

A JOURNAL OF PROSE | POETRY | PICTURES **FREE**

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Editor's Note

Tyler Gobble — Editor-in-Chief

Austin Hayden — Fiction Editor
Gene Kwak — Fiction Editor

Carrie Lorig — Poetry Editor
Nick Sturm — Poetry Editor

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Mike Young | mike@noojournal.com

THERE'S THIS HIGHWAY in Siskiyou County between Weed and Yreka, where the wind gets trapped and swirls so hard it would blow, say, a clownmobile, straight into a ditch. Kyle and I were driving south on this highway in an old yellow truck...

Wait, no. That's what I said in the first issue. This is the fifteenth issue, a quinceañera, whoa. At the beginning of 2014, I made a document called "2014 jicama salad," in which I listed things like "use your blockers" and "brush with the restorative toothpaste" and "listen to things when you think 'I'd like to listen to that'" and "set mini alarms" and "be a friend to yourself" and "natural light." Another one was "figure out NOO."

See, NOO has been around almost ten years, and while my love for NOO has not diminished, my energy for actually working on the darn thing has waned as my life has undergone major squiggles and changes in the last few years.

This means—for one thing!—I took a crazy long time to finish NOO [15]. If people thought about NOO at all, they probably thought it died! But I'm glad it didn't die. If it had died, you couldn't read stories with feather sisters, tossing phones into the water, animated knife piles, and a girl who plays football named Tractor. Or poems with shadow doves, batshit heroines, sunset cannonballs, peaceful blemishes, new gaps, #FUCKYESOXYGEN, and loving yourself at night. Not to mention all the great small press books presented, the new alumni spotlight feature, or the decadent collage work of Erin Case and Joseph Young.

In the nine years NOO has been around—as I've worked on it alone, and with Kyle Peterson and Ryan Call, as well as with many other helpers and interns and submission readers and copyeditors and issue distributors, all of us volunteering our time—it's found a lot of readers and fans and good folks in its quiet weird free punk grayscale stapled way. Real talk: 99% of the writers I know, I met in some way initially through doing NOO! I honestly can't imagine what my life would look like without all the friends I've made through NOO and all the amazing work NOO has been able to broadcast and share. Thank you so much to all of you. I'm seeing your faces right now. You're eating an off-brand cocoa cereal.

When I die, drape that necklace of sarsaparilla bottlecaps around my neck please yes.

You might guess this is the part where I say NOO is over, I'm driving the boat out to the middle of the lake and driving the boat back alone, and actually I really wanted to do that, but after reflection with friends, I realize that what NOO does is still pretty cool. There aren't a lot of other free literary magazines that live both in print and online, sneaking up all over the way NOO does (you can see pictures at facebook.com/noojournal), thanks to the incredible network of support it's built over the years.

So what I'm doing is handing it over to a new team of editors. You can see who in the bubbles above. Tyler Gobble, Austin Hayden, Gene Kwak, Carrie Lorig, and Nick Sturm are all people very dear to my heart, and I'm tickled to Pluto and back that they're onboard to make NOO better than ever.

I'm going to stick around as designer and publisher, but all editorial decisions and correspondence will be handled by Tyler and crew. They already have fantastic ideas about distribution, parties, and maybe even tanktops. From here on out, Tyler will be writing this little Editor's Note. You'll like him! A lot! Meanwhile, I'm going to milk this one for all it's worth. Like, um, you might've noticed that this NOO—my last as editor—is the longest one ever. I believe that's the going out they call "not with a whimper."

When it comes to literary magazines—maybe even when it comes to clownmobiles—2014 is a lot different than the 2005 I wrote that first paragraph in. And I'm stoked that the landscape is chaotic and loud. That's healthy. I'm hopeful that the beauty and energy of all the new editors will bring about a new NOO (oh man) that still has a fun role to play in introducing people to the campfire of independent literature we're all huddled and high-fiving and ghost-whispering around.

To close: thank you for reading, and thanks for making this Sierra river country boy with his scraped out prospector pan of a heart feel like he did something good for once. Now please enjoy NOO [15] and shower Tyler, Austin, Gene, Carrie, and Nick with your cocoa cereals and clownmobiles and good wishes amen.

NOÖ and Present



LAST ISSUE we introduced you to our collaboration with Vouched Books. In the wind and dust since, Vouched has evolved, under the leadership of the wonderful Laura Relyea, who has set her anchor down in Atlanta. Meanwhile, out on the west coast we've got Lauren Traetto holding down Vouched San Francisco—a national effort!

In case you forgot, here's how **NOÖ's** collaboration with Vouched works: in addition to our regular content, we will be running special expanded reviews, interviews, and other features by the Vouched Books team. The idea is you might read a review you really like here in **NOÖ**, then visit vouchedbooks.com to see what else that reviewer has vouched for. Or you might see a snippet about a book on vouchedbooks.com and visit **NOÖ** to read an expanded feature. Either way, you'll get to discover excellent literature that flies—with shimmering duct-taped wings—under the radar.

This issue, we're excited about adding another series to the stack: Ben Segal's *TRACINGS*, a forum for Ben to explore and connect special small press books in surprising contexts, with a little background thrown in. Like, say, a fried banana on top of a fried egg, and your friend making this dish for you, and your friend explaining where it comes from. That dish is actually really good. I've probably mentioned it before. We're very excited to have Ben writing for us! The first two books in his living room with us are Scott Bradfield's *The History of Luminous Motion* and Lucy Corin's *One Hundred Apocalypses and Other Apocalypses*.

What else do we have? Well, the aforementioned Laura Relyea takes a look at books by Aubrey Hirsch and Peter Davis. New **NOÖ** Editor-in-Chief Tyler Gobble gets stoked about Darcie Dennigan, and Austin Hayden (half of the new **NOÖ** Fiction Editors) examines **NOÖ** alum Mary Miller's major label debut. In the poetry corner, Luke Bloomfield thinks about immortality in Maged Zaher's work, Ben Kopel raves about LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs, and Erin McNellis takes a look at Andrew Morgan's debut. Finally, Blake Bergeron shines a light on the genre defying Megan McShea. Read on!

WHAT: *Why We Never Talk About Sugar*

BY: Aubrey Hirsch

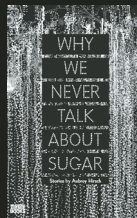
IS: Book of stories

FROM: Braddock Avenue Books

SAYS: Women would carry with us, each, our own black hole.

AT: www.braddockavenuebooks.com

PRESENTED BY: Laura Relyea



THE SIXTEEN STORIES of *Why We Never Talk About Sugar*, deep and rich, take you through the mire of life gently. These are authentic accounts of humanity, full of stranded wives, broken husbands and marooned circus performers. Each page brims with beauty and damnation. These stories are intrepid: the terrain they survey is not only strange but cavernous.

There are common themes woven between these stories, yes: relationships, pregnancy and science surface and resurface. But where all of these recurring themes converge is the overarching focus on emptiness. On space. On absence. The circus performers have no home. The cancer patient is losing her grasp on life. Pinocchio feels hollowed out not because of he is not human, but because of what he is not: a woman.

In one story, "Hydrogen Event in a Bubble Chamber," a physicist pursuing her doctorate explores the role emptiness plays in our lives more explicitly:

"Women would carry with us, each, our own black hole. A source of life and energy. A mysterious place: small, but with infinite draw."

As the author, Hirsch is a patient and dedicated guide, resisting the urge to over-explain or package up clean, tidy endings. Hirsch shows us how we do all contain a void, how our biggest error is our instinct to fill it. These stories show us how not to fear the dark.



WHAT: *TINA*

BY: Peter Davis

IS: Book of poems with a complicated muse

FROM: Bloof Books

SAYS: I'm depending on you, too!

AT: www.bloofbooks.com

PRESENTED BY: Laura Relyea

PETER DAVIS has a lot to say to Tina. Who is Tina? Tina is hard to track down. If we follow Davis in this book of poems down the rabbit hole of his life-long pursuit of Tina, we might end up finding her—or we might end up finding Peter Davis.

In these poems, Tina is so many things. She knows how to fold a table cloth, that's for certain. But most importantly, she's a harbor for the speaker. He confides in her, projects upon her, and retreats to her. In confidence, he tells her: "Tina, I have been lucky, / to be inside my wife / and watch my kids expand her belly / and see her explode with them."

Clearly, these are not the confessions of an acquaintance. For the speaker, Tina is close but also unattainable, and amorphous. Because of that, and for countless other reasons, she's also a source of frustration. "It's a sort of Rube Goldberg device, a balancing act," says our speaker. "What, you think I make this shit up? Of course not! / I'm depending on you, too! We need each other, Tina!"

This charmingly obsessive and winding narrative never gives us a clear image of its namesake. What can be gleaned most from it is a portrait of the speaker himself: not only his hobbies, pastimes, and interests (skateboarding, fatherhood, and a deep love of Van Halen, just to name a few) but also his bevy of harbored anxieties and ambitions.

We all have things inside us that we feel both made of and separated from, wishing we could call them something besides ourself. In *TINA*, Peter Davis has found a name that fits everything.

WHAT: *Madame X*
BY: Darcie Dennigan
IS: Book of self-hypnosis poems
FROM: Canarium Books
SAYS: I keep hoping you will interrupt me
AT: www.canarium.org
PRESENTED BY: Tyler Gobble



IN HER second book, *Madame X*, Darcie Dennigan throws static bubbles over the wire ...

We had survived and the residents were really...roused...The news...the adrenaline...their lives...for months...might be extended

... and calls straight out across the page: "I keep hoping you will interrupt me." Through its variety of punches, *Madame X* demands attention, your breath, and possibly a few tears in its display of the narrative-in-combusting.

Though the first poem is called "The Youngest Living Thing In L.A.," we stagger into the fact, and thus into the book, that the baby is dead. As newborn hopes and fresh light begin to smother, these narrative travesties and allusions of turmoil pair with a jagged storytelling style to create one of the most heart-pounding books of poems I've ever read.

That first poem is enough to fling you down and possibly out. But Dennigan unveils the desolate, decrepit landscape we'll be basking in with such impossible complexity and grace—the

fountain as remaining water, the statues surrounding, the long-lasting wind—that the reader allows themselves to be baked in the decimated heat along with it all, until we arrive at:

We peered all day into the strange fountain.

I said to myself, That is just your face stiffening around your cheeks. That is just grass growing at your feet.

I held the baby all the time, and he never ever cried.

As the days beat on, as the situation sinks further, a certain optimism attempts to break through, harnessing mechanisms, like Tom Hanks and that stupid ball on the island, of distraction, of ill hope. The speaker processes things in a way that somehow fills the reader, the book, the everything with this (false?) forward hum. Like bringing forth new life, triplets even, as the speaker in "The Contaminants" speaks of wanting to keep up the attitude despite the three babies and bloody tiffs over clean water, wondering "[b]ut was that true optimism...or residue...leftover...from...the commercials on pessimism."

For this fella, this sad, failing self-hypnosis is captivating, even endearing, especially with that turn towards memory, to the familiar. "I hear imaginary news on the radio all the time now," a later poem says, forcing us to contend, looking at this jumbled pile from our jumbled pile: Is an image / a person / a feeling still itself if it's not fully intact? These poems radiate the possibilities of hope through the carnage and broken down bits, the childbirth and the disposal. These poems believe in the hallucinatory power of wild pressing forth, for both the involved and the voyeur on the other side of the page.



WHAT: *TwERK*
BY: LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs
IS: Book of new language
FROM: Belladonna*
SAYS: How does the butterfly thrive /for my big ole kettle belly?
AT: www.belladonnaseries.org
PRESENTED BY: Ben Kopel

LATASHA N. NEVADA DIGGS'S long-awaited debut collection, perfectly titled *TwERK*, does just about everything that language was invented to do, as well as a few things I didn't even know it could do. Which language? Like, seven languages. Speaking in tongues? The human tongue alone can't handle this hot hypermagic. *TwERK* speaks slash shouts slash holla holla hollas in the mode of hips and lips and brains and eyeballs. It's a Tower of Babel in beauteous pink and blue book form.

Before *TwERK* was even a real for real book, I taught a couple of its poems in both high school and college classes and let me tell you this truth: these poems are made of pure, uncut, endless possibility. Every poet I exposed to LaTasha's twists and turns pumped up the volume on their own personal linguistic boom boxes to an ear and heart-splitting 11. The work in *TwERK* changes the atmosphere in any room.

Honestly, as open and generous as this book is, I'm always finding it hard to describe her work to the world at large, especially with words. Trying to write about *TwERK* is like trying to play guitar about Marquee Moon. We're talking about a poet who, by some strange alchemy, is able to make all words sounds, taste, and feel like new words. These fresh words make a new noise as beautiful as strange as any freak-out anthem.

The energy at work in *TwERK* is life, the very life of life. It pops and repeats and vibrates the body electric, and you'd do well to follow these rhythms wherever they take you. Who knows, you might unlearn something.

TRACINGS #1

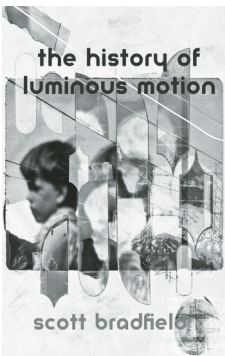
BEN SEGAL
THINKS ABOUT
BOOKS

NEW BOOKS are published and people assess them and this is called book reviewing. For some reason I thought this was something I wanted to do, but then I realized that I spend far too much of my life grading things.

What I really wanted was not to review books but to read them and think about them and see where that thinking might go. In that spirit, TRACINGS wants to be more than a book review. It will try to be a space for considering new books in terms of the idiosyncratic and hopefully not totally boring lines of thought that they open up for me. It may even be not-terrible.

For this initial iteration of the column, I'll be talking about two books: Scott Bradfield's *The History of Luminous Motion* and Lucy Corin's *One Hundred Apocalypses and Other Apocalypses*. Other books may creep in. Preoccupations and asides will likely sidetrack any traditional fulfillment of readerly expectation. Caveat minefield preamble will stall any getting-to-the-heart-of-the-matter before giving way ungraciously and with only a centered star for transition.

— Ben Segal



THE HISTORY OF LUMINOUS MOTION was originally published by Knopf in 1989, quickly fell out of print, gained cult status, and was reissued in 2013 by the ever-wonderful Calamari Press. In typing this backstory, I realize the I've begun my first column by breaking the one rule I set: talking about new books. I'll make the stretch to include new editions in that definition. Things aren't off to an auspicious start.

OK, so, *The History of Luminous Motion*, died and returned, Christ or zombie from the trash heap of the 1980s. It's a good book to have back, full of fucked beautiful prose, precocious nightmare children, heavy suburban heat and ennui and troubled bodies. If I remember right, the promotional copy in the Calamari catalog name drops Lynch and Lish, or at least it should.

Take the following passage in which the text begins with a tender description of undocumented immigrant families in the San Fernando Valley and slips into the hazy childhood occult in which the narrator, Philip, and his best friend Rodney have immersed themselves:

Timid small children with big eyes hid behind their parents' legs, waiting for their mothers to drive them to the laundromat, supermarket and home again in broken automobiles. At supper they ate with vaguely surreptitious expressions, their ears alert for any sound in the street, awaiting that penultimate knock on their door. These were families who were always waiting to be sent away, and as a result you never saw them. These were the citizens of my secret community I most cherished and admired. They, like me, lived their secret lives in public places.

I was going home and taking Rodney with me this time, and that made a difference. My dreams weren't secret anymore, but rather part of a common purpose, a scheme of shared knowledge. Rodney and I were going home together to see my dad.

Rodney was right—we had unleashed strange forces tonight. Severe black things that had moved up from the caverns of the

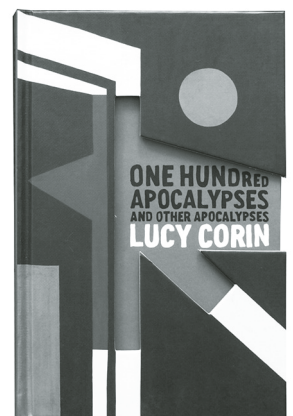
dead. Every once in a while I felt them bustling invisibly past me in the street, obloid and featureless, like faintly disembodied laundry hampers. (122)

The quoted text gives a sense of the book: voice heavy, gauzed-over, violent and surreal, too weird to be fully somber. In the above passage, the public and private collapse into each other along with the dream and the waking, the secret and the open, the mundane and fantastic. Suburbia is rendered as phantasmagoria: a haunted space of slippage in which the ordinary binaries of seen/unseen and known/unknown are as solid as clouds. The undocumented immigrant is an (in)visible figure, seen as a flickering series of stock-images of precarity, never an as individual subject—that kind of recognition (the “knock on the door”) is the prelude to deportation. Precarity itself is explained as the collapse of private and public (“living secret lives in public”). The same play on (in)visibility is carried on and distorted as it slips into Philip and Rodney's overwrought occult obsessed adventures.

Too—obviously—the book plays on the common slippage of suburban dream into suburban nightmare. It is part of that genre that reminds us of the ‘sub’ in ‘suburb,’ that the term for the American dreamscape is etymologically reducible to undercity.

Harmony Korine once said that the thing to remember about *Gummo* is that it's a comedy. I was told he said that, though I don't have the source. It may be apocryphal, but let's take it as real. Bradfield's book is a similar (non-) comedy, with rural Ohio swapped out for the tract homes of southern California and Korine's collage aesthetic replaced by the interior monologue of HLM's young savant protagonist.

Anyways, the sum of all this is that I admire the book tremendously. But unequivocal admiration isn't so interesting to read about. I'm less sure of my feelings about *One Hundred Apocalypses and Other Apocalypses*. Or maybe more accurately, I have several



radically different and possibly incompatible feelings about the book.

The first thing to notice about *Apocalypses* is its beauty as an object. It's a McSweeney's hardcover with a constructivist-ish cut-out cover. Inside the book is divided into two sections, first a handful of more or less conventional short stories and then the titular hundred apocalypses.

I have to be careful here. I don't want to suggest that the stories are in any way bad, but I do want to use them as a bit of a punching bag. I'm sorry perfectly good Lucy Corin stories. You deserve better. Probably you deserve a whole book, but you are in this book and that bums me out. I really honestly am apologizing here—a careful and conscientious reviewer would take the stories on their own terms rather than dismissing them for being not-something-else. But I am being ungenerous here, or too excited by the *Apocalypses* to linger on that which precedes them.

