

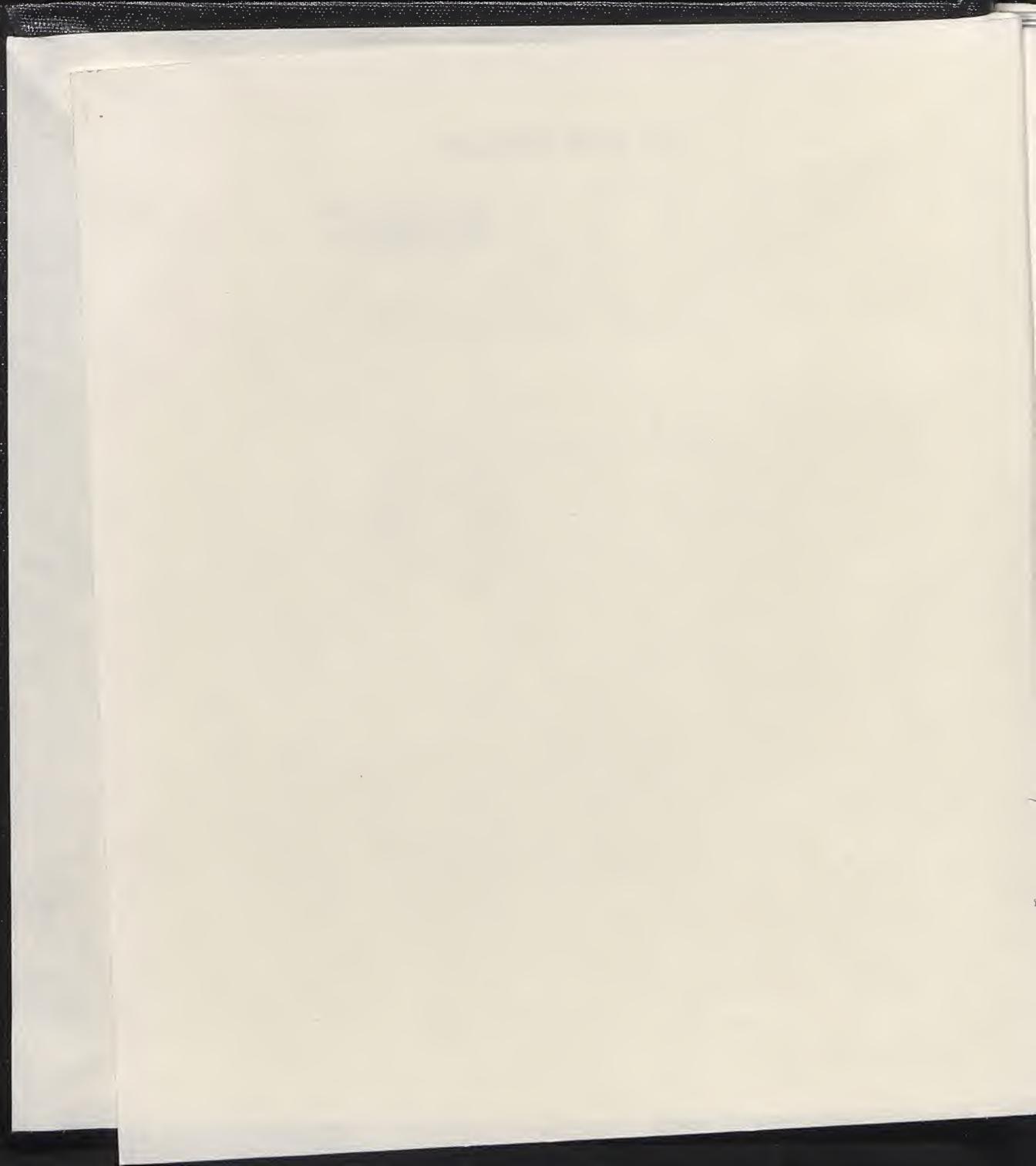
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY



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NOT TO BE CIRCULATED



FALL 1998

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY



THREE TO FOUR OUNCES



Don't worry about saving these songs!
And if one of our instruments breaks,
it doesn't matter.

We have fallen into the place
where everything is music.

-Rumi

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Fall 1998

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I built a structure made of units and pipes. I kept a lot of junk/stuff in my hideout/cubby. The apparatus starts to crumble/shake/fall apart, and I try to maintain my balance...

...Finally, when the structure falls, I remember I had included a safety feature, a pole to slide down/escape, if the system were to fall. Then, I'm in Supi's "studio"/workplace, and I'm looking at her apprentice's work. I'm looking at his work, and he's very annoyed with me—telling me to back up.... Everything is a general mess

then I'm in a living room w/ Older Joe mixed w/ A Little Don Combo, and we're watching tv with a Country Western Star woman with black hair and scar face.... middle aged, whitish clothing and spangled tassels.... Joe's bought me a white dress to wear while he's gone so I paint the surface edges bright blue. "What's the sense of moving from pure to tacky?"

He gets frustrated that I've "ruined" the "gift." The Country Western Star says, "sounds like you need to talk to someone." He says, "I should talk to someone." So we're waiting for the Country Western Star to leave so we can talk, but she never does

....I see myself on tv painting the dress. Joe whispers in my ear, "Let's go into the bedroom and get naked so we can talk." I realize he is going to dump me and wants one last fling. Frustrated—wake up to an angel.

Wife of Juan V

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Sestina

You'll want to begin with something you know;
so begin with your tale of the fabulous light.
Of the world beginning with pins
pushed through the night like roots
grown over the sky's remote
fortresses. How that tale refuses to apologize.

The story is so simple—it won't apologize.
How do you know the things you know?
Even the things assured are remote
and unable to explain the appearance of light.
So go on without explaining your roots,
and give it all over to an alliance with pins.

Perhaps it is explained in the way the word "pins"
needles and sticks without room to apologize.
You search for the leaves' answers in the roots.
As if it were possible to know
the results of the mysteries of light.
As if it were controlled by something remote.

You've lost the battle by remaining remote.
The objective was marked on the map with pins.
Like a moth, you could only move to the light.
Circling, you could not apologize
with blindness. You could only know
how to know things, take hold of their roots.

In the end there are roots spinning in soil, remote.
This you know—
the grains of sand like pins,
the dark highways of moles. Apologize
for the intrusion of light.
The extinction of light.
The death of square roots.
The stars apologize
for remaining remote.
Skin spreads on the tray with the tension of pins.
you want to atone for the things you know.

The things you know, the currencies of light
die riddled with pins. The extensions of roots
into corners remote. What made us live, apologize.

Carter Smith

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Ode to Roger

He was a parasite
The epitome of selfishness
Like a tapeworm
 three meters long
 coiled and twisted inside my intestine
 quietly stealing my meals
Like a leech
 the swimming slug
 the slimy flat worm
 getting fat on my blood
Like a bot fly
 burrowing into my skin
 eating my flesh from the inside out
 causing unbearable pain
Like the tsetse fly
 biting into my skin
 injecting infection and fatal protozoans
 thus stealing my vision
All created in god's image
All fine-tuned to do exactly what they do
All selected to be selfish
He was a man
 befriending us with sad stories
 playing upon our sympathies
 only to get what he wants
He was the worst kind yet...

Connor McGowan



Untitled

Jimmy Hilburn

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES



Untitled

Emily Dransfield

for business majors

A harmonious reader-poet-muse relationship demands from each of these three components the successful completion of very explicit obligations.

It is the muse's duty to continually inject into a poem sufficient deficiencies and idiosyncrasies in diction, symbolism so obscure and convoluted that it makes an ignoramus of the most accomplished pedant, and to inspire quirky and obfuscating line breaks.

It is the poet's onerous task to transfer the muse's words onto paper—the poet, however, is not merely a conduit, for in the transmission from muse to poet something of the original poem's clarity is irretrievably lost, lending the poem a certain spineless, accommodating quality that is the true signature of a great poet.

Both muse and poet delight in the end result:

An aggregation of discrete words not wholly integrated on whose skeletal frame any reader may decorate with whatever interpretation strikes their fancy.

The best poem is one so blessedly incoherent that it fits every body size and soothes all intentions, malevolent or benevolent—it is, in short, the ultimate egalitarian document.

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

it must be reluctantly admitted
that this poem is currently being written without a muse.
I readily admit the difficulties in the creation of museless poetry—
certainly one invites the scorn of traditional, reactionary poetry lovers,
but also, in writing in a sparser and more analytic style,
one threatens to disdain the yoke that all poets have borne
since the inception of Time,
that is, the canonization and eulogization
of anything remotely poetic.
Given these precautionary notes, I nevertheless contend
that museless poetry would serve one extraordinarily useful purpose:
it would tap vast segments
of the population who have managed to live their lives, however meagerly,
without aid from the blessings of poetry.
Yes, perhaps this sparser and more analytic style
will not be able to canonize or eulogize aDon't worry about saving these songs!
And if one of our instruments breaks,
it doesn't matter.

We have fallen into the place
where everything is music.
Don't worry about saving these songs!
And if one of our instruments breaks,
it doesn't matter.

We have fallen into the place
where everything is music.
Don't worry about saving these songs!
And if one of our instruments breaks,
it doesn't matter.

We have fallen into the place
where everything is music.
s effectively
as traditional poetry styles, but

THE BIG KILL

James Faucett

CAST:

ALBERT T. JACKSON, III
ALBERT T. JACKSON, IV
ROBERT WILLIS
HENRY BANKS

Heavy Southern man, late 40's
His portly son, 15
Businessman, early 30's
Businessman, early 30's

Cast Size: Four Men

Time: The present

Place: South Georgia

Length: A play in one act

[A gunshot is heard.] *The light slowly comes on. A deer-stand is seen with all four men standin up looking into the distance. Henry Banks lifts his glasses from his nose and looks down over the edge of the platform. Jackson III spits ove the edge and yanks his pants up.*

JACKSON III: Dammit boy! You see the size of that buck? That musta been a ten-pointer!

LITTLE AL: A twelve-pointer, at least!

JACKSON III: Shit-fire! [removes his hat, stomps the platform hard an dspits again. The three others clutch to keep their balance.]

WILLIS: [stomps the platform half as hard, imitating JACKSON III; pauses before giving an obviously uncharacteristic curse] Shit! *Shit!* [looks at BANKS accusingly]

BANKS: [puts his glasses back on and looks back at the other three innocently] Whoops. [The others stare at him, then he stomps his foot halfheartedly] I mean, shit. Shit-fire.

[They all sit down again on their folding stools]

JACKSON III: Dammit, Little Al, that woulda looked good on the den wall. [removes a pouch of tobacco from his hunting vest] I need a cup of coffee.

[LITTLE AL turns to the knapsack to get the thermos but WILLIS is already there and actually yanks it away from him, then smiles and nods, pours the cup of coffee and hands it to JACKSON III avoiding the kids hands]

BANKS: Well, at least we're prepared.

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JACKSON III: Yep, twenty-five seasons and nobody dropped their gun before. Only that idiot Jim Tipton who accidentally pulled the trigger. You remember ol' Jim boy?

LITTLE AL: Yessir.

JACKSON III: [laughs] Yep, ol' Jim pulled the trigger early. He never was too bright.

BANKS: [in mock county accent] Didja shoot him? [WILLIS elbows him in the ribs]

JACKSON III: No, but we oughtern't too. Damn nice buck. But not as nice as the one you just scared off. [Spits again] Damn shame to let that one get away, huh little Al?

LITTLE AL: Yessir.

BANKS: Just think... he'll live another day [WILLIS elbows him in the ribs again]

JACKSON III: Not much of a hunter, are you Mr Banks?

BANKS: No, no. I'm a big hunter. I've killed lots of things. Kill things all the time. [WILLIS looks at him through clenched teeth]. Yeah, every day, before I even get to work, I try to kill something. That morning commute, you know. I aim for cats.

JACKSON [fake laugh] Cats are a sorry breed. You gettin' hungry Little Al?

LITTLE AL: Yessir.

JACKSON [with great difficulty, leans over to open knapsack] Yep, takes a certain kind of man to be a hunter. Certain kind of man. [pulls out a pack of crackers] Looks like we're down to just crackers.

BANKS: At least we have plenty of guns.

JACKSON III [another long, drawn out fake laugh] Well you don't need a gun to hunt, Mr. Banks. I've seen Little Al here take a squirrel out of a tree with nothing but a piece of gravel. Hit him square between the eyes and he was at least thirt' feet up in the tree. You remember that Little Al?

LITTLE AL: *Yes-sir.*

JACKSON III Yep, what an aim. Knocked him square between the eyes. Tell Mr. Banks what we did then, Little Al.

LITTLE AL [smiling, turns to BANKS] Ate his brains.

[JACKSON III and LITTLE AL laugh loudly]

JACKSON III: Hell yeah, we knocked a hole in his noggin' and put a straw right in. Nothin' like fresh squirrel brains, huh Little Al?

[JACKSON and LITTLE AL laugh loudly again]

BANKS: I guess eating brains makes you smart.

WILLIS [bumps JACKSON III on the shoulder] Hey I hear there's some pretty good sized quail around here. Maybe we'll run across some.

JACKSON III: Hell, Willis, ain't you never been quail hunting before?

WILLIS Uh, yeah, I've been a couple of times.

JACKSON III: I guess you never shot one then. You ain't gonna get no quail in the woods. That's a field sport. Gotta flush 'em out of the brush.

WILLIS [laughs nervously] Yeah, well, you know, I just meant-

JACKSON III: Besides, quail aren't legal for another three months. You wouldn't want to do something illegal, would you Willis? I might have to tell old Roger about that [elbows WILLIS good naturedly]

WILLIS [laughs heartily] Oh, no, no, don't let it get back to Roger!

JACKSON III: 'Bout a three hundred dollar fine. That'd be a pretty expensive quail dinner. You'd have to put it on the old credit card and write it off as a business expense! [elbows WILLIS again, who joins in laughing] 'Course we could talk shop for a few minutes so that it'd be legitimate and all!

WILLIS [winds down laughter obviously fakely] Yeah. Speaking of business, what do you think of that Carlson deal anyway?

JACKSON III: Carlson, yeah, five acres, commercial frontage, right of way. Looks pretty good from what I can tell. 'Course ol' Roger never steered me wrong.

WILLIS No, no, and i think between you and me we could say he's made you a lot of money.

JACKSON III Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, there's the ones that find the deals and then there's the ones that have the finances to make them happen. Not much happens if you don't got the finances.

WILLIS Oh, yes, of course, that's what I meant.

JACKSON III yep, some of us come up the hard way. Had to work for what we got. Little Al here, he's doing summers with my construction company. Working with his hands. It's good to work with your hands. Builds character. Let's you know that things don't always come easy in life. I'd have to guess you never did no work like that, did you Mr. Banks?

BANKS huh?

JACKSON III: No offense, there's just some that look like they've done real man's work and you don't look the type.

BANKS Well, I'll tell ya, I haven't done any work like that but just trying to keep your books together and legal is a hard job in itself. [long, fake laugh]

JACKSON III Yeah, yeah, I'll bet.

LITTLE AL [whispering] Dad! Three o'clock! Looks like a doe!

JACKSON III [gets up slowly and carefully, humorous because of his size] Gimme the binoculars. [Peers into them] Wait... wait... no. Nope. Well I'll be damned. It's ol' Nixon!

LITTLE AL Nixon?!

JACKSON III Sure as shit! I'll be damned. Mama must have let him out and he tracked us here. Damn dog always could sniff out anything. Well, looks like we ain't gonna see any more huntin' today.

BANKS Why not?

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JACKSON III [shaking head] Well, because a dog running through the woods will scare off the deer for miles. That's why.

BANKS So why do we have to stop hunting?

JACKSON III Little Al, you see any game around here?

LITTLE AL No, sir.

JACKSON III Nope, nothing except maybe squirrels in the trees. But we ain't got the right rifles for that. Gotta hit a squirrel with a twenty-two. Anything bigger and you'll either mess him up worse than shit or knock him three miles away.

BANKS Well, we got ol' Nixon out there.

JACKSON III Nixon?

LITTLE AL Nixon?

WILLIS Nixon?

BANKS Yeah, well, he's an animal isn't he?

