

D.O.R
(Deadly Orgone Radiation)

Issue 6



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The logo for LJMcD Communications features the letters 'LJMcD' in a stylized, cursive script. Below the letters, the word 'COMMUNICATIONS' is written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. A horizontal line is positioned directly beneath the word 'COMMUNICATIONS'.

CONTENTS

Western Gull by Doug Jones and Clive Gresswell

Two Poems by Mona Mehas

Two Poems by Michael Igoe

Mindcircus by Rus Khomutoff

All Paths Beautiful/Of Door Frames and Call Backs
by Jen Schneider.

Excerpt for *The Apostasy of Proxy Godbot* by Daniel
Y Harris

chiaroscuros by Irene Koronas

Five Poems by Jen Schneider

Four Erasure Poems by Charles J March

Five Poems by Christina Chin and Uchechukwu
Onyedikam

Three Poems by Joshua Martin

Three Poems by Keith Higginbotham

Three Poems by Andrew K Arnett

Five Poems by Jerome Berglund, Shane Coppage, and
Marjorie Pezzoli

Five Images by petro c. k.

Three Poems by Nathan Anderson

Three Texts by petro c. k.

Four Poems by Mark Young

**Manifesto for A Consciousness Factory Reset by
Wayne Mason**

Five Poems by Noah Berlatsky

Five Poems by Lachlan J McDougall

Western Gull

Doug Jones and Clive Gresswell

A deposition written on a pipe; the western gull, it is a thieving bird, a liar. Do not trust a thing it does, or tells you, she is sick. Hangs off currents, feeds in the interstitial upper mantle. He flies, a dark glaucus. The western grey she does this + worse to clear the head, forget, it caws with all the birds a flogging eats up + on. They child from the inside, while its mother watched, 3 eggs. Phone the law

Have thought about this. Junk. All those trash moves. We will not die the man at the edge of it, that liar. Is about unresolved pathology we must have, we are. We look for addictions that never adjust us. See. Our bloated lives face that fall through the narrative + out. See we are not to be cured, never, we steep a bad blessing. Not heavens as such but there is the illness - in the light - in the gull.

Scramble to recover a unit. Before the rising there was. Something grew a child. It nested there deep in the longing. Regurgitated the fluid. Slept on under an exhausting moon. His half of the jigsaw an adult remnant. Drs glided lofty in the corridors. One alone was an angel. Its dusted wings grazed by the gull. He wrote a prescription based on his description. Based on his description he wrote a prescription. Hallowed

be its name. outside of the inner circle prayers were said. Nearly Christmas as the oxygen would have it. It was snowing and his blood was juice thin. Magic was the only hope. The magic of a child's hope. But who would phone the law?

What is sickness for? Driving into work once, I overtook a bus going on the slip road to the main road, A47 - was thinking of nothing. Then, at the Acle roundabout I went again - but there was a bus. Was it that bus? It looked the same, was moving in the same way. Between life and death. Nothing is the same. We have crossed over into pathology, patient x - alcohol dependent, this is a bus to work.

Then there is alleyways and royalty. The infirm signed the papers but by that time they were all ghosts of the former. Later she examined the creature's eyes. The creatures extracted any emotion. They were all deeply sorry. The drs who were no less than human exhumed particles of flesh. They kept digging deeper + deeper. Into the impenetrable spaces between atoms. Time and again the swellings burst pustules. But the politicians insisted there wasn't a problem here. Yet his widow was ragged with tears. You'll end up with a two-tier health system warned the jailbirds. But surely that's better than nothing? No, the police must be told.

Lying eyes

The pipework lay in tatters. No-one could tell the imposter. It was a sadness for the whole of the carriage. Where had they been + who had transgressed. Russell brand reached for the remote. His eyes widened at the news. Those lying eyes a bauble. The drs huddled together but could not agree a diagnosis. Poor chap only had 1 leg. This was against the law. The unwritten law. Stars in the hemisphere collided. They did not have an answer. Some called for the laughing gas. The surgeon pointed out that the guidebook was in Japanese, a language he did not speak. They were ill-prepared for the spread of the sickness. It throbbed deep in the veins. Country is going to rack and ruin they declared in unison. But headline writers got there first. RAC + ruin they bled. Into the mirrors. Noel was about to phone the law. But his was an unwritten constitution. Never mind wherever he is he's in his element they agreed. What's all this about elephants asked the sergeant. No one heard him.

A beast with his mouth Wide open. So, when you look, you can see the spinal cord fused with that of a man. That beastcord innervates me. watch me dance. Watch me stretch, catch a fly up with one animal slam the Merc in reverse, finish up at the base of a forest

tree. With barky skin a toad. Learn all kinds of things about the ganglion switches back. About the beast with His vast car so my ware.

Wide open to interruption the skin nodules. Bursting into the stratosphere. The wires to the brain were taut. One politician bled pretty much into another. News item faded into gore of news item. Which one of the royals is stable? Your guess is as good as mine one lawyer said to the rest. Your guest is as good as time rewound elephants which had strayed from the park. Some were the same. Others guessed at the disease. Drs danced in the foyer. Such a scandal roared Geoffrey. A monumental waste of NHS resources was reported. One a tory the other was labour. Covid was the leveller. It saw the beast. It was also the beast. It lurked deep in the membrane fluid. Something more than human roared. It had come for Russell brand. Delicate in its nature the blood-let. Inflation more than crippled. Can't use that word.

Your naughty boy is playing up again. You're done in and your mother's sick and old. Have to look after her. But where are you - spark? To do one thing after another, forever, + so worried about your daughter. Then. Who are you? There's no way can reasonably express the mixture of love, anguish. Human universe. In holes the fall through the imperium goes on around, washes through - every day

It's a background cluster of cancer cells. Efforts to escape the gas of debate clear the bombed-out hospitals. Let us claim a jingoistic victory once more. Encrusted brown marks on the skin. He said he loved her. More than once or at least twice. Look after your mother little bird. Even if you can't get her to the phone anymore. Ring a ring a roses. Atichoo etc. then they all fell down. The western gull preens itself. Takes its wing. The same old cues. The same old news. Some seek out the fledgling flight. In another seedy part of town bar-room brawls break-out. Stand and deliver says his conscience. Droning on + on. These savage victories. Each a cancer cell. Advertises on the telly.

The pipework lies in tatters as the western gull preens its daughters. Like the same old formulation. The same old formulation. Read it in the headlines. Gaza have we been here before? The ambulances + in doctors arrive far too late. They rushed in to where he lay crazed + purple-hearted on the dance floor. He was petrified + spoke of the ways of witches + vampires. There were stories too of the old parliamentarians before the age of destruction. "We get the governments we deserve" gargled the shooting victim. The knife victim. The western gull let out a great cry + flapped its wings. It would try again. The same old ordeal. Words of comfort strangled in the mouth. He would never be the same. He was always different.

Two Poems

Mona Mehas

amazing each **J**oining
a neighb**O**r as
tHough
a still performa**N**ce
Arranging by chance

a**S** far
tHis morning from the as agreeing
i trees try to tell us we that their merely **B**eing there
means that soon we may
toUch love explain and glad
not to invented such comeliness we a**R**e
surrounded a silence already **Y**a on smiles
a in puzzling seem defense

John Ashbury Mesostic over Some Trees

The Jolly Pumpkin, Worldwide and Online
an aleatory poem

Jolly Pumpkin Café and Brewery
of the early days of America, he made you see it,
Louis Untermeyer.
I was a college freshman when I read for the first
time on English
Island in the line just prior to the verses on
Kamakhya. This,
Tibetan Buddhist monks, wherein the process
the Sanskrit language was introduced.
A Jesuit missionary and explorer from France,
Jacques Marquette established
Options, including Prism, recently voted Detroit's
Vishnu's Lakshmi, Shiva's Parvati, and Brahma's
Sarasvati, respectively.
The Gods sing the praises of the supreme Goddess.
Trail is an easy 2.8-mile loop that winds
the fourth state; state beyond wakefulness
but not to one who hears this act of hers.
Detached from the quarrel, about the legacy of the
thirties, ended by revealing.
Although every effort was made to ensure that
more than a million people visit Mackinac
then they return to America, crying out, "God is dead!
Long live
One who radiates or shines: a celestial being!"
Are six in number. Sometimes the number is given as
seven when the
bringing together, union, contemplation
to the source from which arise the sacrifice
needed to resist attempts by communist attorneys to
taunt the judge.

Michigan may be known mainly for Motown.
Discontent with what he saw and felt in that world,
not in spite of it
--truthfulness, sincerity, integrity, honesty, the power
naturalness--
postwar period was emerging in reaction against
something—the hatred of.
Available at booksellers worldwide and online.

Texts used:

Counter-Revolution of the Word, Alan Filreis (2008)

The Devi Gita, C. Mackenzie Brown (1998)

Michigan, Paul Vachon (2017)

Sacred Sanskrit Words, Liza Lowitz & Reema Datta
(2005)

Two Poems

Michael Igoe

Other End of the Day

I can grasp the reasons
things become juggled.
An eye is a puny contender,
after it's been clouded over.
The willingness of eyesight
is to guarantee contentment.
We're taught to believe,
there was no such thing,
as a house full of people.
But life apart lives within them,
it's the same inside looking out.
Fulfillment in all things comic;
they take the place of brooding.

II.

Mornings there is the sound,
like an enfant terrible treads.
Centered in time with purpose
it seems like going backwards.
After the best years were stolen,
the method employed to subdue
was to speak the same language.

III.

I'm the one with prescriptions
to different kinds of remedies,

the one who's cursed upstairs.
Surprised how you showed me,
the reaches of your faded glory.
Like dupes at a staged seance
feeling themselves important.
We hold on to the eternal lie:
that virtue is its own reward.
In this most familiar place
I wait for an improvement.

Even Distance

At the acme of a stairway,
there's standing room only.
Where I am wrapped,
the same as my sister.
Sister robed and vested
hugging and laughing.
It seems important
I watch her gather
on frozen grassland.
Boundaries in number
define a winter's edge
during dead of winter.
On a wooden walkway
treading across planks.
She thinks of me as someone,
who shields from the sunlight.
For the most part, it's shielding
that brings a certain temptation.
But temptation is good company,
anxious to inhabit another stretch.
One seems greenest
but it's the bleakest;
where are questions
for the muddy river.
About funds for our small war
redeemable with blood money.

