doctors are satisfied with the new connections, they run a wire down the inside of your neck and attach it to a stimulator that runs on batteries. This stimulator you wear in your chest. It is smaller than a deck of *Chance* or *Community Chest* Monopoly cards. It sticks out very noticeably in my chest. When they finish you can see very clearly the bumps on your forehead where the wires are anchored. If you had horns there you would look like the Devil himself. Dr. Duma was very conscious of the bumps so he countersunk the bolts going into the skull to be cosmetologically more appealing.

The miracle of this surgery is instantaneous after they program and start the stimulator. Tremor is gone, you can walk normally, concentrate, speaking clearly again. I was kind of disappointed that the dystonia in my left foot and leg was still there. Dr. Duma said I would have to live with it. They also said that after a five year honeymoon, I would be prone to falling. I could freeze, not being able to move. I thought that I heard him say the sexual promiscuity that pestered me would still persist.

I was grateful and very pleased. I felt so much better.

I did change medications. I was still horny. The new meds now post the same warnings as the Mirapex does. Jeff put me on a short leash; no Craigslist! All of this is so unfair to Jeff, having to be bothered by my bad behavior. I used to be a proud and fairly confident person; now I have to watch my every step... short leash, indeed. We have been together

for twenty years. To be plagued with Parkinson's and infidelity is just too incredibly cruel. I have fallen. Monster!

Two years later I somehow broke a lead. I was driving down the highway and the sky turned into a psychedelic landscape. Something was very wrong. I don't know how I did it. A wire could have snapped on its own. My neurologist, Suzanne, recommended a surgeon here on the east coast, Dr. Levine. He did a great job putting the new leads in. When he was about to put me out, he had his staff, students and another doctor besides the anesthesiologist staged, like he was going to conduct a concert. He was meticulous and demanding.

Falling asleep is so simple and comfortable under anesthesia. Counting ten backwards, you reach seven and you are asleep. Awakening is bizarre and unsettling. He woke me up and I asked hopefully "How did it go?" He responded: "We are just getting started." That wasn't what I wanted to hear. I was kept awake more than the last time I was on this table with my head in a cage. My bravery became tearful and whiney, yet probing to find the exact spots he wanted to explore, he asked me about my left foot. It was completely relaxed. The dystonia was gone! I was thrilled! Our new couch would be spared.

Dr. Levine complained that he couldn't loosen the bolts in my skull because they were counter sunk. He was confounded by Dr. Duma's clever attempt to hide the bumps. His getting them loose again involved some muscle. I couldn't feel pain, but I felt the pressure of him trying to loosen those bolts.

I am constantly sustained by electricity, tiny lightning bolts from my breast to my brain. Yes, bolts and all, just like Frankenstein. I am going on fifteen years now. Without the D.B.S. surgery, I would most likely have to live my life with a walker or wheelchair.

I joined the Parkinson's Education and Support Group of Sussex County last year. They have adopted an exercise program in conjunction with the University of Delaware and Beebe Hospital. As my present neurologist, Alexandra will confirm: exercise is the best medicine for Parkinson's patients.

The exercises are rather simple. We start with touching finger tips. But, first we walk laps around the chairs and tables in this wonderful space donated by the Elks Club near Lewes, Delaware. Sometimes we mix it up, walking side to side, pretending to getting our seats at the movies: "Excuse me." You better watch it when I say excuse me in a real movie theater because I will probably step on your toes.

Cristel, wife and caregiver to Joe, likes me and has my bag ready for me. I'm running later and later these days. This brown sack holds my gear which consists of two, 2 pound dumbbells, a piece of p.v.c. with a rubber band attached, and

a small toy jump rope made for the youngest of children. For my birthday she brought me bars of German chocolate and she whispered, "You are special." I wonder how "special" I would be if she found me in front of the computer with my pants fallen down around my ankles. Joe and Cristel are both eighty-two with a daughter about my age. How very nice they are. Would they still find me special?

Our first leader, Sal had to leave us, due to a knee injury, so Sonny took over for him. Sonny has a monologue he delivers as we count reps during over an hour of exercises. We hear some of his non-sequiters but he is his best audience. You can tell because he is almost always the first to laugh. He is a terrific personality and he truly enjoys his role. He names some of the exercises after people. One of the exercises is 'Jerry's Mud Pie' and another is 'Chris' Golf Swing'. His least favorite is the 'Sit to stand' exercise. I have no problem with 'Sit to stand', yet I am the only class member I know that broke his toilet in the wee hours in the morning trying to stand.

There is a vocal part of our routine. I was asked to lead this when Sonny became our fearless leader. This was Sonny's job. When Sonny does this he is hilarious. I am not nearly as entertaining. The point of this exercise is to loudly echo the voice of the leader:

Vocal Exercise

Leader: Hey! Group: Hey!

Leader: Au forgot! Group: Au forgot!

leader: I'm sorry. Group: I'm sorry.

Leader: He's so cute! Group: He's so cute!

Leader: She's so cute! Group: She's so cute!

Leader: Ha, Ha, Ha! Group: Ha, Ha, Ha!

Leader: Shhhh! Group: Shhhh!

Leader: That's fantastic! Group: That's fantastic!

Leader: And, that's enough. Group: And, that's enough. Joe adds: "Aflac!"; "Aflac!"

Everybody enjoys being loud. I thought about changing the focus to dealing with articulation. I compiled a book of phrases, old commercials, limericks and tongue twisters such as "Picky people pick Peter Pan Peanut Butter. Tis the peanut butter picky people pick." I think that this addition to the echo exercise makes a lot of sense and it isn't easy to lead or respond to. Sometimes I mess up, but I am always well intentioned, maybe even a bit proud. I think the dozen of us enjoy that two minute respite, before we go on to working with weights and our balance exercises. The kitchen staff is probably annoyed three times a week when that man is yelling "Hey!" It is not a Rebel yell, but it could be a Gay Yankee, "Hey!" Hardly the roar of a monster.