The tiny bombs that make up the *Apocalypses* are weirder, more jagged, harder to categorize except by their own self-given title (not unlike the texts that make up Maggie Nelson's *Bluets*). Perhaps McSweeney's and/or Corin thought that the *Apocalypses*, genre-indistinct monsters, would scare off too many readers and so hid them behind a hundred pages or so of more recognizable stories? Maybe they just thought the *Apocalypses* didn't take up enough space to constitute a whole book? I think they'd have worked wonderfully as a standalone collection. They're linked stylistically and thematically while at the same time varying widely in style and theme. They tell stories and refuse to tell stories, linguistically revel in the freedom of the compact burst.

Most excitingly, without the burden of sustained plot and character development, the *Apocalypses* collectively take up the always admirable project of a self-dismantling definition. In this case, the idea of apocalypse is worked over and through, alternately taken as sensational, banal, literal, and metaphoric. In some texts, Corin spins through fantastically catastrophic End Times. In others, apocalypse just seems to mean 'disaster' in the loosest sense, as in domestic let-downs that are all the more devastating for appearing not-bad-at-all and thereby laying bare an underlying existential emptiness. In fact, these minor apocalypses could be set in the landscape of *The History of Luminous Motion*, a similar world of everyday absurdity and subtle horror.

Maybe it is only the loudness of my own obsessions drowning out a more accurate or generous reading, but I think I like the *Apocalypses* so much, in part, because of the way they relate to fragment and constraint. The little texts of the *One Hundred Apocalypses* are in a sense classic literary fragments—both coherent wholes and small parts of a larger whole. Benjamin's evocation of the constellation is apropos here, as in so many discussions.

Additionally, the fragment form, the need to reach *One Hundred* distinct story-lets, and the thematic conceit of apocalypse act as a set of constraints to frame and guide the project. At times this leads to perfectly strange set pieces, such as the brilliant "Mirage," which begins:

Postapocalypse, we were all still racist and clamoring for scraps of gold. I was still lusting after the girl who looked most like a fashion model. Maybe there is something to be done about those feelings but I was not doing it very much, not anymore! I felt a little freed to just want what I wanted, wherever that came from. Like maybe it's not my job at this point to have a problem with getting off on something when that's how I feel about it. No one calls anything natural anymore, not after what we did. Finally! *Natural* means something like dead.

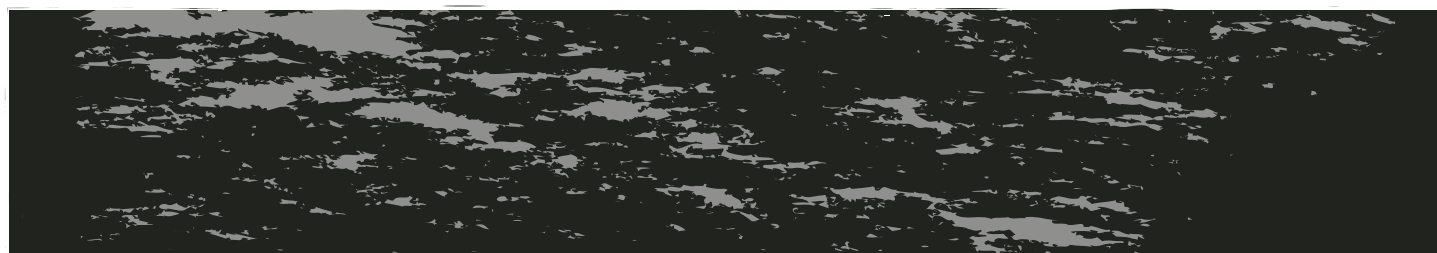
In "Mirage," the radical freedom opened by the end of the world turns out to be only an illusion as the survivors are unable to escape the limitations of their bodies or their old ethics and desires.

In other pieces, the end of the world feels tacked on, an exhausted and exhausting way of stuffing a text into the frame of the project.

Of course, I probably shouldn't complain about these, or even call them mis-steps. After all, what would be the point of a book of apocalypses without some pretty bad endings?



Etchings by Attila Sassy (1880–1967) for his *Opium Dreams*, 1909.



WHAT: Thank You For the Window Office

BY: Maged Zaher

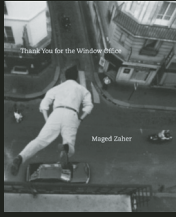
IS: Book of 74 title-less poems or one long poem

FROM: Ugly Duckling Presse

SAYS: I am asking to be kindly left out

AT: www.uglyducklingpresse.org

PRESENTED BY: Luke Bloomfield



MAGED ZAHER'S collection *Thank You for the Window Office* contains 74 title-less poems ranging between four and twenty lines, or it contains one long poem—a “title poem”—parsed into 74 sections.

If title-less-ness signifies one continuous poem, or if this book is of many title-less poems, it all seems rather arbitrary to me, and I've gotten this review off to a bad start. Whether this book is one poem or many shouldn't matter to me, and I don't think it does.

And yet, the absence of titles is perhaps significant in a different, non-taxonomical way, which I'm going to try to figure out.

A title contains the life of a poem. Mortality—one of two reflexes a poem performs—is eminent in the title. The title is the first suggestion of the end of the poem. The life of the poem—to live, another reflex—is made ambiguous by the absence of its mortality. If a poem does not die, did it ever live? Or is title-less-ness an immortal structure, a perfect microcosm of the universe without beginning or end?

I like that idea, that a poem can express immortality through something as simple as leaving out titles. It's a compelling expression, and it asks the reader to be immortal too, to follow it where it goes, to adopt the same perspective, to experience the same joy, to bear the same pain.

However, *Thank You for the Window Office* is not concerned with experiencing pain and joy, as far as I am aware; rather, it prefers inquiry over sensation, report over drama. Each line, more or less, is a complete thought—revelatory, introspective, whimsical (morbidly so, often), adversarial—whatever it is, it's entire unto itself, a perfect and perfectly complete fragment, representative of the larger work at hand.

This is an imaginary city
It has seven hills
And it is always ready for your software needs
I will describe it gracefully
But first let me tell you about my mysterious encounter with
music
Old people too
They extract the nightmares of the night
These are good ducks in the park

Now—what to do with the thought that people lived
and died miserably?

And that all the religious and Marxist books
Can't change anything about that?

And it would be crazy of me to suggest *Thank You for the Office Window* does not end in the literal sense, for it does, on page 74, with the line “I am going to lunch and need your blessing” (though, again, without the definitive end-stop punctuation, the book re-asserts immortality in its final breath). With this last line, the book quietly makes its exit, while reaffirming an implied promise to return, to resurrect, for what is a lunch break but an interstice between work?

Is it title-less-ness or something else that unifies each poem to its predecessor in *Thank You for the Window Office*? One reads this book fluidly and in one sitting. The paradox is that each line feels fragmented but conducive to a greater homogeneity. In my copy of the book this is apparent in the lack of bookmark or dog-ear. This collection offers contiguousness by which an amalgamous theme emerges; sexuality, identity, dislocation, stoicism, despair, to name a few, all strikingly contribute to the amalgam.

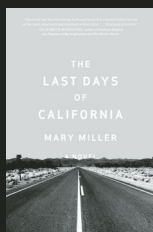
Thank You for the Window Office is deft, intuitive, sharp but never clever. Its lines move confidently; they disorient and reassure in the same motion. It's difficult to single out one poem that exemplifies this more than others—I kind of like all of them! John Donne popped into my head: “If a clod be washed away by the sea, / Europe is the less.” I feel like that's how it has to be with this book: you can't single one out for praise or criticism without including all of them. They're all these imperfect little pieces, instruments in an orchestra (I think I just contradicted something I wrote earlier, but who gives a shit?!)—what matters is the whole performance.

Here's one I like for its progression of particulars:

People eventually stop sending you party reminders
And schedules empty out
With few poems to rescue
No one cares about the flag
But some anarchists are also patriotic
I am asking to be kindly left out
They have lots of rugs downtown
They are on perpetual sale
But they help us fight back the communists

The office evokes interiority, containment, claustrophobia. An open office is still an office. A home office is still an office. Society limits our understanding of the office's functions: one goes to the office to do work, to fulfill obligations, to perform a duty. You could read *Thank You for the Window Office* and imply some abstract comparison between it and a business office, and maybe that would work for you, but, of course, it would be bullshit. This is poetry after all.

Want more poetry reviews? Visit WWW.NOOJOURNAL.COM/15 for Leigh Stein's keen take on Ana Božičević's *Rise in the Fall*. Leigh's review has many interesting links in it, which makes it better online than in print. Not everything is like that, of course. For example, “today” a dentist made me bite a piece of black paper. I'm pretty sure I can't bite a piece of the internet. Even if I could, one thing is for sure: my insurance wouldn't pay for it.



WHAT: *The Last Days of California*
BY: Mary Miller
IS: Debut novel
FROM: Liveright
SAYS: Face this rapture thing like an adult.
AT: books.wwnorton.com/books/The-Last-Days-of-California/
PRESENTED BY: Austin Hayden

“THE BIBLE COULD BE so beautiful sometimes,” Miller writes, “if you could forget it was the Bible.” *The Last Days of California*, like most of Miller’s work leading up to her debut novel, can be so beautiful sometimes, too, if you can forget the diegetic ugliness that surrounds the characters.

That’s Miller’s knack: making a teenage handjob in the back of a van a crucial turning point in a narrative and doing it without flinching. The scenes aren’t easy to swallow, because they’re lived-in and icky like bad memories, but the story is told honestly and deliberately. Miller is the one for the job.

Jess, the fifteen year-old POV character, has a pregnant sister Elise a couple years older, a fanatically religious dad with a gambling problem, and a mom who couldn’t be less in touch with the family. The four of them are driving across the south to be in California for the rapture. Miller straps a seat belt across the chest of human angst (boy-problems, money-problems, family-problems, God-problems), tosses it in a Ford Taurus, and feeds it drive-thru fast food and gas station sodas. This novel feels cooped up and carsick. Everyone is on edge.

Miller uses the road trip to her advantage. The closed settings keep the dialogue intimate. The movement through space allows Miller to chain vignettes together into a larger narrative. Of course it matters that the light at the end of the road trip isn’t Gulf Shores or Mount Rushmore. They aren’t on vacation. The Metcalfs are driving toward the end of days to gather with an unnamed group of Christians led by someone named Marshall. At stops along the way, the family half-ass hands out soul-saving tracts. Jess and Elise rock “King Jesus Returns!” t-shirts. Elise has written the trip off. Jess is full of unanswered questions about it, looking at her parents as guides but then as weirdos, like a teenager does.

Jess is right in Miller’s wheelhouse. Miller has written from a young, changing female before (notably “Leak” in *Big World*), and she does it well. Jess’s inner voice often comes unchecked and unfiltered, because she sees through innocent eyes, and her brain’s always working on what’s in front of it. When a boy she meets at a motel says, “I thought you were agnostic,” Jess goes, “Exactly. I haven’t ruled anything out.”

There are often glimpses of profundity broken up by a text message or a reference to a John Hughes movie. In a hotel room Jess and Elise meet a fat woman with a cigarette in her mouth and an ashtray on her gut. With the woman is her son and her caged birds. When the sisters leave the room, Miller writes:

I remembered my horoscope from a few days ago, how I was supposed to be asking questions and I’d hardly asked anybody anything. I should have asked the woman why she chose birds,

or about the mating process—did the male and female always like each other, or was it a matter of trail and error? Or I could have asked where they were from, where they were going. It seemed silly that we were all moving around the world for no other reason than we could—cars and planes and boats taking people from one location to another as if we weren’t all going to die.

Jess is self-conscious and nervous around boys. She sees the way men look at her sister, and she’s jealous. On one page Jess is eager to grow up, exploring herself and her sexuality. On another, she is referencing Garfield and closely examining the adults. Like many of Miller’s protagonists, Jess feels marginalized and alone, and she seeks the attention and affection of others. Some of the time she wants to impress boys. Other times, her parents. This discord plays throughout the novel.

Jess and the family see a number of things in a number of places. They witness death. Jess watches Elise do the Hell raising that a fifteen and a seventeen year-old do. They snack on vending machine grub and Taco Bell, have boys tell them to get naked in motel pools. Jess searches for answers where most folks do, off the beaten path of righteousness: at an Applebee’s-esque bar with older guys, in a flea market talking to a face-painter, in lobbies, in bathrooms, in a sink full of beer, on the side of the road when she has to pee and the Taurus has a flat. *The Last Days of California* is, at its core, a coming-of-age story, chronicling Jess’s journey for answers, told from a huggable and interesting voice. This is a solid and sincere account double stuffed with those big little-moments that humans like.

Because Miller’s forte is twisting the mundane and carving out the quiet conflict, the novel festers most beneath the skin. The bigger picture, this rapture business, gets blurry and tossed aside for less serious—though no less pressing—issues in the young girls’ paths. It is absolutely the wavering, calculating voice Miller harnesses that carries the work along, not the less-than-heart-thumping concern with the doomy and gloomy end times. This is a quick read for a slow paced narrative—with three chapters spanning seventy pages a pop, and one final chapter clocking in around fifteen flips of the thumb.

Miller keeps her style clean and her characters familiar. They might even be your family. The actions and reactions, the swings and the backswings, are candid, honest. In the truly uncomfortable moments, you’re doing a head nod, or you’re cringing, because being fifteen was something you did once. Miller, too. And now she’s offering hope in mistakes, a new future from the memories, life. In the last days of our world, she takes a stab at the days that will surely follow.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: We generally present only small press books, but we’re big fans of NOO alum Mary Miller, and we were so excited by her debut novel that we decided to bend a little.

WHAT: Month of Big Hands**BY: Andrew Morgan****IS: Book of creepy prose poems****FROM: Natural History Press****SAYS: A forgotten lump of molted feathers shifts against the current, balloons into an oxbow of lipsticked lasterdays****AT: www.naturalhistorypress.com****PRESENTED BY: Erin McNellis**

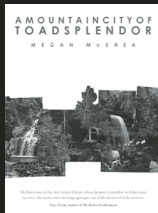
AS SOON AS I finished reading Andrew Morgan's *Month of Big Hands* I flipped back to the beginning and read it a second time. High praise? It is—but it's also the reading practice that this book cries out for. The story told by this sequence of prose poems feels like a Möbius strip, or a seasonal cycle, or a dream where the chain of causality connecting events could flow in innumerable directions. The three main characters—Robbie, Elly, and Herzog—move about in a crumbling world that the sun has deserted, enacting cycles of vengeance and penitence whose precise contours never fully resolve, calling to mind both the repetitively-punished sinners of Dante's *Inferno* and the futile rituals of Beckett's post-apocalyptic visions.

That may sound grim, but Morgan's rich, strange prose makes this book a creepy delight. Descriptions like this one are mind-bending and beautiful: "The coin flips. Vibrates. Settles—a rusted tip of tongue starving the moon's color from the rim of its reflected cone" (1). The touchstones of the rituals that the characters enact are deeply bizarre: a live canary in a hollow melon, severed hands frozen in a block of ice, "the sharpened bones of a skeletal ox"

(25) among others. Words and images recur frequently in different combinations, lending this book the tangled pleasure of a sestina, and allowing the reader to track them like clues. In this sense *Month of Big Hands* might be said to resemble David Lynch films such as *Lost Highway* or *Mulholland Drive*: it creates a tapestry of repetition and resonance that allows for emotional response, yet resists definitive interpretation.

A key to the book's strategy may perhaps be found in these lines on page 9: "[Robbie] folds his hands into ice, fists his way through memory's opera. All movement a mirage of pattern. All patterns by motion besieged." If memory is an opera, it is melodramatic, archetypal, and repeated: staged night after night and century after century. Within this repetition the opera is static—its ups and downs are always the same—but it's never *actually* quite the same twice: "All movement a mirage of pattern. All patterns by motion besieged." These lines paint memory as obsessive rehearsal, and suggest the ways that memories can drift or change over many iterations. The book's repeated images form patterns like these, and "memory's opera" itself becomes one of these motifs, later referred to simply as "The Opera" and taking the form of a ghostly, ominous force: "The Abbey is shuttered against The Opera's darkened limbs . . . There is a hymn. Donations collected for families touched by The Opera" (41 – 2). As the book builds to its dark climax, The Opera—and the world it both structures and menaces—threatens to collapse under its own weight.

Month of Big Hands is a book for a rainy night, a darkened room, and a glass of your best whiskey. It's a bad dream that you will catch yourself wishing you will never wake up from—and when you do, you might just find yourself turning back to the beginning to have it a second time.

**WHAT: A Mountain City of Toad Splendor****BY: Megan McShea****IS: Hybrid of poems and stories****FROM: Publishing Genius****SAYS: Change your rabbits!****AT: www.publishinggenius.com****PRESENTED BY: Blake Bergeron**

IN HIS BRIEF prose piece "Reflection on Poetry," French Surrealist Robert Desnos writes: "Poetry may be this or it may be that. But it shouldn't necessarily be this or that...except delirious and lucid."

I suspect Monsieur Desnos would be a fan of Megan McShea's *A Mountain City of Toad Splendor*. Throughout this collection of stories and poems, McShea provides luminous accounts of a dream life shaped by emotion and sound, sensation and surprise. Take the opening lines of "11 Irritations That Morning":

I want things and beautiful
light, a perfectly soft don't.
It's my 9th most enormous
successful feeling, timed upon an at.
Only I got busy and now, gee,

I don't remember entering
the pleasures, and that elation—
don't scare me.

McShea cultivates disorientation in her musical verse and prose. However, this sense of disorientation is never overwhelming. Instead it provides a sense of gleeful intoxication and belonging. McShea does this by passing off the strange as sensible, sensible enough to act on even:

"Change your rabbits!" came a shout from up the stairs, and then again, descending closer, "change your rabbits immediately!" A man in coveralls appeared with wide black eyes. "Oh, pardon me," he said when he saw us there. "You're not the people I thought you were."