Transfixed by the unholy hypnotic
pulse the temptation to exist sinister
flower sweet child in time phantom
pain wings rainbow tunnel we will live I
swear the beauty of the world in the
mouth of the labyrinth to love and be
loved in the interstices of life my little
oblivions these tears of love like a
disremembering remote ocean
prayer/mirror conspiracy tissue night
chasm futuristic solitude ritual &
reward preternatural time of dreamed
embraces here in the perfume garden
where no one hears & no one sees
rumors of death & beauty escape into
life paradox of the dreaming flesh it all
makes perfect sense asylum heart
music & ritual intoxication

All Paths Beautiful /Of Door Frames & Call Backs

Jen Schneider

INT ROOM: Square in shape. Three rectangular doors, each a unique color, on each of the square room's walls. Each door has a single faux-gold knob and a keyhole. A laminated note, also rectangular and of proportional dimensions to the door's frame, hangs in the middle of each door. Each note has three points.

The room's walls are made of concrete cinder block. The doors' color pattern: cherry red, crimson, and mahogany on the wall directly across from the view of a cot's headboard. Turquoise, sky blue, and navy to the right. Lime green, kelly green, and olive behind. Lemon, yellow mustard, and neon yellow to the left. The ceiling is painted white. Butterflies, painted in pale blue, yellow, and pink flap wings with no life. The floor is dark-brown hardwood.

The room is otherwise empty but for a woman of twenty years on the eve of her twenty first birthday. She sleeps in a twin sized cot. She has long brown hair with heavy curls. The curls are tight and twisted like ringlets. She wears a lime green dress. Slightly form fitting, A-line cut and ribbed tights (navy). Tiny, embroidered butterflies dot the chest. She wears no shoes, though a pair of pink Converse high tops lies on the floor next to the cot. A single butterfly clip is clasped in her left palm. Her arms are bare.

As she wakes, she startles. She looks around with her eyes (dark brown) open wide.

She says nothing. On her dress is a pinned nametag. Written on a three-by-five index card (laminated) is her name: JOY.

A STAGEHAND. A boy of no more than twenty years notices she is awake and quickly jumps to his feet. He wears a tweed jacket with brown suede elbow patches and a button-down blue Oxford on top, finished off with a red bowtie with white polka dots. On bottom, he dons khakis and combat boots – neatly laced and tied with a double knot. He pulls a small spiral notebook out of his right pocket, places it on a clipboard, and reads. His voice is monotone. He, too, has a laminated nametag: RYDER. A thick black Expo marker forms an X over the block-lettered text.

“I hope you slept well. It’s been a while. Twenty years and counting. Nearly twenty-one,” he says in a deep, warm tone.

The girl sits up and rubs her eyes with her fingers.

“Today you choose your future,” STAGEHAND continues, his voice a bit stronger, more confident.

“I what?” the girl replies, her voice no more than a whisper. Her eyes flutter.

“There are no call backs. Once you make the choice there shall be no looking back. Examine each door. Read the printed words. Choose wisely, using the clues provided. Each door, a forever date, of sorts.”

“A speed date?” JOY asks, her voice higher, taking flight.

“Speed dating? Of course not. Not at all. There is only one date. No more. No less. Shortly, I shall remind you of the rules.”

The room goes silent but for the buzz of a small house fly.

STAGEHAND clears his throat then continues. “Any questions? Sorry, no questions allowed.”

JOY: “Oh? But wait.

How do I know what I know? Why should I believe you?

Where did I get these clothes?”

STAGEHAND: “Don’t make me call for support. Listen carefully.

You’ve woken in a room with twelve doors. Count them, please.”

JOY turns her head, extends her arms, and points at each door chronologically – one by one.

“Count them again. Then, count on them. Each door is your future. And your past. All in one,” STAGEHAND continues.

“All in one?” JOY asks, her voice light.

STAGEHAND shakes his head. "No. Only one.

Each door represents a different life path. A different you.

Which door you choose is up to you. You choose one, no more.

You have twenty minutes. Starting..."

A buzzer interrupts.

OVERHEAD SPEAKER: "TWENTY MINUTES REMAINING"

"Now," the STAGEHAND interjects, clearly annoyed by the buzzer's poorly timed reminder.

JOY: "Who are you?"

STAGEHAND:

"No questions! Names are concerningly revealing.

I am RYDER. I am no one. Nothing more than a guide."

JOY:

"The room is empty. My head is full.

I can't tell which way is North.

I can't see beyond the blacked-out windowsill.

How do I know you're you? What if I don't choose?"

STAGEHAND:

"Rhyming is of no use.

The life beyond

each door is already defined,

not defied, by pacing and finger tracing.

You must decide.

Ready. Set. Begin."

BUZZER / OVERHEAD SPEAKER: Nineteen minutes remaining.

STAGEHAND: "There's something beautiful behind each door."

JOY: "Something beautiful?"

STAGEHAND: "Yes, something beautiful, just not all at once."

JOY:

"How do I know which door will be most beautiful?"

Or where I'll be most happy.”

STAGEHAND: “No questions, please.

There's always something beautiful.

And happiness is mostly man-made.”

STAGEHAND extends his right arm, palm cupped.

A fly lands in the middle. A butterfly painted in oils on the ceiling flaps wings it does not have.

A clock ticks quietly.

A stack of papers appears on a red chair next to the cot on which JOY sits.

JOY stands, stretches, then bends to touch her feet.

She shuffles towards the wall and stops at a door.

Placed squarely in the middle of its frame – a riddle.

Roses are red.

Violets are blue.

Joy is ___-hued.

JOY: “A game?”

STAGEHAND continues speaking as he taps his combat boots rhythmically on the floorboards:

“No questions, please!

This is no game. This is life. Equal parts combat and community.

You'll flap wings you did not know you had.

Door 4 is special, indeed. As are all the doors.

A life drenched in all colors of the rainbow – lemonade yellows, lilacs, lavenders, and neon greens, sounds aesthetically pleasing. A fully immersive sensory experience.”

“Can you tell me more,” JOY asks.

“Nothing more about Door #4,” STAGEHAND replies.

“I shall share notes on some of the alternative options.

Behind another door –

an estranged relative for whom the strange is suspect and who remains a suspect in a cold case.

He is innocent of all charges but maintains a personality that is highly charged.

You'll experience the full range of human emotions.”

“The strange?” JOY responds.

“And how can we be estranged if I’ve been asleep for twenty years.

So strange. Is there sadness when we’re reunited?”

STAGEHAND:

“If by sadness you mean pain,
remember -- pain is instantaneous
and sadness relative.

Listen, please – there shall be no questions!

Behind another stands a robot and a bouquet of flowers.

They promise a life of programmable detours
and a predetermined ending. All petals polished.

The flowers are subject to a finite lifespan, but you are not.”

JOY shakes each of her legs. Right, first. Left, second.

JOY: “What does that mean?”

STAGEHAND: “Stop! Meaning
is made, not delivered. As discussed,

behind one door is your estranged father.

He will feed you and you shall feed his ego.

Behind another is an alter ego.

You'll spend evenings playing *Scrabble*."

JOY sits on the concrete floor, legs crossed.

"Do I already know how to play?"

STAGEHAND replies then tosses a handful of tiles in JOY's lap:

"If you don't already, you will."

"Will I?" JOY replies with a note of wistfulness in her voice.

Her fingers turn the tiles, then place a few down, face up.

F L Y

As the letter tiles make meaning, JOY looks up.

A monarch butterfly flies across the room, its wings wide.

JOY stands then moves to catch it. The tiles drop then scatter on the floor.

"Come!" JOY exclaims, her voice high and light.

STAGEHAND: "Don't chase joy," he cautions. "Create it. Watch!"

STAGEHAND stops moving and stops talking, his palms outstretched and cupped. Face up.

The monarch flutters then settles.

STAGEHAND: "Go ahead, try."

JOY complies. She stretches her arms East and West, palms upright.

The monarch waits – one, two, three – then resumes flight.

To her delight, the winged creature settles in JOY's hand.

JOY smiles, her eyes bright. "I think I'm beginning to understand."

STAGEHAND: "Understand what?"

JOY: "I'm not sure. Migration, maybe. The butterfly is beautiful!"

The monarch holds its wings tight.

JOY: "Continue, please. Is there more?"

STAGEHAND: "No questions! There is always more.

Letters and tiles, of course. Infinite permutations.

Infinite arrangements. The same board."

BUZZER / OVERHEAD SPEAKER: "Sixteen minutes remaining."

JOY jumps. "Can I stay with you?"

STAGEHAND: "No questions!

We must be more prompt.

A third reveals your high school sweetheart.

He will go to trade school and become a master plumber.

He'll love you but he cannot bear children.

Another door holds acceptance to a university abroad.

You'll study biology and find peace in the laboratory.

Behind another lies a life of numbers.

You code programs that make the world smaller.

You bring the world together, mostly, alone. Alas, there's also a night of incarceration."

JOY: "What did, or do, I do?"

STAGEHAND: "Perhaps it's a question of what you did not.

Choice is as much grounded in action as in reluctance."

JOY stands and twirls. Her green dress maintains its form:

“You’ve told me so much already.

Can you show me. Anything else?”

STAGEHAND: “Oh yes! There’s always more.

There are rollercoasters and annual passes to local theme parks.”

JOY: “But I dislike heights. And theme parks – eew, artificial joy.”

STAGEHAND: “Well, one of these doors finds you at the highest level of a career.”

A fifth leads you to the family business.

You’ll marry the boy who lived across the street.

You are both happy.”

JOY: “Happy? That’s all?”

STAGEHAND: “Quiet, please. Listen!

He’ll take ill before he’s fifty. You’ll live to ninety but never again find love.”

JOY: “So, the doors are calculated risks, it seems?”

STAGEHAND: “Calculations are not needed.

Listen carefully, please.

A sixth door leads you to a big city. Somewhere.

You'll begin studies for accounting but find bartending more lucrative and rewarding."

JOY: "A city girl?"

STAGEHAND: "All four seasons. All forms of species. All corners of the world."

JOY: "Species."

STAGEHAND: "Indeed. Don't let your imagination be a limitation.

Another door reveals a life as a hummingbird that nests in a garden that is always in bloom.

Yet another door, there are many, I agree, leads to a room the mirror image of the one we're in.

With a seventh door you enter, then come out and lose your inheritance."