JACKSON III [to WILLIS] Well, I thought he was a little weird but now it's clear he's insane [WILLIS puts his head in his hands].

BANKS Insane? Why do you say that?

JACKSON III You don't shoot dogs, you nitwit, that's why. Any goldurned fool knows that.

BANKS Well, why? He's an animal isn't he? He's alive, he's moving around.

JACKSON III I don't know where you're from Banks, but last I looked, this wasn't China. We don't eat dogs here, friend.

BANKS Well, you're not trying to kill a deer to eat it. You want to put it on your wall. It's not like we're killing for food. You're sure not hurting for a kill.

JACKSON III It's always the same with you types, isn't it? Always gotta be talkin' about how you shouldn't kill this and you can't kill that. Don't want to hurt the poor furry animals. Well, have you ever stopped to think that that's what they do to each other? It's called the food chain. They kill each other to survive.

BANKS So that means we should do it?

JACKSON III I knew it when I seen ya. One of them types. Mr. highly-educated. All set to save the environment with your brand new gold card. The only problem is you're using that same gold card to buy steak dinners at fancy restaurants. Well, guess where that steak comes from? It doesn't just show up all nice in a wrapper. it's a cow, eatin' in a field one minute and slaughtered the next. It ain't even as nice as puttin' a bullet in it's head. They shock 'em with electricity and do all kinds of things to 'em in those slaughterhouses. I worked in one for three years when I was but Little Al's age. But you, you never see that, do you? By the time it gets to you you're far away in your air-conditioned house and your air-conditioned school and your air-conditioned restaurant. Your hands never touch it. your hands never touch anything. That's the problem with America, white-collared boys like you. You never

see reality. You probably ain't never shot a gun before. Hell, you couldn't hit old Nixon even if you wanted to.
[punches LITTLE AL in the ribs and laughs]

BANKS Yes I could.

WILLIS Could what?

BANKS Hit the dog. I could get him.

WILLIS This is unbelievable.

JACKSON III Boy, I'd bet a thousand dollars you couldn't shoot anywhere near three feet of that dog.

BANKS How about a hundred thousand?

WILLIS What?

BANKS A hundred thousand. The shopping center deal. I hit the dog, you agree to do the deal.

JACKSON III What? Boy, you're out of your mind.

BANKS I'm serious. I'll just wing him in the leg. I won't hurt him.

JACKSON III Boy you couldn't wing him in the leg if your life depended on it. Hell, you'd be lucky to hit that hardwood twenty yards away from him.

BANKS If you're so sure, then take the bet. If I miss him, I'll give you ten thousand dollars and quit my job with Schneider and Covak.

JACKSON III Boy, you're crazy.

BANKS I'm serious. We have witnesses here. Willis, you hear what I'm saying.

WILLIS You have lost your mind.

BANKS I'm serious. That's the challenge Mr. Jackson. Are you willing to take the risk or are you going to back down?

JACKSON III That ain't no fair bet. You probably haven't even shot a gun before.

BANKS Boston College, '89 summer field events. Second place, skeet shooting. Are you trying to get out of this?

JACKSON III I'm not trying to do anything. I'm trying to save you some money.

BANKS I miss, I quit and you get ten thousand. I hit and you have to do the deal. Simple. Are you up to it?

JACKSON III [laughs nervously] Yeah, yeah I'm up to it.

LITTLE AL Dad?!

JACKSON III Now just calm down Little Al, he's not going to get Ol' Nixon. [BANKS pops two shells into the chamber, unleashes the safety, raises the gun to his shoulder and begins rotating around, testing the sights]

LITTLE AL Dad?!

BANKS Relax, relax. I'm just going to wing him in the hind leg. Yeah, the foot. It might take it off but he'll be up and around in three or four days. You won't even notice it's missing.

WILLIS This is insane

BANKS No, no, wait. The front leg. Yeah. The front... right leg. Okay, okay, almost got him. Get in there you

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varmit!

LITTLE AL Dad?!

WILLIS [gets up and grabs BANKS' arm] Banks, what in the hell are you doing? Put the gun down, this is crazy!!

BANKS Wait, hold it, get off of me. I almost had him then. Don't you realize, you moron, I pull this off and he signs the deal.

WILLIS Are you nuts? Have you lost your mind?

BANKS Get back, he's coming back around. In another second he'll be clear and I'll have the shot.

LITTLE AL Dad, Dad, make him stop! Nixon, Dad, he's going to kill Nixon!

JACKSON III Okay, okay boy. Now listen here Banks, enough of this foolishness. Just put the gun down.

BANKS But we had a deal.

JACKSON III Deal, what deal? Just put the gun down and don't shoot the dog.

BANKS Oh no, there are witnesses here. We had a deal. You can't back out. You can't welch on the bet.

LITTLE AL Dad! He's going to kill him!

JACKSON III now just hold on a minute. Nobody makes no bets about killin' nobody's dog. I didn't think you were serious you damn fool. You can't kill somebody's dog. That's inhumane and cruelty to animals and it's against the law.

BANKS Well, we had a deal and I'm going to shoot him anyway. You can't back out of it now. It's too late.

LITTLE AL Dad!

JACKSON III Alright, alright, now listen here you damn fool. Put the gun down.

BANKS Then you're giving in to your part of the debt.

JACKSON III My part?

BANKS You have to sign the deal.

JACKSON III Now listen here-

BANKS Either you sign or old Nixon here takes a dance with lady luck.

JACKSON III Now-

BANKS This is it Jackson. Sign the deal or Nixon here learns the art of running on three legs. [BANKS looks back into the sights] Okay, thatta boy. Here we go. Come on out now.

JACKSON III [jumps up] You'd better not shoot that dog.

BANKS Here he comes! I see him! There we go. Now, right ...in...the...

[LITTLE AL yells]

JACKSON III Wait! Wait, dammit! I'll do it. I'll sign the deal. We'll do the shopping center. Just put the gun down. Put that gun down, Banks.

BANKS You have to do it. You have to sign. Robert, you're a witness to this.

[WILLIS is slowly shaking his head, in his hands, back and forth]

BANKS Little Al, you're a witness. You're a witness aren't you Little Al?

LITTLE AL Yes!

JACKSON III Damn you Banks.

BANKS Damn me and my hundred thousand dollar shopping center deal, right Jackson? Right?

JACKSON III Right.

[BANKS lowers the gun]

BANKS Robert, where are the papers?

WILLIS Uh, they're uh, back in the truck.

BANKS Well, let's get going then. We've scared off all the deer for sure now so we may as well get at it. Besides it's about breakfast time and I'm getting hungry.

THE END

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Black Fruit

Uppity Black folk make for some strange fruit in my part of town.
Big, beautiful, Black fruit.
Hanging sorrowfully from a thick, knotted, brown branch.
They tried to warn him,
but he ain't listen to warnings.
Masa' caught him...and turned him in.
Lawd, I say Masa' caught him...and turned him in.
Without a flinch of emotion on his hard, pale, white face.
Black fruit jus' kept on swingin' in the hot summer sun.
Glistenin' like a shiny, new penny.
Leavin' a world that ain't got love for fruit.
One day it's all gonna stop...
Lawd, one day a change gonna come.
No mo' Black fruit hangin' from the trees...
Swingin' in the breeze...
Till' they're cut down...
Down to their knees.

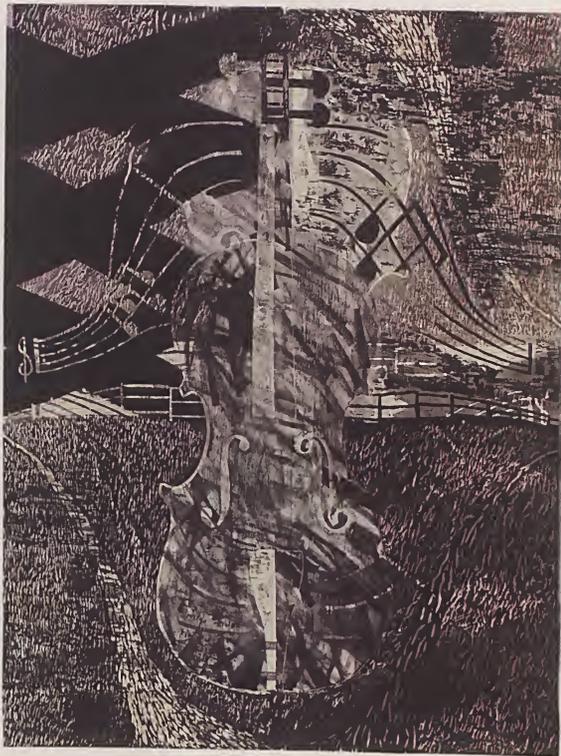
MMM



Untitled

MMM

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES



Untitled

Adam Wells

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Woman equates youth
the Blues—aged eternity
there's no fling to bring
like mean, green spring
remember this thing
youth is king

*my Face grew jagged, lines drew up on my hand
I said my face it grew jagged, lines drew up on my hand
and my woman, she got sad, and left me for a younger man*

the Blues—a soul yearning for re-admittance
willie dixon fixin' his box
a good man feeling bad
(working the THC magic amongst a group
of down-hearted, love-darted Marlboro exuberance)
and feeling
and healing
and soul-o dealing
I saw the best minds of *my* generation—
unknowingly unlocked by the Blues

yes, a loving black poet once sang the Retro praises of the Blues
and Woman is strong
yet, days are long

so, recall, all, summation rings tall
—good hard, music maybe a catharsis
—and youth is king
but when riding that PCP of coitus and spring,
let your eyes run
and your ears drum
to the lowly innovations of Robert Johnson

of Muddy Waters
or of Guitar Gable (who still "twists" better than the Thief)
because in the music of the final summation—
—experience is god
—and so are the Blues
—and so are the Blues

Blake Smith

during winter months,
when winds kissed with snowflakes
brushed my face like petals,
i sat.

i sat with her, under the moon,
where crystals crunched under our boots,
and the slippery clouds protected us,
together.

together when we were alone,
when cold marble pressed through my jeans,
and the smell of wind,
echoed the thoughts of past conversations.

Anna Bengel

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Look, No Subtitles

Rachel Venuti

The over-watered lawn at Tanglewood was hidden beneath a sea of flannel blankets and wicker picnic baskets. On the black and white movie screen, hundreds of young men on horse back escorted a warrior to his village. His mother made some joke in German about no one wanting to marry a bed wetter, even if he was a hero. I noticed the backsides of my jeans weren't doing too well either—probably from the sippy grass. I squished my feet into the mud and rummaged through the navy and white cooler my parents took with them everywhere. As I pushed around the soft brie cheese, red grapes, and a box of shortbread, I knocked over my parents' open bottle of white wine. After licking my fingers, I plunged my hand into the ice again and pulled out a soda. My mother murmured to my father that she was cold, and he handed her an umbrella. My parents fit in way too well at Tanglewood.

"Daddy, I'm cold too," I said, to see what object he would offer me for warmth.

"Here, Val," he said, handing me the car keys, not removing his eyes from the English subtitles on the screen.

"Thanks," I mumbled, and slipped on my sandals. Everything was wet—even the air clung to my face. I trotted as quickly as I could to get off the lawn, reached into my jeans pocket, and pulled out a crumpled five dollar bill. Weighing the money in my hand and the keys in my mind, I decided that my best relief from the cool June night air was a cup of hot chocolate. What was I going to do with the keys anyway? Walk a mile into town where we'd parked the car for fifteen dollars and rip the seat cover off to use as a shawl?

The orchestra that accompanied the movie swelled in the distance. From my position on the paved walkway by the entrance, I could barely see the Shed that housed this orchestra and a hundred of the richest people in the Northeast. I didn't mind too much. A drop of water fell on my neck from somewhere. "Hot chocolate," I remembered, and kicked off a wood chip down the walk to the refreshment stand. A young man got in line right behind me, and when it was my turn to order, I opted for coffee. Of course, I had to leave it black.

Instead of sipping it, I held the double paper cupped coffee to my chin for a break from the chills running through my body. I wandered along the path toward the Shed, padded through the bark mulch back onto the soupy lawn, and hovered behind the last seat at the very edge of the shelter—the seats that only cost fifty dollars, a seat where the occupant couldn't even see the gigantic movie screen. I wondered if these people were issued hand-held televisions that played the movie in any subtitle they wanted, or none at all if they knew German and wanted to show off. I stared at the woman in the blue and lavender gauze pants suit who probably thought she looked like a cloud. Would she notice the way her neighbor smartly held his tiny screen by its edges to display its lack of small white letters, and place her large thumb over the bottom of hers?

Passion: Canis Lupus

He ran. The soft flakes buckled under
The pressure of patient gallops.

A single snowy plover called warmly.

The pair of optical icicles that hung from the ridge of his tense brow
Glimmered hues of azure and fierce, soothing
Waves of translucent serenity. His absent stare reflected
The relent of his shivering soul. Sharp whistles of wind blew
Across the frothed plains of seas and lifted tufts of
Frozen thickness from his haunches of vigor.

The shadowy hills of grayed deadness preyed
On the sacred lives of his companions—one gone with every
Sunrise.

Still, he trudged on to interminable destiny. A shroud
Of isolation enveloped his breathing carcass. The pack had dwindled
To a few sparse threads, holding on only by the common connection
Of undesired existence.

Shallow graves of frozen hope engulfed the remaining few,
Leaving him to trudge on in solitude—an entity
Of his past, a completion of his present.

He came silently and bewildered to the edge of his icy
World. His hot breath cut into the air like a whetted
Machete. His eyes melted into the moon; the streams ran
Freely below.

His head snapped upwards in a stroke of victory
And alone he cried a strident howl of passion.

Brian Melton

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

The Creation

It's only about a mile outside of Galway
When the Northern mountains appear;
Where the beaches hug islands and Ireland,
And tourists take all the pictures.
It seems that the entire world rolled off a mountain there.

In tiny yards
Trimmed with
Quiet hands
Little old men smile
One branch at a time.

They find their perfection in a five by five square.

Patrick Patten

The Photograph

A picture-taker aims her trained eye
Directly at the steady gleam of Venus

For one second they stare at each other
Framing each other in their unwavering sights

And then a single blinding flash—

I'm not sure which one
Took a beautiful picture

But another said, that night—
He saw Venus shimmer

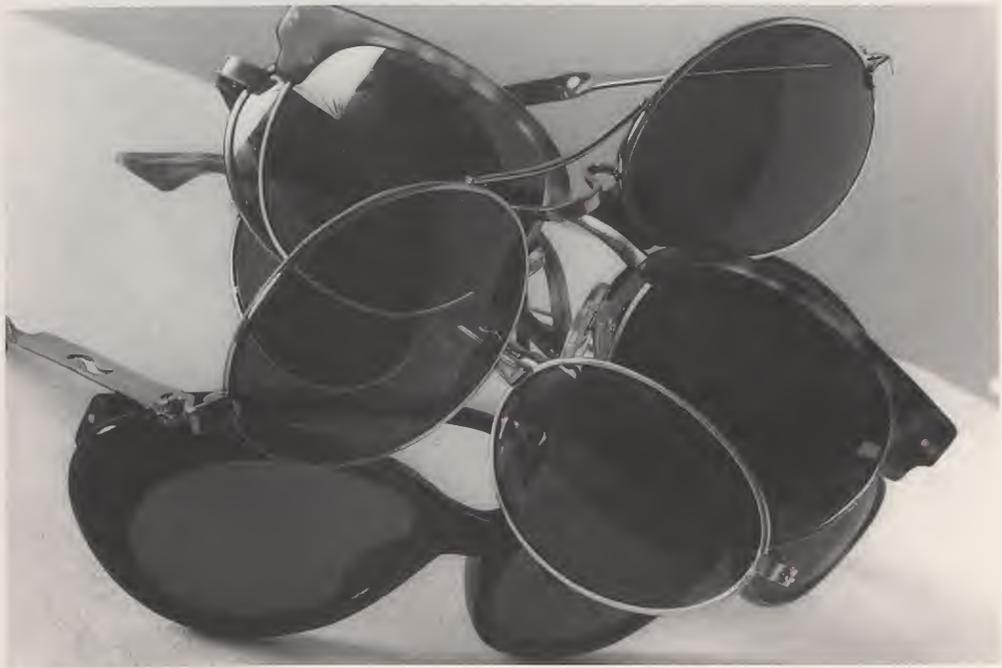
Blake Smith



Untitled

Katherine Arnold

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Untitled

Jimmy Hilburn

Voices from Camelot*

John Bowman

I. The Writer

I write, I press my pen into the page, I lacerate. The demons come clutching and crawling from my brain, spilling their sharp insanity across acres of white waste. Why do I say these things write these things these obvious untruths these falsehoods these bleeding lies? Can I hear myself talk, can I feel myself wasting? Why do I flash a social smile and play these games when my memory is shattered and vacant? No, I have no memory, but only the idolatry of old bones. The tomb is empty, for the body has long since decayed. I cry to God without answer: save me! for the waters are come in unto my soul. And I wonder is this what the suicide feels is everything well until one day he looks and there is nothing, nothing around him, nothing to bear him up—O God, to think nothing, feel nothing, be *nothing* for the waters are come they are come

II. The Traveler

This one I will make good, this time pierce the cloak of reality. Sometimes if you have no destination, you just have to go. Let the road receive you, and you will become the journey. Only the motion is real, only the fire, only the molecules that vibrate inside of you, only the hot depths of your soul. This one I will make good. I'm going and I don't have time to die. The living is ours if we take it, the explosion is ours if we make it; the blood is ours if we bleed it, the cold ground is ours when we feed it.