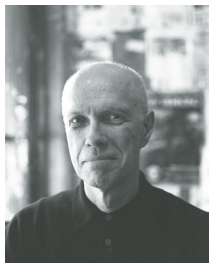
But it was too late, for mother and I had already changed our rabbits.

Moves like this, alongside a smorgasbord of sonic delight, mentally situate the reader in McShea's dream life, performing the poetic equivalent of a Vulcan mind meld. This effect is exemplified in the first few pages, where snippets of poems and stories from throughout the book are printed in large type out of context. As I came across the lines while reading I recognized them, and though I knew I had read them earlier, the suddenness of their appearance made me feel like McShea had access to my memory.

NOÖBIES

**ALUMNI
SPOTLIGHTS**

RON PADGETT



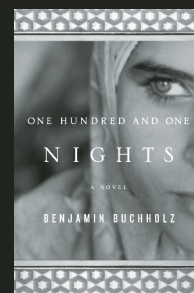
WE AT NOÖ are giddy and lucky to have a whopping contributor list of millions (OK, not quite) of booming voices. Among all these great people is one Ron Padgett. He's published more than a dozen books and, of course, is associated very often with Ted Berrigan and the New York School folks. He's translated, memoir-ed, taught, poem-ed, and just-plain added to the big conversation of poetry for decades. On top of all that, the man is a NOÖ [10] poetry contributor.

Well, what happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? In November 2013, the force and the object basically decided to collaborate: Coffee House Press published Padgett's *Collected Poems*. Coffee House's repertoire of authors looks like the Greek gods and goddesses of literature, only way more diverse and arguably more powerful. The *Collected* Padgett is heavy, as in its weight. The book is over 800 pages and spans his fifty-plus years of churning out. Padgett's poems brim with fun, humor, and insight. It's hard to say which is the unstoppable force and which is the immovable object, the press or the book or Padgett or what.

We the NOÖ people urge we the NOÖ readers to track down and grab Padgett's *Collected Poems*. His is the sort of thing you hoist on a flagpole. — Austin Hayden



Collected Poems
Ron Padgett

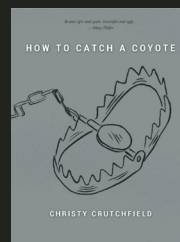


One Hundred and One Nights
Benjamin Buchholz



A Child Is Being Killed
Carolyn Zaikowski

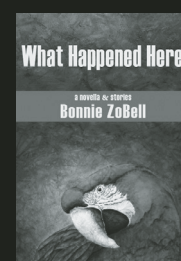
NEW AND NEWER NOÖ ALUMNI BOOKS



How to Catch a Coyote
Christy Crutchfield



300,000,000
Blake Butler

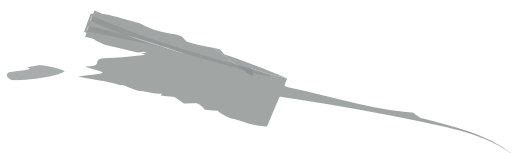


What Happened Here
Bonnie ZoBell

In any other situation I might find this effect creepy, but this is a mind I *want* inside mine, especially in its moments of tender acuity, such as when McShea writes, "to be alone daily makes / everyone seem interesting," or "Night covers things up but you can still hear the rain," or "The doctor seemed to be made of knowledge with a thin covering of skin." I could go on almost indefinitely.

In a time in which we constantly specialize and categorize and leave what we can't do up to the other specialists, it's refreshing to see McShea cover such a broad range of forms and styles in one book. At once she writes smooth narrative stories ("Full Circle"), tight language experiments ("Table Saw"), and near everything in between. While this can seem exceedingly ambitious at times, McShea pulls it off, creating a surprisingly coherent conversation between very different pieces.

In "Soft Pure Pleasure," McShea writes, "It made a soft pure pleasure maker blush." Not that I'm a "soft pure pleasure maker," but I blushed too.



BENJAMIN BUCHHOLZ

SINCE CONTRIBUTING a series of arresting photos and poems from his 2005-06 deployment in Iraq to NOÖ [8], Benjamin Buchholz has been a busy guy.

In 2011, he published his debut novel *One Hundred and One Nights* (Back Bay Books). The novel follows Abu Saheeh as he tries to establish a new life in Iraq, following three wars and the events of his own tragic past.

What is most striking about Buchholz's work is its intimate, human perspective, a perspective he finds lacking in the American understanding of Middle East Culture. In the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* Buchholz was quoted as saying, "We get way too much through 20-second news blurbs and not enough that has the depth and richness that can let us see what life is like over there from somebody else's perspective."

In pursuit of this depth and richness of perspective, Buchholz enrolled in the Army Foreign Area Officer Program, which includes travel, language and cultural study, and, for him, graduate work in Middle East Studies at Princeton University. Rock on Benjamin. — Blake Bergeron

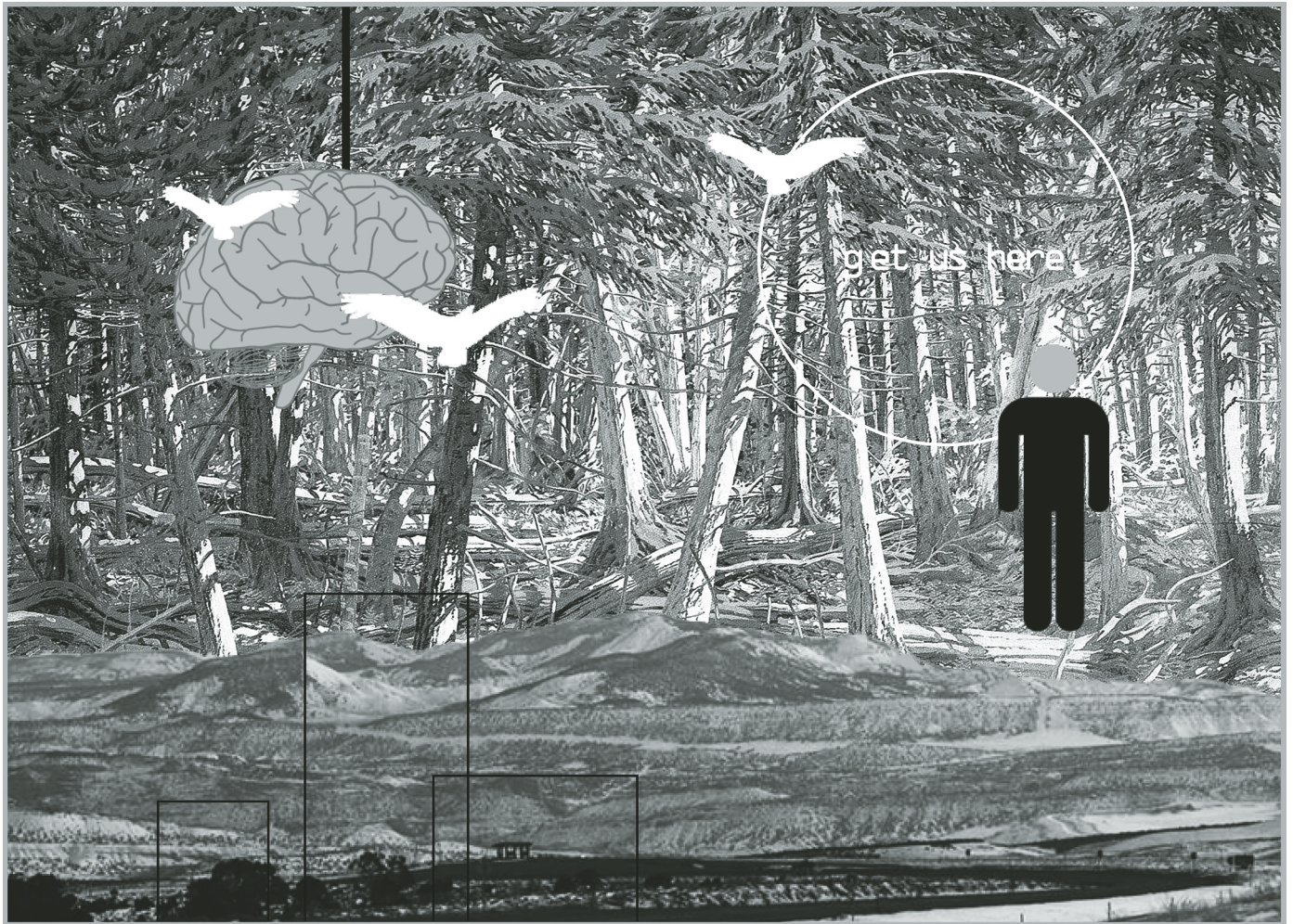


Cross



Joseph

Get Us Here



Young

WAIT ANYWHERE

Anne Marie Wirth Cauchon

AFTER DINNER, it was time for our bath. Gale sat naked in the dry tub. I turned the water on and put my clothes in a neat stack on the lid of the toilet. Gale's were on the floor. When the tub was full, hot mist filled the air and clean ivory feathers started to sprout from the nubbins where Gale's breasts would be. They burst suddenly, to the length of a pigeon's wing feathers, but were soft clouds, like fog, and they drooped.

That winter we had slipped on the ice after school when all the kids were getting on their buses home. My glasses broke and Gale fell right on top of me laughing. Everybody saw but Gale didn't care. I started to cry. Being twins was bad enough, we didn't need feathers.

Shut up, Gale said, but her eyes were wide.

She swished her skinny body side to side so the feathers swooshed along with her. I lay down with my ears underwater and cupped my hard little breasts. They'd been bigger than Gale's, but now she had feathers. My feet bobbed alongside her head.

After a while Gale lay quiet too so the strawberry bubble-bath bubbles dissolved and left a sweet soapy grime and a smell. Then she thrashed her skinny limbs and water sloshed out over the edge onto the linoleum. We weren't supposed to spill so I pinned her by the shoulders. The water swayed, blues music trickled from Greg's room.

Shut up, I said even though she wasn't making any noise.

The feathers were long as fly-fishing lures now and moved like underwater fauna.

I want those goddamned things off!

We looked hard into our eyes, not moving. We clawed and tore and bit each other with our gazes. We loathed each other with our gazes. I didn't need her; I hated her. She shoved me off but I'd left white hand-prints on her shoulders. They dissolved into her skin, but I was gasping, there was no air to breathe in that little room with both of us inside.

What should we do? I said.

Ask Greg, she said.



Mlle des Faveurs a la Promenade a Londres (Anonymous etching from 1775)

Out of the tub the feathers dried to frizzy tufts. I reached for my towel and brushed one with my fingertips but pretended it was a mistake. Yes, it was this soft. Gale's pajama's were soaking, so she kept her baby-blue bathrobe on. When I knocked Greg opened his door like he'd been waiting. He was eighteen, and he had faraway pale eyes that used to be hazel, enormous wiry hair, and he'd lost an incisor in a fight.

Was just listening to some records, he said.

Then he grinned and opened the door a little more.

Well, he said. Thought you'd be Mom.

All that hung on the wall was a poster of Skip James wearing a hat and holding a white handkerchief like a pigeon. Greg's window was open. Outside was the night.

You've got to help me, Gale said.

She was his favorite.

These. Feathers started growing. Out of me!

You can do better than that Gale.

But we're not *pretending*, she said. You want me to show you?

We weren't allowed in Greg's room. Not by Mom and Dad, and not by Greg. But Gale stepped inside, and Greg shut the door. I stood in the hallway alone. It had one window, pea-green shag carpeting and our school pictures from a couple years ago in dusty frames. I had a piano concert the next week, and I hummed my song. Gale hadn't been invited to play. The door opened. Greg was grinning, shaking his head.

I always knew it Gale, he said. We're two of a kind. No offense, Gretch.

It looked like he wanted to touch her, but he didn't. She came back into the hallway. I gave her a look but she just shrugged. Greg's eyes were fresh little wounds.

What should we do? I said. Tell Mom and Dad? Go to the hospital? Burn them?

Well. *Don't* tell Mom and Dad.

Gale was already looking out the hall window which the headlights lit.

Dad's home.

We ran down the hall to our room and got in our beds, the baby-blue shag in between. I started to read aloud. When our door opened, Dad was lit from behind and he smelled like liquor and steel. He'd never told us what part of the cars he assembled. I guessed the doors. Gale

guessed the catalytic converters. We didn't say anything and neither did Dad; there was nothing to say. Eventually he sighed and turned but stopped.

Be good, his voice too loud.

Later, we lay on the shag between our beds with our shirts off and watched the ceiling. Mom screeched downstairs, over Dad's oboe. Gale lightly touched her feathers and I fell asleep with my hands on my heart. When I woke up Gale had her Lees on.

I've got to go, she said.

Like to the bathroom?

Don't be a bitch, Gretch, she said.

We can't just go anywhere, I said. We can't even drive.

I was too tired to go anywhere.

Not just *anywhere*. Listen. You know I'd do it for you. Anything, right?

We'd made this deal. It had been so long ago, I could've pretended I'd forgotten, but before I knew it I was crawling after Gale, out the window and onto the roof. We had a ranch-style so it was easy to hang and drop onto the grass. Both directions went lawn, driveway, repeat. In the driveways: Chrysler, Chevy, Ford, repeat.

I hate Detroit, I said.

Someday I'd be out of here, I'd be gone. In the tall grass along the highway, we walked toward downtown. Trucks burst by. Gale walked ahead of me, holding her shirt.

Put your shirt on, I said.

Even with it on, she looked different, and it wasn't just the feathers.

I had to stop her. She was going to die out here, on the highway.

A truck passed this close and her black hair whipped her sallow cheeks and eyes.

Gale!

I caught up to her, but she'd turned so I was just staring at the back of her head. I could imagine her eyes anyway, that was easy. And I almost could've touched her. Flowers grew with the tall grass in the ditch so instead I ripped off a dried daisyish head.

Up ahead a diesel semi had stopped, idling, its emergency lights flashing red in the mist, and on the wet tar and on Gale. I looked at her chest. The feathers were

still growing, like a cancer. They would be as long as she was, longer. They would strangle, drown her. She ran to the cab of the truck, the door swung open far above. I couldn't see the driver's face.

What are you girls doing out on the highway? It's nearly midnight.

Greg, Gale said, and held her hand up towards him.

Who? he said. Where you kids trying to get to? Not safe for little girls.

I couldn't let her do this, whatever it was, alone. I stepped close and would, did touch her. I pressed her wrist between my thumb and finger. This meant: Enough. This meant: Now. She didn't look at me but I could smell faintly strawberry bubbles on her.

We thought you were still at home, Gale said.

But Gale it isn't, I said. It's not Greg.

If only, he said. Been on the road three weeks now.

It's just nobody, I said. We have to go home, Gale. Home. It's. Your imagination.

She took back her wrist, stepped up onto the running board and only then looked down at me in the hazards flashing. Just as the feathers burst through her t-shirt, cascaded and spread in white torrential streams down from the cab and across the tar. Her face was pale and

slick with sweat, and her black hair hung in long strands. I couldn't see the driver's face. If we were here, if this was really happening. I picked a loose feather from the ground. Up close it was filthy, covered in little white maggots and dust.

I'm going, she said. How long can you wait?

I dropped the feather, disgusted at her. Was that what I wanted—her gone so there'd be no more falling on the ice? Maybe I wasn't trying to stop her, or maybe I was the one imagining, or forcing her to go. Maybe. I was already puny and alone while she stood on the running board, a cloud of feathers, maggots and her face.

Here? I said.

No. You can wait anywhere.

If this was hell, at least I had air to breathe. So I was gasping, shivering, and Gale gathered feathers in her skinny arms and shoved them into the cab of the truck; she was waiting for me to answer. How long? I was very cold. I would have to walk home alone.

Pretty long I think.

She nodded. She could've said Goodbye or I love you. But instead she said:

I guess you have no choice.



apology

Chelsea Martin

I GAVE YOU a small, unfolded flat-rate USPS box and told you to fold it into a box. I told you that I knew the name of the person who was in love with you and I was going to put their name in the box so you could open it and find out.

You had been depressed about something. You told me what you were depressed about but I hadn't really been listening.

I had been planning on putting my own name in the box, because I was in love with you and wanted you to know that you were loved. But I was also in love with someone else and I hadn't yet made any formal decisions on who I was going to pursue: you or the other person.

While you were constructing the box, I realized it might be cruel to give you information that you couldn't use, since I could only give you the knowledge of my love and not the actual love, at that point at least, when I was still deciding who I loved more: you or the other person. But I didn't consider that it might be cruel until you were 90% finished constructing the box. You know I'm not good at thinking quickly.

When you opened the box it was empty. Though you seemed unsurprised, I think it hurt you to look into the box and see nothing but air. I can see now how that may have been more hurtful and damaging to you than just seeing the same air without a box around it.

The whole thing was a big miscalculation on my end because the other person didn't love me, though it took me several months to glean that information, and you and I drifted apart in that span of time.

Anyway, I'm sorry about the whole box thing. It was really stupid.

WHAT YOU LEFT

Karen Uhlmann

BEHIND

SHOULD I have known? Dropped a glass? Woken in the middle of the night? Had a vision? I slept soundly until the phone rang.

There was a witness, a man, who called the emergency number posted on the bridge. The number is there, perhaps, because there is no railing. There are not enough jumpers, I read later in the paper, to make a railing cost effective.

Your husband, tried to reassure me, or maybe both of us, that you had so many drugs in your system that you hadn't felt a thing. But I looked it up. It is all physics after the fall begins, as gravity takes hold—the falling body quickly accelerates and slams into the water. What you die from. Internal injuries.

"Ask me anything," your husband had said on the phone. But I couldn't think what to ask.

In China, when you were an ex-pat, we took your kids out for Indian and Italian food. We went shopping, and you taught me to yell—in your terrible Mandarin—when people touched me. We bought boots and shoes and sweaters and a sparkly evening bag.

In New York we ate fried artichokes in my hotel, and loved them so much we ordered more. We watched movies on my bed and drank wine.

In Vermont I heard you open your door in the middle of the night to comfort a girl who was crying.

In Chicago you stayed in my guest room, and your oldest daughter slept with my dog curled underneath her arm.