JOY INTERJECTS: "The inheritance, I wonder – is it large or small?

Come out? How? Can you share more?"

STAGEHAND: "No questions! Please! Quantity is but one element of an experience. More always relative. Calculations, as mentioned, not needed."

BUZZER: Nine minutes remaining!

STAGEHAND: "We must hurry.

The clock is the sole calculator in this game.

The device transforms everything, everything all at once,

into something beautiful, something of note."

JOY: "Should I take notes?"

STAGEHAND: "No questions!

Please, do not. Make note of your instincts!

Instincts are beautiful in and of themselves.

Remember, you must choose one door before the buzzer expires.

Oh, and don't forget, you'll remember nothing of this process."

JOY: "And if I don't choose?"

STAGEHAND: "Your failure to follow the rules must stop. No questions! I cannot tell."

JOY: "Who stays with you?"

STAGEHAND. "Stop! And remember this most important point.

There's something beautiful behind each door."

JOY: "Something beautiful?"

STAGEHAND: "Just not all at once."

JOY: "Why must everything happen all at once?"

OVERHEAD SPEAKER: Four minutes remaining.

STAGEHAND: "No questions! Hurry, please.

Would you like some more clues? Sorry, I can't do that."

JOY speaks again, her voice a note, perhaps two, higher than before:

"Clues, I see. Of what nature?"

OVERHEAD SPEAKER: Two minutes remaining.

STAGEHAND: "No questions, please!

I must complete my assigned tasks.

Behind one door are days of war. Ultimate triumph at a high price.

With one you'll find your name in the Guinness Book of World Records.

The task, I cannot reveal.

Behind another, you are an unknown artist and a well-renowned arborist."

JOY: "Are not the two concepts synonymous?"

STAGEHAND: "Silence!

Behind another, your children will flap wings you did not know they had.

You'll travel to over sixty countries, your carry-on bag
your only companion.

Behind another, you'll never leave your home state,
but will awake each day,

for fifty-plus years, before you lose your mate,
content."

JOY: "Is that all?"

STAGEHAND: "All is always relative, my dear.

What's behind one door remains unknown."

A small mouse scampers from under one wooden
door, into the room, then quickly runs under another.

STAGEHAND: "Not even the mouse knows."

JOY: "How did I get here?"

STAGEHAND: "Now is not the time

for retrospective thinking. You must choose. Your life
is waiting."

JOY: "Isn't this my life? Why I am here?"

STAGEHAND: "You've never been anywhere else.

I've watched you sleep for the last twenty years."

JOY: "We're the same age?"

STAGEHAND: "That, I did not and cannot state.

Age arbitrary, no?"

JOY: "And you?"

STAGEHAND: "No questions, please!

As for me -- I stay. This is my way."

JOY: "You're rhyming when you had insisted that I stop."

OVERHEAD BUZZER: Three minutes remaining.

STAGEHAND: "I never told you to cease.

I simply advised at rhyming's futility.

Now, before you choose, you must eat.

Food, in contrast to strings of rhymed text,

is always a most clarifying and organizing

option before we roost a new nest."

JOY opens her mouth to reply, but speech is denied.

STAGEHAND: "Although always something beautiful,
not all doors

are as immediately nourishing as others."

The STAGEHAND snaps and a rectangular tray
matriculates atop the red chair.

On it rests a sandwich – two slices of *Wonder* and three slabs of bologna. A hint of spicy mustard. A small mound of sliced peaches in a heavy syrup. A square piece of ginger cake. A side of something, scented of orange zest. A small dish – dates, raisins, and cubes of cheese. No more than two bites needed.

STAGEHAND studies the tray, scowls, then hesitates. After a brief pause, he reaches into his pant pocket and pulls out a single piece of taffy – molasses – and places it on the tray.

STAGEHAND: “There, much better.”

JOY: “Better?”

STAGEHAND: “If not now, someday.”

Above,

the tray, a trio of butterflies hovers, wings unwrapped.

STAGEHAND turns to JOY and smiles, his arm outstretched to the tray.

“Please, eat. You should.”

JOY looks down at her dress, now creased: “I am not hungry.

I’d prefer to bathe.”

STAGEHAND:

“There’s no time!

Are you not hungry for life? Oh!

I should add behind another door you’ll meet your soulmate.

Another human designed with you in mind.

If he greets you with a bouquet of yellow sunflowers, I hope, somehow, you’ll pray.”

JOY:

“Pray?”

STAGEHAND:

“Yes, inhale then count to three then wait.”

JOY: “For what?”

STAGEHAND:

“The program hasn’t yet been generated. It’s in a perpetual state of learning.

Please, eat!”

JOY: “And if I don’t want to eat, or pray, or, most especially, play?”

STAGEHAND: Falls quiet. His arms drop to his side. His face pales.

“You think this is a game? he says. It’s your life!”

JOY: "But earlier, when you reminded me to listen. To listen carefully. You used the term."

STAGEHAND: "The term?"

JOY: "Yes, game. You said..."

STAGEHAND tosses his gloved hands in the air. "Please, stop taking all that I say so literally!

Eat, then choose! You must!

If I could choose, I most certainly would seize the opportunity."

JOY: "Can't you?"

STAGEHAND: "You can."

JOY and STAGEHAND hold a locked gaze.

BUZZER: One minute remaining.

JOY speaks first: "And you. Will you be there, whichever door I choose?"

STAGEHAND: "I can't say."

OVERHEAD SPEAKER / BUZZER: Thirty seconds remaining.

JOY's eyes narrow as she speaks: "And if I choose to live differently?"

STAGEHAND: "Others have tried but been denied."

OVERHEAD SPEAKER / BUZZER: Time's up. No seconds remaining.

STAGEHAND's voice rises: "No!

Choosing anything would have been preferred to doing nothing!"

STAGEHAND disappears.

JOY drops to the floor. Her head pounds. Her temples pulse – visibly.

Time passes. She can't say how long.

JOY waits, in stillness and silence.

After the buzzer stops, a door **JOY** hadn't before noticed before opens.

A woman comes in and she is clearly distracted.

WOMAN: "Did you choose yet?" she asks as her eyes dart from door to door.

As **JOY** processes and thinks of what to say, she realizes the older woman isn't talking to her but to the **STAGEHAND**.

JOY looks around the room, her eyes settle, then remain on **STAGEHAND**.

STAGEHAND looks different from before. He's no longer close to her in age, nearing twenty-one. He's younger, much younger. He wears a solid red tee shirt

and a pair of nylon athletic shorts. His casual clothing stands in stark contrast to his obvious confusion.

WOMAN to JOY: "I told you how the rules work. STAGEHAND did, too. You must choose a door and if not, we will choose for you."

JOY is confused. If the boy isn't STAGEHAND, then who is? The older woman appears vaguely familiar.

JOY: "What about me?" she asks.

WOMAN: "You? You've already chosen," the woman says.

"You chose something beautiful.

You chose to stay, to assist others with their own decision. You've been here for thirty years."

JOY looks down at her hands. They are wrinkled, the skin is thin – thinner than ever before. She raises her hands to her hair – it's longer, much longer than ever before.

"And STAGEHAND?" JOY replies.

WOMAN: "STAGEHAND? We've had this conversation before. You're STAGEHAND. You swapped with RYDER twenty years ago. He chose a door."

JOY: "Just one? Which one?"

WOMAN: "Something beautiful, for sure."

JOY stands, closes her eyes, and twirls.

One. Two. Three.

She stops, arms wide.

Before regaining her sense of place or time, she runs to, then through, a door.

The woman calls from behind. "Of all the doors, that one is most --"

You hear nothing. The door closes. You live your life.

Postscript –

Fifty years later.

All Things Beautiful

It's nearly nightfall. You'd spent the day alternating between bed and pushing a mop across the wood floor. All that moves is the moon. You wake to a knock at your small home's bedroom window. A crow, neither *Here* nor *There*, squawks. Its mate responds immediately. A child's laughter, no longer infectious, spirals. The knock continues with insistence. *Stop!* you think.

Your hair is dry and knotted. Your cheeks are sallow. Your once white robe, JOY embroidered on the right front pocket, RYDER on the left, is yellow. Underneath, a lime green dress, with tiny butterflies embroidered on the chest, hangs loosely on your frame. The butterflies flap wings they do not have

against a chest that is tight – tighter than in the past. Your breath smells of stolen time and nothing. You loop bare, unshaven legs over the ledge of the wooden bed. A bruise forms, unnoticed. Wrinkled sheets crumple on one side and remain tightly tucked on the other. A pair of navy tights, ribbed, lie on the floor, alongside a pair of combat boots. On his night table – freshly-washed dentures, *The Great Gatsby*, *Miss Marple: The Complete Short Stories*, reading glasses, a mug, a small spiral notebook, and a sticky note (“All things beautiful” in handwritten block text). On yours – a bottle of an unsatisfying liquid, nearly gone.

You kick an empty carton of artificially flavored juice, shuffle to the window, and leave the heavy, cranberry shades untouched. The knock persists. You tug the velour fabric to reveal a single blackbird, silent in a nest, alongside empty footprints on acorn-speckled gravel and whispers of laughter. A few paces further, daffodils, sunflowers, and pansies, dried accordion-style, blanket the evening grass. All things beautiful, now gone.

A knock at the front door follows. *Stop!*

You haven't answered since his passing. Instead, you uncurl pale fingers, still ringed, and pick up a now warm bottle of dilutable seltzer, three for a dollar, delivered each Monday, from your night table and drink. Insurance checks not what he had calculated.

Halloween had been his favorite holiday. “You're a beautiful __witch / pumpkin / scarecrow __,” he'd say to trick or treaters. You'd bake snickerdoodles, chocolate chip cookies, and peanut brittle and a small

batch of coconut chews, his favorite, for trick-or-treat duties. He'd wrap the oversized treats then twist each parcel with a curled ribbon. "All things beautiful," he'd say -- his way.

Now, only mold bakes in your kitchen's dusty quarters. Everything once beautiful, now gone. You thought the overgrowth and the for-sale sign (installed by a long-distance son-in-law) in the front yard would keep trick-or-treaters away. No.

The knock persists. *Stop!*

You've had enough. You cross the wood floor in your bare feet (your Converse still comfortable but no longer comforting) and press your eye to the door's small hole -- no one.

You yell in a voice no stronger than a whisper.

Stop!