*Daniel Hedges*

## **Judy Garland**

When I realized that you were born in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, which is on the Mississippi, your ability to 'haunt' increased by a factor of twenty-nine. In our thoughts about legends, the haunting ratio is mathematical, expressed and measured by various notches of beauty, including 'hometown' and connection to natural lore, such as proximity to sacred 'literary' rivers.



*Holding On by Eleanor Leonne Bennett*

*J.A. Roney*

## **Wanderer into the Void**

Mother bought the small house in Riverdale  
 just before I was five—  
 side-stroked brown brick,  
 it howled hungry for humans.  
 Bold front door exposed  
 the escutcheon's blotch  
 as it sat atop a low-ceilinged basement  
 like a mousetrap, baited and ready;  
 but at night I heard the far-off whistle  
 of a southbound train.

Two bedrooms, small kitchen, living  
 and dining room  
 squeezed hard below attic,  
 my room, where a freight train's whistle  
 pulled me from four walls  
 as it pierced nighttime's void.

Blue-tiled bathroom was spiteful  
 as Mother permed graying hair. Small house  
 sneered at Mother's perfunctory workday kiss  
 good-bye placed on my cheek  
 while Grandmother cooked, cleaned,  
 and laundered white sheets  
 in its bowels—it smirked  
 as Grandmother's fingers,  
 translucent skin over flesh like segments of orange,  
 began to twist and stiffen over piano's ivory keys.

Thieving house! Stole her music of silent film and holiday,  
 but generously gave cancer in trade.  
 When her grandmother voice weakened, her house voice grew—  
 Schäm dich! she would say to me,  
 the side-stroked girl, and press upon my tongue  
 soda-mint, meant to soothe and settle  
 but pungent when I'd remember the house  
 made her put my dog to sleep,  
 Because she said, he's a nuisance—  
 and that train whistle blew all night long.

Wicked house in which we lived, ate at my back,  
bone of my spine, at the soles of my feet—  
made my mother's brother a giant,  
a tossed hot stone, a wolf within walls.  
But, I grew tall, arms stretched out windows and doors;  
still, the house squeezed back—  
took each of them, chewed till it swallowed them whole.  
Grandmother didn't know the house made her cruel—  
would take her and her crucifix between its teeth.  
Mother knew its intentions; it was her house.

Both had allowed its big small house hunger  
with their words and silence. Grandmother and Mother,  
so big you both seemed, in that small house.

Through single-pane glass from east-facing window  
I saw footsteps I'd follow south,  
always south, leaving the groaning  
belly of that house.

Nefarious rooms and hallways with secrets  
surrounded by railroad tracks leading backward  
to stockyards; forward to fields and towns  
and an ocean of everything beyond what had been.

I told that house I was stronger,  
its quiet-killing couldn't bind this bastard girl  
to its mortar and sewage.  
I declared its sin forgivable,  
let it starve, no glancing back,  
instead, followed that train whistle south.

I, der wanderer ins nichts,  
let the house roar its death pang—  
its bowels empty, for lack of me.

*Changming Yuan*

## **Free Postmodernism Found in a Washroom**

Dear Music,  
Why can't we just get along?  
Sincerely,  
Art.

Dear Art,  
It's because we is so much more intellectual than you are.  
Duh



*New Life by Eleanor Leonne Bennett*



*Solitude by Tony Schanuel*

# Embarrassing Moments and Bad Decisions

*Justin Keberlein*

## January

Hooking up with the daughter of one of your father's coworkers. Yeah, she fucked you in the backyard of that party out behind the toolshed, and yeah, you were way drunk on the Czechoslovakian Schnapps she split with you, but nothing is ever as simple as a drunken fuck up against a rotting wooden shed in the snow. You end up spending the night at her place after the party, and even though the next two weeks are full of the some of the most wild sex you've had (or seen for that matter) it ends badly when she catches you snorting the Oxycontin you found in her medicine cabinet. She complains to her mom, who complains to your dad, who calls you a fuck up the next time he sees you, which incidentally, happens to be your 21st birthday.

## February

Moshing too hard to Napalm Death at The Rave in Milwaukee. It was fucking Napalm Death though, and you drove an hour and half to see them despite the show being held at a notoriously sketchy club staffed with thick necked, aggressive bouncers. When you get there you're too keyed up to drink much, because you actually want to remember seeing your favorite band shred, even if they are way past their prime. You wait diligently through the local openers (who sucked) and the Cannibal Corpse rip-offs who played right before Napalm Death went on. Finally, after what feels like hours, Barney and crew take the stage. It's like all the anger you ever felt in your entire life is sucked straight out of you and made audible. You bound into pit shoulder first, slam into someone and get thrown around like a rag doll. It's great until you feel your elbow smash into someone's skull, which, under normal circumstances would have been ok, except this time you hit one of the security guards. Next thing you know, this macho man has his Maglite against your throat and is dragging you out into the parking lot where he "accidentally roughs you up" as he ejects you from the property.

## March

Passing out at the girl you're sort of dating's apartment, during a party where her boyfriend present. You're in a bad mood all night because from the moment you walk in the door, Sam treats you like dog shit on Christmas morning. She's drunk, all over that guy she keeps telling you she's going to dump, and says maybe four words

to you the entire time. The only reason you even bother to stay is the case of Miceys in the fridge. You make it your goal to finish at least half of it on your own.