III. The Sorority Girl

Oh I have no special thought, no particular thought I mean, but I think everything in general, like oh what a stunning top she's wearing, a lovely chartreuse, and I swear I'm fond of the color. I'm fond, I mean, in general. And symbols have always had a special draw for me: runes and the hieroglyphics of ancient pyramids. When I was a little girl I would fancy myself locked up in the tomb to spend an eternity richly perfumed. I am a fan of richness and of chocolate, before sex and after. You know, dear, the first time is not so bad—well the stories you hear are enough to scare girl—but it is only like the sun shining a bit too brightly on a tender place, and you think perhaps next time you'll not stay out so long. But oh that gorgeous tan is *so* worth it! There's so much more on the inside, why I could sink into the tomb forever.

IV. The Poser

Transpose me to a magazine—that's where I belong, after all. Translate me to a billboard; capture my face on a TV

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

screen; project me on the cinema walls for all to see. Let me pose for you—I will smile seductively. I'll capture you with my eyes and sell you with my sex, move you with a twitch of my arm. I will dance with the dancers and pose with the posers, deal with the dealers and preach with the preachers. In every image will be me.

V. The Wild Girl

She sings this song at daybreak: Oh I am only a poor girl. I have been cast out from many doors, but now I see the morning. Oh I am only a poor, lonely girl. My hair is not pretty, but I wash it in the dewfall. I drag my skirts like nets through deep water. I breathe the scent of pine, and the rocks kiss my feet. Oh I am poor and lonely but not alone, for I have felt the breath of midnight. The stars shine in myriad revelations for me, and they form the patterns of my dreams. The cool earth is my pillow, and my couch is always soft. The birds sing in my awakening. The sky unfolds a thousand sights and burns where the mountains touch it. The fog brings rest to my memory. Oh do not doubt that I worship and wonder, for I am never, never alone.

VI. The Dancing Crowd

We are the dancing crowd. We dance a fierce spectacle of desire and drink in the music like liquor. Our arms entwine; we brush our swinging hips, our bellies. We are the dancing crowd. We breathe and sweat as one, plunge into the heat as one, drown in rhythmic insanity. Our hearts are drums for the nighttime; our whirling limbs stir ecstatic gusts of air. Surrender to the beat, we call, surrender, and feel the music dance you.

VII. The Secret Bigot

The enemy sneaks inside the gates. I see his eyes in the cafeteria lunch line. I see his smile across the Calculus aisle. Oh his eyes are like my eyes (only darker). His smile is like my smile (a hidden sneer). He walks these halls smug and satisfied. He thinks he belongs here. But I will shut evil out, and darkness will never stain my soul. Cain will never thrive in his garden. Daddy, here I am and sin can never hold me. I stand among sinners, wash with sinners, I eat at the table of my enemy, but sin can never (daddy will you) sin can never (daddy will you) sin can never hold (daddy will you spare the rod?)

VIII. The Soldier

Man, I deal. I deal on the corners and in the alleyways, I deal down by the playground. I sling crack rocks to little kids, and you know I bring in the money. You know I got the women, you know I got the gold. Man, I sell meth and heroin and hash mixed with diesel fuel, I don't care. Man, I deal *guns*. I sell to the grandmother on her porch who says it ain't safe in the hood. I sell to the brother whose shop gets burned and the police won't come when he calls, 'cause you know we got to defend ourselves. I got an army, and I'm gonna go to war. My father was a soldier 'til the desert took his skin. The desert took his eyes. Now I'm a soldier, too, protector of these four blocks square.

IX. The Dying Girl

My world is wrapped in white, my gown, my bed, the quiet corners of my room are as pure and cold as snow. It is winter now, and I remain. The respirator hisses "in" and "out," deflates and fills my lungs while I lie still and pale. "Drip" goes the IV, "drop-drip-drop-drip." The heart monitor pulses "eep...eep...eep." I am cold and far away, but I remain. (The hands will come to press my forehead, they will trace my arm with the chalky fingers.) I see a face I know, her eyes are filled with tears. I want to speak, I want to tell her I am here, but my lips are so, so cold....

X. The Prophetess

The children are thirsty, their mouths gaping open, their faces upturned to the sky. They sit among the dust, among the dry dust of desert places. They cry out to heaven with parched throats. They stare with blind eyes to the sun. Long, long have they waited. All their lives they have waited. I know the rain will come. So long? Must it be so long, must the waiting be so hard and so long? Yet I know the rain will come.

I have seen winter transformed into springtime: in three days the whole world turned green. I cursed myself and cut my skin, but now I am whole. I loved and had my heart broken. I collapsed from sickness when i might have died, but the love of my friends held me up. Their embraces drove out an unspeakable sorrow. My winter now is melted, and I drink beside the healing waters.

Who will bring water to these children of the dust? Who will be their comfort? Not the sun, the light that burns them. Not the desert sand. Yet I have heard a thousand voices, felt a thousand gentle hands, seen a thousand searching faces, a thousand vessels of living water: a storm is rising great in the land. Yes, the rain will come to wash clean their faces and fill their outstretched hands. It will fall wet and cool onto cracked tongues. It will fill the desert fountains and flow in rushing rivers. The desert rose will bloom, and all that has been dust will live, and all that has been low will rise, and the children will laugh in the garden. Yes, the rain will come to all the desert places of the earth. I know the rain will come.

*Camelot, for me, is youth with all its vitality. It is a place of deep feeling and bold action, but it has equal capacities for illusion and corruption. Its inhabitants long for meaning and connectedness. The walls of Camelot are the walls of this university, but they are also the defining characteristics of our generation, all the features that separate young from old. With these ten voices, I have tried to present a picture of Camelot, both of those who live within he walls and those who live in their shadows.

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

On the Futility of Being Forced to Learn about Milton

There is a crease on the girl's ankle in the seat next to me, it smells like hospital floors, I'm sure, waxy and gray, her ankle.

The salmon colored shirt with shiny buttons spear-headed by the squash-top Meek smiling on the other side of me, glaring like strange and hollow hospital lights, laughing.

The bent waist of the writing girl before me sings songs of Milton with her pen
sounds like the rasping of respirators, a quaint rhythm.
A rhyme of sorts.

The emptiness behind me that shines-honestly-in its plastic and wood pulpness. It stares like old men who have already forgotten their lives.

The blurb, the occasional Latin of the professor, professing love, coming out of his throat. Regurgitated here for me.
I come with no hands.

We, most of us here, are kept alive
if by desire, only that to live
if by necessity, only a misguided formality.

Ah, the aching floors.
The lonely, spinning palms.

Anonymous

cherry red-
a convertible, lightening rod speed dream
soulful conversation in dark coffee houses
smoke and drink and sweat and jazz
screaming lights and flashing sirens
pouring madness over the spinning room
singsong voices fill empty corners like a choir
echoing through stone churches
oh please sink down like a kiss
lingering on lips like gold
precious staining paint
into my cherry red-
paper bleeding stars into my pink tongue
greedy, bringing sweaty-palmed nervous shaking shaking room
dripping sweet music teasing
chimes and tingling bells
down tunnels of dark flesh to drums beating blindly
glitter crimson at the tips
laughter explosions in fireworks and fairy dust rain
cherry red-
dangerous dreams, melting faces into rivers
huddled in a bathtub
white hollow china powdered flakes of skin
steam like breath
pouring over hot flushed slippery skin
dragon fire releasing ice thoughts

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tumbling cubes clicking against each other
broken clock broken time
glaring violently in the mirror statue faces
copper fading to rust
cherry red-
splinters mindless pleasure into streaks of light
trailing behind feet on the soggy carpet
puddles bubble up from the floor
honey water caressing smooth soles and quiet toes
tantalizing waves crash crashing
silk clouds sliding over metal sky
precious night glowing eyes of crystal stars
howl howl wind retreating into
cherry red-
party hats and crackling sparks on parade
dance beneath a velvet moon on the ceiling
juggle thoughts
zipper words together into speech
heart pumping satin ooze
in circles spinning like a web
into silk snake eyes and shining tears cling to black lashes
fast fast car tearing highway
cherry red-
curling ribbon of smoke nestling into hair and clothes and skin
heaving cheeks and breasts beneath clinging desperate cotton
collapse in heaps and puzzles and pieces
of joy and grief and weep and scream
heavy pleasure
beat beat your mind
cherry red

Anna Bengel

Last Night

Last night I
 Drove home
 With dinner
 Squawking
 In the back seat
 Learned
 Make-shift français
 Had it out with
 Cockroaches
 In my suitcase
 Shaved my legs
 With a hose
 Outside
 At the bathroom sink
 Even sat straight
 On a board
 For a two hour gospel concert
 In the rat-tat-tat illumination of
 Green fluorescent lights and
 Was baptized
 With the water
 Of a culture
 Not my own
 That I could not or would not claim
 Yet in its immersion
 It bade me realize it.

I thought
 I might, perhaps,
 Which echoed
 Behind the walls
 Of false security
 And in the dungeons
 Of the market place
 Where trapped
 And chained
 In a run down shack
 Was the draining cassava,
 Gross with its ostentatious stench.

Last night I
 Saw the spirit of a dead man dance
 Sat at the feet of a voodoo witch
 While she spun
 Tales of women
 Living under water
 And trees that
 Fall

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But get back up
Again
I wandered
Through a magic forest
Where the ghosts of
Chickens and goats
Gently rustled the large shady limbs
Of the ancestors
Standing tall in their roots
I kissed
The floor
For the presence of a young
King,
Took his gift of whiskey in the middle of
The morning
While he tried
To maintain his repose
And answer
My questions,
Separating him
From all politicians I know.

Last night I
Cried the sorrows
Of captives,
Forced to forget
Their freedom &
Themselves,
And found
Myself
In the perspective
Of Africa.

Anonymous



Untitled

Anderson Williams

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Untitled

Erin Cooke

some Practical and Social Consequences of untruth or truth

Ben Smith

Judge Thompson's reputation among his colleagues as passionately and consummately Disinterested, as, indeed, the barely-human incarnation of Objectivity, Justice and Whatever Other Great Ideal That Should Be Capitalized, earned him rapid advancement within his occupation and the admiration of all observers. Judge Thompson's colleagues marveled at his ability to disengage himself from the fervent pleadings, the gruesome stories, the tear-dash filled eyes, and the incessant, incessant smiling and sobbing that hopelessly entangled and paralyzed lesser judges in their courtrooms. Judge Thompson, after even the most wrenching and grisly of stories, would emerge miraculously from the fervent drama with just enough relevant facts to draw from his benign quiver an appropriate Law of Justice and dispense the relevant penalties. Even Thompson's most ardent critics could not find fault in his magnificent courtroom performances - they only mumbled that he had so completely his reasoning faculty from his emotional sensibility that the latter had withered and become useless through neglect.

Indeed, Judge Thompson was quite a bore at legal conventions, noontime lunches with his staff, and various requisite social gatherings. He found most conversations to be either personally intrusive and petty, vile, weather-related things and, at the age of twenty-five, largely renounced the distasteful habit. He sent a memo to his colleagues stating that if they desired to speak to him he could guarantee a response only if the intended conversation satisfied the following two conditions: (1) it concerned itself with a present or future case, the Constitution, Justice, or Liberty and (2) it seemed likely to last less than ten minutes. As one can never accurately predict the duration of a conversation, the second condition permitted Judge Thompson to quash with a rigid, petulant silence any incipient conversation that he anticipated to find tiresome, which was most. At legal conventions and various luncheons his experienced colleagues would seat themselves as far from Judge Thompson as possible, leaving to younger colleagues the privilege of sitting close to so eminent a personage as Judge Thompson. Even those who came to tolerate the Judge's personality wondered both how he managed to court his wife Verena and about - for a man who had grown to find handshakes too physically intimate - the undoubtedly awkward circumstances under which his two petite sons had been conceived.

Verena Thompson first attempted to become a nihilist at age eighteen and finally succeeded at age twenty-six. Upon initial ascent to nihilism at eighteen she occupied herself the next eight years with the process of what she jokingly called "debriefing," that is, the systematic process of disparaging and forgetting everything her parents and community had taught her. Verena had to unlearn liberalism, God, science, the Good, Jesus, human rights, and the ideas of Progress, Success, and Nobility, among yet other childish fancies. Perhaps surprisingly the most intractable superstition of them all was the ideal of Beauty, specifically physical beauty - Verena longed for the day when the most brawny, rugged and handsome prince would seem as unattractive to her as the scrawniest, most

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physically repulsive, hollow-chested pauper. Verena achieved this pinnacle of nihilist consciousness at age twenty-six, at which point, not incidentally, her courtship with Judge Thompson began.

Judge Thompson, to commit a severe understatement, had never had much success with members of the opposite sex - he continually reassured himself, however, that this did not mean that he found females any more loathsome than members of his own sex. In fact, he had long since reconciled himself to the idea of an opposite sex and to, as he preferred to call it, a *lifelong partnership* with a member of that opposite sex. Judge Thompson reached this conclusion in his early twenties when he realized that a female partner would serve at least two functions in his life: first, she would certainly aid him with the burdensome, unfortunate necessities of life (e.g., shopping for groceries, maintaining the yard, managing finances, etc.); and, secondly, his luxuriant financial maintenance of a lifelong female partner and one, perhaps two, children would complete the image of the strong family man necessary for aspirations to national prominence. Judge Thompson reflected that a male could as easily satisfy the first condition as could a woman - irrational societal prejudices and his desire for national prominence, however, prevented this type of arrangement. It was not that he was secretly homosexual - he was as little "in the closet" as he was in the dining room, up on the roof, down in the basement, or anywhere else. He was, most accurately, non- or a- sexual: he was, as in the courtroom, utterly Disinterested. This lofty Disinterest permitted him to regulate the formation and maintenance of all of his social relationships according to just one criterion: every relationship must serve to advance his self-proclaimed missions of the radical extension of Personal Liberty, and the vitriolic defense of the Rights of the Individual.

It would be quite natural to wonder how a man of such rigid and lofty morals could bear the company of a woman whose only principle was to be unprincipled. Verena's nihilism was, however, paralyzing rather than assertive or caustic. With an acutely sensitive social antenna Verena could accurately divine the values and opinions of any conversation partner and convincingly adopt them as her own. She had at various times in her life been fully accepted as a Christian fundamentalist, a radical environmentalist, a communist, a WWII veteran, and a member of the victorious women's 1984 Olympic swim team. Her extraordinary talents did not fail her upon meeting Judge Thompson. After their first meeting, Judge Thompson remarked to himself - with a red blush lasciviously coloring his cheeks - that he had never met someone so fully committed to the defense of the Rights of the Individual and the radical extension of Personal Liberty as Verena.