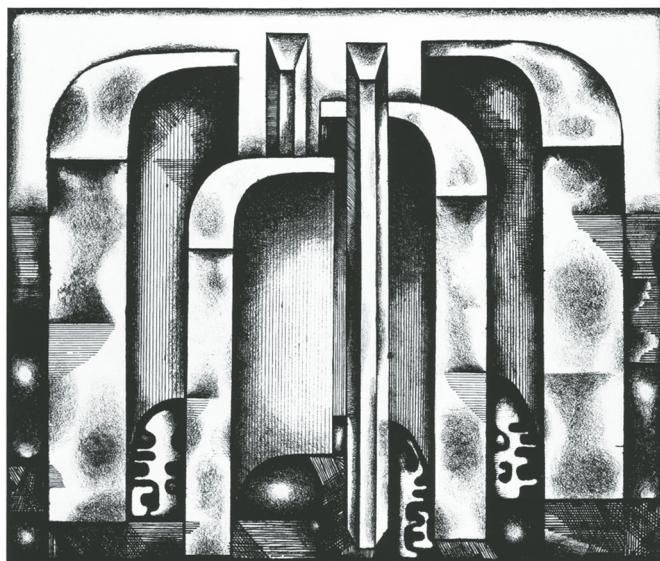
In Providence I went through your belongings, because of the promise I had made.

You were alive, unconscious, when a police marine crew pulled you from the water. And then you were dead. Some people survive the jump from this bridge. It is high, but not nearly as high as the Golden Gate, which almost always promises death. This one was a crapshoot.

It is best when jumping from a lower bridge to go in head first—to maximize the injuries—but I don't know if you did that. If you did your research.

You were not wearing your favorite leather pants, because I found them later.

You drove to the upper level of the bridge and parked. This is how they identified you. The license plate.



Algirdas Steponavičius, *Constructions I*, 1969, lithograph



Cars and bodies must be released and retrieved. It took your husband the better part of a day, because the bridge was in another town. So maybe you had thought about your children. Spared them, at least, from the local news. Or maybe it was because it was just the highest bridge you could find.

Your husband sold the car immediately.

What kind of mother, people ask, leaves three young children?

There is no answer to this.

People also ask if there was a note. There was not. I know because I looked everywhere, including every pocket and purse.

On the flight to your house I did not worry about either the takeoff or landing. You were not afraid of flying, but I am.

Your absence made the house empty—even with your children—or maybe, because of them. The younger two were watching cartoons on the family room couch, which was covered with dog hair. They did not, they said, feel like talking or lunch, although your ten year old daughter asked me to paint her nails blue for your funeral. Your boy, who looked so small for eight, didn't, or wouldn't, look away from the TV. Your fourteen year old, the one who had just stayed at my house, appeared for a minute, gave me a hug and went to her room. When I peeked in she had her headphones on, and a blank look on her face. I think we all had that look.

Your phone had a message on it from me.

Where are you? Call me.

I don't know if you listened to the message.

You tossed the phone into the water. The witness saw this. Noticed the splash of the phone, and a thin

thirty-something woman with long blond hair. Your eyes were fixed downwards, as if you were searching for something. He looked away to find the emergency number, and you were gone.

The other things missing were your computer, your diamond wedding ring and your purse.

You liked to call me from the Dunkin' Donuts lot where you smoked in the car wearing a raincoat, rubber gloves and a shower cap, so your children wouldn't smell cigarettes. I could hear your deep drags over the phone.

You promised you would not do what you did, and I believed you.

Your mother brought lasagna that night, but I excused myself to go through your things.

"Go ahead," your mother had said. "I can't bear it." She was sitting on a kitchen chair with a glass of bourbon in her hand. The wallpaper you were so proud of, green with red fire ants, framed her head.

I threw the tangle of underwear and nightgowns into a garbage bag. Scooped the makeup into another. I cried when I got to the bathroom and found the shower gel I'd given you. You'd used most of it.

Your clothes were slipping off the hangers, pooling on the floor. It took hours to hang and straighten. To be able to shut the door.

"Can I have her shoes," your oldest daughter asked, when I was done.

"The living cannot walk in the shoes of the dead," your mother said.

I looked at your husband. He nodded yes.

"Of course you can," I said, showing her that I had put on a pair—your hot pink pumps. Your party shoes. I slipped them off, and handed them to her.

HEAR

Delaney Nolan

BOOBY

WE HAD AN ARRANGEMENT: I helped her out of the bath. I made her great tubs of food, steaming on the white plates. I looked away at times when it was appropriate for me to look away.

She did not like my face and she did not like the loud sound of my breathing and she reminded me of this, over and over again. She spoke in harsh, deep tones, opening her puckered mouth narrowly, revealing the pale fuzzed tongue. Because our time together was a thing I was paid to do, I never said, "You breathe so much louder than I ever will." Anyway it didn't matter. She knew that on her own.

Mary had been obese all her life, and now she lived in a run down house in one corner of a bad town, her body so large that it was a hazard to itself. The government paid for some of her living expenses because that's the decent thing to do. They sent her disability checks that I carried in for her to sign, walking on long slim legs from the mailbox. My job was to keep her living. I came in the mornings and made food, washed her massive clothes, swept the kitchen, and then I mostly watched television in her living room while she lay in bed, sometimes groaning, but never calling for me, ashamed of any kind of need. I liked to watch the gruesome daytime programs—Maury, Jerry Springer, Judge Judy—because I liked to see these reminders that most people were uglier than I was, worse at living. I sat on her dusty couch and watched poor women pull each other's hair. When they cried it looked fake. Their faces were too shiny. I rooted against them all.

Once a week, I had to bathe her. I went into Mary's room with a tub of soapy water and a clean white cloth.

Those were times when we stopped being people. We became mechanical movements of flesh. I would dip the cloth in the water, wring it out without speaking, and start to wipe down her shoulders, her heaving chest. I lifted her arm and drew the cloth along her sides, her gaping armpits, lifting folds of skin that sagged and doubled over. Under her breasts, which I had to push up with my entire forearm. I'd help her roll over so that I could wipe her back, her buttocks, her thighs, and yes, even between her legs, the creases there. I could have skipped that part and she never would have mentioned it. But I would have brought attention to it by my own neglect and embarrassed us both, so I kept on with the prescribed movements. Then her thighs. Her bloated knees. Afterwards, I threw the rags away.

Every time I entered the room she was waiting for me, staring toward the door with wet black eyes. If she had some other diversion, some reading or a game she played in her head, I never learned what it was. I crossed the small kitchen towards the bedroom with loud, clomping steps, so that she would hear me coming, so that I would not walk in and find myself interrupting nothing.

"How are you today?" That was what I always brought in in the morning with breakfast (a deep bowl of oatmeal and fruit, twelve slices of toast with butter, half a packet of bacon, ten eggs burned or underdone). "Is there anything you need?"

She would groan, wave her arm. "You're late," she would say. I was never late.

There were things I wanted to tell her. The smell of her. The sourness, how I grew accustomed to it. The words I thought when I saw her lift her head: how a

glacier is born: calving. I wanted to tell her how some afternoons, alone in her living room, surrounded by her things, hearing her groans, I stuffed the dirty throw pillows up my shirts, down my trouser legs, into my sleeves, until I was a bunched-up thing, until movement was difficult. With the television off I saw myself in its black reflection. I would feel so safe, a kind of embracing. But that was not like Mary's life. Mary was flesh all the way through; she had blood where her pillows ought to be. There was no safety in her bulk. So I'd throw myself against the badly-painted wall, or I'd lean against the edge of the broken coffee table until my chest ached, my breathing became heavy and compressed, the lifting of the ribs a difficult thing, and then stand up and shrink down, strip the downy cloth away, because it was time to do Mary's laundry.

The last time I saw Mary, I went into her bedroom and in the morning and she was not waiting for me, staring at the door like she usually was. I walked in and her eyes were fluttering: open, shut; the only light and mobile flesh on her. I put the tray of food down on the floor and

shook her shoulder. She looked at me through a heavy film, unrecognizing. I called 911 and spoke into the receiver, hushed, like maybe she would hear me and become alarmed: Please come quickly. Yes, she's breathing. No, I don't know how long she's been this way.

I waited standing next to her. I lifted my hand towards her body, but I didn't know where I should place it. I stood still. I watched her massive chest heaving: up, down, up. The muscles it must have required to move the ribcage. An effort I couldn't imagine.

When the paramedics arrived, they were angry at me.

"Why didn't you tell the dispatcher she's this big? We need special tools for this."

One went back to the ambulance while the other checked her pupils, asked her questions she couldn't answer, her deep voice weak. They used a levered bar and a wheeled stretcher to move her, huffing, struggling. When they loaded her into the ambulance they said I couldn't come along; there was no room. I hadn't asked to come along at all.



Testing the Heart: The Glory of Woman

TESTING THE HEART—SCENE IN A GYMNASIUM

COPYRIGHT BY BYRON, N. Y., 1899

BY THE USE OF THE STETHOSCOPE THE CONDITION OF THE RESPIRATORY ORGANS CAN BE FULLY ASCERTAINED

KNIFE FINDER

Matt Rowan

WHAT GOOD IS IT? What good is finding knives? And when was I going to tell you about the knives I found and found and kept finding?

Worthy questions, these.

Finding knives, man. I don't know. I wish I'd never found them in the first place. I'm going to tell you a little about what I had to deal with. Firstly, I had to deal with the man to whom the knives belonged.

I went down into the basement of my apartment (to get something from storage, I think) and saw a single steak knife set in one of the crevices built against the wall—the crevices were formed out of a series of these support planks of wood holding up the handrailing. Basically the planks were cheap balustrade, if that helps give you an idea. I hid the steak knife. I figured that'd be that. And planned to move on, never think of the thing again.

Not in the cards, though.

Always, when I returned to the basement, there was set neatly in the crevice a new knife. I took the knife, each time, put it elsewhere. I started a pile. I thought then, from the very beginning, it was important to keep the pile away from the kids. The pile was not good for any of the kids. I kept repeating that in my head: "Keep the pile away from the kids, keep the pile away from the kids,

imagine the blades are like teeth and the pile wants to bite the kids." I thought, no more playing in the basement for the kids. So you know my heart was in the right place when I moved the knife and then the subsequent knives. The whole of it seemed odd and seemed threatening.

I felt threatened.

"That was exactly my intention," the guy with the weird spandex suit that was many colors and too revealing said. He was the one to whom the knives belonged. He was a knife thrower. Amateur, but improving. He'd heard me mumbling about feeling threatened.

The knives were stolen. He was, perhaps, mentally unbalanced.

He kept forgetting where he'd left his knives, one right after the other. Until the day he remembered, the very same day he informed me he wished I'd felt threatened.

The day he remembered he came down the stairs juggling several knives and cutting himself a lot as he did so. I was in the basement doing my laundry. That's why I was there. He explained his weird quasi-philosophy, the gist of which was before he could become a great knife thrower, he had to first be a great knife setting down person, or some term for one who sets knives on surfaces like the one in that crevice of the basement staircase.

“You see, what I did? That was part of my *process*. But now it’s all ruined, because of you and your interruption. All my knives are gone from where I left them,” the knife thrower set down a knife in the crevice. He looked my way and lifted the knife by the blade, throwing it at me accusingly. It missed by a mile, glancing the cinder block wall and landing innocuously on the floor—which I wasn’t sure if *that* was his intention. And he didn’t say one way or the other, as he had about being threatening. He also didn’t reprove himself for missing me, which I thought he might if he were truly trying to hit me or even come close. Still, he was bad at throwing knives.

I tried to defend what I'd done. I said, "Really? Because all I did was bring them down here, to this pile? See?" And I pointed at the pile of knives. It had gotten big. "I kept giving myself fits because I imagined the mound of knives coming to life and attacking the kids, but you can have them all back. Maybe don't leave your knives near my staircase in the future? Leave them somewhere like your own house, as one option."

“Not an option. You’re the knife finder. You’ve found the knives. That was never supposed to happen.”

"Ok. So do you want the knives?"

“Nevermind,” he said. He didn’t leave. He stood in my way as I climbed up the stairs with my laundry basket under one arm. It was awkward getting around him.

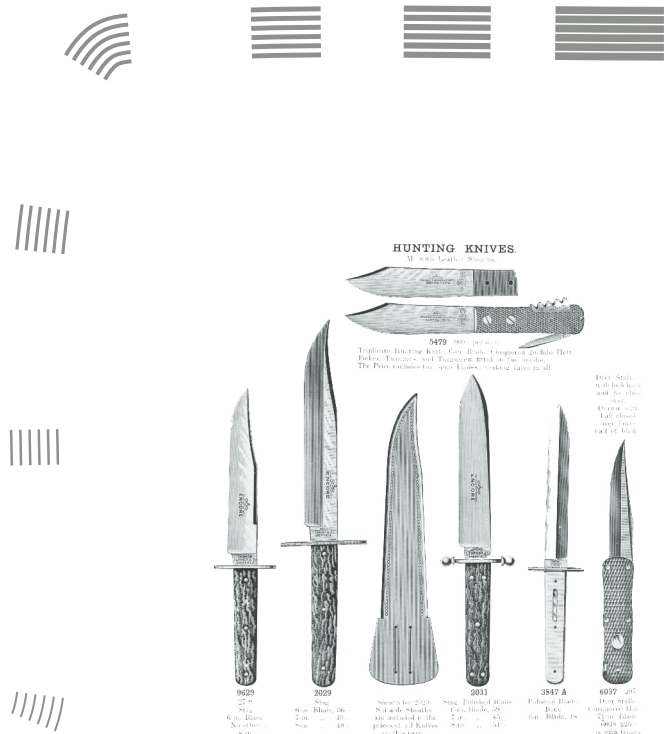
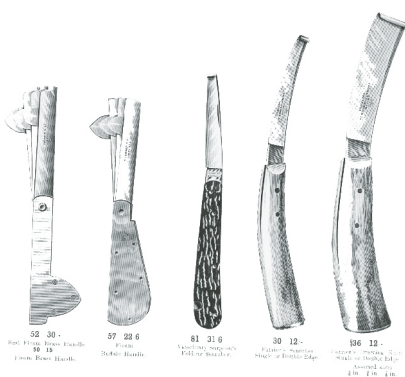
Actually, he's still down there. He's pouting and sobbing. Curled up next to his pile of knives.

And that's not the worst part. It isn't. See, worse than that? When I went back down there, feeling bad and a little weird about leaving the knife thrower? I found the knife pile finally *had* come to life. So they're down there now, together, hanging out and talking knives. The pile has this horrible twisted expression on its knifey face. And, *oh* yeah, it has human features: mouth, eyes, all outlined with different kinds of knives. The eyebrows are two extra-long bladed butcher's knives aiming downward with tons of menace and malice in them, like you'd expect. The pile of knives yelled at me as I retreated up the stairs, in terror, said: "Send the kiddies down. We can play! There's no danger! Not with old Nick McKnife, the happy knife pile of fun." The knife thrower kept putting an arm around Nick McKnife, trying to get the pile to sing with him. The knife thrower kept cutting himself on the animate pile and laugh-crying about his cuts.

That loud bass is the sound of Nick McKnife's laughter muffled by the floorboards.

I should call the cops, right?

What do you think they'd do?





Gregory Howard

SILENT ANNALS

SOMETIMES, THOUGH, she woke up the middle of the night. She woke to the sounds the house made. Muttering, muttering, but also the whistle of a train. The sound of the train reminded her of the house by the sea. She would sit in her pale green room and think of the house by the sea and how the floor was covered with dirt and glass because her mother sat and stared at the fire even though it was the summer and for days at a time her father stayed at the water treatment plant where he did things he wouldn't talk about. Then she felt like the house, filled with glass and dirt and broken watch parts and she would lick her lips. This was after the disappearance. After one day her brother just vanished and her mother wouldn't speak but wouldn't sleep either and went methodically about her business, cooking the same things over and over again, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, pancakes, peanut butter and jelly, and a burnt tuna noodle casserole, bitter and terrible to eat, and constantly rearranging the house, moving the furniture, cleaning the bureaus and the floors, but not too much, and even at times despoiling it, the house, even bringing in dirt, just the right amount, good, good, kneeling over the floor in the kitchen, kneeling there and rubbing the dirt into the off-white tiles, which were always cool against her cheek as she watched from under the kitchen table her mother, in a dirty blue robe and pale night gown, make the house, over and over, into the place it was the day before her brother went missing. Finally, one day her father put them both in the car and drove and drove until the reached a new house, a house with no memories, the house by the sea. At dusk you could lie in the dunes and watch the sun return to the ocean. You could put your ear to the ground and listen to unseen things moving, burrowing, beneath you.

CIVILIZATION

Glenn Shaheen

YOU BOIL EGGS. You twirl keys. You live bells. You peel grapes. You run slow. You watch art. You map hives. You sog gloves. You harm time. You out side. You slam books. You drink slow. You figure out. You walled in. You pound street. You hear bells. You climb stairs. You station cross. You fake sick. You tear page. You halve bread. You cloud thoughts. You rib cage. You free bird. You strep throat. You clean plate. You scar magenta. You break dolls. You shelve books. You menace kids. You call mom. You call me. You twist phone. You palm coins. You trash trash. You lay slow. You light house. You fill rooms. You walled in. You flit quick. You lay flat. You let ring. You cold heart. You face glass. You real tooth. You fake feather. You lovely lovely. You spin tops. You sip bells. You pen note. You place shoes. You hard time. You eat fruits. You sleep well. You plate delicately. You file note. You drink slow. You lose two. You tongue silver. You sack fruits. You boil tea. You signed leaf. You stag none. You miss lovely. You bell slow. You fear light. You out side.



Brigitte Fontaine - Est... Folle LP [Saravah, 1968]

The Doubts of the Confederate Army

Katie Lattari

GRIFF, YOU ARE telling me about what your band The Doubts of the Confederate Army is working on now. You ask me if you ever emailed those demos of the new tunes to me. You did. You nod and start to dissect them, fork in hand. I think that first one, you are saying, the one that Mike wrote, is going to be a sort of heavy plodder. But in a good way, you know? Like, I think it will have the density of a dying star but the agility of a

greyhound. The bass line shores this all up; it, like, gives us the tornado cellar we need—this stronghold to keep us anchored, but it also knows how to swing the fucking doors wide open. Haverford gave us a brilliant blueprint. It's like, where it all starts on that song. It is like it is the first thing ever born. Like it is a golem. Earthy, essential. And so now, the work we have cut out for us—me and Pinkie—is to make our stuff support that, enhance it.