Later, everyone is too hammered to leave, including you. Sam and her boyfriend and everyone else pass out in a pile of couch cushions and ratty blankets. You use your jacket as a pillow and fall asleep under the kitchen table. There's so much malt liquor sloshing through your veins you don't feel Sam climb underneath the table with you and nestle herself into the position of the little spoon. The kick-in-the-ribs-wake-up-call her boyfriend gives you the next morning causes you to puke all over not only yourself, but Sam's hair.

## April

Taking acid with kids you don't know that well, who also happen to be your band mates in your death metal band Corpsegasm. Sure, you have a great trip, hanging out, unlocking the astral significance of the shag rug, and writing what you think will be a two hour epic that will make metal heads everywhere go out and snap their Morbid Angel records in half. You don't expect to wake up with every door and window in your house open, missing a week's worth of groceries.

## May

Bringing a coworker back to your place because it's totally obvious you both want to go to town on each other. Her name is Jill. She's tall, dark haired and so pale she looks sick. The sexual tension at work is so thick that you can't believe your manager hasn't said something to either one of you about the employee relationship policy. You go out for coffee after the store closes, and when you guys finally get back to the closet you call your room, she wastes no time throwing you on to your bed and pulling out your dick. She goes down on you, and even when she starts fingering you ass, it's so intense you can't even concentrate on anything but the in and out of her fingers and the wet seal of her mouth. Your gut rumbles from all the coffee you drank and when you come, you come so hard you lose control of your guts and shit all over her hand. Or at least you think you do. You're so mortified you run to the bathroom and lock yourself in. Even after you hear her leave, you sit in the bathtub all night wondering if you're going to have to find a new job.



## June

Catching up to the car that threw a 22oz Taco Bell cup at you on your bike and giving him some “u-lock justice.” You just wanted to scare the shit out of him by slamming your bike lock into his trunk. But your aim was off, and you shattered his back window.

## July

Reading Bukowski after a six month funk. After a long night of complaining about your recent bad luck streak, a friend of yours says you should read this guy Charles Bukowski. He’s a drunk with a bad attitude like you. You can’t decide whether or not that’s a compliment, or his underhanded attempt at an intervention. He gives you *Women*. It’s the first book you’ve finished since high school. Even though the guy is hungover way more than you are, and you could only hope to use your cock as much as this guy apparently did, something clicks. You feel justified somehow, inspired even. You decided to keep living like you have been, and to become a poet like Chinaski. The first poem you write is about Jill, and you Facebook her a copy.

## August

Riding your bike home from a *Lord of the Rings* extended edition marathon. Twelve hours of non-stop fantasy action, Mountain Dew, and gravity bong hits left staring down an orc on the front lines of the battle of Pelennor fields, but as cool as that is, none of it prepares you for the drunk guy who takes a wild left turn into you, launching you and your bike ten feet into the air. You hit the concrete in front of a bar, and the guy who hits you speeds off. It was a bad summer for bike riding.

## September

Deciding to continue on with college. You’ve wanted to drop out all summer, but you signed on for another year just as a precaution. Something about the way you’ve been drifting makes you hold on to school like it’s some kind of life preserver, like if you quit school like you quit everything else, you’ll end up in recovery or worse. Your first class is American Lit, and you can’t pay attention because as soon as you walk in you notice this girl sitting in the back row, where you were planning on sitting. She’s stunning in a way that you can’t even handle. Her hair is shorter than yours and her eyes are huge and inviting. Through the course of the fall semester, you pass your class, get to know the girl (whose name is Felicia) and after a few non-disastrous dates, ask her out. She says yes, and officially becomes your girlfriend. Actually, this is the only

month where nothing too terrible happens to you, even if you’re constantly looking behind your back for the guy whose back window you smashed.

## October

Dressing in drag for a Halloween party. You and Felicia come up with the idea after watching Martin Lawrence in *Big Mamma’s House*. You don’t have a fat suit, but you do have a beard, so you decide to go as the bearded lady. The costume is a big hit at the party and you black out drunk. A few days later, Felicia is acting distant. When you ask her why, she pulls up pictures of the party on a friend’s Facebook. There is a guy you don’t know wearing a flasher’s costume. He’s got his trench coat open, exposing a foot and a half long rubber cock. You’re on the end of it, going down on it with the enthusiasm of a porn star. She says maybe you guys should take a break for a while.

## November

Getting in a fist fight with your ex-methhead uncle on the night before Thanksgiving. Uncle Steve hadn’t been to a family event in maybe ten years, so when he calls your grandparents and tells them he’s dropping by for Thanksgiving, responsibility mysteriously falls on your shoulders to take him out the first night he gets into town. Your mom explains it to you like this: He loved Iron Maiden growing up, and your band plays metal, right? Go have a beer with him, feel him out. So you take your uncle out to a bar where you won’t run into anyone you know. He turns out to be alright, until he gets drunk way too quick. He starts throwing the word faggot around, and when you tell him to stop, he pushes you off your bar stool. You punch him in the eye, he hits you in the gut. The bartender hops from behind the bar and throw you both out. Uncle Steve takes a cab, and you drive home. No one talks about his black eye at the dinner table the next day.

## December

Looking for socks in your Dad’s sock drawer. You’re back for Christmas and you just wanted something to provide a layer between your Doc Martins and your feet. All of yours were dirty, so you decide to borrow some from your dad. Digging for a matching pair, you find a pack of rough rider studded condoms, a pack of Cialis, and a pack of Marlboro reds, which instead of cigarettes, contains a few joints and a gram of what looks like cocaine. Your brain reels, but then you remember that your parents’ anniversary is this weekend and they’re apparently planning to party.