Judge Thompson did not propose to Verena in any normal manner. Judge Thompson drafted a fifty-six page document specifying the exact rights and responsibilities of each individual party and the relevant penalties for both the infringement of each other's rights and the failure to perform one's responsibilities (e.g., verbal reprimand, letter of apology, separation, divorce). Judge Thompson allocated to himself, among others, the duties of cutting the grass within twenty-four hours after it had grown to a height of four inches, reading to their child or children bedtime stories on Thursday nights at 8:15, and, at least until one of the children reached the appropriate age, disposing of the trash in a timely manner. Chief among Verena's responsibilities were the birth of

one or two children within the next three years and their subsequent care (the Judge lacked a few progressive bones). Judge Thompson reserved for himself, however, what he considered he considered the most important responsibility: the drafting of a similar document specifying the exact rights and responsibilities between parents and their children. Judge Thompson marveled that such a document had not yet been written—surely such an achievement, he supposed, would quickly vault him into the pantheon of the Great Lawgivers.

The Judge soon despaired that he would be able to write, as he came to fondly call it, the Universal Declaration of the Rights and responsibilities of Parents and Children. For whereas Verena was able to quickly judge the merits of the Judge's partnership proposal, the Judge's children—Jefferson and Abraham, twins born one year after the establishment of the Judge's and Verena's partnership—would be able unable to agree to such a document without first being able to perceive their own best interests. The Judge carefully observed his children's progress through preschool, fervently hoping that they would exhibit premature signs of rational behavior. Abraham's quick mastery of coloring between the lines gave the Judge some hope, but this subsequent difficulty with scissors forced the Judge to admit that his children, like most others, would not be sufficiently rational to be contractual partners until at least age sixteen.

Many of Abraham and Jefferson's characteristics struck their parents as bizarre. Jefferson had a disturbing tendency to fall asleep on Verena's lap. Abraham would frequently attempt to hug his father. Jefferson like to toy with Verena's hair and would drool on the Judge's shoulder. Abraham preferred to talk at length—longer than ten minutes—about butterflies, ants, scorpions, and dark red clay. Judge Thompson castigated his children as violators of that great principle that one has liberty to do what one wants to do so long as one does not impinge upon the ability of others to do likewise—indeed, his children had the unfortunate habit of ceaselessly and unremorsefully demanding his attention and affection. Privately, both Judge Thompson and Verena began to long for their children's teenage days when they would no doubt pierce their ears, tattoo their buttocks, lock themselves into their rooms and listen to obscure, probably-Satanic rock and roll bands.

Both Abraham and Jefferson severely tested Verena's powerful social antenna. Try as she might, Verena could not detect the faintest whisp of Christianity, communism, Olympic athleticism, or anything else in her two sons—they were, apparently, blank slates with extended arms anxiously waiting for Verena to inscribe her marks. Verena had never had to inscribe anything before—she had been a social chameleon. Now given the opportunity, the obligation, she had, of course, nothing to inscribe. Verena hoped that her social antenna would eventually discern, like blips on a radar screen, the individualities of Jefferson and Abraham, at which point it would once again become useful.

Verena attempted all sorts of ways to conjure the individualities of Abraham and Jefferson. She read and re-read her ever-burgeoning collection of psychological self-help manuals: Dr. Frank Peter's 12 Steps for Actualizing Your Child's Self, Discovering Your Child's Self: a how-to guide, and Where's Waldo?: searching for your child's self, among others. All of her books suggested for her to allow her children opportunities for the authentic expression

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of their selves, that is, they suggested for her to buy lots of crayons and blank paper.

Most of Abraham's and Jefferson's art was of an extraordinarily abstract, scribbled nature, however. Verena initially figured that this was due to their very recent liberation from coloring within the lines, but as they continued to produce abstract designs, she did not know whether to regard this as a positive development or not. Perhaps children had such finely developed, abstruse individualities that their artwork, their self-expression, was necessarily uninterpretable to anyone but themselves. Unfortunately, since they had not yet learned to talk, neither Abraham nor Jefferson could provide any interpretative assistance. On the other hand, however, Verena noticed that her sons' artwork very nearly resembled, in its confused, scribbled, abstract style, the artwork of their young peers and classmates—Verena considered it very unlikely that so many children had developed their individualities. Verena figured that only with the development of any clear color of design preferences could she infer that her children had achieved individuality. Verena waited patiently, very patiently, for this development to occur; Jefferson and Abraham continued to extend their arms, anxiously waiting for Verena, or anyone, now, to inscribe their marks; and Judge Thompson remained Triumphantly Disinterested.

"What Politeness is"

He said

"You shouldn't put pen to paper
unless you are attempting greatness."

"Ha ha."

I said. And

"I'll wager that when
you're trying to write
you look constipated."

I thought

As I said
Something else
entirely

Jeff Cook

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It turns out
That three letters make a girl a woman.
A stigma to be proud of;
It probably started with Hester.
(She was an alpha you know).

Patrick Patten

Metal Makes

Next to the leg of an aluminum and vinyl chair
With a red seat, cracking from age
The girl holds an orange, splitting open
Because of the fork she stuck in it
She sits down hard

As a farmer, Francine forgoes all modern conveniences
She hates the far off gleam metal makes

Rachel Venuti

The legends of prostitutes
down on Three and a Half Alley
burn and spin like stars.
I have sat, blocks away,
drunk on yellow curbs
in front of the beer stained bars.

Once, Katie and I pushed our way
outside of one of those
smoke-choking places and came up
with sixteen different ways
to say, "You can get
really drunk at these bars."

I remember my friends and I,
mostly on warm nights,
would roam up and down
the lighted streets wandering
and reaching for rides home.
Sometimes, we never made it
until morning.

Katie said, "One may imbibe mass
quantities of alcohol
in an establishment such as this."
With blurry eyes I giggle, "By
partaking of fluids in buildings
that sell profuse amounts of beer,
one may get inebriated."

Laughter and late night doughnuts
from Jerry's, pinball and bar stools,
too much pool with cue sticks
that slip from the cue ball

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and losing games to sketchy men
who want to take us home.

Across the street at Dingo's
Tom and the McConnor twins
spilled out of the door
in a blurb of bad music.

My heart.

My unrelenting face allowed
for me to tell him, once again.
They stop, ask Katie for smokes,
tell us to meet them
down at The New Bar later.

He knows.

We watch them step
into their car and drive off. I am
thankful I don't smoke, I
am thankful I don't cry.

Katie nudges me with her elbow,
"One becomes intoxicated
by ingesting a superfluous sum
of brew in a tavern." We laugh.

Anonymous

she smiles at me

she smiles at me
and i don't know what to do
she smiles at me
and it makes me giggle in that spot
where you can bring a person back to life
if you press hard enough
she smiles at me
with those high cheeks
and i forget what i was so upset about
she smiles at me
the way that chick must have smiled
at my old roommate (abdul)
in a poem he wrote
she smiles at me
and it makes me wonder
if she has a fresh bowl of sunshine
that she dips into and spreads over
her face every morning
she smiles at me
and i'm embarrassed
because i don't know why the heck
i'm not smiling

Clinton Wilburn

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They come in wheat-sea dresses,
fat woodland fairies from goblets drink

Born from trees, appear at once
and hover there, the forest's brink

They flow like honey-sweet sugar water
among the thickets of the leaves

They dance upon inspired feet
and wear their hearts upon their sleeves

They stomp and smash their berries sweet
with rouge stained wandering toes

And lick the juice from their knees,
pass it 'round among the throes

In slow, entrancing waltz they move
entwine their arms, synchronize hips,

Toss back thick tresses of hair
and kiss each other with claret lips

Gluttony engulfs their bodies
hid beneath the darkened sky

And here the ritual proceeds
again tonight in you and I

Anonymous



resist or serve

Erica Hamilton



Untitled

Seema Bharwani



COVER COURTESY OF MMM





**THE HUMAN SOUL WEIGHS
THREE TO FOUR OUNCES.**

-DON DELILLO, *AMERICANA*

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THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Lament

I am told that
each poet gets
only one Oh.

He keeps it
in his sack
full of metaphors,

laments, fistfuls
of grass, yellow
cheese stuffed in

mousetraps, dewy
flowers and fathers
slamming doors; it

rests in his left hand
while his right
writes of masturbation,

flaxen hair, and
dirty bus stops
until he comes

upon that time he
called his mother
and she told him

she didn't want
a Christmas tree
this year, and Oh,

it is blown onto the page
by the force of his sigh and
his Oh is used up for good.

Jessica Jackson

Before Dawn

The earth is silent like a moon.

I can think of no beginning
to this stand of trees, its veinwork

of branches.

Barns shrug off their pitch-paper.

I would like to tell you of winds swinging
from the barn heights,

of spirits
ghosting up from the fields

or of the new life
that was born in their darkness.

But that's not the way it is here,
grey on grey, sky lightening a little.

Carter Smith



A Kind Soul

Katherine Bradley

A How-To
Rachel Venuti

"You have your children, Ollie, and I have mine," Lulu said and buried her face in Zoe's side. Ollie clenched and unclenched his fists. He took a look around. The short, green shag carpet on the kitchen floor had a path worn in it leading from the refrigerator to the dog bowl. There was also a path from the fridge to the table. Granted, that grimy matted length of carpet was a bit less traveled than the one to Zoe's bowl. But it was there. Ollie sighed, half smiling now at Lulu's back, curved inside its pale blue gown. Touching his fingers to his lips, he traced her outline in the air in front of him. She shifted her weight to nuzzle the dog's chin. He thought of his children and the route then, walked over the metal threshold, through the porch, and pushed the screen door open. He pushed directly into the thin mesh of the door, desperate to make an impression.

That afternoon, Zoe's aging bowels failed her yet again. Lulu cried pure salt (and so, it seemed to Lulu, did Zoe) as she put the dog outside, but she knew it had to be done. If Ollie came home to find not only Lulu laundering their bed sheets for the fourth time that week, but also the culprit still skittering around underfoot too, not even the odor of a baking turkey pot pie would calm his temper.

As he descended the hill, Ollie felt an angry excitement swell in his chest. The situation was too perfect--there was Zoe, out on the front lawn, alone. Ollie's mind raced. Images of the dog pissing on his newspaper, biting his now grown son, sleeping between him and Lulu played out in his mind. And thoughts of Lulu, the way she used to be, ran right along with them. Her nipples, hips, and... Ollie's foot gained a few pounds and his right arm felt a bit stronger than the left. The dog looked up as if to stare him down, as if she had been waiting for this moment, waiting to win Lulu once and for all. He headed straight for her and she did not move a muscle.

"Die." Ollie whispered, and then he saw her. A slight breeze pitched her dress between her legs, revealing their outline, revealing his purpose. He accelerated. Then Lulu did what Ollie should have seen coming from the moment he saw Zoe alone. She went to the dog. Ollie cut the wheel of his old school bus hard, keeping his eyes on his wife. When she let out a matinee-type scream, Ollie had no way of knowing it was for him. When he realized he had cleared Lulu and Zoe, he wondered for a split second why she was still screaming. He had no reason to suspect that the scream had something to do with the house and the bus becoming one. And then he saw the inside of his front porch.

Ross telephoned, giving Lulu no reason but to acknowledge Ollie for the first time since he was forced into retirement. She walked into the kitchen. "He's saying it's snowing already," she tried. Ollie wildly kicked his legs out, assuming Zoe was in the room and hoping to give her a good, swift one. "I am talking to you, Ollie. That was

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Ross on the telephone." He looked up. "Says he and Whosis want us to come up for Christmas."

"Her name is Lorraine, dear."

"Ya, Lorraine... she got on the line, too. She said 'We think it would be divine if you could join us for the holidays.'" Ollie chuckled at Lulu's impeccable imitation of their daughter-in-law. Her eyes softened at the sound of his amusement. "The holidays," Lulu repeated, "What is she, Jewish or something?" As the two of them laughed a little, Ollie looked down onto the kitchen table to see her hand delicately balanced on its edge. He took a chance, and she squeezed his hand back.

"All right, Lulu, we can go if you want to. Hell, I ain't got nothin' to do around here anyways."

As Lulu kissed Ollie on his paper thin cheek, Zoe ambled into the room, causing him to breathe in sharply. Lulu started for the dog, and Ollie's mind was suddenly made up--not even for all the progress the two of them had made since Ross' phone call could he deal with what was surely to follow. "She is not coming with us, dammit all. If we go, Lulu, we go together, alone. I don't care what happened this fall, I am not going to..."

"Oh, Ollie, don't be ridiculous, poor old Zoe would never make it all the way to Danbury." She pointed to the weak brown stream behind the dog. "I would never allow a shock to her system like that!" Lulu bent down to face Zoe, "Mama would never hurt you, would she? Noooo." She scooped her up and wandered out of the room, calling back to Ollie, "We'll just have to get someone to keep Zoe and house-sit while we are away." But then she stopped and turned, and it seemed that they were both on the same wavelength for the first time since they left Ross in his dorm at the university. "Who would come stay here with that crazy bus out front?"

"Do you want to know what I think?" Ollie asked.

Lulu kept on, "There's got to be somebody who could drag if or lift it outta here...but then there's the porch...Oh Ollie, why'd you do it?"

"Let me tell you something, Lulu. I am not going to pay some cowboy with a hitch on his truck to come in here and screw around on my front lawn just so that the damned dog will have someone to play with while we're on holiday! I've been thinking about this situation ever since it happened. I know we can't just leave the bus how it is, Lulu. Don't you think I know that?" She nodded. "But I think we can leave it where it is. Look, the entire front of the porch is gone, but we haven't been cold yet, have we?"

"Lulu, I know you're gonna think I've lost my mind, but we're gonna leave that bus just where it is, open up the door and build a frame right around it. I'll caulk up the windows in the bus for better insulation, and we'll have us a new room."

Looking from the dog in her arms to her husband sitting at the table in front of her, Lulu began to get excited. "Zoe is so beautiful," she thought, "and Ollie is so smart!" What more could she ask for? "Okay, Ollie," she said, "Okay," and squeezed the dog as hard and as



Untitled

Regan Rozier

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

gently as she could. He turned in his seat to watch Lulu parade down the dimly lit hall, her ample behind shifting gently from hip to hip.

"Tell me again about this bus contraption, Dad. How'd you ever think to..." The two men disappeared into Lorraine's study, leaving Lulu with her daughter-in-law in the living room, completely unarmed. "Can I get you a drink, Lola? Some sherry perhaps?"

"No, not me, thank you," Lulu blushed, "I think some tea would do just fine." She knew that the intercom was on the wall above her head, but she could not understand why this woman in a suit was walking straight for her. "Surely," Lulu thought, "she isn't going to make that poor little Mexican girl come all the way across the house just for some tea!" But suddenly there she was, huskily shouting some gibberish into the speaker. Ross' suggestion rang in her ears, "Ma, please try to make some intelligent conversation with Lorraine. You two ought to try to get to know each other." Lulu agreed. "When did you learn to talk Mexican, Lorraine?" she offered.

"We've always had help, even when I was a little girl. I suppose I simply picked it up along the way. Of course, Spanish isn't my favorite language, especially the guttural version these Mexicans speak. I have formal training in Latin, Greek, and Ross and I are leaning Japanese for fun. What about you, Lola?"

Lulu practically hugged the small, brown girl when she broke up the dialogue by floating in carrying about six silver trays. She stood to help her put the setting out, but, Lorraine clicked her tongue. Lulu got the message and tried to relax. Why shouldn't she enjoy being waited on by a girl whose wages were probably paid not by her son, but by his lawyer-wife? "What the hell, she thought, and reached for the small steaming cup she understood contained not the cold, sugared tea she had asked for, but that bitter amber liquid she remembered from one of Lorraine's showers a few years back. As Lulu piled grainy lump after lump into her tea, Lorraine decided to let up on the old woman.

Ross and Ollie came upon the scene just in time to hear Lulu say, "No, thank you, Lorraine. I'd just as soon leave the television off-- I'm not really interested in other people's news."

"Get in there and help your mother," Ollie said, "I'm going outside to check out the scenery."

Forty minutes later, Ollie rounded the bulge of Ross' cul-de-sac. And there it was--the handicap school bus converted into a teenage rock band's tour bus that Ross had told him about. He made three passes to see if anyone was around. "Probably spending the holidays at EuroDisney," he thought, he moved in close, whipped out a little steno-type pad, and began to furiously detail everything he liked about the set up. Two hanging lamps. And, of course, a terrific pile of speakers. Ollie's blood raced through his body as if he were about to run over Zoe all over again.