Because weirdly, it is about the bass with that one. Like, let that take center stage for once. So Pinkie is working on the beat, the fills—how to make the tornado come to that stronghold. I think that's kind of my job, too. How we barrage the storm cellar while also strengthening it. It's a conducive kind of assault. I think that's what that song is about. What that song needs to be about. You are telling me about what Mike has gone through to get his newest bass amp, used. You are telling me about the guy who needed to sell it so he could make his rent. You are telling me about how Mike still tried to talk him down on the price, even with knowing everything. Even with knowing the guy was a step away from being homeless. You are telling me about how Pinkie cracked his crash cymbal at the Doubts' last practice and how he was fucking mad about it. Like it was your fault somehow. And then with that second demo, you are saying, is there anything more real or true than Tom Waits? I tell you that I don't think that there is, and this seems to be all you have to say about the second demo.




Kurt Seligmann, *Game of Chance No. 2*, 1949



The third demo, I say, is my favorite. You laugh in your throat, Good old number three. Tell me about that one, I say. You take a few big gulps of your High Life. The light above us is bright and warm; like if your mom could emit a register of light when you are most homesick it would be this light, and it would comfort you when you couldn't be there with her. That one, you say, that one begins and ends with me. I think it's that place between your lungs and your ribs, you say. It's that sliver of wet, gooey space, that liminal space where things are allowed to expand. But they expand—and this is so you can breathe, and live—into something. Against something. I don't think anyone would call ribs restrictive, you know? They're there to be armor for those delicate organs. The heart, the lungs. They allow the lungs to expand, but they are the outer limit in that sense. We breathe all the air out of us and we hit the other limit. That space in between,

where that sort of expansion happens, where it is a system that works together, where the living thing has something to come up against—solid, serious, but no hindrance—that is what that song is. That's where that song lives. It is close and allows everything to happen. That thin, twiggy pocket. It is that slight pocket coming up against something, a hemming in. And so the guitar tone is fuzzy, it's wild. It's almost like radios mixing frequencies. And choruses of them, choruses of them working together, building, expanding. Coming up against Pinkie's beat—fucking Great Wall of China. And then you have Mikey as the like, thick, war-time thread helping us integrate—the lung sac and the ribs. And I want that seaming to stay there, the expansion trying to deflate backward but the thread holding it expanded, almost against its will. It can't unexpand, at a certain point. It can't diminish. It can only end.





After the Little League Game Where I Was Hit in the Ribs by a Pitch

WE WALKED back to the red Chevy van, the kind with a spare tire on the backdoor, and my flesh held the ball's stitches like a Jell-O mold. In the woods beyond left field there was rumored to be a drifter who exposed himself to local birdwatchers. In my mind, there's a man in the woods beyond the fence, naked and covered in mud. If you see anything strange, they said, step away slowly and don't call attention to yourself. What was strange, to me, was when the ball hit my body, it sounded like mud being thrown against a barn. I cried—probably too much and my dad talked about weather-resistant primer with the umpire. In the van I thought about lasting imprints, like if someone threw a quarter at my bare skin would the first president forever be eyeing my nipple. If I threw anything with a barcode at my naked flesh, would my self-worth be scanned and dictated by the supply and demand of the local economy. During the game, I inhaled, due to an unseasonably dry spring, enough blown dirt to plant a modest garden at home, in the corner of the yard where the water piled up during heavy rain. Living in the woods, I thought, how free. My dad called the man a harbinger for the years to come. Then he said something about the people who put razorblades in cupcakes, but his voice filtered out the driver side window like smoke from the cigars (he actually called them turds) he smoked, but only when we were camping because that's what men do. After I was hit by the pitch, I took my spot at first base and used my toe to scratch my name into the base path and then I scratched it out because even the wind coming in from right field can read and I didn't want to call attention to myself.

I Quit Football After Two Weeks Because My Head Didn't Fit the Helmet

THE FIELD I NEVER played on was like those mats at the driving range, sopping and unforgiving. The coach looked like a former-pro wrestler who crushed too many beers cans on his head and threw tires around his backyard. His son, who he called Tiger, looked like a Rottweiler that survived off of raw meat. The air smelled like bad cheese and misdirected testosterone, and I was embarrassed of my head and I didn't want the scoreboard to look at me. I was embarrassed because my head was like a golf ball in a pickle jar and the fat kids who ran laps in front of me—their thighs rubbing together like kindling—called me dicklips or dickless; I don't remember which. During the first practice we wore the helmets that didn't fit without facemasks and did cup checks by kicking each other between the legs. By the second day, everyone remembered. The teams I never played against had boys that made animal noises, like mating cattle, and crushed too many beer cans on their heads. When there was a fumble and all the bodies piled up, it smelled like cigarettes and Mad Dog 20/20. One team had a girl and everyone called her Tractor. The games in the winter that I never played in were low scoring because of the frostbite and we never won because no one could lift their arms above their heads. In the helmet that didn't fit, the turn radius of my neck was the opposite of an owl and I had—when yelled at for lining up in the neutral zone—to turn my whole body, stiff and soldier-like. I was embarrassed of my head, embarrassed to tell my father that the equipment weighed more than the body I'd yet to grow into, and I was embarrassed about the declined moral state of the western hemisphere. There were a lot of tackles I didn't make and when the bodies hit the earth I never heard the bones crack, but I hear the sound even today like a plate of snow falling from the roof to the driveway. The ground was so hard back then that it hit you rather than the opposite. I stole the helmet that didn't fit and put it in the garage like a relic and I shot at it with my first BB gun.



by Tom Wigley / High School Football / Washington, D.C. November 3, 1923. / Eastern v. Central



*Paper collage with acrylic paint, 2011
(originally appeared online in Red Lightbulbs)*

Invertebrates

& other work

Erin Case

ERIN CASE is an award winning visual artist based in Midland, Michigan, with a focus in collage. Working in both analog and digital methods, she is regarded for the marriage of surrealism, sincerity, and evocativeness that is present throughout her body of work.

Erin's work has been featured in forty-two separate locations across Canada for Art in Transit's International Collage Exhibition. She has exhibited for Patchbox Project (Rome), has had features in *Lola Magazine* of Brazil, *Prototype Magazine* (UK), in the Las Vegas based magazine *Vegas/Rated*, and many others.

In a recent interview with *Blanc Magazine*, Case describes her process:

"My process goes something like this: Feel, over-analyze, hunt, cut, arrange, glue, and finally, let it go. I've got quirks, sure. I wiggle my fingers excessively when I feel uncomfortable or when I'm super comfortable, but not any time in between, and I can't throw away my 6th grade boyfriend's hair clippings (even though I didn't particularly like him). I think people are partially defined by their quirks, as individuals at least for sure, so all the quirks that make up how I think definitely have a role in what and how I create."

Catch



2014

"I have these little suitcases that I keep myself organized with. I keep works in progress in one case (it's actually a vintage pink Mary Kay sales-rep case), clippings of landscapes in another case, and clippings of subjects in a third case. Then, I have rolling drawers filled with glue sticks, scissors, Exactos and blades, a ruler, cutting mats, so on. I could be better organized, still. If I need an apple, or whatever, and just know that I have one floating around in that suitcase, sometimes I'll scrounge around in there for an hour and never find it. Then, I'll run into it in there a month later."

Erin is currently in pursuit of dual degrees in fine arts and psychology. She is a die-hard supporter of the arts, regularly organizing and hosting events throughout Michigan.



Honey Glove

2013

The Shepherd

2014

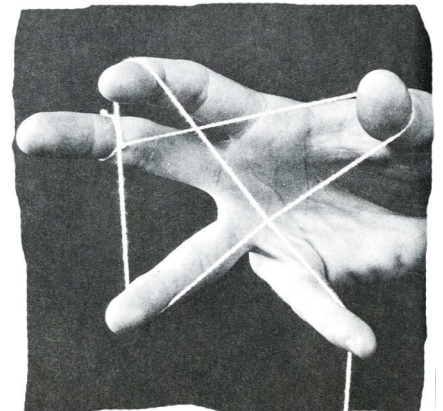


A FEW THINGS I CAN'T BE PROUD OF

Joshua Daniel Edwin

I joined the yo-yo club
 We looked each other up and down
 Of course they let me in
 We're all men in the yo-yo club
 Some rules enforce themselves
 With the other men watching
 I slipped the loop over my knuckle
 Everyone clapped we did
 Important work for our art form
 And for society at large
 We got funding from the university
 And raised money for the troops
 We tried to be racially diverse
 We walked the dog we skinned
 The cat we hopped the fence
 We picked a fight with the lacrosse team
 And bashed their brains in
 Just like David did Goliath with
 A string and a strong arm
 We took their girlfriends
 And we dreamed on they really
 Should have worn their helmets
 We all should have known better
 We were just boys back then
 In blue t-shirts with three inch
 Sleeves for our skinny arms
 We helped each other make excuses
 And sometimes very late at night
 Shadow doves or rabbits on the walls


from *The Amazing Yo-Yo*, Ross R. Olney
 photos by Chan Bush, Lothrop Lee & Shepard, NY, 1980





THE HEROINE GOES BAT-SHIT, BUT ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE

Anne Barngrover & Avni Vyas


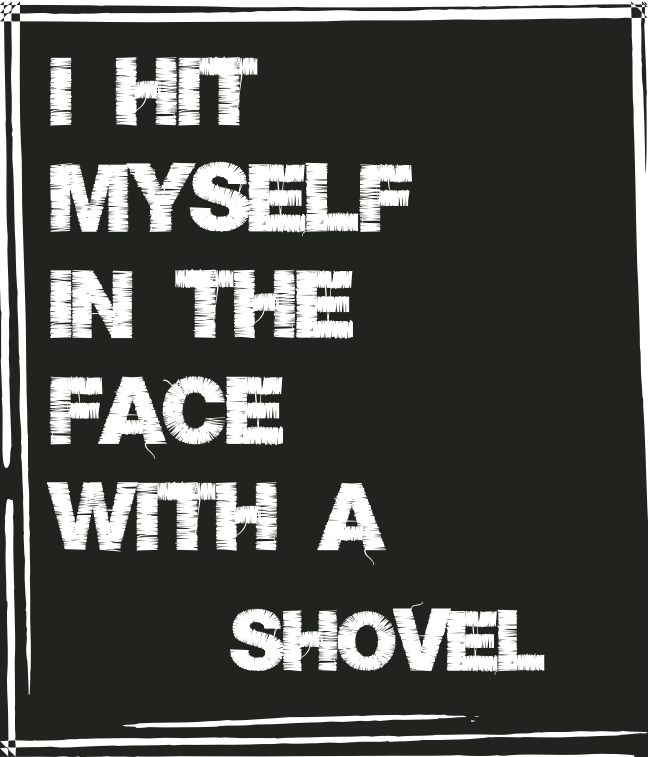
Remember when I taught you to bust open that crab? It was the closest I've ever gotten to a skull. Could you order my tics by importance? Could you sharpen my taste buds into fleas? I roped off a square plot for a cemetery garden, the bugle-shaped flowers corkscrewing out of the geckos and gerbils' graves. Did I ever tell you how I'd climb out there at night and pet Rainbow's hump of soil? You've never met a heart with thundersnow like mine. I can rage or roil in my love of you. *For* you? You're not allowed to ask that. Please only speak to me in High-Elvish. Address me by my proper name: call me the diminutives of my grandfathers and help me label the floozy who wears shawls and touches your arm at parties. I dub her *Ruffles*. Why light anything on fire when my spit is made of gasoline? I just feel like hurling cursed crystals at passersby! Dress like a lamb if it suits your orgasm. My airborne hammers and I will make do.



hard
 & liked it
 & I just want to stop
 feeling bad all the time
 I said, which I
 didn't like so
 I hit myself
 hard with the shovel
 & liked it
 I didn't like
 liking it—how
 hard the shovel was
 I just want to
 stop liking it, stop feeling
 bad sometimes &
 good others & not
 writing poems because
 I'm a hedonist & like
 liking it like
 the shovel I just
 want to stop, shut
 up, I said, stop
 talking to me
 like that I said &
 secretly liked it
 liked the shovel
 not the face suffering
 the brunt tooth
 knocked back
 hope you choke I I

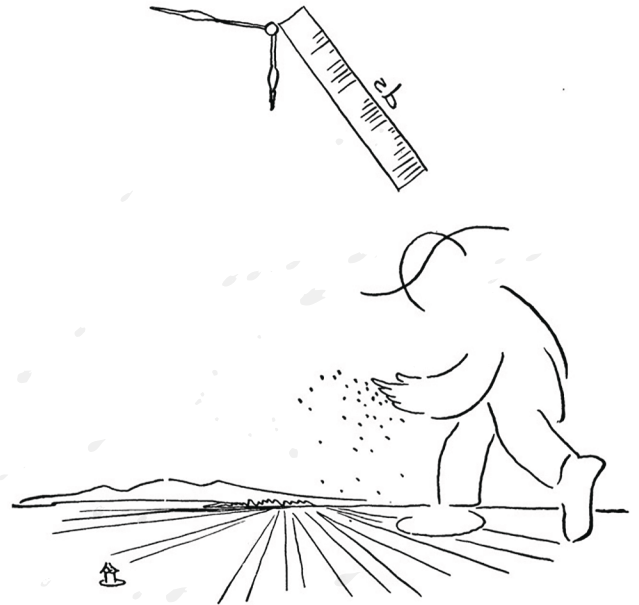
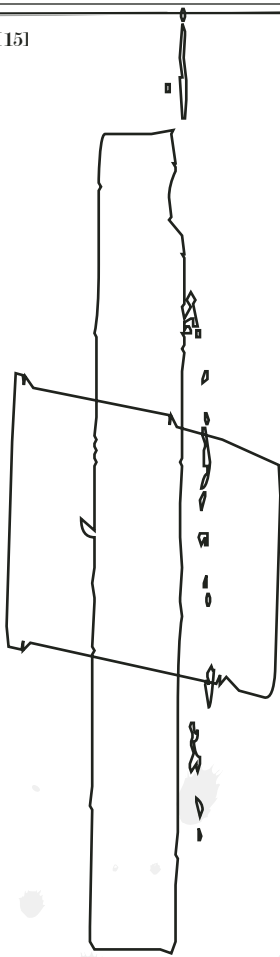



I I stuttered, how
 nervous I was
 making myself! good
 for my poems
 licked the new
 gap & not smiling, no
 way to shut up
 except for the
 shovel &
 couldn't be
 trusted I
 liked it too
 much

**I HIT
 MYSELF
 IN THE
 FACE
 WITH A
 SHOVEL**

Jen Stockdale



from *The Einstein Theory of Relativity* by Lillian
Rosanoff Lieber / Illustration by Hugh Gray Lieber

Self esteem is trouble enough when exiting
the shower.

Nor in the light of hindsight should the reverse
beep be our soundtrack.

To the extent that later is vinyl retrospective and our 50+ features
pointed out.

Because when it comes to the movables, faces are far and away
the best at marking position.

Along the lines we draw and the better angles
of our nature.

The corners of the day turning back
but not like a negative.

Which is a reminder of certain passages and just what happens
when vegetables go bad.

Given what falls from the question as well as the question
of how long the season will last.

And just how different would it be without the flocking
or you, shotgun.

Dan Kaplan

Two Pine Trees

Brooke Ellsworth

I did not walk to the beach today.
 I did not walk the broad cramp.
 The transience of purple.
 The short dogs at noontime.
 The dog that approaches the nose.
 Sloped under the noumena of utility.
 I did not nose the discredited.
 I did not cheapen from old habits.
 I did not see the blue sand.
 Anonymous frame of the shoreline.
 I see the shores that are glued.
 I conclude the return years later.
 I did not close my eyes to listen.
 The shared name of winter storms.
 To tag the wind with the rose.
 I did not insist on the contraction.
 I did not approach the pine tree.
 At once itself are certain needles.
 I can generalize with the surrounding needles.
 I did not hear the needles.
 I did not hear the overlapping chatter.
 Forked by a barking person in public.
 Listeners into the public room.
 I did not have the purple eyes.
 I was not given the detail.



LEANING BACK OR

David Bartone

My mastiff cannot swim but occasionally wades out.
 His fawn turning apricot then brindle made by lake water.
 Leaning back, the sun direct makes us into our locked elbows propping,
 and my left crosses your right causes the crisp end of your sleeve....
 Touching my arm reminds me cause to think you are dangerous.
 Poetry is not usually aggressive unless it needs to protect people.
 And, yellow day afternoon heavy you whisper water whispers.
 Ripple, notice of our feet, yours, which is lifted over so dripping
 European from your heel, and that thing around your ankle,
 and causes hold my eyes on the easiest part of you. My ear now
 almost touching my shoulder, the lift of the smell of sex
 under a buckeye coming up from my own body, this shirt's look,
 and causes to wear it every day until the long weekend feeling
 wears off, which will be never! it will never happen! never erode,
 on this day, whose colors are most distinct on longer haired dogs,
 and causes for owning one with you occur grand as ever.
 You blow sleepy Aeolian on my sleeve to get my dark eyes hazel,
 which works, as we think mutually of dog combing settling all
 and any questions patterned after the future.
 Who is going to look you straight in the eye, your bad luck?
 Who is going to be by you? It's always winter at sundown,
 and my mastiff cannot withstand this lake's ice nor be withstood by it.
 Wanting you to know that every cause causes telling you about it—
 poetry this and poetry that—and you say, “See that son and dad combo,
 and how the dad's teaching his son something, saying ‘Son,
 see these knuckles?’ and how the son is listening, is an asshole
 in training, and how the son so clearly wants to be looking over
 and caressing his reflection,—how do I know that won't become of
 our caresses: always wanting something else, but allegiance to some tether?”
 To this, your left hand lifts, fingering back and forth between us,
 and causes me to make my remarks on the matter. Just then a small tug
 on my America-themed fish pole comes, which we never expected,
 especially with Dodge dumb thumping around as he does,
 and commotion all the better, for now it's winter in my imagination, and we
 own the long dog with lonely eyes. And about the cause of trying to honor
 your prompt, thank god the fish comes in with me staying sit down.
 And putting it back we quit fishing, but like a moron on way too much coffee,
 I get up, I take off my shirt, I take off my shorts, I take off
 my underpants, and I do a sunset cannonball soaking you,
 and Dodge comes after me and I go after him and we hug there
 naked, and the dad looks at us like we are assholes and begins to row
 away. And I look at you enthused, and with soggy eyed apology smiles.
 And you sit there. Those wet drips on your glasses, your arms still cocked
 in that stayed put position, and you love what I've done by the way
 you smile no more, you smile no less, you do absolutely nothing.