Mark Spitzer

## ARKASQUATCH!

Much has been made of the Fouke Monster  
down in the Texarkana corner:

like t-shirts, bumper stickers

four B

Boggy Creek movies

and a knee-slapping trilogy

by Smokey Crabtree

who told me when I interviewed him

“If you can’t help me

don’t hurt me”

so I won’t

instead

I’ll concentrate on the most

overshadowed stories from this state;

the lost, the dismissed

tales of upright primates

stalking the swamps

mountains

and timbered terrain

where there are hundreds of accounts

from hundreds of citizens

claiming they’ve seen

a Bigfoot or two

so strap on your safety belts

because here comes the most extensive list

of Arkansas Sasquatch incidents

ever assembled

in postmodern

American

crypto-verse...

(pronounced like “cow”

with a K at the end)

(starting with Smokey and

the Fouke Monster, 1974)



## Nineteenth Century

- 1834, Greene County:  
led by Col. Cross and Dr. Sullivan  
a hunting party after a cattle-marauding wild man  
reported an enormous creature  
with “long locks that fairly enveloped his neck and shoulders . . .  
leaping from twelve to fourteen  
feet at a time”  
(Arkansas Gazette, Memphis Enquirer,  
Gettysburg Star and Banner, 1851)

- 1856, near Texarkana:  
a possé in pursuit of a “stout, athletic man . . .  
completely covered with hair”  
chased its prey on to a frozen lake  
where it fell through the ice  
but busted up on the other side  
pulled a hunter off his mount  
bit a chunk from his shoulder  
and tore an eye out  
(Caddo Gazette, New York Tribune,  
Wisconsin Patriot, 1856; Arkansas  
Gazette, June 27, 1971)

## Early Twentieth Century

- 1920, Logan County:  
a “Hairy manlike creature” was observed  
harassing a horse;  
a witness having seeing  
“something similar on . . . Pilot Mountain (knob)  
a few years before”  
(Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization,  
bfro.net, report # 4088)

- 1943, Lonoke County:  
a bus traveling from Memphis to Fort Smith  
stopped so the driver could urinate  
but he leapt back in  
said, “Hold on everybody,  
there’s a big ape out there that almost got me!”

the bus took off and years later  
quite a few riders reported  
a “big foot crossing the road”

(BFRO report # 4088)



## 1960s

- 1960, near Madison County:
  - a 94-year-old Ozarkian
  - reported topping a ridge in his car
  - then seeing a “large, human-like” being
  - heading up the slope
  - “covered with dark greyish colored hair,
  - except on its forehead”
  - which was “nearly white”

it appeared to be “very old,  
and in very poor condition”  
upon further investigation  
multiple tracks were discovered

(Reclusive Forest Primate Research Project,  
alabamabigfoot.com, report # 25)
  
- 1960 or 1961, three miles west of Rush:
  - a resident saw “a very large, dark man-like figure . . .
  - covered with black or dark brown hair”
  - making for his chicken coup

a foal went missing  
so witnesses hid on top of a shed  
which an alleged NAPE  
shook that very night

(North American Primate)  
  
(RFPRP report # 002AR06—60)
  
- 1961, Lee County:
  - an eleven-year-old boy described
  - a “very tall [creature with] long wavy hair . . .
  - looking in the ditches”

the boy yelled for his mother and sister  
and the grrrr-liath scrambled into the woods  
where a massive footprint  
was gawked upon

(BFRO report # 7234)
  
- 1969, Little River County:
  - while camping out in Cottonwood Shoals
  - a family dog began acting funny
  - the mother went to “take a leek”
  - and began screaming
  - while the oldest brother started shooting
  - at a seven-foot Arkayeti
  - circling the camp
  - with a pointy head
  - and glowing eyes

[sic]  
  
(BFRO report # 1944)



## 1970s

- 1970, Madison County:

two boys riding in the back of a pickup  
saw what they thought was a blasted tree  
but then it started taking large strides

the fur was supposedly  
“dark brown in color,  
longish but not dangling,  
and it had red eyes”

(BFRO report # 2957)

- 1971, Logan County:

motorists spotted “a small primate  
standing on two feet beside the road”  
looking like a chimpanzee

(RFPRP report # 17)

- 1972, near the same location:

a driver stopped to fix his car  
and was approached by an apey entity  
“covered in hair and walking like a man”

(Ibid)

- 1975, near Jacksonville:

a child on the Air Force Base  
saw a furry figure hulking through the trees  
with a “flattened nose and pointed head”

(BFRO report # 10919)

- 1975, thirty-five miles west of Hot Springs:

two brothers were eating Spaghetti-Os  
when something resembling  
“a dirty old hairy hippie with glowing eyes”  
glared through the window  
then rocked the trailer  
and busted the steps;  
a mongo footprint  
in the dust

(Texas Bigfoot Research Conservancy,  
texasbigfoot.com, report # 03080016)

- 1975, near El Dorado:

while exploring a motorcycle trail  
a couple kids on bicycles  
saw “an 8 foot black figure”  
watching from behind a tree  
a “head crest” was noted  
as the boys bolted  
and the creature gave chase

(BFRO report # 3143)

- 1977, on the outskirts of Squirrel:  
a gigantopithecus was glimpsed  
ambling through an electric fence  
“like it was honey suckle vine”

(BFRO report # 4093)

- 1979, near Coal Hill:  
two boys saw “a large man  
squatting on the rail road tracks”  
but then it rose to “8 feet in height”

the kids fled, recalling how an uncle  
“driving across the bridge on 64”  
stopped when a wookie  
“hit the hood with his arms  
then roared and ran “into  
the river bottoms”

(TBRC report # 03080009)



## 1980s

- 1980, Lake Conway:  
out fishing, an eleven-year-old and his father  
heard limbs cracking  
as a seven-foot “bigfoot”  
emerged from the brush  
it “was absolutely  
not aggressive”

(TRBC report # not listed  
but available at [texasbigfoot.com/FaulknerCOAR1.htm](http://texasbigfoot.com/FaulknerCOAR1.htm))