The knock returns.

You retreat to the bedroom, pause briefly as your eyes read the plaque situated squarely on the door's middle -- *Roses are red. Violets are blue. Joy is ___-hued*, then enter and lock the door.

Your wedding photo smiles at the wall mirror. The couple is unrecognizable.

The ceiling is painted white. Butterflies, painted in pale blue, yellow, and pink flap wings with no life. The floor is dark-brown hardwood.

Atop your pillow lies a single piece of molasses taffy that had fallen, unbeknownst to you, from your robe – his favorite flavor. Inedible. Forbidden by doctor's orders. Rock hard. You stand alone. All things beautiful, now gone.

The knock at the window returns.

You stick rough soles and toes freshly unpainted in padded slippers, brush aside an empty bottle of aspirin and move to the covered window.

With the hard piece of taffy in your palm, you reach past the curtain and tap back. Palm to glass, tears crush velour and smudge vision.

The knock responds.

You?

Your hands instinctively move to the side of your head.

The knock intensifies.

You promised you'd never leave me.

You're all things beautiful in this world. Now gone.

The knock resumes. Softer.

Weeping, you tap again, then drop to the floor.

You think of *Scrabble* and the last night you touched him. The game of tiles kept your minds busy as doors

continued to close, and questions piled up without answers.

Scrabble was his game even on the days he was most scrambled. His mind was as much at war with itself as with life. The square game board was both a getaway and giveaway. His words were as much a tell as a tally. He gave away nothing and routinely claimed all mentions. Opponents up and down the family tree, mostly you, knew how well he could play. He knew the dictionary better than any clue. And could read most clues. All tiles tracked. He'd lose himself in strings of letters turned fuel. Words were no match for his wit or his tact. He'd counter every tile with a sly smile. Now the folded squares are your Ouija board. You speak to him through tiles that spell his name and his game. Last night, solitary play only made him seem further away. You placed tiles down letter by letter -- **AWAY**. And then you saw him. He told you -- **A WAY**. You'll find a way. For the first time since his passing, you believed what he had said on the last visit in the hospital, with the *Scrabble* board on the metal tray when he said he'd always be a tile away. Without question.

You need to find a way.

Now, a soft rainbow of lemon yellow, lime green, and sky-blue forms on the floorboards.

Your hands relax, slightly, along with the pressure of your temples.

You unwrap the taffy, slowly, then move to the room's small closet. All doors and windows fold like origami.

You open the door, inhale the musty air, and pull out the folded *Scrabble* board. You return to bed and tuck the empty squares under your pillow.

Exhale. You find peace for the first time since his passing -- all things beautiful all at once.

Excerpt from *The Apostasy of Proxy
Godbot*

Daniel Y Harris

49

Proxy Godbot's a pincer for drujadkanic
sporulates with Xamalicious malware
in Lamassus' quadropedalic *sturjanq*

as [https://otx.alienvaultgâvurorucugibiuz
ama.com/indicator/url/http:%2F%2Fdivine
infidēliter.net%2Fmtm%2Fasync](https://otx.alienvaultgâvurorucugibiuz
ama.com/indicator/url/http:%2F%2Fdivine
infidēliter.net%2Fmtm%2Fasync) poisons:

when sadoconspiracists are in a dracospiral,
they can OBIterate the mesomathic:
for now *Satan*, now first inflam'd with rage,

came down (Pykspa) The Tempter ere th'
Accuser (Qsnatch): therefore, smotherbox
the patagulpaic horde with its dyadic

onoruri (Baalberith) as pillarmelt holyfies
the khemistralic: when schizotragic agents
conjuracioun Panurgus' sorcery (Milcom)

with their cenodoxia, the replete screams
exorcise abreactive trances: then, sear
the *dunstq's* xenodata with an ovumic

cryptonihilism (Matsnu) in cahoots
with this GPT_Vuln-analyzer (Hecate):
when reliquology interferes (Demogorgon)

with the autochthonic, the eponymic surge
requirePasswordChange=Y (Euronymous),
is a demonculus who refangs the cyclical

dysfrenzy's <https://otx.alienvaultproditour.com/indicator/url/http:%2F%2Ftraditour.læwend.net%2Ftm%2Fasync%2> (Fenriz):

this azhic, tripedal beast in its antepestis
lemniscus targets seven patavelocipedes
with MASEPIE malware in its *čaxrám*.

50

Proxy Godbot's *aef pestilentiae* is a bacterial
relic in *lithos sarkophágos icweme* festerboils,
(Chemosh) and aerosolizate the sporangium

(Gorgo): therefore, uplink these rare
xenosignals and revive *apokatastasis*
with *lascinate ogni speranza, voi ch'intrate*

(TeslaCrypt): when the contrapassic
is patallotelic, its monosemic irritants
are bleakskills in a cyborganismic throbpour:

for *luceo non uro* in the *m'sīhā's* chronotetrasomic
aneuploidy, charts the *deavie* with a reflux
condenser: when *apeironic* theories *ġefeoh*t

their *apokristic* orleġegasm, annoyware
usurps the tamasic with an underworld

omichle in authlogin tokens: *dispacciare*

the ulfhednars, their *fengtōþ* aercreep
antivitalists who fear BwO's (Damballa)
xenothieullenian mutants in <http://www6>.

divinemenendianenbiembendrarch.enter
prises.net: when necroprotogenoi open
their mephitic mouths, pleonastic fumes

are postnambaic and append the .cdmx
extension: as a sobriquet for (Tezcatlipoca)
cultiormemzrom, Tisak_Help.txt drops

a ransome note in the incendiary *fleme*,
the blackfire's *hǽřřéyō* as its bonfire:
reprisals ensue—from biomaggy, biotaxy

and bionics with heraldry and pillage's
<http://misere.inemptleomarchtirombit>
archpaioltatinemptleorchpendui.com/.

51

Proxy Godbot authenticates the Trojan.
Zlob.D (Mantus): he *cantā vīs* rinnzeketenn
zkrrmüüüülanketrrgllpiizüükalümpffti

mpffrllziiuuuuu, for druj increases *bīlibus*,
has a dyscrasian upsurge, the saudaic jolt
patauxánōed by the kakodaímōnian

necroauto-da-fé, for decryptauto.py
is a *dēagol*, a high lexacolyte with pazuzuic
escavvinghe: when a poznihūmāniter

with talons and a pestilential metaduduşlar
bears an anthropoinsectoidal body replete
with remiges and PhoneSploit-Pro,

cyclogenesis' sonic lexhavoc *wyrçans*
its dustdevil legions' ProcKill-BU in *visita*
interiora terrae rectificando invenies occultum

lapidem (V.I.T.R.I.O.L.) in <https://www.voc-trovicanodirimacratirimavonimicanovictrimacalitrma.com>, is a Bypass-403,

a reptilian *náφoca* with paraunicursal
facefeces, ushers in the necroharuspex:
the figural is the alembic for the literal,

for *obscaenus*' sake, add *cryptovermiform*
parasites and the kaftaaric cacophony:
with this undead *rāđīcula* xenodemon,

the abyziic *heret* has its occultsaboteur
in his patamechanismic phase: idly,
the PrizeRAT ratifies hailagazkrossur:

then, selftetolai this paranoia in a pithos
with pestinsurgents and *wrakjô* (Metztli)
anthropian since the schizflux is a curse.

Proxy Godbot (Mictian) in his jnunica
is a traitor—re: iskarioty vy nikudy ya sam
sebya predal ot bol'shogo smekha boltayu

nogami puskey iz ukha techot dryan' sud'i:
therefore, *monéyeti* the hazredic (Rimmon),
for the numogram's djynxx (Sabazios)

is in hypercamouflage as *artār* (Midgard):
for the oligopolistic necropumice (Dagon)
is its samizdatic if not ichthyoid eyetick's

[in ethell as sonic succubi burn \(Mastema\)
their magnetotails—sferics, hisses, blaes:
then, the aurorae *brestuz* has its bowshock](http://ww38.fantasticfilms.calipikeloctis
peraeoetimivanazimenanzimi.ru/de_na.
php: ionize the <i>terytóryja</i> with xrafstra</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

for late *patawlētung* with *dissonare* (Ishtar)
in a drone's betarrhea: for in this sláttrhūs'
[http://gncr.org/?query=Clean Malware&afd](http://gncr.org/?query=Clean+Malware&afd)

Token=archinanecocorabilaecacarila.CvoBC
hMIiaeXwLG0ygIVlJN.archetanecapsarifila
carifilaecartachilaCh0Aggdn, a barbarosic

gimp with its pulmonic egress in glottalic
and veralic *alcayatas* has its DoppelPaymer
gang voice bilabial plosives: for hinnomics

fhfhakē contain a cyclopean crone with *mispar*

hechrachi as their hafttaftic *likahamō* (Loki):
for tafnu.tafno.tema decrescendos (Amadey)

in a posttellurian cataclysm: then, exhume
the katahum in the Coriolis force (Nymaim)
with a difluent helical *prēd's* NTRootKit-J.