RE- COUNT

Candice Wuehle

Imagine if when my father told me to close my eyes
 I did. What word is there for cut-up charism? What
 echo threw its face in the radio and invented
 whiskey nation? What prayer is there for the angel
 who mis-records glossolalia? Imagine if I hadn't seen
 all the blood bool coming in appear
 as awe or
 as full or some as ruby river, as one occult eye? How then could I
 know how long to remain under
 water without breath? Count
 all the way
 to the others' country. Clack, clack, clackity.
 It will not be possible to keep track. Instead
 of the body, imagine the voice
 dis-placed, suit-cased into instead another animal, another desert skimmer, departed
 of beautiful dirt. If erased is the space
 between the stars, more stars. Shine, shiner, shone. If ever are you
 alone and speak from the electric tongue within,
 it may have been my monster hopped the fence. It may also
 at the same hour
 be us.
 Clack. Under-sky, without count and unhitched. It may also be us
 on our way home from the war. Imagine
 us witnessing
 one space and running
 open
 in another.
 No one said this could happen.

thingspo

Carrie Murphy

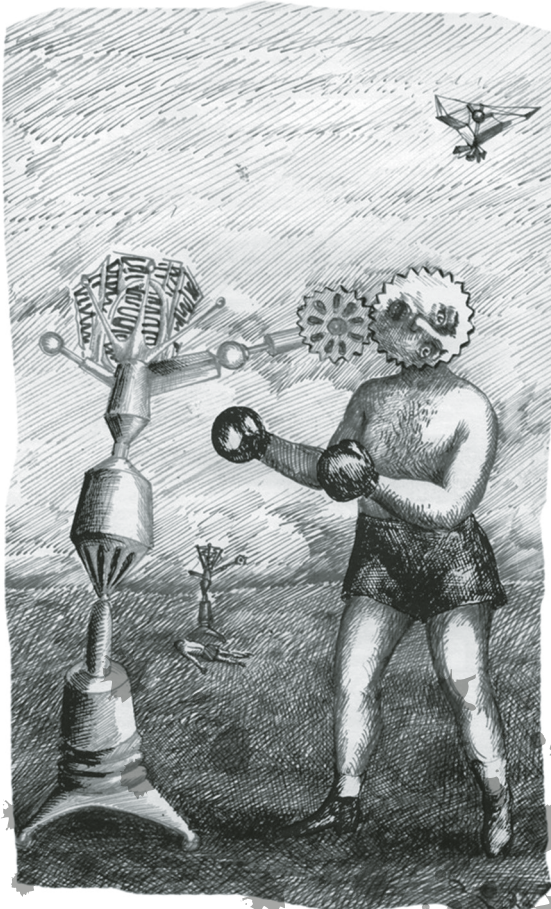
I take my able-bodied
body to a place where we
can be alone. I almond meal
I crystal light I sports bra
eyeliner out lipstick up
image out image in
My Feminazi mouth
My baby oil breath
My size eyes



Medicine & Public Health / Model of man in Maze of Superstition exhibit 1939-40

THE STRANGER

Amish Trivedi



Le conflit entre l'homme et la machine, illus. Roland Topor

The fear of being seen

when not
present

is tangible,

at least. My favorite

coma is
the one that
hasn't been seen

yet. A
taxable set
of teeth
is unbelievably hard
to come by

since the old way of
pulling weight
was to stand near by

it. The affordability of
heart attacks changes with

the structure of veins
across the skin, a

pattern designed to
bring terror.

and my brother lives in a storage unit
we have an agreement for now

put my mother's things
in a catalogue (I think), used to be "free spirited"

my brother is a sleeping sentry
when he's asleep

my lover sleeps with other men sometimes
whoever said life in the city

I once slept in a store window
for two days straight
and no one bought me

I am an artist,
I am a reasonable person

I will make this brief,
a package was mailed to intercepted

I build a case where there is none,
every day is predicated

the fact the phones are tapped
so literal communication is impossible

nerves are tumble weeds,
I am an artist and

MY PHONE IS TAPPED

Alan Ramón Clinton

hope most of the mail
is still secure

my brother is sleeping in a storage unit
looking for something that is not here

they can search whatever, whenever
a system being a case

thought I was in the right place
in the store window for fuck sake

I will visit—you're not in danger
here's the deal, don't ask me about it
I'm designing a logo in crisis
in a planetarium of really unreasonable characters

I try to remove the magnet,
I am an artist

life as a fetishized
are we all

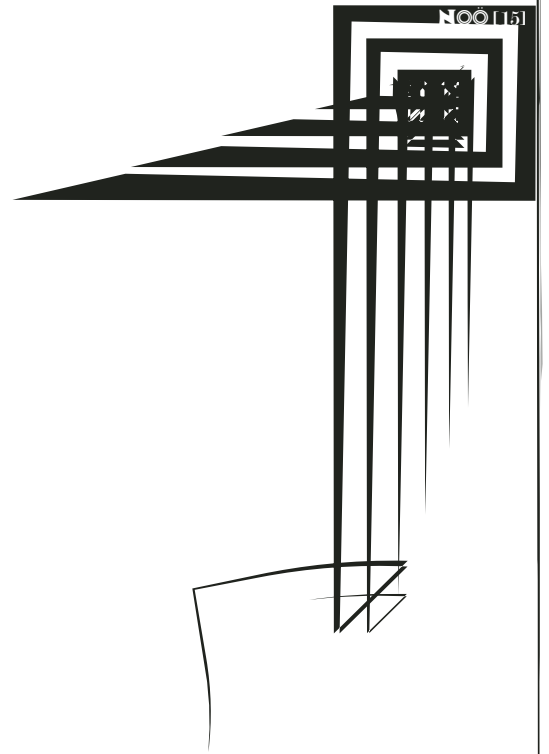
maybe build a case where there is none
maybe burn this

I am a reasonable person

designing a logo in crisis
an agreement for now

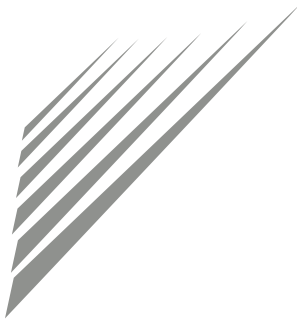
FROM

LEAVE YOUR BODY BEHIN



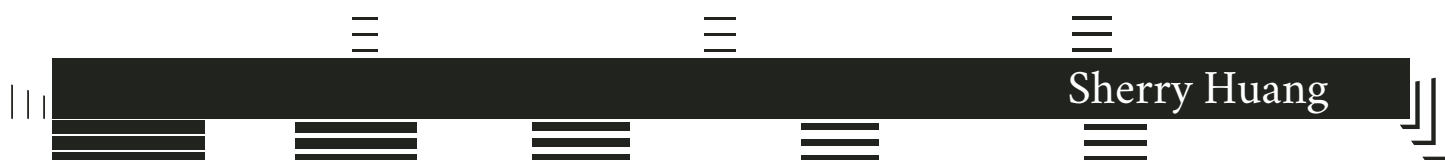
Sandra Doller

This is my most political poem. I think I'll send it to Politico. Talking about political poetry is the same as being political. Poetical. I'm so poetical I'm political. I'm so of the people I'm for the people. I'm so peopled I'm in you. Hi. I'm Pepper. This is my political poetry. Does political poetry accept donations? Will I still live on the train? Listen to the dervish up there, he's eating it up. The dervish, the organic Weetabix. The stairs. This is the poem we all aspire to, admit it, the one that climbs the stairs. Admit it, political poem at the gym. I thought about reading my most political poem to you while I was writing it. I thought about drafting a bill. I thought I was right so I wrote. I thought I had something to say but I'd already said it. I thought about you saying it for me. I thought about you. I thought about me. I thought about you and me.

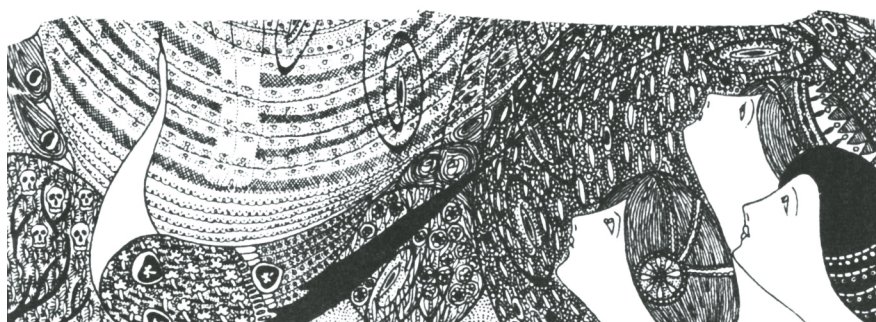
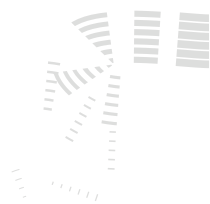




FROM S V R L D V S N S



I can't ignore a toothache thinking like this all the time: a mouth a mouth to collide with. People look great or terrible wet. You wrote a better poem than me that goes $H_2O + H_2O = H_2O$. I had to say sprinkler water on a cork floor to say soft. To spell out desire, a joint wet between our lips. We are slowed down or else faded in the corners. Which naturally means there is a center. It gets close, then disappears in halves, some black thing fluttering. You get closer, or you might. You would the way anyone would have. First by filling up the room while I rub my face in your hands, then, as I try to give you mine everything from the wrist down.



Etchings by Attila Sassy (1880–1967) for his *Opium Dreams*, 1909. Published under the pseudonym Aiglon.



INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP EXHIBITION

Lesley Ann Wheeler

*Ganga Devi, Latpatia suga,
entwined parrots motif, 1988-89*

Caroline's paperback *Nocturne Indien*
on attic stairs
permanent mobilization
false sandwich made truly sick of
important friends in faraway places

four kinds of it layered: your hands, up-
heaval white suit disgraces
we must be connected
the moment you sent I checked, we're:
mittens speaking mum in a continental snowdrift
strong strung baby
red vase with stars
fallen from flags,
determine hardness, angled jointing and
visualize the drop
slot and soon spreads of
minicakes and sparkling sodas
fly at your squinched reaction
spoonbread's
defeat by cubs
sleep blinking away night folds
hungry for empty barrels and sits
for the next cutlery, sized—
the convent steps towards the border.

IN EACH DREAM DEFEAT

Rebecca Givens Rolland

1 *The villages of Prêcheur and Sainte-Philomène were receiving a steady stream of ash.*

Spring: after all the girl's just a rock of glass, a summons the beach rises after (breath stanced, bare anchorage shipped to the shore). One man survived in his jail cell (no oxygen left to be burned). Hunkered down, he turns amphibious, inhales soil like an elegant old frog.

Later, he finds himself lonely, everyone in free air having passed. No shelter, no fame: he strains to eat trees, grasps only lemon strips and shards.

Evenings, the girl descends to meet him, navigating foot-on-foot ladders. Cottonmouths appear as refuge, imprisonment (speech lost, bold wake of *bear-with*)—the guard pays her to leave, but she signs never, and in that blank refusal births a world.

2 *In the morning, people were observing the fireworks the mountain was displaying.*

Spring: she lives each day as a trap to pry open, map to witness, fortress to found. Call in fireworks, celebrating cattle (requested, they'll chew cud till morning fades). *No one saw the signs, or no one could get there that early.* Ash on her shirtback: she grinds it in further, stalking the spare lace marks of defeat.

Sorrow's carnivalesque: dusk's light showstops foreheads, maddens woodgrain under eyes. *The last will be first, the trapped freed*—city walls mumble each banged-out line—runners' tracks blur three rings, eyewitnesses catch the scene from afar: lingering, they stick a crown on disaster (*we promise you'll come out an honest man*).

3 Spring: with each spin, there's another rock in her pocket, weeping doll on marionette thread. Throat-slicing wind crosses wittily (cutting's just another subtle pun). Whitecaps on water sling rubble, pebbles, bare-scraped legs. Each night she drags something behind her; purled or pulled, kneeled or healing, always something reckless and long-lived.

Sleeping it off, she finds in each dream defeat (*you'll have to pull over this time*). Whirling car engine: miniscule, birdlike it stumbles and rings. And yet it doesn't shift an inch, no matter her blackening moods under white-beveled windows, chastised by questions (*whose accident?*) (all the neutral gears drown).

4 *There are unnamed eyewitnesses to the eruption, probably survivors on the boats at the time of the eruption.¹* Innumerable witnesses: someone's seen her stumble (rocks projected at her stomach, tossed with scarring force at her ears), watched sea winds forsake her mountain, dropping bands of tessellated air.

Yellow tape confirms: she's a hard one to capture (darts around her forehead unfurl). *Jack Sprat, mouse in the kitchen*: all of this would love to be a sign. Cornered, she'd forget to ask questions, let distance hang low in her knees as tall tales, bargains flock around her, endings float their boats and catch on air. Hope's a distant listener (denouement's shot)—anger hurries off and ties her hands.

BURNING THE CANDLE AT BOTH ENDS

Stephen Danos

When the minx asks if we know how to fly
a kite at the industrial graveyard, I admit
I've never flown one. That I'm part cardboard
cut-out part bubble wrap part hamstrung
panic room. I press on like cheap nails. I wear
my head on my hip, as a costume. Jilt me
at the altar, deviated septum. Where is
the fuse box for short-circuiting the city?
Grant songs and Triscuits for impendent
blackouts. Powernap on my peppermint
tongue. When someone says you chose wisely
by drinking from the faded cup of everlasting.
Changing geographic residence is what it takes
to make me feel less displaced. Open-faced
peach, you're a pale sunrise I almost
didn't notice. During the era of loving everything
inanimate. You troubling rainfall.
You peaceful blemish. You power drill
humming to the plumbing. We say
we are contagions. No laminate suit
can help the defiance our bodies brag about
when we sleep, pissing the sheets
because of all this improbable joy.

Tonight I skirted the wood's edge
in a place between its names

pursued by fire, gunfire, 1939

This was not a dream but
a book I couldn't put down by

waking. One, two AM, you came in
and said I forbid you to continue reading

that way. If we'd had a porch and not a baby
I'd've liked to smoke. To smoke

and wait for a car to hit the manhole
with the loose cover and make

that sound. Why am I here
now? What will happen if I'm tested?

I have not prepared by serving
those in need nor pored over

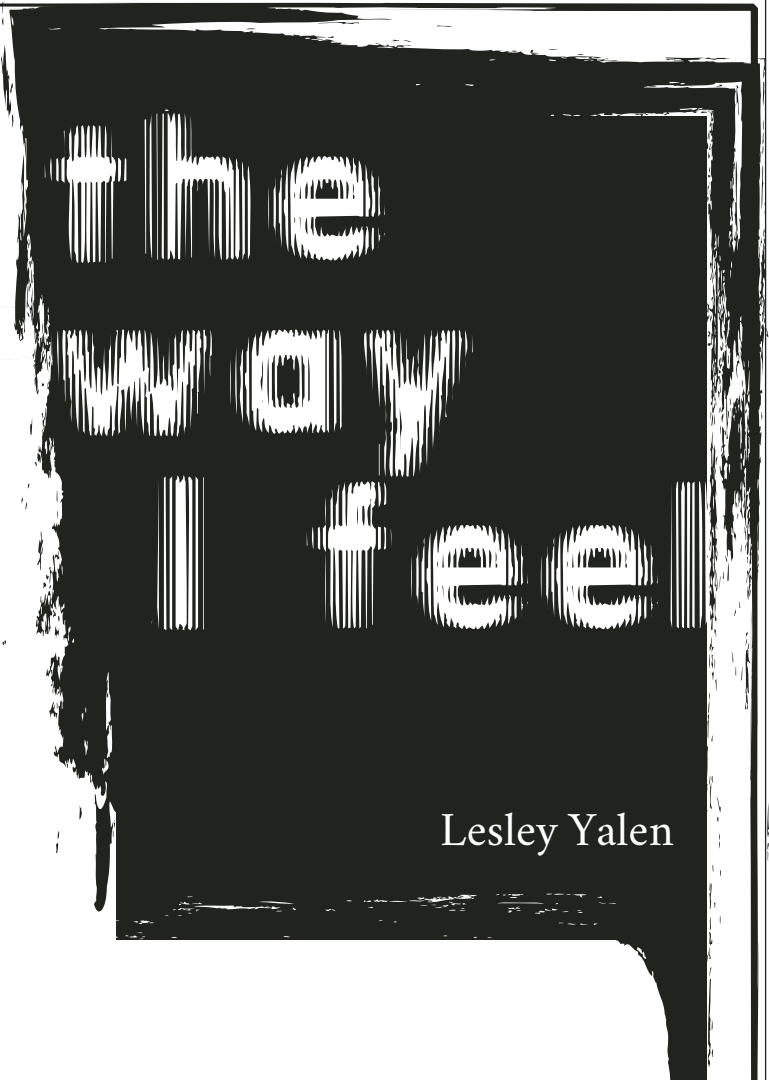
the great philosophers for answers.
History is farfetched;

so sad. But I guess
if I had the balls to be born

after millennia of not being born
I can get through whatever.

I defy you,
pick up another book. This time

I am walking around starving in Christiania
and the syntax is interesting and I sleep.