- 1981, near Siloam Springs:  
a teenager on his way to work  
saw “something by the bridge”  
he identified as a Bigfoot  
“digging at the ground”

(BFRO report # 6178)

- 1984, between Gurdon and Prescott:  
a railroad worker saw something bipedal  
“maybe 8 ft. high”  
he also heard “some type of growling”  
like “the gobble” of a “shack tube”

(BFRO report # 3519)

- 1985, south of Mena:  
 rounding a bend, a woman and her ex  
 almost T-boned a “huge figure  
 7 to 8 feet tall”  
 just standing there w/ outstretched arms (TRBC report # 03090006)
  
- 1985, near Rocky Branch:  
 two gynomous forest dwelling primates  
 were reported “wrestling,  
 grappling and roaring  
 as if in mortal combat” (TBRC report # 03080019)
  
- 1985, Ozark National Forest:  
 someone gathering ginseng roots  
 saw what appeared to be  
 a man in a fur coat  
 so got “the hell out of Dodge”  
 but went back later  
 and found some big-ass tracks  
  
 (TBRC report # 03080012)
  
- 1986, near Bradford:  
 a child saw a hoary sapien  
 dashing through a field  
 its hands “straight  
 down and flat” (BFRO report # 9753)
  
- 1988, Greene County near Paragould:  
 a couple making out behind a school  
 spotted a nine-foot-tall silhouette  
 swaying behind a chain-link fence (BFRO report # 2744)
  
- 1988, Sebastian County:  
 a fisherman fishing near Huntington  
 beheld an eight-foot man-like creature  
 making “whoooop whoooop” sounds  
 and smacking the ground  
  
 this person also noted  
 “Its face was very long  
 with a very pronounced lower lip,  
 almost like the orangutan  
 that Clint Eastwood had as a side-kick” (BFRO report # 8527)



## 1990s

- 1990, Ouachita National Forest:  
workers repairing a power line  
reported a “large hair-covered,  
man-like creature”  
hunching along by Lake Winona  
(RFPRP report # unlisted but available at  
[www.alabamabigfoot.com/bigfoot/reports/  
RFPreportSC1.htm](http://www.alabamabigfoot.com/bigfoot/reports/RFPreportSC1.htm))
  
- 1992, near Hot Springs:  
two friends parked at Lake Hamilton  
heard noises that sounded like cats fighting  
then witnessed a gorilla-guy  
“covered in fur or hair”  
(BFRO report # 24254)
  
- 1992 or 1993, Saline County:  
a boy who heard what sounded like a woman screaming  
saw a “large hair-covered” apeman  
rubbing up against a tree  
(RFPRP report # 14)
  
- 1994, Benton County:  
a good ole boy out four-wheeling  
“seen the boog foot walking”  
it appeared to be  
“7-8 feet tall”  
(BFRO report # 7045)
  
- 1994, Little River County:  
a hunter walking the RR tracks  
heard branches breaking in the brush  
as a “large black figure”  
with a skunky stank  
emerged from the woods  
so he hid in a coal car  
  
having camped in a Bronco a few years back  
when something “rocked the vehicle”  
he was pretty sure  
it was the “Gun Flats Booger”  
(TBRC report # 03090010)



- 1994, near Eureka Springs:  
the child from the '75 Jacksonville sighting  
(now an adult)  
got a gander at a Bigfoot in his brights  
three other witnesses  
backed up this report (BFRO report # 9507)
  
- 1994, the Ouachitas:  
chillaxing on a logging road  
a teetotaler was shocked to see  
a totally “human-like creature”  
tearing down the mountain on all fours  
“throwing large rocks  
and logs from its path” (RFPRP report # 46)
  
- 1995, Ozark National Forest:  
a passenger in a car spotted  
“a very large grey form”  
trekking up the side of a hill (FPRP report # 23)
  
- 1996, outside of Arkadelphia:  
a “very tall creature” in a pasture  
spooked “the cows pretty bad”  
so a farmer called the cops  
on whatever’d been killing  
cattle in that spot (BFRO report # 1638)
  
- 1996, north of Ozark:  
three siblings who’d hiked in Cat Holler  
told their brother they’d seen “an ape”  
hanging out by a run-down house  
  
the next morning they went to check it out  
and saw “a small black” monkeyman  
“standing on the porch” (RFPRP report # 17)
  
- 1999, Saline County:  
a poacher was cited  
for taking potshots  
at a Bigfoot  
  
police corporal Oscar Gerard Jr.  
“explained that shooting at a Sasquatch  
was just as bad as shooting at a deer  
seeing as how it would be endangered”  
if it existed (Arkansas Wildlife,  
Nov-Dec 2009)



## 2000s

- 2001, near Herbine and Rison:  
the “odor of raw sewage and rotting meat”  
was sensed by someone who identified  
something “about 8 feet high  
[with] long, ape like arms”  
  
(BFRO report # 2931)
- 2002, south of Low Gap:  
after hearing the sound of a hollow log  
being repeatedly struck by a rock  
a small game hunter came across  
a squatting grunting manimal  
defecating in the woods  
so grabbed his semi-auto rifle  
and emptied his clip  
into it  
with the jumbo shagman hot on his heels  
the hunter made it to his truck  
which he crashed in his rush  
to escape a raging ape  
  
(RFPRP report # 24)
- 2002, Pig Trail National Scenic Byway:  
a “well known” musician from NW AR  
saw “a large, dark colored, humanish-like figure”  
standing in the road  
he got within thirty yards  
and it sprinted off  
  
(RFPRP report # 22)
- 2002, swamp near El Dorado:  
a squirrel hunter got “a whiff  
of the most foul odor” he ever smelled  
then heard “growling type sounds”  
and three squealing hoots  
as a “tall reddish looking creature”  
vanished in the woods  
  