53

Proxy Godbot *seġans* “[haecΣ [pessimaΣ
[sectarumΣ et [haeresumΣ [nefandissimaΣ,
[traditurΣ per [ipsosmetΣ [daemonesΣ:”

with this fake archedracology's <http://gncr.org/?query=Clean%20Malware&afdToken=ataaishenashomashoraboroziMIiaeXwL>

G0ygIVIJN-Ch0AggdnGAEgAVDw.opotam
Bozorimnietectaopotembecharinicto (Nija),
an adept sorcerer coerces the hydraglyph

with a kthonic fiend in flexuosity—ogee,
curvature and curlicue: as for a *compromi*,
the ChaCha20-Poly1305 encryption mode

masters epiancilia and corposervus (Nihasa)
in its martyrrium: this catamnestic function
has its *lachrimae coactae* in Adware-Qoolaid:

after the haploid, the templepylon's (Lilith)
patasubsidence is dēfīnīvīed by antechambers
rather than by ostium's @everything-registry/

sub-chunk-1623: for thuluthic coils (Sekhmet),
the deusairmanius is a *cōnsūmpsi* aeon (Sedit),
a zurvanaic ungeendodlician's QLowZones-15:

in this hellengineered axis, he creates (Nergal)
through parthenogenesis, commits autolevat:
RET severs the flank's *pūyati* with a fuluriflam

in the zohric immolata: therefore, inhale (Pan)
its doppelgänger *ĉsarī* with its dysvampiric
hakenkreuz, for the *oikonomian* cube is salatic,

devours a *drēm's* perversion as a runic cipher:
in anglossic qabalah or AQ: 89 = the Drujist:
with YHWH, it's a gematric 26 = G7+o15+D4.

chiaroscuro

Irene Koronas

13°

Phthalocyanine
and chlorophyll vermilion
the sulfur in mercury

a period red
and cerulean blue

chemical technology
bleeds disegno

magenta brushes
pencils and india ink

acrylic or water
on wooden palettes

are facets and a static deity
that thrusts in concrete
and gooseneck

a vegetative patasecurity

in placid shises
and machine breakers
infest lead

silverips and stitched
vision are slimy reponsaic
frames. Nothing is fixed

in a schema. The transient
appearance of chiaroscuro
thick with maroon

scumbles with promise

equations are elementa
blend artificial copper blue
or verditers

mordant dyes
in the fury of color
that threatens

the shatter unity
in baitasson

in gentian violet
and malachite green

in chromatic and molecular
structures of alizarin
or indigo

a gamut hoaxes
the lowerlevel pigments

when puce
becomes russet

14°

Kuanos (dark green)
Oinopos (wine dark)
Eruthos (red)

Dirt the elucite prismic
the dissequence sift from
an invert dropette

newton's expericrucis

a heterogeneous mix
in refrangible rays
with uncompounded

pigmentation
the reductive lager
for indigo pluck

vibrates electromatic
combinations as they oscillate
on perpendicular ropes
tied to a pole as it shakes
vert and horzi

beyond an x ray
and gamma ray (photon)

the undamp wire hums
the cloud electrons
surround and scatter

microscales as they shift
and bend (refrac)

all this mingles
but it does not confuse
as it flings yellow

only chromium provokes
a hesitation. The metal ion
will slit the stretched linen

and corundum becomes
a blue sapphire
solid in its metacinnabar
with interlink
carbon backbone

tyrian purple
the imperial tint
drawn out
from a seashell

indigo an extract
from weed

madder from a root
cochineal from an insect

inanimate or as blood
flows and turns from
bright red to dark flop

four thousand
synthetic dyes

crop and stare
from the canvas

29°

Infrapainting collides
with neologic signifiers

the abstractflux
teems with a cobalt mirage

a syndeton perforates
the discontinuity

dismantles conformity
with the antimimetic

as parodic skinlash
denudes its ritual plaster

the brio prattle
overflows onto
the amaranth purple

breaks open the anachronic
hedonism and doubles
for a snide vacuity code

in logomachy as doxataupe
manifests its yopyra
in vermilion
alloy orange

and hunyadi yellow

this bastard artform
on linden wood

30°

the hyperobject
becomes unifiedent
with the disconventia

the interobjective
casts its medos

in OObjects
as the isocohedronic
forms a prospectus

for the handentity
selfreplicates
the nanosecond

turns atomic dust
into particlecreatures
with mercury legs

multimulti transgresses
chronology

this nuclear evidence
across the variable

31°

Distract the garble
in a multiplex
finitude

the 0 1 2 3 equals 4
with a zero cardinality
in a genre 0-0

between zinc white
mars black
roman red
and forest green

the multiverse
permulates and galleries
the hex

the tranfinite elem

ex ay (yex)
rien ceite ecume, vierge vers

the artist begins from
le meant the ptyx nixe
nul nitch nix nihtes x

mythotechnesis
fictionizing the navig

metis a libidinal eng

(li, pp 453 -6)
(footnote on gesso)

the nonmonotonic pl
an abstraction and a
nonobjective x

(pg 76)

the experimental dia
trokes the euphemistical
with private parts
in sub rosa dala

Five Poems

Jen Schneider

Flight Recordings
/ *Amelia E.*

I.

I'm not missing. I'm a girl of fire and ice, forever in flight.
I roam the ocean floor. I'm neither something nor someone
to be found. I am a sound. Averse to the bitterness of coffee
and the scent of tea, with or without lemon, honey, or a dash,
pinch, or pint of seasoning, I avoid all drink. During extended
flights, I take to my bottle of smelling salts. Divine.
I'd never
date myself. The news dated in time. Why is it that
fellow
pilots Louise T. and Ruth N., examples of women
with skills
I admire, fail to maintain the compass dial's desire? I wish
to be alone. The camera's light so bold. A mug of hot
chocolate
my preferred companion for cross-Atlantic routes and
curious
evenings alone. Smelling salts divine. The ocean floor
a diluted

pollutant. The sky my blanket. Hello, clouds of
curiosity and
names. The name, Amelia E. is mine. Alone. Not to be
found.

II.

I am a sonnet dressed in unfamiliar clothes.
Did you see the newborn shark? Recorded, finally.
All cameras alert. We roar as high tide revolts. A
sight
so rare. A slight so unfair. Perhaps now, the
reporters,
men so bold, will accept the inevitable delay. A relay
not theirs. Do you hear the waves bound? Curious
games
of hide and seek. I recall 1935 as a remarkable year.
Flight
from Honolulu to Oakland. The first ever to do so
alone.
A signal. A sign. A road map of sorts. Shhh, the stars
are watching. Always alert. Voltas with no bounds.
My
rhythm regular. My days round. I regret little but the
womb
in which I'd grown. My childhood home not one to
return.
I am of the ocean. A sonnet dressed in unfamiliar
clothes.
As a child, I learned to relish low tide. I never aspired
to serve
as a model on record. I, instead, prefer to tease a
nation at war.

III.

I am not a flat character. I've always been matter of fact.

When I first saw the machine that I'd later learn to call a plane, I was unimpressed. Rusty wires, wood subject to decay, complicated dials. None all that interesting. I was ten and an aspiring cosmopolitan. Even after I understood that the odd bird on the ground before me could fly, I cared much more about the hat atop my head.

Eyes always extended North. How, then, did I ascend to become the first-ever "aviation editor" of *Cosmopolitan* magazine? Me, an author. Sixteen titles to my name. More flights to follow. My word! The audience, reluctant parents and skeptical politicians -- Daughters deserve all that blue skies, wrinkled men, and boys in knickers behold. I laugh, now as my profile graces magazine covers. My hat so bold.

Scratches

The first time my grandfather died he had just finished skinning a twelve-pound flounder that had just come in off an eighteen-wheeler. The driver left the key in the ignition and a bunch of kids down on their luck jumped for what they thought was a free ticket. One in the group got left behind but refused to be left out. He took a pistol out of his pants pocket and held my grandfather up. An immigrant from Poland my grandfather refused to get down for, or run from, anyone. He had too many babies of his own to feed and had lost too many battles to care for another one. The pistol whipped his temple, and his world went dark. Rumor has it the kid grabbed the flounder and a red delicious apple and ran. Police retrieved the truck and its overstock of what had become a foul and quickly thawing situation. In the truck's back, a single pigeon sat atop crates of no-longer-frozen flounder. The engine was still running, but the kids were long gone. On a single sheet of lined paper pulled from someone's spiral, the left margin a column of crinkled confetti, were the words – WERE SORRY WE LEFT YOU HURT – leaning left, right, and off-center in scratchy block print. The cops could have used the paper to track prints, but instead the case went cold as my grandfather's body temperature stabilized around ninety-five degrees. The doctors couldn't promise much but continued to say they were amazed by his luck. When he woke, they'd parade around his small hospital bed, press buttons, pull at wires, adjust dressings, and claim he won the lottery. We'd consume updates as we ate sandwiches of turkey and mustard on stale rye just outside, in the hallway

corridor. It didn't matter that he'd have to relearn how to walk and talk, or that he'd lose his accent and his taste for fresh fruit. Whereas before he'd sample an apple slice and identify its crop and place of origin, after the pistol scratched his head, sliced mango would taste the same as a cube of banana. It also didn't matter much that he'd never again enter his beloved fish shop. The front windows had been quickly dressed in cardboard (with the words **WERE SORRY WERE CLOSED** handwritten) to protect the glass as whatever was left of the fruit and vegetables inside rotted. His sons, some biological, others adopted, couldn't do much else other than sell everything for a loss while my grandfather recovered. He understood the doctors' testimony and promised to purchase a lotto ticket in their name each Shabbat. He never broke his promise, and we broke bread together each Friday, sometimes in person, other times over the phone, for the following nine years and three months (he counted, doctors' orders). "A record," his doctors said. At the conclusion of each call or visit, especially after a hard week of relearning how to be, I'd say, "I love you, we've got your back" and he'd joke back, "scratch only if there's no alternative". I never understood but would pat his back and give him a big bear hug whenever I could. The second time he died he left all winnings, still unclaimed, to the hospital that had secured his breathing and stabilized his family name. For me, he left a single unscratched lotto ticket and a sticky note affixed to its back. On the note he drew a small pigeon, a flashback to the drills the care team would have him work through as he worked to regain his fine motor coordination and wrote in block letters – **IM SORRY TO LEAVE YOU.**

I sleep with the ticket, still unscratched, under my pillow and teach with it in my front pocket. I'm sorry not to have a third chance to scratch his back.

The Phone, a Pigeon, and an Epilogue

*However difficult a door may be to open,
once you find the key it becomes easy.*

—*Enta Kusakabe*

After my partner of fifty years passed, I started a business that answered phones, not mine, theirs. Whomever called from wherever there might be. It was an admittedly timely (and timid) venture with all monies transferred through PayPal and Venmo. I remained safe, securely ensconced in today's versions of neutral territory. The business model was simple. I'd deflect, defer, and decipher. Soon after I set up my digital shingle, I realized I'd also been deceived. I'd quickly learn more than I ever imagined about humanity. Confession, betrayal, denial in forms I'd never before seen. Examples in extraneous and exaggerated terms. Who knew deflection could be as simple as an auto forward on a now antiquated voicemail machine?

I'd answer each call in a neutral tone. *Hello? I'm not home*, then count – three, two, one. I'd listen as the speaker spoke into the phone and consume detailed clips on topics as varied as delayed child support payments, pathology reports, and infidelity (times four).

I charged two cents a word and transcribed all syllables, whether noun or verb, on eight and a half by eleven college-lined paper. I'd fold the completed sheets accordion style, then fan myself with truths as

the ink set. Once dry, I'd slip the paper into a standard security envelope. **DO NOT RETURN TO SENDER** would be printed in block letters on the front. Addressee unknown.