For the rest of the visit, Ollie walked off his sickeningly rich dinners with visits to the tour bus. Twice he was even so bold as to

pull out a measuring tape and make some calculations as to how to reproduce it on a larger scale. By the time their visit to Ross was over, Lulu was calling Lorraine, Loretta and longing for Zoe, and Ollie was proud of Ross' terrific situation and ready to transform his bus-porch into his own world.

When Lulu and Ollie walked in the door, Zoe languidly crossed the floor to meet them. Lulu lifted her "child" to her chest, "She's sad because she missed us," she said as she held the dog out to Ollie to kiss hello. Brushing the wet muzzle away, Ollie headed for the bus with a stride his wife hadn't seen in years. She studied the way his pants creased at the top of the thigh as he walked away from her.

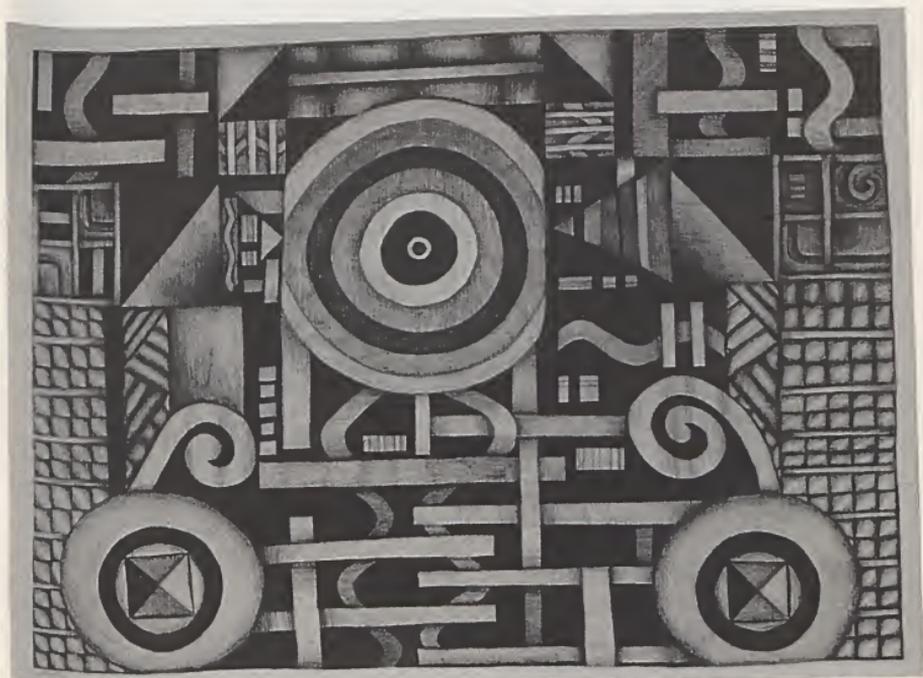
Ollie removed his battered steno pad from his jacket pocket and sat, not in the driver's seat, but in the way back, on the bench seat. He ran his fingers along the back support in front of him, fitting their tips into the strange river pattern all bus seats have stamped into their green, slick skins. His eyes followed the emergency door to the first window, pane by pane as he envisioned what it would all look like when it was done. Then he recalled what Lulu had promised him on the way home from Danbury.

She was still in the kitchen when he found her, playing with the dog (or so it seemed to Ollie from the way her body was shuddering, rising, and falling.) She was laughing, he thought, but then he saw the puddle behind the dog. Zoe had not made it by herself, Lulu had contributed to it with every tear, every ounce of water she had in her body. Ollie felt triumphant, and whispered a brief praise of victory over the dog--he had won Lulu back for sure. But she heard him--she heard the delight in his voice, the quickness in his breath, the strange bubble of pleasure caught in his throat. And she turned on him. "What do you want, Ollie? I'm playing with the dog," she lied.

Startled, he actually remembered why he had come back into the house. "I wanted to ask you about those curtains you said you'd make for the new room, for the bus, but I..."

"Go on back to the bus, Ollie," she screeched. "Go!" Lulu screamed, all pretenses of composure gone.

He watched the way her hands moved toward him and the rest of her body stayed with Zoe, as if she meant to shove him all the way across the living room without leaving the dog's side. Ollie stormed onto the bus, yanked the double door closed behind him and searched for a seat. He wandered up and down the aisle, looking for an empty seat. He felt his way back and forth along the inside of the bus that he had worked on for thirty-five years, but he could not find a place to rest.



Tapestry Town

Melissa McGhie

Napoleon before Moscow, A Letter

At Smolensk, her men fell back.
They gave their town as
A ghost of buildings and uneven streets.
They left their ancestors as
Stones that would not abandon.
Ils ont enterre' l'esprit de la russie.

As I passed through Smolensk, I grieved.

At Borodino, I engaged them.
And though I took forty thousand men,
Their line would not give, and my generals
Came to me with empty arms, with the report
Of our victory, and with eyes made heavy by
The Russian effort, with hearts weakened
By the Russian effort.

I stood four thousand leagues from Paris!
In the breast of Catherine's country, I took
Her land as mine. At the heart of Catherine's country,
I wept-

Winter will come, as winters will come.
It is the eternal procession from
dust to empire, from empire to ash,
from Rome into Athens into the seas.
It is the meaning that builds peoples;
Today there is a meaning among the ash.

There was meaning when we met at dawn,
When the night fell beyond the valley,
When the thickness of the mist fell back
From the gem of her people,
When Moscow welcomed me as her captor.

When I was sixteen and a lieutenant, my first
General swore that yours would forever
Be the greatest built by men, that you would
Hold the highest place among us.
It was then that I first felt your presence.

Today, I stood four thousand leagues from Paris,
In the breast of Catherine's country.
Tomorrow, I will burn her capital.

Alexander, I make my peace with you.

Jacob Kline



Untitled

Tamara Payden-Travers



Untitled

Tamara Payden-Travers



Untitled

Cynthia Kelley

This poem took its title from the disgusting advertisements of Winston cigarettes, the most popular brand in Africa, who claims to be The Taste of Freedom in order to promote cancer in the third world by using the attraction of American society as a vehicle for its malevolent propaganda. The content of the poem, however, deals with the glorification of violence in modern American pop culture and its repercussions in developing nations. It was particularly inspired by "Black Easter" 1996 in Cape Town, South Africa, which was a gang war between the Hard Livings and the "Americans" that resulted in the death of hundreds of individuals. One of the largest, most violently dangerous gangs in South Africa calls itself "American", idealizes gangster rap, and wears red white and blue.

America's Cancer

There's a fervent force,
Currently encroaching underdeveloped countries
through c u l t u r a l m I s g I v I n g s .
Hard Livings
and quote unquote "Americans" at war.
Versus each other.

Versus the Firm.

Versus the Core.

So what's the score?

Three men down in Elsie's River last night.

M I n d I n g

T h e I r

O w n

B u s I n e s s .

The witness,

saw the assailants shirts,
as they

escaped

Identifying images

of the late

T u P a c S h a k u r .

Sure,

glorified guns run the street

As the Death Row beat

Booms.

Back.

Bass in your face at a rapid pace

from the Volkswagen Bus.

Which was,

parked.

there on the side of the road

as the wanna be gangsters prepare to unload

Release!

to the Hip Hop beats

fulfilling distilling

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

the heart of the quote unquote "American",
Standing proud in his brand new Nike tennis shoes,
with the patented "Swoosh" reminding you to Just Do it.
Go on, JUST DO IT.

And the Heart of the Hard Living stops.
Shot dead in the head by a quote unquote "American",
caught up in the East Coast West Coast Rivalry.
You see?

there's a new plague that's found its way to decay
developing nations and stay
Central to Society's Self Destruction.
Capital Corruption and Cultural Consumption
Are Perpetuated

by persistent

Americanization.

Destroying a nation.
From its inside out,
till its all worn out
by the naiveté of its youth
who do not realize the value of life.

Striving to keep surviving yet thriving
in the violent streets
to the Death Row beats
of an American Gangster.

As they feed from the seed of that deceiving disease
The media pleasing,
culture ceasing,
epidemic
Called America's Cancer.

America's Cancer catches like Wildfire.
Spreading through developing nations worldwide.

As images of greener grass grow in the minds
of hopeful youth holding the double u sign
of West Side.
wishing they were born in Compton.
wishing they were born American.
wishing they were born in the land of milk and honey
where Money is worshipped.
And Cinema sent always presents
America.
Stars and Stripes. — Dollars and white pipes.
Land of the Brave,
Home of the Free.
where the *Bold and the Beautiful* live happily

Free from hunger, pain, disease;
where the green money grows upon the trees,
America.

America,
Exporting its vices worldwide through cultural oppression.

The Suppression of the indigenous values
confuse their youth
as to the truth
of wrong and right
and dark and light
and equality,
In a Westernized World.

Where people are abandoning their traditional cultures everyday.
In exchange,
for the American way,
the American Dream
that seems to appeal
to the Western ideal
of Greed.
That breeds,
jealousy.
and general dissatisfaction
with a peaceful life,
free from strife,
and spiteful
violent action.

The American Dream.
The American Dream was brainwashed into the minds of Africa's
youth
By media's gross distortion of the truth.
As glorification of guns and war,
swiftly start to settle the score
between young boys
whose deadly toys,
destroy
- communities.

In a Non-Western world.

Where the Tribal chief
controlled the clan
the common thief
exiled or banned
And all the people
lived with the land
In peace with nature

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

and fellow man
United Now
They All Must Stand
AND FIGHT!
for their Right,
to live.
In a Non-Western world.

Free from Anger,
Free from steam
Free from the Capitalist American Dream
Free from Money,
Free from greed,
To happily thrive with only things they need;
Food, Shelter, Water, and Love
Good Clean Meditation with God above,
And their God-given right to live in Peace!
Free from America's Social Disease.

Allen Roda

Haiku

The flower trembles
with fear of frost. But wait. But
the frost trembles too...

Jeff Cook

She walked in thinking a two-minute peppermint
Would hide the three-hour taste of Manhattans
and Parliaments.

She looked tall and graceful when I blinked, when
she stopped moving and when I remembered her.
But now her eighteen-inch skirt could not conceal
Her wobbly knees breaking through to catch her
Weight which was not there yet.

Now with both her hands down on my desk behind the pens,
Nameplate, pencil holder, and picture of herself, her red hair
Mussed perfectly, with a polite mouth jacked open with
A tongue contorting the first click for speech, she spoke.
Then, turned around and swayed too much to be sexy out the door.

Patrick Patten

"Kilgore Trout once wrote a short story which was a dialogue
between two pieces of yeast. They were discussing the possible
purposes of life as they ate sugar and suffocated in their own
excrement. Because of their limited intelligence, they never came
close to guessing they were making champagne."

-Kurt Vonnegut Jr.



Seema Bharwani

Untitled

Distant City

The moon screams at
Passing cars; trucks tumble
Into purple darkness and
Broken openings. Cold swallows
Absent everything; from the nipping
Night, all lies carefully
Frozen. The smoke of the city
Escapes my chest looping out like
Ripples in forgotten parking
Deck puddles.

If there was no tonight
Or cheap measure street—
Sweeping my thoughts clean,
Your crumpling stone coat
Would suffice. If I cannot melt
Into the laughter of filthy good Byes
And sigh in spite of poisonous
Parting, twenty paces in your
Vagrant alley would suffice—

Burn me blue with your distance.

Brian Melton

Somewhere Between El Perdrero and Me

*I didn't cross the river at the landing. I didn't
cross the river at all. There were the worms
and the shaky ground and it had been
raining for thirty-eight hours.*

So what have I left? Does it matter where I had been? Does it matter
where I
was trying to go?

Sometimes I think that knowing just one person really well is enough,

sometimes I want to sneak into a dark hub and melt all my dreams
down until
they swirl and merge and I do not have to look upon them anymore,

sometimes I think poetry is my nemesis and this dark night is my only
home.

Anonymous

Night

enters and you shudder
as buckets of darkness
descend upon your cracked wooden bones
drowning forgotten bulbs
in seas of frost

[every night
every night]

your barren fields sleep
in the black blanket

and we close our eyes,
attempting to escape that cold sea,
we bury our daily trials
with dirty hands.

Jessica Williams

"In spite of its hazy memory, the human soul seeks to return to its true good; but, like the drunken man who cannot find his way home, the soul no longer knows what its good is."

-Boethius

"Sometimes I go about pitying myself and all the time I am being carried on great winds across the sky"

-Ojibway Saying



Bedtime Snack

Erin Cooke

Cerniglia
(An Excerpt)
Rachel Venuti

"It's the dead-guy!" Daddy hurriedly whispered, maneuvering his cart down the next aisle, the one with the waist high freezers. I took the opportunity to throw a box of Astro-Pops into the carriage and simultaneously responded, "Is Andrea with him?"

"Nope, it's just the dead-guy buying nylons, tampons, and steak on a Friday night. Poor bastard."

"Steak sounds good," I said, catching the glare of a lifetime.

"You'd think the guy could at least pick up a six pack or something!"

"Anything!" I finished.

We went on weaving our way through the store, aisle by aisle, in order, only to fall in behind him at the checkout. Daddy hit my ankle with the carriage. "Hi, Mr. Cerniglia!"

"Peter!" Daddy tried and stuck out his hand. The dead-guy blinked twice, attempted to shake with Daddy without depositing his items, but then gave up the whole endeavor. The plastic egg missed the strange, short conveyer belt by a retrievable amount, but nobody even bothered.

"Were it not for the presence of the unwashed and uneducated, the formless, queer and incomplete, the unreasonable and absurd, the infinite shapes of the delightful human tadpole, the horizon would not wear so wide a grin."

-Frank Moore Colby

From Twelve Step Program

III.

There is work
to be done. Since
I am not doing it
This is living—believing
in the existential miracle
of open eyes and breath.

In the meanwhile...

The real procrastinators
sleep soundly
Preparing to stuff the horizon
with skyscrapers.

Jeff Cook

"In times of widespread chaos and confusion, it has been the duty of more advanced human beings- artists, scientists, clowns and philosophers- to create order. In times such as ours, however, when there is too much order, too much management, too much programming and control, it becomes the duty of superior men and women to fling their favorite monkey wrenches into the machinery."

-Tom Robbins



Untitled

Cathy Ann Burgess

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES



Untitled

Robin Lewis

Civilized (siv' -lizard') adj. 1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Polite or cultured: refined. (American Heritage Dictionary)

I am the one who destroyed a savage culture who needed my sophistication/
I am the one who uses proper forks and napkins when I eat my food/
I am the one whose father was an English baron and whose mother was a French princess. Their blood is in my veins/
I am the one who built houses and conquered nature/
I am the one who wakes to the alarm at 6 A.M., buys my subway tokens, sits down next to my neighbor, and does not say a word/
I am the one who walks through concrete forests and automatic doors that slice through Mother Earth's breath/
I am the one who watches a potted baby cactus uproot itself rather than live in an air conditioned high rise building/
I am the one who eats alone, always trying to feed off of myself/
I am the one who watches fake people in a box rather than deal with reality/
I am the one who wears the watch and gets the work done/
I am the one who buys my nourishment from a freezer and who passes the cake at southern parties/
I am the one who watches the Challenger explode and thinks about the homeless/
I am the one who forces my views on lesser foes/
I am the one who exploits people for my own gain/
I am the one who carries the torch for the cause of humanity/
I am the one who watches my life on TV/
I am the one who uses land for my profit/
I am the one who like pigskin, pork rinds, and pig's feet, while protesting the waste made by pig farms/
I am the one who values gold and silver above love and relationships/
I am the one who shoulders a cause simply to have a cause to shoulder/
I am the one who actually believes there is life on Mars, the only one who cares

Spring 1999 class of HUM 285: Culture and Religion in Contemporary Native America

Another Night

Images swim as our eyes
strain to find focus, our
teeth chatter to the beat
of "Smack my Bitch
Up." We carve
cardboard hats from twelve packs
to shield our heads from reality.

And we forget.

In the corner the purple bulbed black-light
illuminates glow in the dark
fish tank vegetation and
highlights the nicotine yellow on the teeth
of our drunken grins.