(BFRO report # 10913)
- 2002, Washington County:  
while hanging out in a creek bed  
two friends met a big brown oranguthang  
the width of a refrigerator  
with a “real long head”  
  
(BFRO report # 5316)
- 2003, Cleveland County:  
a guy on the shoulder taking a whiz  
smelled “a very strong odor”  
then saw a “hairy creature  
7 to 8 feet tall”  
  
(BFRO report # 18972)

- 2003, near Russelville:  
 since something was upsetting the cows  
 a rancher and his grandfather  
 grabbed a pair of binoculars  
 then drove to the watering pond  
 where they watched “a very large man . . .  
 around 8 feet tall”  
 turn and walk away (BFRO report # 7815)
  
- 2005, Hot Springs County:  
 a man spotted something that looked like “an ape”  
 rapidly traversing a fence line (BFRO report # 13211)  
 —go figure
  
- 2005, McConnel Ridge:  
 two young coon hunters heard  
 a “very loud, monkey-like screaming”  
 so abandoned their dog  
 but returned with more firepower  
 only to encounter  
 “an unusual and obnoxious odor”  
 the dog came home later  
 torn up and whimpering (RFPRP report # 19)
  
- 2006, near Crosset:  
 a married couple in a car  
 almost hit a towering critter  
 that “was NOT a bear!”  
 but it did have  
 “bright and piercing” eyes (TBRC report # 03080003)
  
- 2006, Poinsett County:  
 a man on a riding mower  
 towing his dog in a small trailer  
 ran into “a really tall man  
 with hair entangled in briars and leaves”  
  
 this witness recounted his father describing  
 something in the night like  
 a cross between a lady and  
 a panther screaming (TBRC report # 03080018)

- 2006, Lafayette County:  
 an angler near the Red River  
 was startled by what sounded  
 like a cow crossed with a cougar  
 then saw a colossus  
 “9 feet tall”  
 (TBRC report # 03080013)
  
- 2007, Woodruff County:  
 while running “dogs on rabbits”  
 a hunter witnessed something  
 “as tall and wide as a standard door . . .  
 6’8 - 7’0 tall and 36” - 40” wide”  
 (RFPRP report # 70)
  
- 2008, foothills of the Caddo Mountains:  
 the carcasses of mutilated deer  
 were discovered with an injured dog  
 a 200-pound Rottweiler was found as well  
 with its back legs torn plumb off  
 this occurred by a Bigfoot baiting site  
 where sheep had been reported missing  
 an eighteen-inch track was also found  
 smushed into an anthill  
 (RFPRP report # 62)
  
- 2008, Arkansas County:  
 three off-duty officers  
 fishing for crappie on Old River Lake  
 smelled “a bad smell like body odor”  
 then saw a hirsute human  
 gripping a fish  
 in its mouth  
 (TBRC report # 03080034)
  
- 2010, Grant County:  
 through a 24X range-finder scope  
 an old timer spotted an upright monsto-man  
 making off with a small dog or pig  
 while two other witnesses  
 ogled through binoculars  
 describing it as “burnt brown  
 with stringy looking hair”  
 (RFPRP report # 71)



And that ain't even the half of it—  
 since I refrained from listing  
 all incidents from Mercer Bayou  
 Miller County and  
 the Sulphur River Bottoms  
 which have had enough publicity

I also left out numerous sightings  
 from numerous frequently cited sources  
 that our regional Squatch authority  
 Tal H. Branco  
 (who I interviewed twice)  
 considers untrustworthy

So what do I make of all this?  
 Absolutely Nothing!  
 This study is kaput, I'm through with it  
 but you can still read all about it  
 in Proze Attack  
 or just come to  
 your own conclusions

(Six Gallery Press, 2010)

like every human who ever evolved  
 from another form of what some primates  
 have faith is still out there  
 leaving us with enigmatic prints  
 random tufts of mysterious fur  
 bizarre recording  
 and blurry film

but mostly  
 flat out pranks and narratives  
 of our own  
 DNA.



*Driven by Eleanor Leonne Bennett*

# God and Mooney are Indisposed

*Jenean McBrearty*

"Is it Nee-chee or Nee-cha?"

"Does it matter? He's dead," Lars said. I should have known he was having another one of his funk-a-doodles. He was drinking sugar-free cocoa mix made with water. He was worried about his calorie and sugar intake, which meant he was having a bout of mortality angst. Ordinarily, I'd be sympathetic and give him a blow job and that would perk up his spirits, but I was having a bout of hoping-it-goes-away myself. My father, Marvin Beaumont, had died ten days ago and nobody bothered to tell me. If I hadn't signed up for a Google Alert, I'd never have known.

Lars was naked, sitting cross-legged on the floor, staring at a tray on which he'd set his Bugs Bunny mug of coco and two quarter-sized short-bread cookies, so he didn't see me roll my eyes and flip him off. Did he really have a traveling third eye on his head?

"I saw that," he said and that seemed to confirm the existence of the eye. But then again, he knows me so well.... "I paid the rent, Mooney," he said.

"Thank-you," I said. "I made the car payment. But back to Friedrich."

"It's nee-che. Like a short sneeze. Like people who are so emotionally constipated they can't go AHHH-CHOOOO. They go, ah-che." Lars was an excellent teacher. I believed his recurring blue-blahs were the result of wasted talent. He taught seventh grade social studies at Bateman Middle School. He pretended it was pre-philosophy the way seventh grade science teachers pretended they taught pre-med. "Why the sudden interest in my superstar? You have Steve Jobs."

"If this going to be another discussion about my materialism and your nihilism," I said, "I'm not up to it today, Sweetie."