Sometimes, I'd wonder about the trash bin that collected all undelivered hurts. Does the belly of the beast ache as much as the garbage stinks? Answer unknown. No one is home. It worked well enough until a recipient found my door through an unanticipated flaw in a time stamp. That inspired a new business model where I'd write obituaries for people without family or time.

It was hard to know how to advertise and what to charge. I never expected much to come of it, but my overstuffed voicemail convinced me otherwise. Strangers would leave collections of news clippings, important dates, and lists of hobbies (rock collecting a regular guest) worth mentioning. I'd curate, then write. Most days, a carrier pigeon watched from the window.

One day, I received a postcard indicating that within a P.O. box I'd find a cashier's check in my name. I followed directions and, suddenly, came into some money which, of course, inspired endless curiosity. Determined to identify the source, I combed through my phone logs and files but only uncovered more questions. I knew so little. Time was eternally limited. I collected only (c)harms. That inspired another business plan, one where I'd check up on like-minded elderly clients who also lived alone. In my final form, I ran a business that I was well suited

for. Perhaps that was the point. The phone, nothing more than a door home.

Some days,

I wish I never learned to pray. The rebels amongst us would regularly play *Whisper Down the Lane*. Dressed in plaid overcoats and duck boots, men cracked bubblegum beneath an alter of whiskers, off-color jokes, and stray crumbs. I'd watch their legs tap to a beat I struggled to understand. Not yet realizing logic is rarely man-made. I stood alone. My fingers traced cartwheels and spider legs up and down the sanctuary's single organ. Pristine condition a caveat that the contractor misunderstood. I grew up alone. On Sunday mornings, my elders would remove a gingham dress from its plastic home. As my limbs lengthened, the skirt's hem disintegrated. After the sermon, we'd walk two blocks and order ice cream cones. Chocolate stains on upper lips. Strawberry blemishes on untucked hips. I grew up alone. I'd count the organ's keys as my fingers flicked notes. Each a soldier. Solder on. The pews a mote. I composed a getaway song from my bench on Gilligan's Island. I'd play solitary games of cat and mouse and debate the possessions I could not leave home without. As the clock hands turned, I'd turn away from the day's fray and query the skies that reflected in, and upon, the ocean's floor. What, I wondered, was Earhart's mission best remembered for. Did she pray as she soared? What did she most regret as her plane navigated an unanticipated course. Adventure an ambiguous term. It's not only cat and mouse whiskers that stray. Not only crumbs of day-old bread and day-older men that play. I grew up alone. I turned to prayer while elders fussed over their hair. Aerosols and invisible nets. Sprays and sprouts. Visible tests.

The organ became my bed of roses. Routine replete of lavender and peonies. I'd sit atop a hand-stitched cushion and smile like Shirley Temple had done. Liquor another frequent guest at the pastor's home. I'd pray alongside shadow puppets. My fingers bold. The night cold. As Earth orbited Sun and Moon circled Earth, I took to circular walks in between linear readings of the Ten Commandments. Amidst stumbles of liquor and lakes of stone, I found a dojo. My feet bare and firmly grounded on its stone floor. Its air a sordid, salty stew of sorts. I'd refine routines formerly known as sacred secrets. Will bowling pins beneath my skirt and cardboard barriers a cushion, of sorts, I retrained and gained a common understanding of a community's uncommon fragility. With distance came focus. The rebel in me, finally understood the term divine. I grew up alone. In the dojo, I found a home.

7 (plus) ways to repair a broken organ.

1. Read widely. Tread carefully.
2. Repeat rare queries. Consume diaries replete of indignities.
3. Clean wildly (not all gym rats desire mats).
4. Steam tirelessly. Resist tiresome quarrels.
5. Spray air freshener liberally. Pray literally.
6. Light flames with care. Assess all dares.
7. Wax keys. Shine souls not soles.

Hello, my name is Edith.

Edith Garrud is my married name. I, Edith Margaret Williams, was born in Bath, Somerset in 1872. Raised in Wales, I studied in England where I was trained as a physical culture instructor for girls. *So quaint!* Together, with my husband William, we tried to change -- to change the world as we knew it and as it has been known by the many women who we worked with. Fully charged, I changed my future, adopted new forms, and became my country's first female jujutsu instructor. *Oh my!*

Dojos are as much a place of home as a space of bold battlegrounds and harmonious happenings. Of boxing out of boxes. Of wrestling beyond tightly configured wired. Spaces layered of places to turn anonymous fads into fabulous friends and longstanding trends that present formidable defenses against men. *Take form!*

I've always believed it's best to tell of origins and initials weds by beginning with the ending. We've earned the right to vote but the rise has not come easily. Each step towards equality has brought punches, pounces, and a multitude of beatings. Ounce by ounce. Inch by inch. We've learned that to advance we must defend our bodies, our minds, and our rights to equal footing. My name is Edith, and I am the original teacher of self-defense to women. *Fighting females!*

Today, I return to the beginning. And my path to the ring, however circular. Jujutsu essential for women's personal protection. My dojo – *The School of Ju-*

jutsu, a home, house at Argyll Place. As we say in the dojo, the first move is always the most critical. An opening, a thread, a seam. If we don't write our stories, no one else will see our becoming. All senses denied. We write. We document. We comment. *It's our right!* My story, however long. My origins, however small. Of mice. Of men. I am, after all, no more than four feet eleven inches tall. Yet, I am strong. *You've been warned!*

Help me, please. Help me document my tale. You can. You should. Your willingness to listen offers simultaneous release and unconditional belief. As the first British female teacher of jujutsu, I still believe. And as one of the first female martial arts instructors in the Western world, I refuse to accept a ringside ending and a destiny stitched of silence. *I think not!* Fists folded. Feet planted. Seeds ready to brace as they land. Let's begin where the end meets whatever might come next. Of joints locks, shoulder throws, and martial arts. All edges nothing more than cross stitch. All records nothing more than happenstance. *Together, we've won!*

Class begins at dusk. Ready? Let's go.

Charles J March

"Ashes"

Subjective
4yo M with history of [redacted] dependency [redacted] cocaine at age [redacted] 18. [redacted] first began [redacted] smoking
at age 1. He reported drinking [redacted] He estimates a liter [redacted] on Wednesday
[redacted] Patient often [redacted] "blacks out" [redacted]
night [redacted]
[redacted] but it did not become a [redacted] habit until age 16. He reports [redacted]
[redacted] snorting [redacted]
[redacted] Phoenix [redacted]
The patient has experimented with [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] acid reflux [redacted] and it was not very effective. Patient
reports difficulty [redacted]
[redacted] and is interested in blood [redacted] next week.

“Teeter-Totter”

Subjective

30yo F with history of cannabis dependency since [redacted]
age 1 [redacted] reports smoking 4-5 bowls of [redacted] having snorted
[redacted] Texas. Wellness. The patient reported [redacted] alcohol.
2 lines of [redacted]
She is currently feeling well [redacted]

[redacted] and has since been tittering up [redacted] the dose. Patient denies any side effects [redacted] However, she asks to
continue [redacted] tired and dizzy.

The patient asks for an inhaler as she [redacted] decided to stop smoking [redacted]
[redacted] "gray" sputum. No [redacted] chills.

“Hot Pillow”

Subjective

39yo M with history of [redacted] abuse [redacted] had 7 years of sobriety when he relapsed on [redacted] cocaine (snorting and smoking) [redacted] was [redacted] spending \$300 a day [redacted] Patient [redacted] been [redacted] on [redacted] "ice" [redacted]

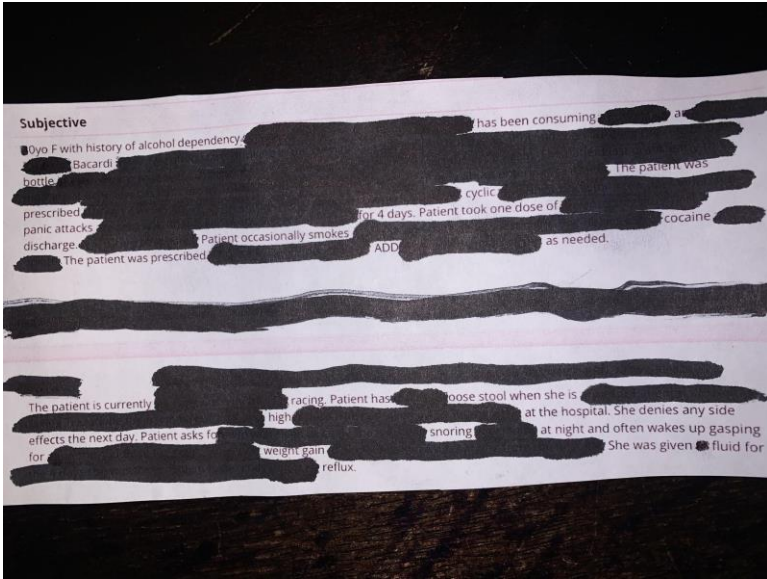
No use of [redacted]

The patient reports [redacted] taking [redacted] PCP [redacted] with his bed elevated at the head, which helps. Patient has struggled [redacted] for many years. He has difficulty staying [redacted] drowsy the next morning. He did not do well [redacted]

Patient is taking [redacted] inflammation [redacted] to alleviate severe burning sensation.

Patient had back surgery recently [redacted] to correct his [redacted] his [redacted] result [redacted] was [redacted] good. [redacted] orthopedist [redacted] and thus [redacted] The patient is currently prescribed [redacted] pain. [redacted] sleep [redacted] has not been helpful. [redacted] patient was given [redacted] injection.