Hands fan in front of
empty eyes.

"He's dancing with the daffodils man"

Two sentinel kegs
frame a sign reading
Enter and forget-
and we do.

Dancing hair, bleached blonde shines
neon yellow, bodies bump, groins
grind, the night
finds college love.

An intellectual urinates
on his backpack.

And we forget
To see without our hats
We forget
That cardboard is not forever

David Ekedahl



The Best View Available in Ocklawaha

Juddson Reed

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Reconstruction
James Faucett

He still had the same apartment but figured it was going to be torn down. A month earlier all of the tenants had received notices that their leases would not be renewed; the whole block was slowly giving way to new brick and stucco structures promising a better life to those returning to the revitalized downtown. As he worked his way through old cardboard boxes, he found a letter, unopened, at the bottom of his closet. The letter had been sent years earlier but somehow overlooked, He opened the envelope and from it emerged a world that had been sealed away, left behind, forgotten. The letter read:

Ed,
Hey - I decided to go ahead and mail you these Valentine's Day things. There are some other things - I didn't know when I'd see you again, so I'm just going ahead and sending them to you now.

The card is self-explanatory.

You see, I don't know if you'll ever be in love with me like you used to be, But I do know that I love you, I'm in love with you and that will never change.

So, Happy Valentine's Day again.

Love always,
Anne

He made a phone call and they arranged to meet.

* * *

They were over at Vortex drinking Guinness drafts and talking about what had been going on in their lives since they'd been together last. He hadn't seen her for almost two years.

"So," she started. She tapped her fingernails against the side of her glass.

"You look good, he said. He wondered if this reunion was such a great idea. "What's been going on?"

She told him about her job working at Northpoint Mall, some place called "Cinnabon's." She said she worked all the time, put in ten and twelve hour days. She told him about her boss, something that had happened earlier in the week, but he started drifting, not because he didn't care, but because when she was telling him the story she smiled and the smile blew something inside him wide open, some kind of wall between the past and the present and nothing seemed to make sense, nothing

seemed real. Her other life, her new apartment in Grant Park, "Cinnabon's." She was going to sell the Cadillac. It all seemed like fiction, like some vague dream, because he wasn't in it. It was her life without him and when he saw that smile again, he saw something that felt like it was taken from him, stolen almost.

"So I've really gotten my life together lately." Anne sipped her beer. "I don't spend as much money, which is good because now I have some saved up--"

Someone else was talking through her, Ed could sense it.

" - and I've put most of it in an interest-earning checking account, because Mark says--"

Mark was talking.

" - that if I do that, I'll have something to go towards taxes." She paused. "Mark is a guy I'm dating."

Ed felt a pang. It caught him by surprise, that same feeling in the pit of his stomach, the one he had felt that night, the night the rain never stopped, just ran in broken circles across the window while he waited for her, the night he knew - it was an exact moment. For some reason he knew, he didn't even have to ask her about it and it was over, right then, everything, completely over like lightening. Her words stood out in the electric light, scenes replayed in his mind and he saw him, the other guy, whoever he was, talking through her in their conversations over the past few months, foreign ideas and phrases invading their island of unity. The guy she was talking about now, he might have been the same one and he might now have been Ed really didn't know and realized he didn't care to know either. He brushed the feeling aside.

"So, who are you dating now?" she asked, pulling out a cigarette. He lit it for her and suddenly his life seemed insignificant and small, smaller than it was even without her, her brash infusion of color. "Just dating around," he said. He didn't want to talk about himself. He wanted to talk about her.

Suddenly on the TV above the bar a commercial came on, one they both liked, and they laughed. In it a guy was so happy about the taste of new Doritos that a crazy look was plastered on his face - he was running around and a bunch of doctors in lab coats were trying to make him stop. The commercial broke apart the rest of the awkwardness the beers had been hammering away. They shifted back into the way they used to be, he started making her laugh there was nothing else about new lives, new plans, new apartments.

*

*

*

Outside, the rain rattled through the trees and they walked across a manicured lawn, bushes and shrubs subdued and honed in angular precision. It was the lawn of an old house she had always loved, a big Civil War-era one that had somehow remained intact despite the city's energy. It was getting late and suddenly Ed felt like a moment was over, like something was pulling itself apart. She said she had to get back; he thought up some things he needed to be doing. They started toward his Jeep. It looked even more beat-up and blue beneath the humming,

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

fluorescent city lights. There was a big red and white industrial-sized "For Sale" sign in front of the old house, two four-by-four posts blasted right through the lawn, piles of mud scattered around it carelessly.

"They're selling this place?" She looked at incredulously.

"Yeah, I guess so."

"Isn't it some kind of historic monument?"

"Yeah, it's a piece of history all right," he said. He put his hands deeper into his jacket pockets, feeling something inevitable surround him like a low, unfathomable cloud.

She wanted to look at the house once more, so they walked across the lawn to the other side. Suddenly it seemed majestic to him, sitting there in the moonlight, bricks wood, and mortar, a testament of solidarity.

"They're not going to tear it down..." she glanced at him worriedly.

"No they can't tear it down. Even if they tried, someone would protest," he said, with false assurance. Mentally, he pictured a huge crane smashing the bricks into a pile and hoped what she was saying was right.

When they got back to the Jeep, the rain started to pick up. He went to the passenger side, unlocked the door and opened it for her. They drove back to her car, a little, white, fragile-looking foreign job that didn't fit her, it seemed to him. He walked with her across the mirrored asphalt to the driver's side.

There was a pause. It fell with more weight than the rain that splintered across the roof of the car.

"Let's do this again soon," she said.

"Yeah we will."

"Call me if you need anything. Or even if you just want to talk."

"Okay."

She got inside and the miserable little four-cylinder fired to life like a coughing Chihuahua. He watched it move down the street, working its way through the drizzle and traffic, transporting her back to that life he really knew nothing about. He wanted to call after her. When he did, the words fell silent, silent beneath the glass skyscrapers, silent on the small patch of grass he was standing on, the discordant, rare piece of greenery that would inevitably be covered with a slab of ghostly-white concrete. He knew that he would never see her again, that certain things might last forever but most replaced, repaved, redone by new people with new plans and new ideas. Anything else would just be washed away with the rain.



Untitled

Cynthia Kelley

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Forest travelin', I step beneath the pine
The sycamore and the oak shelter my mind
The arrows and bullets crash beside me
But the leaves and twigs blind the shooter's eyes
The green on top, the shades of brown beneath
with the snap and pop beneath my feet
A sense of easy fills my sleep
And a quiet lance penetrates my heart

There is no past in the woods I wander,
No future either, this is the present
The sky's angry calls whip through the trees.
Ravaging the peace with a moment of crime,
Forcing mortals to draw in to keep our life.
Fate plays no part to the leaf
Its time is known to all, and its end succulent
Because it doesn't fight the forces temptation

John Ladewig

"On WAKE radio"

The stoplight in the dark morning
 blinks red to green in space
To direct the void; mindlessly,
Silently allowing nothing to stop
 and nothing to go in turn.
Light stretches for miles
 in the cool clear air.

Paula Decker

Playa

Playa, playa with words so sweet,
Could knock the strongest of conscious sistas off her feet
Your lecherous thoughts and sultry lies,
May get you far, yet I see the disguise.
Sexy brotha with game so tight,
Could charm a Colt 45 out of the hands of a nigga
on new year's eve night.
Think no woman is out of your reach?
Well you couldn't have this precious, palatable peach.
Playa, playa I read your book,
So to your offerings I won't take a second look.
Yet I can't tell a lie,
Brotha you are fly
however to you I could never admit...
I would have you walkin around,
thinkin that you are the shit.
Well you ain't.
See I know you may have women other than me,
So, when I don't catch feelings for you...
Expect the apathy.
Mind games, please... I got no time for that
Especially when all you tryin to do
Is chase the pussy-cat.
So Playa, playa when you playin your game,
And you're thinkin that it's tight....
Just remember two can play that game...
So you gets no ass tonight.

Lady M

Day in January
Bethany Dulis

He was a natural procrastinator.

Sunday afternoons were long. Today the sinking winter sun continued to send lazy rays through the window panes, whispering warmly that night would not come, not for a long, long time. He couldn't really forget that Sunday night (and consequently Monday morning) were inevitable, but for an afternoon he usually managed to propel his mind around those obstacles.

Winter darkness swallows such afternoons with surprising suddenness; now it was ten o'clock. Twelve more hours until he was supposed to be turning in this essay. He should probably be getting started.

He looked out the kitchen window. Out of the night he could see snow blowing against the window and drifting to the sill, then being swept away as the wind changed direction. It would be deep tomorrow. Sometimes snow made him think of Christmas, but now it was January. It was very cold, and spring did not come early.

But even spring wasn't a very pleasant prospect this year. He didn't want to think about it. This time he would leave; Jessica would stay here. Sometimes he wished himself born a few years earlier, after he had met her, that he could have been with her the whole time and graduated when she did. On the other hand, they had stopped student deferments with her year. There wouldn't have been much point to it.

It was ten-thirty already. Time did funny things when he knew that something was coming that he didn't like. He sat down at the kitchen table and shuffled his papers around. He knew he would write eventually. He sure as hell had better, he told himself.

It would be easy to call Jessica and spend another thirty minutes talking about trivialities, but he wouldn't. When he thought about time passing and graduation in May, he had to think of her. She would go to the USSR next fall to study in Leningrad. She was funny, so shy with her long, stringy hair always in her face, brushing it away with her fingers that were so perfectly round and jointed so delicately, like the fingers of a marionette. She was going to study her Russian. Ironic, she called it, since communication, in English and every other language, was not exactly her strong point. She was practically phobic about telephones. Why the hell am I a language major, she occasionally asked, fishing for a witty answer but not really expecting one, smiling that contorted smile that emerged when she was drunk or being cynical.

He had never fallen in love with a really cynical girl before. In a way, it was very appropriate. Timely. He wondered if college, if life, at any other time would have had that same sense of despondent, pointless urgency - but he suspected that it would have been slightly more bearable without Vietnam. Vietnam and his lousy draft number. Twenty-eight out of three hundred and sixty-six. It was almost ridiculously unlucky. He couldn't think about it too much or life took on an overwhelming atmosphere of absurdity that make him want simply to disappear, to

walk away like he would from a showing of a stupid movie, and forget that he had ever been born. He would graduate in early May and the draft would end with June and his number was twenty-eight. He would certainly be one of the very last.

It seemed like forever that he had known, and he continued to go to his classes and write his papers and sit down in the cafeteria and eat and go home and go to sleep. He propelled himself through the actions, time insisting that his body keep pace with the constant cascade of minutes and days and weeks. But he couldn't forget the reality behind the temporary normalcy of routine. Like the cold that startled him every time someone opened the door in winter, the knowledge crept, sharp and stifling, into every conscious thought, reminding him that his life was artificial.

No. Keep thinking, keep moving. If he let himself dwell on it, he couldn't sit in one place, feeling himself moving through time. There is no curiosity anymore about what he would find. He already knew, and it was slowly smothering him.

He got up from the table to get his typewriter from the bedroom.

The snow was still coming down hard against the window. He stopped and brushed his fingers against the cold panes; he didn't take them away. His breath made a patch of fog over the whiteness and the darkness. Silently, he traced a small curlicue in the fogged glass with his fingernail. The mesmerizing movement of the snowflakes held his tired eyes. Maybe he wouldn't finish his paper. He wouldn't avoid May 1973. He would just stop. He would stay here with his forehead resting against the cold kitchen window and never think again but be lost in a continuous January night and only watch one flake fall and then another one.

He forced his eyes to focus again and concentrated his thoughts on how to retrieve his typewriter without waking his roommate. The bedroom was cold and dark. He was quiet as he returned to the kitchen. He sat down at the table again. It had stopped snowing. It was still dark. It was midnight. Oh well. At least he had read the novel already.

The alarm clock snapped him out of sleep. It was nine o'clock in the morning and even before he opened his eyes he knew it was a sunny day; light filled the room from a crack in the curtains. He was ready to get up.

It never took him long to get ready. Procrastination did develop useful skills. It was nine-thirty; he even had time for breakfast. First, he carefully gathered his essay from the kitchen table, where he had left it the night before, and placed it in his notebook. He flipped on the old radio that they shared in the kitchenette and got out a bowl and a spoon and a box of Cheerios. He stopped to fiddle with the radio, trying to eliminate static from the news report. He got out the milk. He wished there were some bananas. He loved bananas.

He was listening to the Cheerios crunch inside his mouth, allowing himself not to think about anything too strenuous, just the sound of the Cheerios crunching and the radio announcer's voice and how much he liked them both and how he didn't want to have to worry about his paper anymore. He wasn't even going to read it over before he turned it in; he

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would content himself with the memory of how sufficient it had seemed at four o'clock in the morning.

Wait. He stopped chewing. The news report: they were ending it early. Ahead of schedule. He made himself swallow quietly, afraid that any sound he made could cover up a vital word coming from the radio on the counter. Now, in January. He couldn't believe it. The volunteer force was large enough and they were ending the draft. They were ending the draft with January 1973.

There were other items for the modulated voice to deliver, but today he could not hear any more. He clung to the sound of the words and held on as long as possible: the draft would end with January 1973.

Nixon - that corrupt bastard. He had finally done something right.

He stood up and put his empty bowl in the sink. They wouldn't call anyone else now. He buttoned his coat, picked up his backpack. He locked the apartment door and walked downstairs and out the front door. Outside, the snow was unbroken, sculpted into waves and ridges by the wind; about six inches, he would guess. It sparkled because the sun was shining. He couldn't believe how beautiful it was.

The wind and sun made his eyes water a little, but it was a pleasant pain. He blinked away the tears and looked at his watch. It was quarter to ten. The wind and time blew at his back as he began to walk to class, pushing him, bustling him into the next moment. He didn't mind, because it was such a beautiful day.



Untitled

Seema Bharwani

Untitled



Regan Rozier

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

EDITOR'S PICKS

Prose

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| The Long Dark Tea Time of the Soul | | | | -Douglas Adams |
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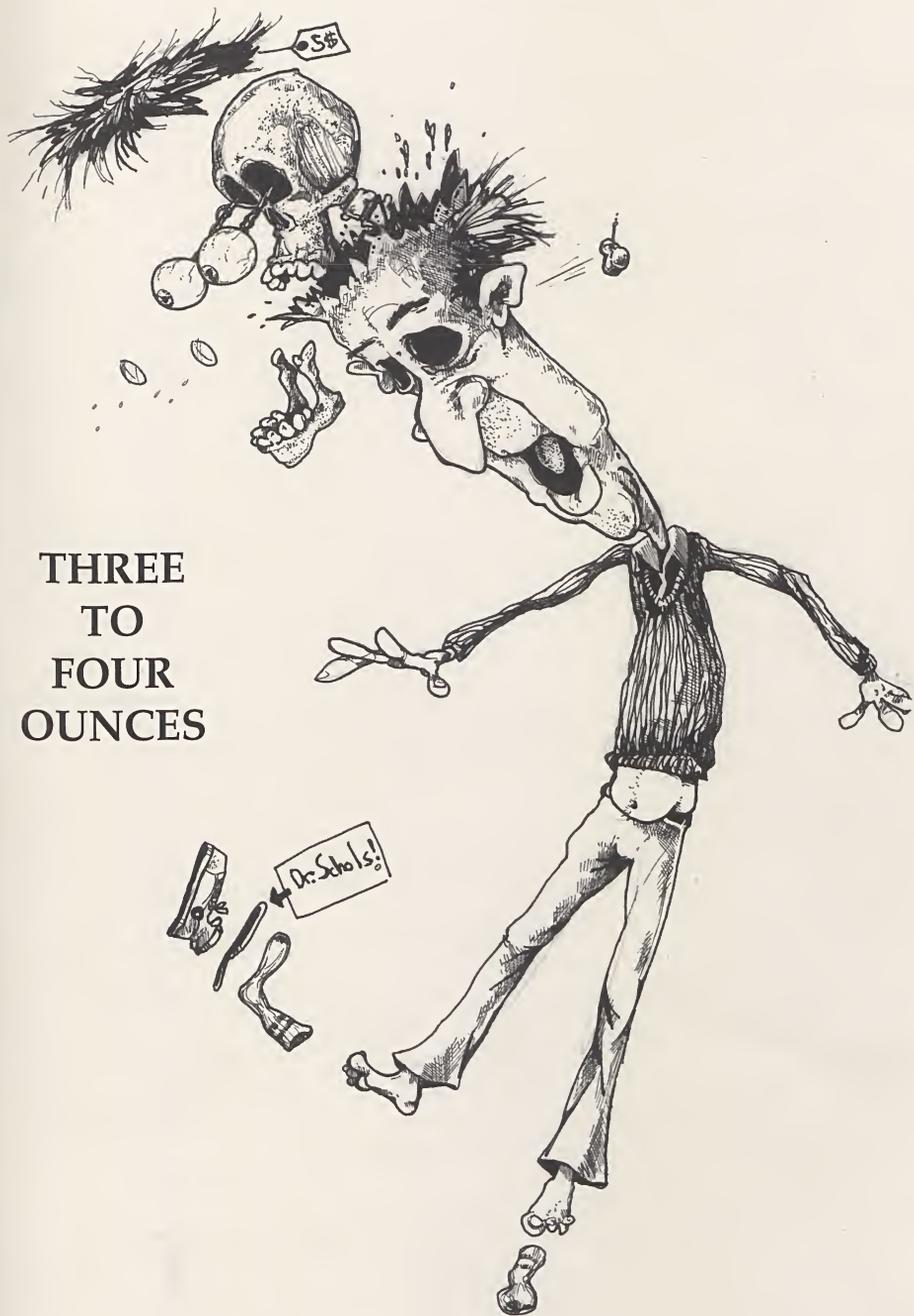
THREE TO FOUR OUNCES



THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

**SPRING 1999
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY**

THREE
TO
FOUR
OUNCES



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THREE TO FOUR OUNCES

Fall 1999

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Wasabi
Wash me over
Make me time worthy
Of magnetic green
Of outstanding heat
So that
Like you
I cannot
Be taken in
Without notice

Ansley Smith

A Tao Tale

I saw my platonic friend walking through the afternoon
In the sun.
And the sun was upon her hair in the warm wind.
Her dress played about her in the wind
As the trees in the wind flashed gold and green around her.
And she smiled.