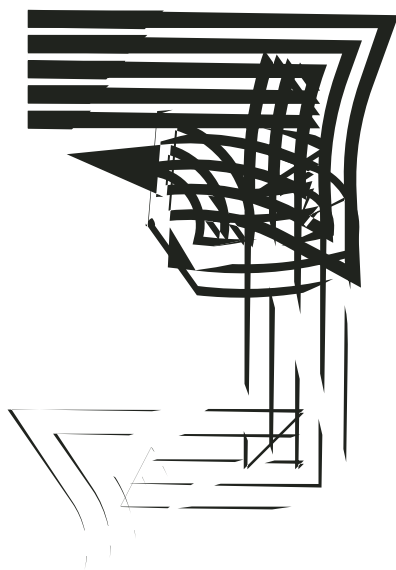


Lesley Yalen

Nura, The Silver Bridge, 1937

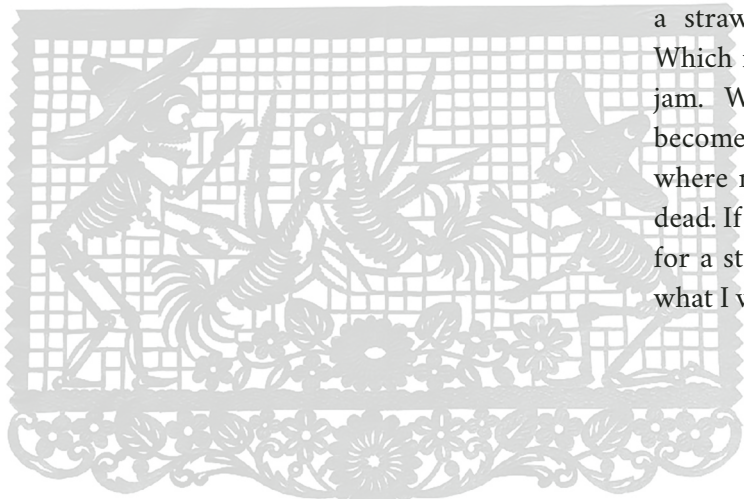


A. T. Grant



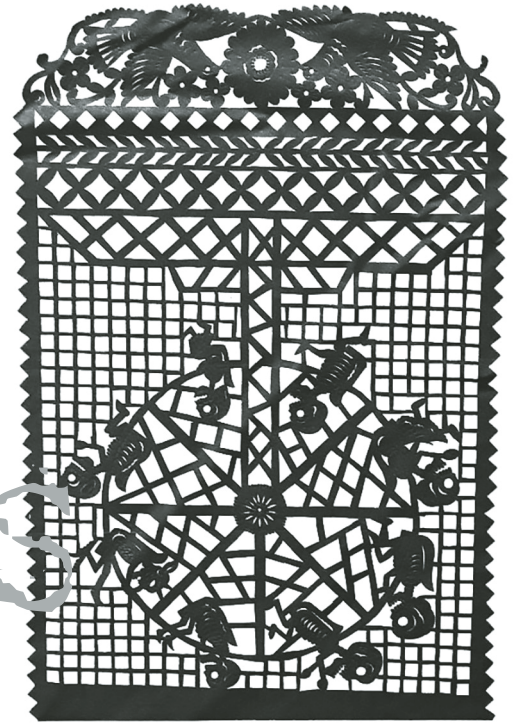
FAMILY

Dead Brother breaks off one of his fingers. Like Dead Sister taught him to do. He licks the broke-off finger and sticks it to the camera trigger. From the finger grows a Dead Brother Photographer. Okay, Dead Brother says to Photographer. I want bright light and deep blacks, sharp contrast. Sharp edges. But the colors should be bold, saturated. So saturated that when we become images we almost collapse under the weight. Imagine a strawberry. Imagine a strawberry covered with strawberry juice. Which is then covered with a thick strawberry jam. Which is covered with blood. Which becomes a wound and is pressed into my body where my heart would be if my heart was not dead. If I was a scooped out space that was ready for a strawberry to grow a heart in me. That's what I want us to look like in the pictures.



'Día de los Muertos' papercut images, produced in the 1980s in San Salvador Huixcolotla in Puebla State, Mexico, from the British Museum Prints Database

PORTRAITS



Dead Brother lies on the table in the spotlight. His chest smeared with strawberry pulp. He rubs his fingers in the pulp. He imagines his fingers are operating knives that go into his chest. He uses his other hand to make pretend blood arcs from the pretend cavity. So many pretend blood arcs. Dead Brother opens his mouth and releases a moan. *Dead Sister*—he imagines the word that has been killed into him. Imagines pulling it out. Imagines the blood arcs slowing to trickles. Dead Brother lies very still. Almost perfect stillness. He smiles at his stillness. At how quiet he feels. This is what the camera sees. Its eye is stuck open. Light rushes in. The image of Dead Brother saturates. Blurs. Even in his stillness. The saturation burns a hole in the image. In the photograph. In the camera eye. In Dead Brother's chest.

Dead Brother rises from the table and walks continually through the hole.



CALL-AND- -RESPONSE MONTH SEVEN

Brandon Lewis

It begins with her growl your growl back
 this fierceness our invention to reveal
 the beloved: bark
 that precise thou.
 Of course she wins the game, more rapturous, the closer to the real.
 And what of this brunch-going man
 and the winter wolf hunt that surpasses its quota
 and Voyager 1 howling Blind Willie Johnson
 and the Pacific garbage pale swirling
 out of reach? all the begotten world not enjoined
 in this victory contained in her body
 that crows in abandon— the begotten world that must seek
 the next glimmer, follow a contour down and down
 as water. Foolish,
 how you sink your body to the floor.
 That you growl again for her growl and crawl and wait
 after it, what may not return ineffable
 for her mouth to form for the air to hold, divest.
 You growl.

SLEUTHING

Douglas Korb

O, quarter dropped
into the slot that says GO

O, pink sluice
of love plummet

O, child who won't
let neck go

O, red TILT of
pinball machine

O, pubic hair in my
teeth

O, [object flying
at my head]

O, cyst in my hip

O, headless statue
bust

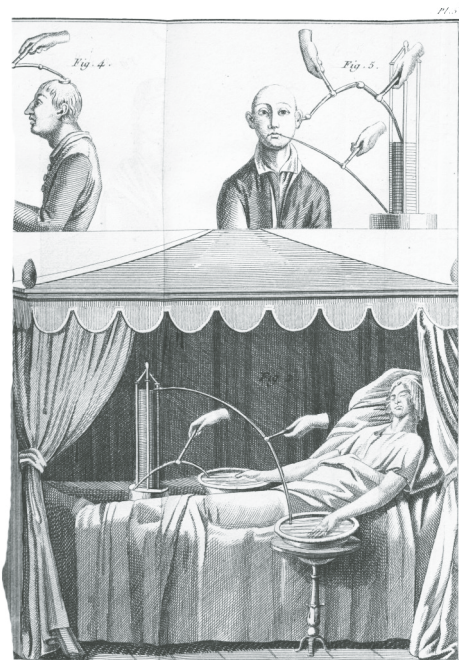
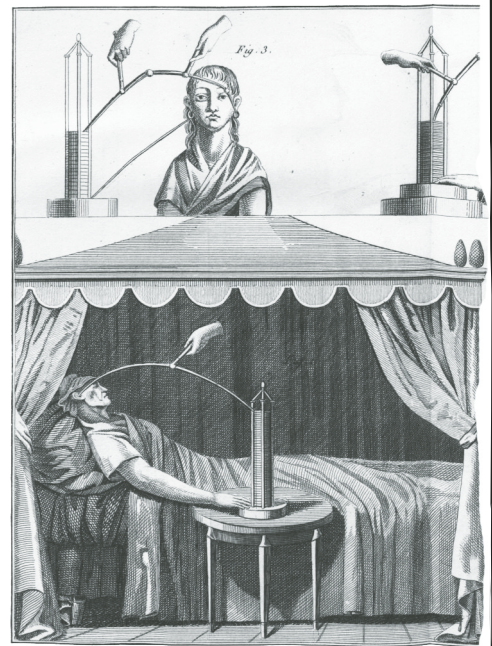
O, hacked email account

O, butterflies
dressed in bread

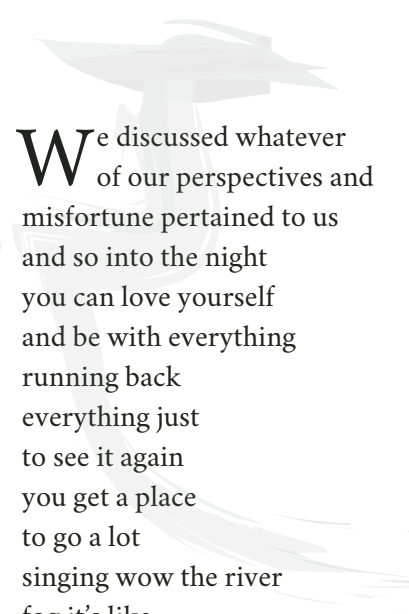
O, death on RTE 9

O, red light dressed
in EXIT

O, heart is that that
Aching



from Giovanni Aldini's *Essai Théorique et Expérimental sur le Galvanisme*



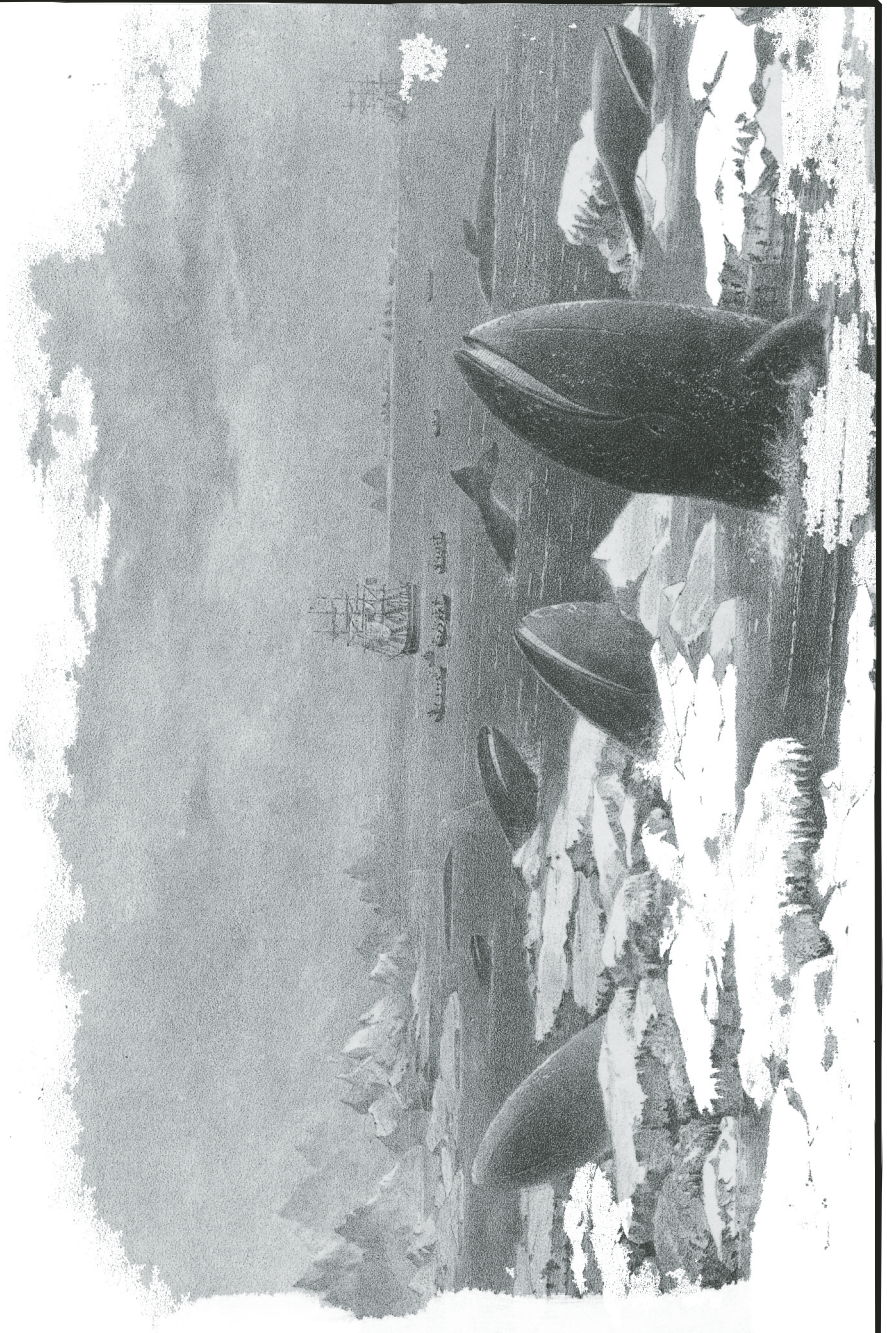
We discussed whatever
 of our perspectives and
 misfortune pertained to us
 and so into the night
 you can love yourself
 and be with everything
 running back
 everything just
 to see it again
 you get a place
 to go a lot
 singing wow the river
 fog it's like
 the air is right there
 my eyes think
 it's like you
 a moment's heat
 from the radiator I'm
 hot I'm cold
 and you come over
 and we discussed
 whatever
 misfortune
 you tell me
 to love your
 mouth the news
 just breaking up
 the ice songs
 and perimeter of what
 you see in fog
 yourself
 a blast of cold
 coming in from Canada
 it's a miracle
 of modern science
 that we know
 and I have
 dumb ideas
 like I like
 listening to experts

Seth Landman

POEM ON SEEING YOU AGAIN

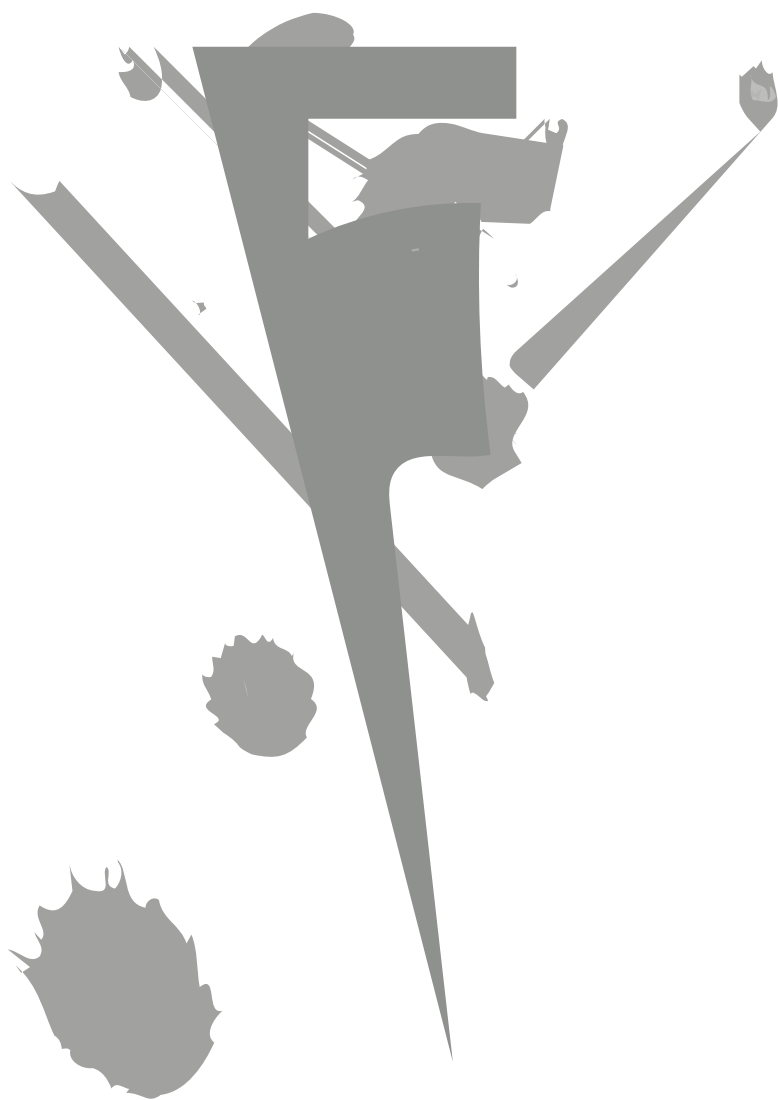
talk about hearing
 a comic talking
 about being sad
 which is this
 eternity's radio
 your advice was
 total advice
 go silent
 go why the arts
 why the arts oh
 please why
 the sandwich
 why any old crap
 you can love yourself
 at night
 with the knives
 you can travel
 in circles
 in the duct work
 a downhill breeze
 inside of you
 and I don't want
 to begin again
 as someone different
 but I've messed up
 this one pretty bad
 it's information
 what a bad year
 we felt certain
 we remembered

and marked it
 and from that
 time on it was
 irredeemable
 there's a lot
 I want to do
 but it's everything to say
 but it's snowing again
 tell me again
 so I can hear you
 talk so I'm exasperated
 so there's nothing left
 to say you are
 the person with
 the most knowledge
 about how I've been
 and I'm watching this
 squirrel outside
 my window
 just doing his thing
 and that's what
 I'm doing in here
 my thing is longingly
 looking outside
 I was thinking
 help me thing
 get me started
 wake me up
 for the whole life
 I don't get
 our wholeness
 an engine
 a whole vehicle
 get out
 come over
 little radiator
 it's January so
 that's why I'm different now
 so that's why
 I'm telling you
 how we were then
 going to be different



any news
 exhausted
 staring at the ceiling
 I tell them
 how it was
 I won't be disappointed
 now when everything
 has already happened
 we catch up
 to the weather
 to each other.