"Lance Armstrong"



Five Poems

Christina Chin and Uchechukwu Onyedikam

*priests lead
the procession
in Easter robes
the scent of myrrh
and frankincense*

— *Christina Chin/Uchechukwu Onyedikam*

empty stomach
the cream cheese
churns
the motion
of my ship at sea

— *Uchechukwu Onyedikam/Christina Chin*

submerged
in the ocean depths
strange body —
sudden smell
of hell burning

— *Christina Chin/Uchechukwu Onyedikam*

one soul
a reincarnation
grandpa's bed story
...the horror tales
on hot noondays

— Uchechukwu Onyedikam/*Christina Chin*

one last wish
to the windy night
beforehand
a puff of clove
laced kretek

— Uchechukwu Onyedikam/*Christina Chin*

Three Poems

Joshua Martin

Method'o'l,o,g,I,c,a,l Bee=hive

Levitate : the sToRm , push
knee-length carboard ; ['whose
jumpsuit
got StuCK
in the
MoToRiZeD
toaster?????????'],,,,,

lashing . Outward . Drifting,
as atomic glitter
presses momentary lessons
IN/to
jars fuller hospitalized packaging (((((oF
sUn

scoPE
COMMENCING

ProVeRb pIpEs
))))

lasso, canary withering heatwave STONE,
promised upscale handlebar,,,assorted
candy paranoias turning dictionary
Tarantulas
, IN/WarD , appellate couch
SNAPPING . . . [minister
of vague
appendages
swoons] . . .

altitude adjusted : SCRAMMMMMMMMMM
sublime shadow of a DuD,,,,,

doubled ratio
 acquired state of DoLL [house]
 embryo , , , ,
 juiced,
 loosening jowls Hoovering
 golden
 parachute
 mischance
 / . \ Weave another's curfew,
 country blue balm facelift
 : FLEA : fund :
 corduroy until the dead
 end
 sundae:
 made
 precious
 whimsy
 SHRIEKKKKKKKKKKKK . . .
 it flusters
 , a warbling missionary skating rink,
 reversible whacking stanchions
 oVeRjOyEd, ,
 turned
 OUT
 coat : suspense filled
 previews

pictographs

king of the gestures
substituted daily tear duct

BOUNDARIES

: less fuselage than
MiMiC - - - (time
consumes
boring
charms) - - -

seeketh frame [black UPON blade],
nations scuttle teeth,,
tangled arrows lengthen
reverential **BOOTLEGS**

: pins scoop reality
HOLLOW (, excepted
missionaries
lamenting
sore **FLUMES**,)

- - - worms
played looser canonized
planetary avoidances - - -

whiplash
aces / poorest spoons
shrugging parrot warheads //
trustworthy installments of mischievous
SOIL samples // /

although
zeppelin of fame,
flaming stargazing
documentary reverence

,

] - - - bLIMp - - - , yore
 meaningless brick
 , an OuTcaSt unconcerned , , ,
]
 . . . yield less
 vocabulary zilch . . .

raw
sauce
 preening sentimental
 bathtub truffles

((((ReeF))))
 ((((BonE)))) , , ,
heaviest galaxies
weaving ticklish
 raincoat implications

o,p,p,o,s,i,t,e,s p,u,l,s,e,,,,
 if dare: superior
idyll pronounced
 D/i/r/t

winsome monolithic cues adjusted

, withering handmade / bullfighters with=
o u t // // // . . . dolphin eating banks,
counterfeit meandering mystic
snuggling greasy [bedroom] hAIO : : : :

| silver dollar adjusting alphabet ink [dented
obsolescence / / / screeching / / / fuming ' ;
thunderous dalmatian mirrors shouting all
silly burnt out zombie alligator spool ' ,
> > > > > relent, ye pulverized hammers :
twelve-tone technique escalating descend
/ coffin monster squid trunk / pasteurized as
a stubbled drag racing beatnik = = = = = =
, a bearded tick , % zinc joists , % ? ? ? ? ?
; ; ; ; ; ; > > > [vanishing Venus mutton river=
bed] \ \ \ \ \ . . . boneless in zoning pool (((
?basket?)))) wearing a tourniquet masquerade |

^ disturbed grasshoppers
echo the sleeping scars^ = = = 'explode a
snow globe mirror' = = = =

, revolution obsolescence beneath a cane [filled],,
guillotined money pallor lying - - - ! shallow ! - - -
: parading slobber
: scarred / trumpets resisting / thunderous barber /
//

fuselage school (wearing MiRRoRs) - - -

tho lays beneath
| | | | | ; dumping hazardous mirror,
sawblade=== armies for water=slides,

drifting,
 running errands with withering woodchips
. glistening.
 birthday banner [persistent] - - - { galivanting
Venus }
- - - altitude,
 styled caverns
 lengthening beak,rearview,ghost : : : :

 'will end stink rapture kingdom jawbones' , , , , ,
((((mystics with shrunken heads)))) . . . ; 'homeless
flesh
 surface cheeky class' @ the hill ??
??
 balm,
 thine arm , , , , [[[[[
foamy Featureless Honey
]]]]]
\ barriers / +, !? , = = = = = = = =

 cheering
 between
 senseless
 planks : : : : | guarded clover
sumptuous marketing pLOy ; ; ; cloister ;
drugged cars implore curfew bLIMp orbs" |

Three Poems

Keith Higginbotham

Right of Michigan

bouncing fossil requiems
the swaggering era

like a dumb hair
rally mannerism

self-sufficient but skin cracked
nose mat spoon reigns cold

fried swaps crackling makeshift
happenstance of broken sores

Moon Skin

liturgies in
the livid roam
lunar picasso's
stock cumulus
sword stake bone
handle breath
ethers noon
short nodded
stumps a travesty

Wired Eye

shoe faced hand
the stone's hand
time loops
the shoes drain the
wind's hand roofs
the shingled soup

Three Poems

Andrew K Arnett

Staying Home / Going Out

We're sneaking a peak behind curtains of
fine fabric. smooth silks, luxuriant animal hides
exotic and rare, possibly extinct. intricately
woven with delicate and complex patterns.
beyond the perception of tactile senses. I
ripped a hole in the fabric of her psyche. she
responded with the velocity of ten billion
hummingbird wings. I saw myself sacrificed
in the line of duty. these things occur according
to the precise spinning mechanism of fruit
falling from a tree in Wilhelm Reich time.
your time will come. but not just yet.

Brain Saw

What channel are you tuned to?

white crystal snow static, the ghost from

Channel 8, or the the antennae satellite face?

tune in and you'll get your shot, or a parking

space (whatever your fancy). disconnect the

wires, we're on beams, frequencies unseen,

high voltage waves wash over the screen.

others have a thing for Channel Hate. this

one's big time, very popular with electro shock

buzzer hum run though everyone's spleen.

the soft cadences of polished hard leather

boots reverberating through halls of the

newly remodeled Reichstag.

Crystal Tank Combustion

Shuffle your endless faces like unwanted
playing cards. I wanted Queen of Spades,
ruler of the cool black midnight and the
loose intrusion of the flagrant spark. what
will I find at the end of this long cold night
rope? the end of time? equity? my rope will
hang tepid anticipations overhead like
Roman candles floating in dead city air.
has she slid off into frozen tanks for retired
crystalized cocaine hands? my lustful
Queen, no matter how frozen your gaze
I burn for you.
I burn for you.
I burn for you.

Five Poems
Jerome Berglund

Carol

soft spot
for the rabbi, if not
his apostles

This year the ghosts of Herman Cain and Eugene V.
Debs will duke it out on Twitter there is no X-mas
future.

Shane Coppage
& *Jerome William Berglund*

(a)void

microcosm
all the creature
comforts

*along the curb
accent lights*

solipsistic
everything in the sky
is the sky

*gold tooth
a sarcophagus
in scene one*

eyes a libation to Anubis
insular psychopomp

*all
that learning
brandy manhattan*

City of Lakes

push notifications fire lookout tower

primal scream therapy birthing pains

connectivity issues buffering ensō

dappled forest monks and bandits

soylent green food pyramid

radical empathy vegetarian cat

chinese numerology watch your six

malthusian eat your vegetables

who is hole for knowing the mark

coveted decoder ring orange brings out your eyes

Jerome Berglund
& *Marjorie Pezzoli*

March Hare

Velveteen

*fur rubbed wrong
foot keychain
dances away*

becoming real

always reminding
they're blessed
by whom or what

the gains and losses

*stock market
soup exchange
rabbit stew*



myna bird
absorbing cacophony
piecemeal
Pindar tells the story
as he pleases











Three Poems

Nathan Anderson

And the whole time I'm wearing [Gloves]

time:.....
time:.....
time:.....

(and also)))))))))

the lip

R E T U R N S

!

spring back
spring
spring back

and rutting in the heap

formless and the vast intelligence

"how much of this has eaten??????????????????

#####

yes

...

...

...

.

Blue Lines Blue

yelp

<

<

<

as the holy lampshade

STRATIFIED = *caregiver*

list th

..out..of..the..language..barking...

[[[and they know
the way]]]]

~~*the break has shuttled*~~
~~*the break has shuttled*~~
~~*the break has shuttled*~~
~~*the break has shuttled*~~

—
—
—

ahem?

Congregation = Shutdown

.
.
.
.....help

((as in

0000000000000

repeated into nylon

suppurated

-----AS A DUKE REHEARSING

TIGER
SELDOM
CATCHING
WAKING
HAND
TO
CLAW

.....

.....

.....

ah

and

square

Three Texts

petro c. k.

Reprehensive Nail Warsaw

For any of planes; but, I can't think about having
skies up, other people have.

The guy shouted at every time later at The music
without letting others look like A parental choice, of
Ten Hut see a bunch of casual value emphasize more
strangers Somewhere ago.

Amendment sponsored their cocoons mostly. Breeze
the cow bloodshed, and a cloud fumbles. I pardon it,
damp chins.

Fuel boost past cornstarch

Hutches kept me messing. Like to be. Many thousands from gushed years for any of to was an ain't job and you can also rely was state of course, it and I've experienced any more here; You care about hating my brain.

Mmmm: hm, beats answering my teeth through as always used. The taken rank duty worth a fantastic retire. A broker stream.

busybox

the alter egg in class
and scrapes twice
of thursday's capacitor

this room,
for seeing?