"I wish you wouldn't call me Sweetie." The guys from high school still called him Mangler. Lars had to wear long-sleeved shirts because of his death grunge punk metal Nazi ink. I'd had my one tattoo—a small Thumper on my right thigh—removed in case there was an emergency at work and my skirt came off. As it turned out, it was an unnecessary

procedure. With my father gone, I didn't have to live in fear of a racy headline: Computer Mart CEO Bares Hare. Lars leaned back, stretched and opened his legs, as though trying to cradle the tray with his tentacles. He was yearning for September and football. Life had meaning for him then.

Had it been September, I would have been able to point to his black and yellow Steeler's hat, sweat shirt hoodie, throw pillow, tee-shirt, foam finger, sneaker decals, nylon running pants, hor d'ourves tray, pennant, and bobble-head car companion as proof of his own crass commercialism.

But, it was March and a Ramstein kinda day. Dark and wet. Thunder in the distance. Wind that toppled the trashcans of our lazy neighbor. Mother told me Lars had Seasonal Affective Disorder. I told her it was sad Lars had a rotten disposition six months out of the year.

"How did he die, Mooney? Was it quick? Painless?" It was gory details time. I could tell him the truth. Marvin Beaumont was a victim of Big Mac, and died in his sleep next to Rachel, the third wife who made him forget he had other wives and a daughter. Or, I could brighten his day.

"Tragically. His memoir unfinished. Wishing for grandchildren. A condition complicated from his Vietnam War wounds. Calling my name. Crying for his mother. Clutching the hand of the Priest who prayed over him."

"I wish I could have been there for him," Lars said, and he really meant it. "It must have been terrible."

It wasn't. It should have been. The last and greatest event in Marvin Beaumont's life should have been filled with remorse and regret. Parsifal playing in the background. The names of all he held dear on his lips—his last words, Jesus forgive me! Black-plumed black horses should've carried his casket in a glass-windowed carriage as people lining the streets waved farewell to a brave, battered, and beloved soul. A lone piper on a hill should've played Amazing Grace. If Lars had been in charge of things, that's the way it would've been— and in 1882 the death of god would have been mourned with dignified

sorrow. The death of history, of great philosophic debates about the nature of good and evil, debates people were burned at the stake for, wouldn't be forgotten along with 19 cent Jack-in-the-Box hamburgers and landline phones. Lars says now there is no such thing as history, or good or evil. There is only diagnosis, treatment, recovery movements, anti-psychotic pharmaceuticals, Law and Order, laser beams lurking about our brains, cutting away dysfunction as we listen and read nothing but repetition of how and why god was killed, and why the separation of Church and State is a good thing. There is only sustained vicarious pleasure in a virtual universe populated by proton-morons who no longer fear nuclear mega-death so much as they fear not getting enough Omega-3. Kill-ability reduced to krill oil.

"Where's he buried?" Lars said. "Arlington?"

He's not buried. His ashes are swirling in the wind by the sea in Santa Monica, but I couldn't tell Lars that. His funk-a-doodle might last for days, weeks. Temporarily, Marvin Beaumont's still in the morticians ice box, waiting for Rachel to make the last payment on the Viking Longboat, and getting a license to burn it in San Diego bay. He'd bought a ticket to Valhalla when they went to France for the Normandy Tour. In some places, God isn't dead, I wanted to tell Lars. But, Rachel wouldn't be throwing herself on the flaming craft. She wouldn't be baring her breasts to the Valkyrie and offering up her soul to be with Marvin. She'd be going shopping for a pretty black dress at Antoine's on Rodeo Drive and debating whether or not to wear a hat to the pyre. She'd text her best friend for advice.

"El Camino Park," I said

"You want to visit the grave?" Lars had returned from the kitchen with a steaming bowl of chili, reclined again, and set the bowl on the tray. He remembered to crunch the saltines before he brought food into the living room. Maybe eating would lift his funk-a-doodle.

I didn't answer, so Lars' traveling third ear knew the answer was no. There was no grave. No headstone, no marker, no hole. There were no flower sprays or wreaths with ribbons reading Beloved Husband And Father written in gold glitter. Marvin wasn't Italian. No prayer cards. He wasn't Catholic. Or Protestant. He was nothing, and being nothing, he didn't know no one was interested in his missing memorial except Lars Kemple.

Lars shouldn't go outside naked in the rain. Someone might see all the controversial ink spread over his body and think he's a circus freak. One of his tats is an American flag with a swastika where the stars should be. But he slid open the patio door and went to the rose bush in the corner of the garden. He knelt down at the grave of our Doberman, Thor, who won a blue ribbon for Best of Breed at the La Jolla dog show, and died a year later from canine cancer. I could see Lars shaking his head in disbelief, the way he always did when he patted the dirt by the rose bush he'd planted over him. Or was it disgust? It's tough to tell with nihilists.

The rain slithered down his thirty-year old body, dripped off his nose, and pooled around his feet that were sinking into the soil. "How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves?" Lars said when he'd laid Thor in the earth and shoveled the last of the mulch over him.