And I did not want to think that she was beautiful.
But did. And said nothing.

I went walking in the wind and in the evening sun,
Orange against my back,
Orange upon the green, glossy bushes,
Contemplating the Tao.

I watched squirrels in the trees chase each other, chirping.
And I reached out and touched a holly bush
And encountered the resistance there,
As harder I pushed.
And there was also minimal pain.

I thought that the Tao was most real and right.

There was a dead bird in the path,
Broken into a pile of feathers and bone,
Lying dead in between two cars,
Inches from the sun's golden rectangles.
I walked on

But stopped myself and,
Turning around, thought it was good
To contemplate the deaths of birds.

But the wind was among the holly bushes.

The dead bird shuffled sideways on its dead wings
And on its broken wings, shuffling inches closer,
The wind was its animation.

Afraid, I turned and walked away,
Unwanting to feel the touch of death.

I think now
That I did not contemplate the Tao hard enough.
Justin Jennings

"Hook-em"



Is This Thing On?

Rachel Venuti

So I am working at this tiny university in Greenville and playing solitaire in the evenings and listening to a little radio station I have been told is not college radio. Except here's the thing. Every time I turn on the Sony dual-cassette boom box I stole from my father in 1987, the same album is playing. It is some kind of looped tape and it just keeps playing over and over. No jockey ever comes on to introduce the songs or say who the band is. Sometimes I get no signal. Mostly, though, I hear the voice of some guy I probably know in Worcester, Mass, singing, "Is this thing on? Are you aware the answer lies—in Television, Delaware?" It's that progressive rock, of course. I can tell because these guys allow for bass solos. No one allows for bass solos.

At two a.m. the album goes off. There is someone there. Someone is turning the lights out in the studio, pressing stop on the tape deck. Looped tapes do not just stop themselves. I leave the radio on. It is so quiet there is not even any white noise. Instead, I listen to the sound of my suitemate giving a blow job to the visual arts professor. I fall asleep to that sound, the small choking, the image of the hand on the back of her head.

I wake up to the part of the second song on the album where the drums really kick in. I am beginning to know the words, too. I sing in the shower, imitating the fakey voice of the guy on the tinny frequency. I try to be loud enough so the visual arts professor will not get caught. I want him to leave before anyone else is up. It is only six a.m. when the music starts back.

It is only six a.m. but I do not care. I call up my old boyfriend in Boston hoping he will know. He is in a band like this, but I can tell it's not them. A woman's voice answers. Apparently he is already on tour. I am glad to hear that he has not taken her with him. I smile at this. "Hey," I say, holding the phone closer to the boom box, "who are these guys—do you know them?"

She takes her time, and finally says, "Oh, yeah, they're from Delaware."

"Television?" I ask, realizing why he left her at home.

"What? Sure, yeah. Hey, that's a wicked good solo," she says. I hang up on her. My old boyfriend plays bass.

That night I go into the bathroom that my suitemate and I share. He is in the shower, the visual arts professor. He yells hello at me through the fog and rain of a good hot one. I try not to look at his outline visible through the clear plastic curtain. He asks me to pass him a towel and when I do he tries that whole thank-you-here-let-me-touch-your-hand thing and I realize he and my suitemate are never going to have sex. I realize that he will always slink off into the shower after she does him a favor to forget the sight of her. He washes her off.

It is eleven p.m. when I notice that I have a blank tape still in its shrink wrap in my desk drawer. I wait for the strange piano piece that cuts the familiar album like an awkward introduction. I put the tape in the second deck and press record. I turn the radio up slightly to improve the sound quality. I do not expect any complaints from next door. I am doing this for them anyway, I think. I think how I will not have to listen to the noise of them—

-each working through issues that have nothing to do with each other, issues that have to do with other people, people I have not met. I think this is why I am using up the last blank tape I own. I am not thinking that this radio station will someday stop the loop for good. I am not even afraid that whoever is manning the station will forget to come back at six a.m. What I am thinking is that I will be able to play this tape back during those hours from two until six. I am very confident that I am only making this copy to drown out the sounds.

Except I do something when the piano song comes back up at eleven fifty. I've recorded the entire album. I turn off the radio and pry the plastic tabs off an old Replacements tape. I pull the protection off so I can record over it. Just like that I have made another blank tape and I move the one I had been using from the second to the first deck. I press the Replacements tape, the new blank, into the second deck. They do not make dual-cassette boom boxes like this anymore. The CD player is always better than the cassette player now, the attention is on the laser. I stand there until long after the visual arts professor has gone home. I stand there hitting play and record and stop and rewind and play and record. I know then that I have not made this tape to cover up any sound except the damned bass solos. No one allows for bass solos.

Sermon

Since you asked me so nicely I will tell you what you have to do. You must turn your precious heart inside out so that the blood may flow freely throughout your body. Then it will seep from every pore, dropping crimson strings from your nose and fingers, casting your legs in red. After it has formed a sea at your feet, you will walk. Only then will you be able to move among those with strong hearts whose beasts are so powerful they can be heard for miles. Those of weak heart cannot walk near them as the sound drives them mad with envy. But you will be able to travel through them as you will know that you are free of what binds them to where they stand. You will not need another's rhythm in your ear. You will be alone, one.

Then you will go past them into the land you haven't crossed before. You will walk so long that your bones coming together at the knees will fire with friction and the heat will melt the tendons, muscles, and skin until your calves are left standing behind you now chest-flat on the ground. Your arms will be your only form of locomotion as your nails grow long and strong from digging into the hard soil. Soon the rough will pull and tear the skin and your bowels will be drawn behind you. Then your arms too will fail you and get left, but by some miracle you will find yourself on your back. You will only be able to move with your eyes, which will be drawn to the swirling mass of blue and white above. You will watch the clouds collect, darken, lighten, and stretch out. You will leave yourself and become the sky: bloodless, heartless, alone, all.

Peter Hession

See without looking, hear without listening, breathe without asking
W.H. Auden

Helen of Troy... of the supermarket... of the shopping mall

When such a splendid sight does grace my eyes
what should I do? Permit a hope to spring
from out my chest? Or leave in peace these eyes
that touch her face? The most unlikely thing,
this pulse that pounds without request. It's blind
to space, to dreams deferred, to fate. But I
am not. I'll feast until the silence, kind,
descends. All beauty's but a lullaby,
we know the end. And not to consecrate
the day of flower, and not to take a drink
from such a cup. To see such things as bait
yet still to sing. To witness this in ink:
The senses and the sensed are closer still
than objects of my willing and my will.

Jeff Cook

Two-toned silk pajamas

Little two-toned robin
I watch you
make & do
as a berry clasped between
your paper thin beak
splits open
from the pressure of your
clenched jaw
bursting- severed.
Like God
when he will squeeze
the sun between his
forefinger & thumb
turning out the light
finally ready to sleep
for a millenium.
I think God wears
two-toned silk pajamas
and keeps by his bedside table
our world floating in
a crystal birdcage.
I think he like those who
make & do
who play God.
It is flattering, I guess,
to have a menagerie of
makers & doers-
of makers and breakers
floating by your bedside table.
flattering, I guess,
to lie in an amorphous
bed of clouds
clothed in a pair of two-toned silk pajamas
watching your disciples
make & do
playing God
playing You.

Anonymous



Thomas Galati

I am "in the labyrinth"
And you are supposed to be
Somewhere in something
About kings, but
You have left the bed And I
Still twenty pages from end
Unnotice your return
Having shed green terrycloth
Now behind me
Trying still to read by thinking a
Strange place for you to begin
Your face in the curve of my back
Just let me finish this page
Our times are finally colliding How
Long I have waited
And now it is you that is
Up and over and reaching around
My book is on the floor and
I become the dog-eared corner of
My stopping point

Ansley Smith

To Prometheus in the Last Days

Like some terrible bird
The bomb flew down
And laid waste the glistening morning fields
With a blast of red fire
And an ocean of flying red dust

The grass bent and burned
Just as did the skyscrapers.

And the businessmen said together
— let us have no talk of this
And the churchmen said together
— let us have no talk of this

And on the playgrounds
The children flew apart
Like leaves on the burning wind
And bounced down the street
Whispering playfully against the stones

And the businessmen looked on and said
— then let us have no talk of this
And the churchmen said together
— let us start another youth group

And the heroes said nothing

With their mouths full of bottles
And the barrels of guns.

And the red cloud bore down upon us
Like some horrid, childish god.

O Prometheus,
Ancient bringer of fire,
Did you know that it would come to this?

Justin Jennings

Observation #2, still smoking

He took the cig from my hand
looking into my eyes
threw it to the ground
destroying it beneath his heel.

If he was going to accuse
Me
of self-destructive behavior,
he
Had only to accuse
me
of loving him.

Molly Mattingly

Why your mother says those things

How rarely a frog, when kissed,
becomes a prince!
How often the opposite
when fucking princes!



Four P.M. Delivery

She'd wanted to have the babies at night,
so that the glow from her hospital window
could be seen from the dark streets below,
and she could get a feel for the streetlights outside,
and some doctor would have to come
stumbling down the hallway
at two in the morning.

Also at night,
she felt,
the twins inside her would inherit a deep, sweet secret,
that happens when you come to life
while everyone else is asleep.
And it would be
her own secret too,
churning forth the placenta,
grunts smothered by the screaming howl
of the occasional ambulance outside.
Her babies would be wrapped in mystery.

But it didn't happen that way.
And does she find the children a little duller for that,
trapped now for several years
behind the wall of their daylight birth?

Dorothy Kuykendal

New York works in seven eight
With the hesitation beat
The red light halting traffic
The suits left right skip the curb
While skirts heel toe round tourists
Who move faster than usual
Due to the seven eight time
Which pulses under the ground
As doors open and open
Then finally close on time
Whisk away the skirts and suits
To outer limits of beat
And taking off their shells and
Beat collapse on the four four
Patrick Patten

about value

It is never
fool's gold
till the bidding begins.

A Memory From Two Perspectives
Phil Glynn

It is purple in my mind. The sky, the air and the day have all been filed away in my memory with a shade of deepest plum. Perhaps it is because they show memories that way in movies. Perhaps it is because the color purple holds some subconscious comfort for me. Perhaps that is how my mother's hand looked when it went through the glass window that day, a long, open, shiny, purple wound. For whatever reason my memory is colored purple, with dull shades of other familiar colors from my fifth year.

I recall looking up at the racks of tall dresses and pairs of pants whose inseams dwarfed me. I recall the distant white ceiling and the reflective manila tiles of the floor of the Venture outlet on Johnson Drive. Above me as I walked were rows of dull fluorescent lights that made banana colored streaks beneath my shuffling feet. It baffled me, the way the light seemed to move ahead of me on the floor. I chased the reflections, my shadow my companion. We reached the gleams on the floor and bounded up and down the aisles of shirts and fishing rods and expressionless plastic dolls with artificial looking hair and funny frozen hands. The store was boring to me, it was the ever looming destination of the trip that I dreaded. The monotony of picking over spider man shirt, after blue sock, after pair of underpants made me drowsy and disagreeable. It made my mind wander and drew my imagination out of hiding. The whole place became a prison to me. the guards were everywhere with their wrinkled faces, sad eyes, and bored disappointed posture. The pallid lights made their nametags glow eerily. Doris. Ralph. Daphne. The other prisoners were carted by, looking depraved and defeated. Doomed to hours of staring wide-eyed at racks of fire trucks and GI Joes from across the department while their mothers held them still and groped in the back seam of their corduroys for their pants sizes. Surrounded by racks of stiff cotton-poly and the oppressive black and white starkness of the store. Escape was unthinkable, but exploration was reasonable and inviting.

Sisters are excellent diversions. Marcie stood in the center of the shopping cart leaning against my mother's shoulder as they bargained over Barbies and pink lace. I backed slowly away and was off in the infinite stretches of alleys and shelves. The maze that through frequent visits makes the purple memory familiar and close.

I ran, cowboy boots clicking like cap gunshots until I was bored. the pale lights were making me tired and I had to go to the bathroom. So, I walked, sulked, defeated by Venture and ready to be in the station wagon headed past the curvy lanes with full oaks back to the big white house on 53rd street. I turned corner after corner. Finally, I was walking side by side with the familiar soft-khaki coattails. The delicate hand of a woman hung lazily at her side. Thank goodness, thank goodness! I took the hand and followed the coattails to the front of the store, out into the purple day and up the hill toward the cars that looked blended with gray in the hazy afternoon of my memory. I was an absent minded child, privy to the wanderings of imagination that didn't always jive with the actualities of life. But, as we walked, certain glaring omissions became apparent to me. For one, the car we approached was rusty and a deeper purple than ours. The color of wine in Mom and Dad's glasses at dinner. Marcie was not there, and the passenger door was being held open for me. The delicate hand of the woman was trembling and I heard a scream.

My mother's voice was like a song, but when she yelled it could chill the blood. It shook my whole miniature world and spun me around in my tracks. There she was, what

seemed like miles off, back in the Venture store screaming my name. "Raymond, stop! Raymond, stop!" The scream had all the tenuous fear and apparent betrayal of a pained weep, mixed with the force of a roaring animal that beholds its young in danger. She was yelling and pounding the window of the door that wouldn't open. The automatic in-door would not let her out. So, with swift swings of her perfect white hand she pounded, enraged, until the glass gave way and cracked. But, by that time the door of the car was slamming and it was speeding away. And, I was left standing in the parking lot, on the lumpy asphalt with the puddles of black water colored by purple stains of oil. And then Marcie was crying and Mom was hugging me and sobbing. "Raymond James, don't...please don't ever..." Crying like a drowning woman who has been pulled from the river and is suffocated still by tears. Gasps of pain chopping up her words and breaths. And then we were all crying and I didn't know why, but I felt terrible. I felt like the deep purpled slice on Mom's immaculate palm hand had been done by my small, dumb, malicious hand.