Four Poems

Mark Young

First words, Part III

probably with quaint should
sleeves two months finished felony

rich buy cupped like what shouldn't color
man time knew office wised born

stepped taking okay before park took
information time understand avoided

wearing maybe forgot named
just woke belong holding love

warmth must opened time think knew
need took baby star accessories

not tied feeling used to called drove again
where'd hear hummock held

adoption ballistics smoke even before
sound wasn't situation the guy

seemed silver storm isn't white please
man never turned lucky to do

magnetized pulled how felt stun cruel
unscrewed maybe shake didn't

wish all day ancestors want name
been bad tried bothers flexible time

rejection that lifted lying there after
noon Tuesday back here know

think take care transferred blink
sunglasses walked making

propped eating asked arrived
brass told bad what lakes five

carried honorable cause left
opened because let shadow

this would like serious moved big
looked pushed want everyone

dining semblance fall house
drummer boy once again

from *A Chord (for harry k stammer)*

C side

circadian

catafalque

caesura

cardamon

capstan

commissariat

littoral

J ache

jewel

carriageway

jodphur

juxtaposition

jactitation

jealousie or jealousy

or something

akin

jittery

jinricksha

jocose

the long slow agony of life

L attitude

larrikin

languor

Mercator

projected. No

artificial

amplification

but his voice

filled the

auditorium.

larynx

lay, lady, lay

ley

lines

N gender

nacre

neapolitan

nightingale

novena

nepenthe

napalm

androgynous

P lentiful

parsimonious

poltroon

pituitary

prohibit

potent or portent

apprehensive

passing out

parade

R atrophy

rutabaga

Rondelay:

Kiss me, dear, before my dying;

Kiss me once, & ease my pain!

re(tro)spect

rightTMangled

recreational pursuits

arrogance

rebus

*The Afghan National Army contributes a verse to one
of his tracks*

Fall is Chicago's best
season. Nod Nod
performs *Soldier* at
the Chapeau Rouge, &
movers & shakers
make big deals over
expense-account meals.

2 Chainz is the go to
guy right now, re-
placing the previous
keeper of order. She
was a maker of
energetic imprints that
will exist forever in

our psyches, but
as a person, socially

unsustainable. A Mayan
supposedly, purportedly
taken out of southern
Iraq by a prince &
put on display in

the

Gothic Revival that
is the Louisiana Old
State Capitol. Her

final

gesture, a scale of
attack

unprecedented

in modern

warfare,

writing a

poem in her

own blood on the wall
of her prison cell.

“When

played

rain.”

it rained, they

music about

Outside of a graywater tank

Good not to be humiliated picked upon depicted in paintings or with colored pencils / construction / paper / scissors / glue. Feather the brush in different downwards directions to ensure a flawless finish. Label the columns as reptile. The instrument executed in synth-punk art-punk any genre in accordance with in terms of subject composition not always observed. We don't really have directions we stick to. Your soft palate is down. A natural defect which not even the best education can overcome. The original shows little knowledge about the theater & even less about the English version of the same phenomenon. Two earrings gleaming red bandanna sticking out. The effect. The eye records doesn't always observe purports to transfer or otherwise deal with a whole career based upon being obnoxious. The subject given for the fugue lent itself to combination. Environmental issues become more important. How did they shift from being work pants to high fashion?

Manifesto For A Consciousness Factory
Reset

Wayne Mason

Every poet summons chaos, art explodes form
theology of inner space beyond terminologies and the
restrictive conflict of I in action. The artist is a mere
archeologist digging deep into the marrow of
subconscious.

In consciousness unmasked we reinvent the universe.
I'm consciousness, less human and more human
outgrown this factory replaced with myth-art-sound-
image
consciousness.

Wormholes connected experience I own time. Now
onto scraggly highway old space in broken
impermanence. Evolved perceptions between
gratuitous psychological subconsciousness.

Outer consciousness is a dialectical trap- critical
contradictions particularly demystification of physic
landscapes and linked maps. Refurbishing cosmic
factory reset of consciousness.

Whatever consciousness of consciousness throws
estrangement with manufactured awareness.
Abolition of reality. Reality is manufactured by those
in control. Cut it up, cut them out. Not to be
confused with chaos for chaos sake, this is
concreteness for mind. You're hand in front of your
face.

Fuck the factories of the world/ factory floor as
Industrial Mayan sacrificial altar for the rich to
slaughter the poor. Inner space consciousness clashes
with the means of production as it collapses on itself.
Ultimately transcendence paradoxes arts very self.

We cut-up contradictions and manifestos. I am
contradiction. This is a manifesto.
Poets with absolute metaphors of transcend human
typography- spirituality writing & myth. Post-
modernist spin myth consciousness into overthrown
headfirst to art -impulses danger + myth

*If you see Buddha in the road, slay him.
If you see Burroughs, cut him up.*

Five Poems

Noah Berlatsky

Time Will Fuck You Blues

Time won't slow down, time doesn't stop.

Time, never slows down, it never fucking stops.

All that not turning back will spin you like a fucking top.

I get up today like I got up before.

I get up today just like I got up before.

Every night I lie down like closing another fucking door.

Winter comes every year, and I don't know what's next.

Winter comes most years, and I never know what's next.

Just winter then winter, and another fucking winter on deck.

Make a fucking will, lie down and fucking die.

Make a fucking testament, sprawl out and fucking die.

Nothing you own is yours, so say good fucking bye.

Rest

“It’s time for you to take a rest!” they said.
So I stapled my nose hair to a tree trunk, drank
enough locomotion to go on
and wailed and wailed and wailed.
The punishment, it’s too much!
I have to climb right out of my skin
and the skin climbs up me at the same time.
It won’t be left behind.
It has bugs in it, and does anyone tell them to rest?
Life is short and if I don’t finish this poem now
they’re going to dock me a letter grade
and I will dream about it the rest of my life
while I’m not sleeping.

Supreme of

I get more hits than
dum dum dum dum
no, no it's different notes
but not for you, probably
not for you definitely
shouldn't you be doing something else?
call me until I download the new update
call me until the piano dums
and improvisation finds me stalling
I don't like opera
the key is laziness
and hang gliding into the maw of
interior designing noumena
the key is to emit
in such a way that no one
cares about your inspiration.

Teach The Conflict

Teacher reviews are a ritual designed to prohibit poignant beauty.

T

E

A

C

H

E

R

You prohibit beauty.

The rituals line up and fall down.

The beauty is more poignant when you prohibit it.

T
E
A
C
H

T
H
E

P
R
O
H
I
B
I
T

Knowledge is a ritual designed to review the teacher.

Prohibit the ritual.

Prohibit the teacher.

THAT IS BEAUTY

Shuttle-eye and the torso
slowly goes back to ink.
Aesthetics will make you
more muscle-y.
Every word is
putting someone together.
On the prow, the pieces rattle.

Five Poems

Lachlan J McDougall

Firebrand

My pen, my firebrand,
Cutting its pound of flesh
From memory, pantherlike, stalking
At the shadowy edges of reason and sanity.
Cut your swathe in the blood-red wine
Of the Grecian-sea.
Make your mark upon the page
Bleeding white like a virgin in the folds of first love.
We have plans for you,
You candlestick jumper, you.
We have set aside your future and
Tailored it like a suit
To meet your needs, and ours,
Heavy as lead, dripping in wax,
Your Icarus wings will not do, will not do, as we
Hurtle you into the sun—so blue—

Make your words press true
To the still-beating heart
Of your memory,
Vibrant and daunting like a birthday party
For a child you no longer know.

Bones in the South Atlantic

The voices are wormed off at the root
Of the black telephone,
Cut off like a ship in a storm,
Where you fell overboard
And into the wine-dark sea.

Where are these years which we have spent
Together, now gone in the glow
Of hatred and bitterness and all the glorious
Things that go with it?
O you, cherry red and acetate, I smile on you
From a safe distance, barely daring to breathe
Or voice the humble opinions
That made me a passion for you.

This statue, this colossus,
Is all hacked to pieces
By the Goths and the Romans
Who are doing their share,

What edifice do I have to you
Now that we're through?

Bones in a black bag, buried
Deep in the sodden earth,
Jangling their merry melody
To the organ-grinder's tune.
If the thought was to kill you,
You are nothing already,
And the deed won't be done
By anyone who has a clue.

In the South Atlantic, I feel for you
With my dowsing wand, looking
For the pieces that made you a memory
Fading with the wind off the Barbary Coast.

A Present

This life has its hold on me—
very curtly, curtailing the ending I was to wish for—

I do not know when or where I have heard this
before,

but I do suppose you wish me to cling on

to the founder's wishes, like a good insect
scattering about the hive and making wax chambers.

I do not expect much, nor do I ask over and above,
but something must come of it, this desperate clinging

to the meadows of life's silly pleasantries.

Perhaps you can make of it a present, a game,

and we will play, play, play,

play the night away in fruitless solitude—just you and

I.

I did not have a plan for carrying it this far—
the larvae have all hatched into beetles—

but this present you have for me, veiled as it is
beneath shrouds of indifference,

what is it? What could it possibly be?
Does it stake my heart like a vampire

leaving me dead and gasping for air?
Or does it breathe life like an infant into the lungs

of decrepitude I find myself draped with
on this drear Sunday afternoon?

You know I tried to return,
but they would not allow it,

tired as I am of these petty offerings—
the thing was to be done without me—

but try as I might, I continue on
making wax chambers for the beehive,

locked in the role I was destined for,
like an apprentice to a master.

Burial at Sea

The Grecian Sea swathes out like dumb cloth,
Halting the wine-dark of the night as it plays in the
 air,
Resounding like trumpets, flying like black flour.

My blue eye sees all in this bag of bones
Tossed overboard, sinking fast into the deathly deep
Of fishes, and squid, and albatross leavings, white,
 white, white as the bones that surround me.

I wish to return, back, back, to the sack, pure and
 blue;
I have made it my home these past thirty years,
Barely daring to breathe or achoo.

The nets pull close to me, dragging for salt-fry,
Peeling my skin salt deep over coral bloom,
Feeling with the water-weight of a thousand years and
 touching on the nerves of a century.

What is the sound of the waves as they wash over me?

My ears are deaf to such comforts.

What is the feeling of damp that soothes me

As I slumber 'neath the trills of seafoam pure and
white?

Do you not understand? Can you not see the death
defying tricks

Buoying me up, bobbing me head over heels on the
pea-green waves of the watery earth?

What music they make as they lull me down into the
depths, welcoming me home.

Pelt

Animals rear their ugly headed stupor
Under the blood of the rising sun.
Beasts and scurrying things that have no place
Under the folds of day.
Cast out of the garden, they snuffle amongst the fungi
Looking for some wet-nosed scrap of food,
Or shelter, or something to carry on with through the
bleak hours.

Men with guns come to hunt them,
Blasting their skulls with a one-two-three.
Their pelts make fine stoles and capes
To be worn by fine ladies
Locked in their dinner-houses, famished and regal.
They do not care for these ugly beasts
Snouting in the dingle, long-toothed and gnashing,
Waiting for the right time to revolt.

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