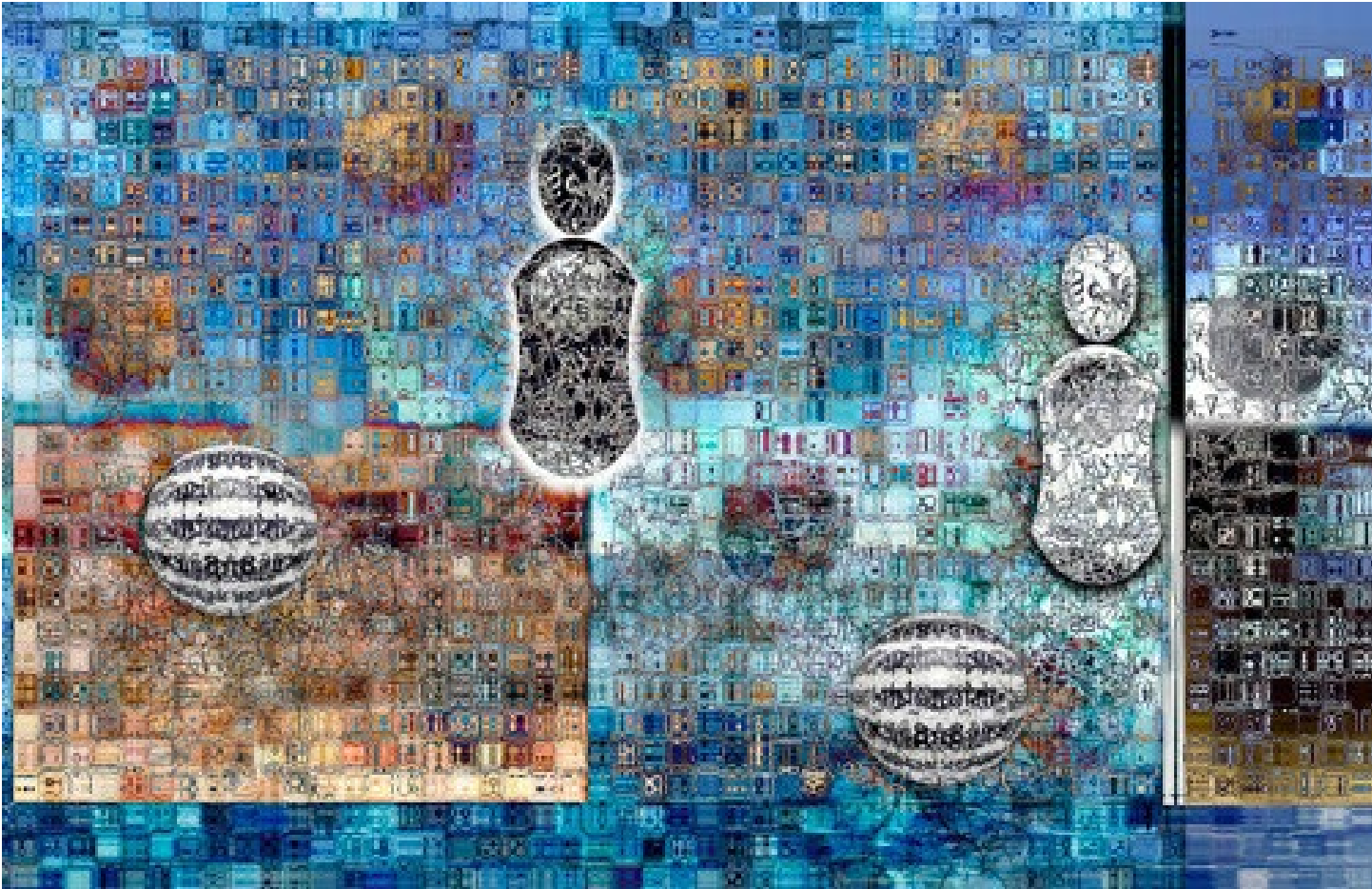
"That's depressing," I remembered saying.

"That's Nietzsche," he said. "The Gay Science that isn't gay anymore."

Lars needed comforting more than I did. Marvin bought him a subscription to the History Channel magazine for Christmas the first year we were married, and Lars renewed every two years. His funk-a-doodle wasn't lifted by the chili, and I was betting he'd pay for indulging his inner Mexican with indigestion and gas as he watched the Final Four teams bounce a basketball up and down the court.

I wanted so much to touch his flesh, to strip off my clothes and kneel by his side, to put my arm around his shoulders. I wanted an incantation that would raise Thor from the dead so he could sit between us. I wanted to pet him and tell him we still loved him, tell him I was proud of him, that his blue ribbon was beautiful and we kept it in a box in the basement along with his chew toy and his heart-shaped name tag just for this resurrection. I wanted to tell him I missed him. Always did, and now I've so much more to tell him. But removing my shoes was the closest I dared come to freedom and I stopped at the patio door because I never learned how to pray.





*Enigma Series Variation by Tony Schanuel*

# Contributor Bios

tral Florida, and currently works as an intern for the literary journal, *The Florida Review*. She finds herself challenged daily. An undergraduate Creative Writing and Cultural Anthropology major, she will be applying to graduate school this fall. She finds inspiration among the bending palms and broken seashells near her coastal home on one of the eastern barrier islands. Her poetry has been published in *Third Wednesday* and her fiction has appeared in *All Things Girl*.

**Mark Spitzer** is the author of 18 books, *CHODE!*, *Monster Dystopia*, and *The Church*, a professor of creative writing at the University of Central Arkansas, and the Editor in Chief of the national literary journal *Toad Suck Review* (toadsuckreview.org). As the world expert on the poetry of Jean Genet, he is also recognized as a leading authority on a primitive fish known as gar (I can be seen featured on reruns of the “Alligator Gar” episode of the Animal Planet series *River Monsters*). I have hundreds of publications in creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry and literary translation. Some journals and magazines include *Minnesota Monthly*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Ecotone*, *Yale Anglers Review*, *New Delta Review*, *Chronicle Review*, *Chariton Review*, etc.

**Lauren Suchenski** is a budding new writer from Princeton, NJ. Her poetry has previously been included in a variety of magazines, including *The Hun Review*.

**Changming Yuan**, 4-time Pushcart nominee and author of *Chansons of a Chinaman*, grew up in rural China and published several monographs before moving to Canada. With a PhD in English, Yuan teaches independently in Vancouver and has had poetry appearing in nearly 500 literary publications across 19 countries, including *Asia Literary Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Best Canadian Poetry*, *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *Exquisite Corpse* and *London Magazine*.