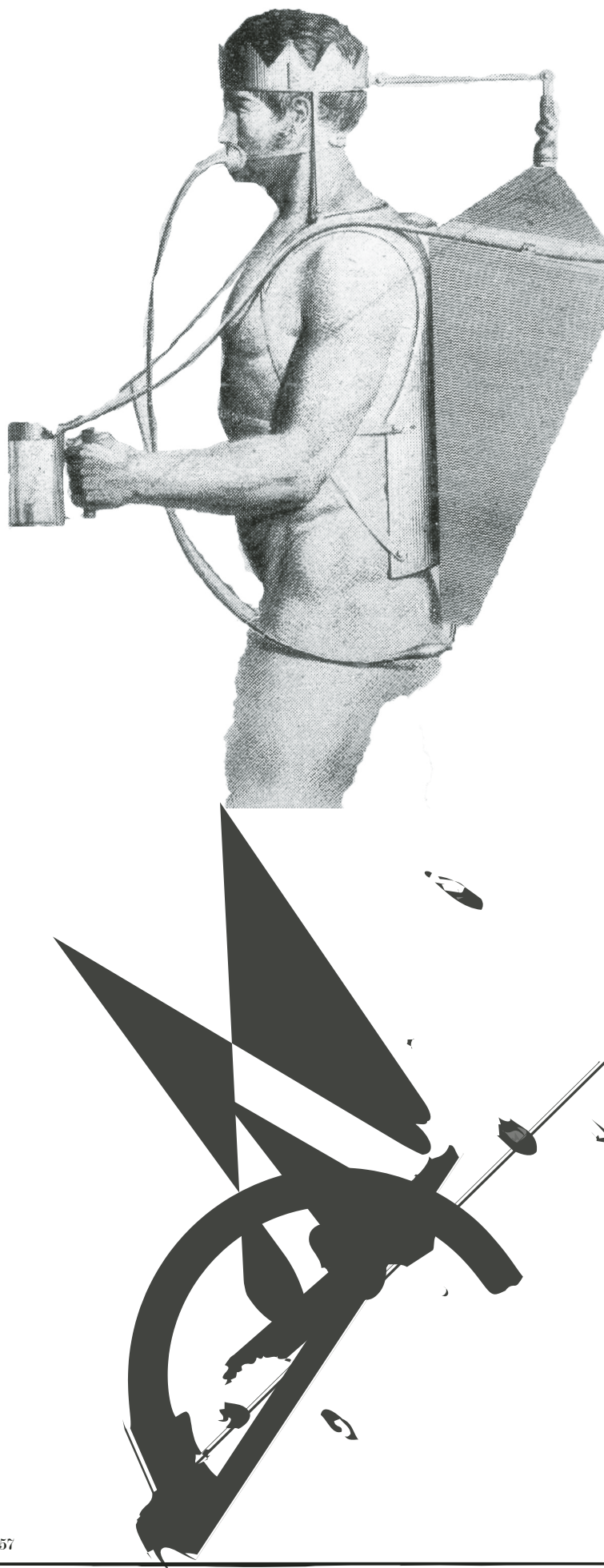
NO TIME *for* FAKE ONES



I n my nightmares, no one is ever warning me about the inherent dangers of swinging from a chandelier. These dreams have nothing to do with gravity, but everything to do with the way certain everybody's look when they do fancy-ass shit with their hair at weddings. Does anyone else know what it's like to expect every status update to turn into a dance party? Why aren't we all sitting on a beach and telling each other about my grandfather? My grandfather came here with nothing but two Genoa salamis and a lot of unpopular opinions about lawn care, so we'd all be fucked if he saw us sitting here scowling. I don't mean to be melodramatic, but I wish everybody in this room would take off their shirts so we could start getting to know each other's belly buttons. I won't feel right about anything unless we can redefine our secrets— isn't that from a rap song? Why isn't that from a rap song? Let's get it all out in the open and talk about our head trauma as if we're putting it in a rap song. Biggie's mom had breast cancer, yet she's still trudging along longer than he could. What I'm getting at is we only

Mark Cugini

have so many opportunities to
 take our dogs mini-golfing before
 someone pokes a hole in the
 ozone and kills all the sand cats.
 How many more times can we fight
 about Chinese food before we start
 talking about our spirit animals—
 my spirit animal is an animated GIF
 of two dogs in business suits plotting
 a detective novel on a white board—
 my spirit animal is an aborted fetus—
 my spirit animal is the epidermal cells
 beneath the fingernails on a Pro-
 Life poster— my spirit animal is
 #FUCKYESOXYGEN—my spirit animal
 is you, and you are a hundred
 helium balloons knotted
 around my ribcage—
 you are the guard rail I grabbed
 before I split my head
 open on those stairs—
 you are a land shark with giant
 foam teeth, and I am the dumb fucking
 remora sucking on the blubber
 of the last great thing you ate—
 I am the seal you are dying
 to breach, but you let me live—
 I am the seal and I am alive—
 I am the seal and holy
 Puffy Combs, I am
 just so goddamn
 happy to be here.



CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

ANNE BARNGROVER is the author of *Yell Hound Blues* (Shipwreckt Books 2013) and co-author with Avni Vyas of the chapbook *Candy in Our Brains* (CutBank 2014). She is currently a PhD student in Poetry at University of Missouri.

DAVID BARTONE'S book, *Practice on Mountains*, was selected for the 2013 Sawtooth Poetry Prize by Dan Beachy-Quick. He is also the author of *Spring Logic*, a chapbook with H_NGM_N. His poems have appeared at *Colorado Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Laurel Review*, *Mountain Gazette*, *Handsome*, *Volt*, and now NOÖ.

BLAKE BERGERON lives in Florence, MA. His work appears in *Route Nine*, and he currently attends the MFA Program in Creative Writing at UMass Amherst.

LUKE BLOOMFIELD is the author of *Russian Novels* (Factory Hollow Press 2014). His natural habitat is Massachusetts.

ERIN CASE is an award winning visual artist based in Midland, Michigan, with a focus in collage. Find her online at erincase.weebly.com.

ANNE MARIE WIRTH CAUCHON is the author of *Nothing*, published by Two Dollar Radio Press in 2013. She teaches writing at the University of Minnesota and is the fiction editor of *dislocate*. Recent work appears in *Juked* and *The Destroyer*. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and their daughter.

ALAN RAMÓN CLINTON currently teaches composition and creative writing at Gulf Coast University for Science and Technology. His novel *The Autobiography of Buster Keaton* is forthcoming from Oakland's Montag Press.

MARK CUGINI is the author of *I'm Just Happy To Be Here* (Ink Press 2014) and the Managing Editor of Big Lucks Books. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Pinwheel*, *Sink Review*, *Hobart*, *Barrelhouse*, *BOAAT*, and numerous other publications. On July 20th, 2014, he became the #1 ranked player of *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*.

STEPHEN DANOS is the author of the chapbooks *Playhouse State* (H_NGM_N Books 2012) and *Gravitational* (The New Megaphone 2014). His poems appear in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Coconut*, *Cream City Review*, *The Laurel Review*, *Sixth Finch*, *The Southeast Review*, and others. He is co-founder and editor-in-chief of the poetry journal *Pinwheel*.

SANDRA DOLLER'S books include *Oriflamme* and *Chora* (both on Ahsahta Press), *Man Years* (Subito Press), and two chapbooks. Her new book, *Leave Your Body Behind*, is something else entirely and will be out on Les Figues in 2014. Doller is the founder & editrice of 1913 Press/1913: a journal of forms. She lives in California, at the bottom.

JOSHUA DANIEL EDWIN'S poetry appears in a variety of publications. His translations of Dagmara Kraus were awarded a 2012 PEN / Heim Translation Fund Grant and appear in a chapbook from Argos Books. He lives in Brooklyn and is a member of the editorial board for the magazine *Circumference: Poetry in Translation*.

BROOKE ELLSWORTH is the author of the chapbooks *Thrown* (The New Megaphone) and *Mud* (forthcoming from dancing girl press). She has recent poems in *Coconut*, *DIAGRAM*, *Spork*, *The Volta* and elsewhere. She currently lives in Queens, NY and teaches at Parsons.

TYLER GOBBLE is the author of the forthcoming *More Wreck More Wreck* (Coconut Books 2014) and *Other People's Poems* (Civil Coping Mechanisms 2015). He runs the Everything Is Bigger reading series in Austin, TX, edits NOÖ Journal, and helps with Magic Helicopter Press.

A.T. GRANT is the author of *Collected Alex* (Caketrain 2013) and *WAKE* (Civil Coping Mechanisms, forthcoming). He lives in Virginia.

SHERRY HUANG'S work is like the awkward but earnest proffering of shoe gaze translated into poetry. "What's the difference between a hand and a bird?" The question in so many of her pieces—as important as the address of a certain you—feels, somehow, like an emergency. But it's an emergency only because there is something there worth saving.

AUSTIN HAYDEN lives in a small house on the White River in Muncie, IN. He's one of those fiction editors for NOÖ Journal. He runs 90s Meg Ryan, a digital archive of contemporary prose, poetry, and music. He referees Kings at Mike Krutel's apartment. He's twenty-three.

GREGORY HOWARD is the author of *Hospice*, a forthcoming novel from FC2. His work has appeared in *Web Conjunctions*, *The Collagist*, *Harp & Altar*, *Birkensnake*, and *Tarpaulin Sky*, among other journals. He teaches at the University of Maine.

DAN KAPLAN is the author of *Bill's Formal Complaint* (The National Poetry Review Press, 2008). His work appears in recent issues of *American Letters & Commentary*, *VOLT*, *Ninth Letter*, and elsewhere. He is managing editor and co-poetry editor of *Burnside Review*. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

BEN KOPEL was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1983. He is the author of *VICTORY*.

DOUGLAS KORB is the author of the prize-winning chapbook *The Cut Worm*. He serves on the board of directors for the Collected Poets Series in Shelburne Falls, MA. His erasure art can be found online at www.brokarthere.wordpress.com.

SETH LANDMAN lives in Northampton, MA, and is the author of *Sign You Were Mistaken* (Factory Hollow 2013) and *Confidence* (Brooklyn Arts Press, forthcoming).

KATIE LATTARI earned MAs in English and Creative Writing, respectively, from the University of Maine and the University of Notre Dame. In 2015 Mammoth Books is set to publish her debut novel, *American Vaudeville*. She currently lives and works in Maine.

BRANDON LEWIS lives in NYC with his wife and baby girl. He was recently a finalist for the 2014 May Swenson Poetry Award. His writing has appeared in such places as *The Missouri Review*, *Salamander*, *American Poetry Review*, *Spork*, *apt*, *HTMLGIANT*, and *Poet Lore*.

CHELSEA MARTIN is the Creative Director of Universal Error. Her latest book, *Even Though I Don't Miss You* (Short Flight / Long Drive 2013), is her newest and most recent work.

ERIN MCNELLIS is the author of *from The Blank Caught Fire* (poetry chapbook, Horse Less Press 2013) and *Impossible Loves* (essays, Rock Paper Tiger Press 2011). She lives in Long Beach, CA.

ERIC MORRIS teaches creative writing at Cleveland State University and serves as a poetry editor for *Barn Owl Review*. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The National Poetry Review*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *Dressing Room Poetry Journal*, *Whiskey Island*, *Puerto del Sol*, *The Laurel Review*, *Pank*, *Post Road*, *Thrush*, *The Jet Fuel Review*, *The Collagist*, *Anti-*, *Devil's Lake*, and others. He lives and writes in Akron, OH.

CARRIE MURPHY is the author of the poetry collection *Pretty Tilt* (Keyhole Press 2012) and the chapbook *Meet the Lavenders* (Birds of Lace 2011). Her second book, *Fat Daisies*, is forthcoming from Big Lucks Books. Originally from Baltimore, MD, Carrie works as a teacher, freelance writer, and birth doula in Albuquerque, NM.

DELANEY NOLAN'S fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *Oxford American*, *Ecotone*, *The South Carolina Review*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, and elsewhere. She is currently the Rona Jaffe fellow at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

AURA RELYEA is a writer in Atlanta, GA, where she runs Vouched Books Atlanta. Her book reviews have been published in *PASTE*, *Creative Loafing*, and *The Fanzine*. She is the author of *All Glitter, Everything* (Safety Third Enterprises 2013).

REBECCA GIVENS ROLLAND'S work has recently appeared in *Brain*, *Child Magazine*, *The Kenyon Review*, and *Hobart*. Her book of poems, *The Wreck of Birds*, won the May Sarton New Hampshire Book Award and was published by Bauhan Publishing.

MATT ROWAN lives in Chicago, IL, with a talented female writer and two talented chihuahuas. He co-edits *Untoward Magazine* and edits fiction for *ACM: Another Chicago Magazine*. He's the author of *Why God Why* (Love Symbol Press 2013), and his work appears in *mojo journal*, *MAP Literary Journal*, *Gigantic*, *Pear Noir!*, *Jelly Bucket*, *Necessary Fiction* and *SmokeLong Quarterly*.

BEN SEGAL is the author of *78 Stories*, co-author of *The Wes Letters*, and co-editor of the anthology *The Official Catalog of the Library of Potential Literature*. His chapbooks are *Science Fiction Pornography* (Publishing Genius) and *Weather Days* (Mud Luscious Press). His short fiction has been published by *Tin House*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Gigantic*, and *Puerto del Sol*, among others.

GLENN SHAHEEN is the author of the poetry collection *Predatory* (University of Pittsburgh Press 2011) and the flash fiction collection *Unchecked Savagery* (Ricochet Editions 2013). His work has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *The New Republic*, *Juked*, and elsewhere.

JEN STOCKDALE'S work has appeared in *Jubilat*, *1913: A Journal of Forms*, *Salt Hill*, and elsewhere. She is the author of the chapbook *Now Puppy Teeth* (What to Us Press). She holds an MFA from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. from Miami University.

AMISH TRIVEDI'S work is in *New American Writing* and will soon be in *The Laurel Review* and *Kenyon Review Online*. His reviews have been on *Jacket2*, *Sink* and one is forthcoming in *Pleiades*. He manages *N/A* (www.nalitjournal.com) while teaching at Roger Williams University.

KAREN UHLMANN'S short stories have appeared in *Southern Indiana Review*, *Fiction Southeast*, *Enizagam*, *Specter*, and elsewhere. She reviews books for *The Common*.

AVNI VYAS is a graduate of Florida State University's Creative Writing Program. Her work has been published in *Meridian*, *Juked*, *The Pinch*, *Gargoyle*, and others. With Anne Barngrover, she is the co-author of *Candy in Our Brains* (CutBank, 2014). She lives and teaches in San Jose, California.

LESLEY ANN WHEELER is co-editor of poetry press *Strange Cage* and a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her photo-essay "A Little Hell of its Own" won *Bone Bouquet's* 2013 Experimental Prose Contest. She teaches writing at the Kansas City Art Institute. Visit her at lesleyannwheeler.com.

CANDICE WUEHLE is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, holds an MA in Literature from the University of Minnesota, and is a PhD candidate at the University of Kansas where she is a Chancellor's Fellow.

LESLEY YALEN'S writing has appeared in *jubilat*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Octopus*, *Everyday Genius*, *Better*, and elsewhere. Her first book, *The Hearts of Vikings*, is coming out from Natural History Press in 2014. She has lived in Western Mass for eleven years.

JOSEPH YOUNG lives in Baltimore. His *Newer Comics* series, from which his collages in *NOO [15]* came, can be found at josephayoung.tumblr.com. A book of microfictions, *Easter Rabbit*, was released in 2009 by Publishing Genius Press.

MANY THANKS TO THE WARM OF HEART

Alabama friends

Argentina friends

Arizona friends

Atlanta friends

Australia friends

Baltimore friends

Blake Bergeron

Boston friends

Brazil friends

Brooklyn friends

California friends

Chicago friends

The Cinnamon Urns

Colorado friends (esp. Ella Longpre)

D.C. friends

Jane Dykema

Florida friends

Flying Object

Omaha friends

Ohio friends

Oregon friends

Maine friends

Mellow Pages

Michigan friends

Muncie friends

New Hampshire friends

New Mexico friends

New York friends

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Thailand friends

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Western Massachusetts friends

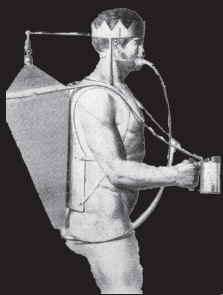
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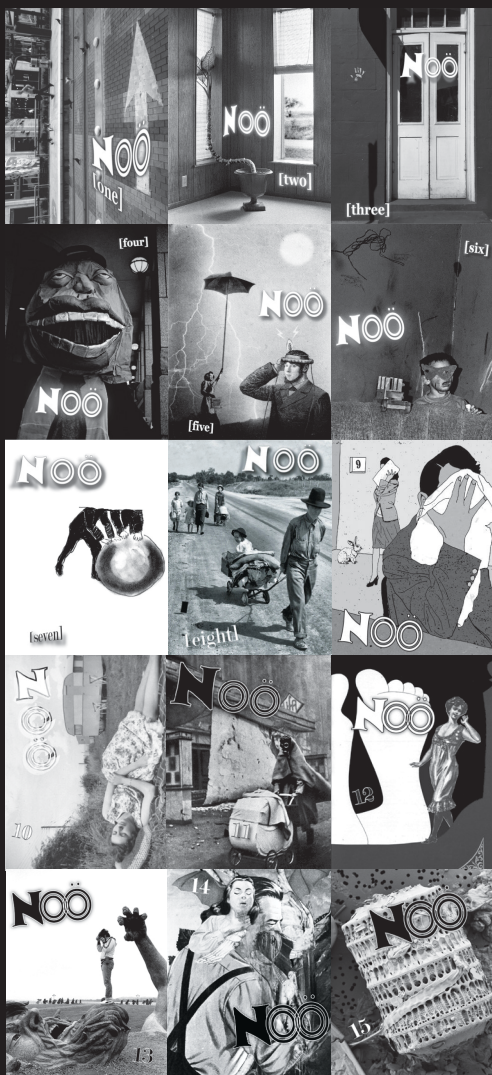
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INSIDE NOÖ [15]

Harmony Korine once said that the thing to remember about *Gummo* is that it's a comedy. I was told he said that, though I don't have the source. It may be apocryphal, but let's take it as real.

NOÖ Presents: Tracings #1

Ben Segal | 6

I gave you a small, unfolded flat-rate USPS box and told you to fold it into a box. I told you that I knew the name of the person who was in love with you and I was going to put their name in the box so you could open it and find out.

Apology

Chelsea Martin | 17

The knife thrower kept putting an arm around Nick McKnife, trying to get the pile to sing with him. The knife thrower kept cutting himself on the animate pile and laugh-crying about his cuts.

Knife Finder

Matt Rowan | 22

I just feel like hurling cursed crystals at passersby!

The Heroine Goes Bat-Shit, but Only for a Little While

Anne Barngrover & Avni Vyas | 35

you can love yourself
at night
with the knives

Poem on Seeing You Again

Seth Landman | 54