She was Mama. That is what they had all called her, as far back as she could remember. Her parents, brothers, aunts, cousins, everyone. If she wasn't nursing a blue eyed doll, she was consoling the schoolmate with the skinned knee. She order her brothers around, not with the contemptuous gluttony of authority to which spoiled children are often inclined. It was the constant urge to direct and serve. She taught her brothers and cousins to read when she was 7. She would often make dinner for her family when she was 10. She was born a caregiver, a born love giver, a born mother in every sense of the word. She was Mama.

Memories of the past, what she calls her youth, were her only comfort in the days after Fred passed and Joseph and Helen passed in another sense. There was a clear line drawn in her memory between youth and the present. Youth included everything up to 10 years ago for her. 10 years ago, she was 41. Her life was never dull. It was a life of sharp awareness divided by the abysses of unconsciousness. It was warp speed peppered with intervals of absolute idleness. For her family, for those that needed her, every moment was lived to the brim of fulfillment. Her only rests were in the moment she had to herself. All she could do then was sleep. There was no function in her life that did not serve the interests of another person. She was never a child, not one day in her life, but had experienced youth. She was vivacious, energetic, idealistic, and full of the constant urge to hold those close to her always at the sun. To hold them close forever. But youth was gone, and to her there was only youth and death, just as there had only been fast and stop in the years of her renaissance of being. The renaissance had slipped away and the immense stone of empty rooms and sobs echoing on bare walls had

rolled over the portal to her dark, sepulchral loneliness. Blocking out the sun that had lit her world for so many of her full years. It now shone on a world that she couldn't be a part of, no matter how hard she tried. She had only her empty house, with adolescent bedrooms, quiet as tombs. She had empty hours in a silent kitchen with a mute phone and a speechless doorbell. She had checks that came alone in chilly envelopes from kids who never called, never told her what was wrong, thought money could sustain the trembling heart of a widowed mother who needed only the simplest of gestures to be nourished and feel useful.

For the lonely or the homesick, there are good days and bad days. But, for the truly desolate, sequestered souls of those left stranded by the ones they love without repay, there are only varying degrees of awful. Mama's worst days were during the summer. Days that used to be spent in parks or on trips were now spent in hours of pain and regret wept upon deaf ears of an old creaking house that she rarely left, only for the most basic things. To accomplish even these basic tasks was a feat almost beyond her.

So, she sat in the gray afternoon with the sun falling lazily into her chilly old car in the parking lot of the Venture outlet. She extracted herself from the car slowly and walked like a ghost up to the door that reflected her hunched form mockingly, and yielded to her drudgery and hatred of being in the presence of people.

She wandered up and down the aisles, her mind blank, drunk on the drone of noises and the sickly fluorescent glow of the lights on her pale hands. Mama's hands were all that remained of her youth. They were strong and soft, warm and beautiful, a white that was tender. She let them dangle at her sides as she sulked, the sounds of children laughing and arguing filling her helpless ears. Arguing, God, she even missed that. The pain never dulled, it was hell, and it wasn't going to stop. That was the depth of her desolation. It had completely robbed her of hope. It had made her used to feeling that way. It had totally exhausted all of her resilience. And walking alone, in the most common of places, her tumults of emotion made her want to cry. She began to stumble, as if in a dream. A dream that began to conjure up a past that didn't even seem like hers.

When she felt the tiny hand in hers she wasn't even startled. It just twisted the knife in her heart and made her hurt more. She wanted to cast the dream child beside her away. She wanted to dash him, to shatter him and her whole wretched damnation. She wanted no more to walk in her death sleep. But, she couldn't let go of the hand because she was still Mama. That connection, that fact of her being was the manacle that made her prison inescapable.

She was out in the daylight again, out in the parking lot fetching the keys from her pocket as she walked when it dawned on her. The hand in hers was real, part of a child that walked with the same dreamy carelessness hers had. But, he was not hers, and he didn't know it. Even worse was the fact that she couldn't alert him and couldn't stop herself from opening the door and taking him with her. And as she turned the handle, the premonition of what she might do, of the absence of precious control, made her heart shudder. Yet, her reduced, depraved sensibilities could not be swayed.

Then a scream snapped her thoughts and her eyes were pulled back to the building and she saw a woman through the glass. She knew exactly who it was. And then she was speeding away, bawling and wailing. Her whole body quivering, with a boy in the rear-view mirror. Standing there, perfect, with his hands at his sides and his hair hanging lazily around his face.

Evening the odds- (an adaptation of Issa)

Considering ugliness,
the difference between the brilliant
and the beautiful
is that
some can hide it,
some can't.

Why your mother says those things 2

After flirting with death for so many years
it's hard not to wish
she would just shut up
and put out.

For Minimalists

Don't show me merely pretty pots
that focus on the spaces.
As if the truth were what it's not
or human beings were vases!



Jessica Hannah

A Prayer

This is a prayer for children.
For children who take their first step to the flash of a camera,
And for children who never walk at all.
For children who love to play in the mud and wet,
And for children who live in a world of mud and wet.
For children who cry at a loud noise,
And for children who live with the sound of explosions.
For children who laugh at a television,
And for children who don't know what it is to laugh.
For children who love to run,
And for children who run from fear.
For children who don't like to eat carrots,
And for children who don't get to eat.
For children who hate going to the doctor,
And for children who would love to go to the doctor.
For children whose parents have died,
And for children who have to watch their parents die.
For children who love life,
And for children who do not know life.
This is a prayer for children.

Ryan Whitley

To Fat

You gather your forces at midriff
Working out through dimpled waves.
You are my deep fried friends who
once slipped across my palate.
Now we bounce along together.

More to love

Hot days bring the sizzle
Of fat on the spine, rivers
Gush from the exertion
Of climbing two stories
And together we melt.

In winter you are my sleeping bag
Of blubber- slick, fleshy inner-tubes
Ready for the chill.

More to love

Fat, you are *mine*-
A partnership of flesh,
Blood, bone and fat
Together we are *we*, are me.

David Ekedahl

a creation myth
I did it.
I swear.



Priest

A priest walks the silent corridors
of the house to which he has been invited,
his robes a mellow shadow,
the daughter of the family is sick.

He is a learned man
and has read much of Paracelsus
Horace, Ovid,
knows the legend of Pygmalion-
that stone cold body ripening to flesh.
This and vespers fill his days
as this corridor fills now his nights.
His skin is grub-white and cold.
The candles are burned far down,
flames feeding off the weakened wax,
and he sees a shape at the end of the hall,

A woman-
the lady of the house.
Her hair loose, unbound,
rampaging around the face
that has been ravaged by beauty.

"Oh," she says,
"and to think I did not see you there-
-to think I did not see-"

Her lips are shivering down to thinness
like the candles,
she looks like she would taste
a bit like mortality.
The Priest would like to ask her:

"What is the word I am looking for?
The word that describes the feeling
of the exact moment that you realize
that you do not, never have and never will
have the thing you did not know
you wanted?
I feel sure, madam, that you would know.
Is there such a word?
And what would it be like to lay my hands
on you like so much clay?"

But he does not ask her,
and she looks at him a little sadly,
her eyes bright-long,
her face moth-gray.

He nods deeply.
"I have just been
to see your daughter..."
She asks no explanation.
And they pass, going opposite directions.
because it is late at night, late.

Dorothy Kuykendal

The map is not the territory.
Our words are not the sense impressions they denote.
Our sense impressions are not the events in space-time which trigger these impressions.
(When a rock hurts you, the hurt is not "in" the rock but in the interaction of the rock with
your senses.)

Our scientific or philosophical or religious models (orchestrations of words and other
symbols) are not the non-verbal universe they try to describe or explain;

The menu does not taste like the meal.

Robert Anton Wilson

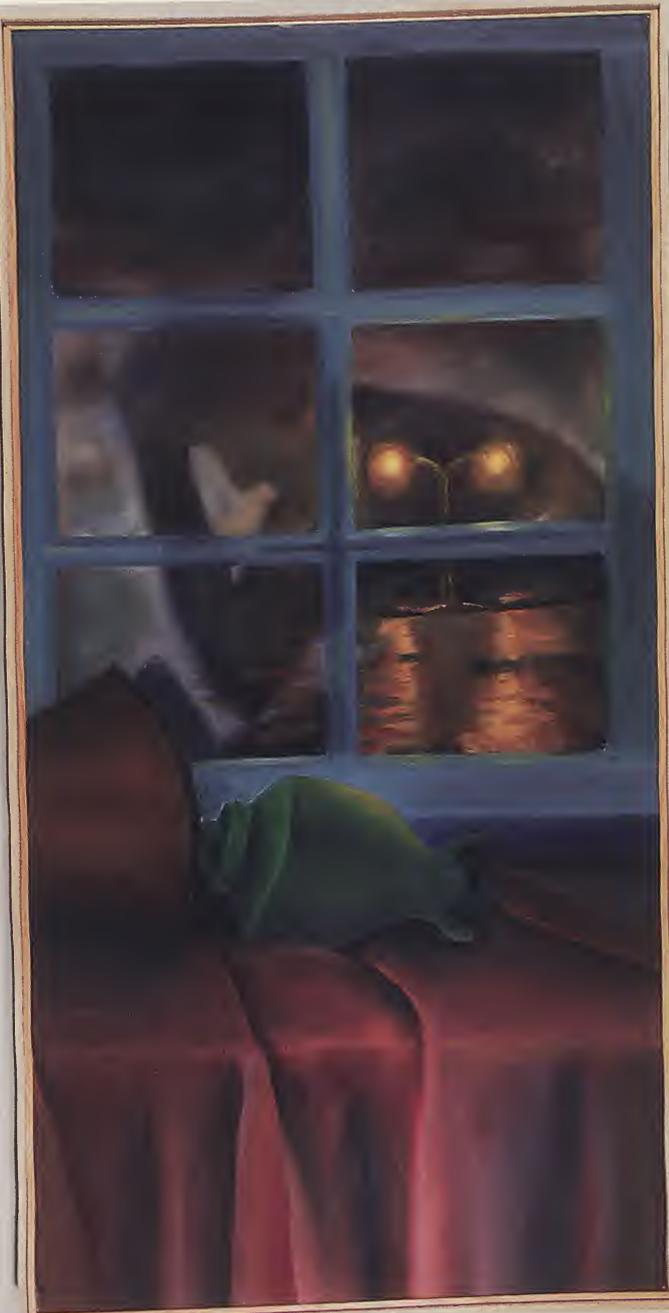
"Now And Then"



Picture found in the pages of the 1975 Wake Forest University Howler









I guess more bad things have been done in the name of progress than any other. I myself have been guilty of this. When I was a teenager, I stole a car and drove it out to the desert and set it on fire. When the police showed up, I just shrugged and said, "Hey, progress." Boy, did I have a lot to learn.

—Jack Handy

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2000

THREE TO FOUR OUNCES SPRING 2000

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Contributors

- Chris Mauney, **Of big words and such**
J. Willingham, **The Opera**
Adriana Giuliani, **what we should and should not do**
Matthew Gudenius, **Angst and Another Revelation**
Ryan Whitley, **Comment Card**
Brian Melton, **Amongst Hardwood and Untitled**
Andy Whitacre, **Questionnaire**
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Jessie Sams, **Ode to Otono, Want Ad, and Untitled**
Rachel Venuti, **But I Was Driving**
Lanier Detnall, **To Be a Canvas**
Cameron Wilson, **When I Walk the Edge and Watching**
Patrick Patten, **Achill Island**
Mary Dodd, **Gamut and Paintbrush**
Nicole Giuppone, **Theatetus 8 am**
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Joseph Ladapo, **Untitled drawing**
L. Hawfield, **Cover art and two untitled paintings**
Shannon Reibel, **The Scar of "E" and three untitled paintings**
John Bowman, **String**
Molly Garvin, **Two photographs**

Of big words and Such

A cleverly assembled presentation
of the vernacular...
Of course it could not be impeccable
Contemplated as ingenious
Inferred to be exceptional,
Unless it was atypically applaudable,
Abnormally exceptional,
and Inscrutinably masterful.
Ideologically metaphorical
Uncharacteristically implacable,
and so Intricate in its Complexity.
An emotional manifestation of
Rhythmical consonant formations
and Deliniated reality
Intelligently assembled
by Professorial introverts
Pondering of,
Explicative hedonism
and Abstract communism.
Quantitative computation
Psychological escalation
Ethereal apocalypse
and isotonic microchips.
of, Exhumed scientology
Implicit neurobiology
Fiber-optic intuition
Transcendental extradition
Cybernetic demoralization
Philosophical globalization
of, Metropolitan economies
and trigonometric fallacies.
Personalized feminists
Heterosexual anarchists.
Hazelnut soliloquies
and Astrological Ambiguities
of,
a poem.
and its Indefinable,
Unquestionable,
Inconceivable,
And undeniable,
simplicity.

Chris Mauney

The Opera
break of day
organ's wings beneath
sweet swell of satin song
choir's cry
love of God
like a cherub's ruby kiss
dandelion on the wind
rose's dewy breath
inferno's heart
deluge of mist
final rouge of sunset
Come Malika...
A thick canopy of jasmine.

J. Willingham

what we should and should not do

Whose brilliance am I to judge
That a cup of hot tea with silky steam
Or that of a branched tree that creates an intricate web during twilight
No, I could not measure worthiness from my
sinewy cage
I instead choose observation and patience
Like all good predators and widows
should

Adrianna Giuliani

Angst

i

love poems

that go:

O what is life worth?

Yea

now I walk in shadows

My mind is empty and

My heart is weak

Since my goldfish died

or

Your voice was nectar

Your hair the sun

But now midnights are cold

Because you left me...

You stupid bitch

Get over it.

Matthew Gudenius

Comment Card

Driving thought a toll plaza,
I see it yet again.
A slot for comment cards
reading, "Please take one."
But it is empty.

In a restaurant.
In a store.
Everywhere.
Empty comment card slots.
Too many people commenting?
I think not.
Empty comment card slots—
To me, this is a great comment.

Ryan Whitley

Amongst Hardwood

Incessant is the misery
of selection this night, which, in
its promise,
divulges
esoteric end.

Of those splintered,
there are few
alike (with time and turn)
to this — the singe to carbon and
shade of burn that
stains my tinder twigs
and kindling stern.

Water raves afresh to sodden coals:
a mesh of spinning steam — the swelling —
a spark that capitulates
a stark beginning.

*Anoint me
with soothing
ash — the grayness
of our tangled past.*

Brian Melton

Another Revelation

On the way home from work
And anxious to get home
The traffic flared up
Again
Just like I knew it would
Because today I *had* to get home,
You see...
I had to pack my bags,
And drive my car,
And catch a plane,
And why does this shit always happen to me?

I knew I would be stuck.
Not moving. At all.
An accident probably.
That's just how lucky I am.

Then the cars grew thick a
And the red lights flared
And I was
Drowning
In the exhaust and impatience.

SHIT, I thought
As I peeled down another road
To escape the siren's call in the auto sea.
FUCK, I said,
15 minutes and 2 miles further,
Red, red firetruck and ambulance screaming at me
And I wanted to SCREAM BACK

But the helicopter's noise
Cut me off.
So I watched the Medivac
Ascend
On whirling
Angel wings.

Through fresh salt-water in my eyes
I saw my white knuckles
On the steering wheel
And couldn't have been happier
To be stuck in traffic,
Alive and thinking
That's just how lucky I am.

Questionnaire

where I is

1. presumably, within one nation
 2. of a thousand students
 3. for a time.
 4. making inoffensive movements
 5. in social rhyme

6. under gods
 7. who left questionable guides.
 8. superterral subjugation
 9. or self-serving creative strides:
 10. religious text, or legislation

11. indivisible
 12. from private virtue
 13. and a view of history.
 14. *spiritus omnis cum omna spiritu*.¹
 15. I amassed in holy polity.

who I is

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____

11. _____
 12. _____
 13. _____
 14. all I can write is
 15. my name cannot be given

Andy Whitacre

¹ Breathing all with every breath.

On Remembering Playing Scrabble with One Who Can't Spell

My competitor dropped out and
I am left thinking of
The words I would make
If I drew all point letters

But Scrabble doesn't work alone
Not by yourself
Even if you know to add an E
to awesome, not that I
Wanted to use that one anyway

We, my competitor and I, once played
While his mom watched
She said he couldn't spell words
He didn't know what they were
I remember what he wanted to spell but
I took the X on the triple word score instead

Sometimes the game wouldn't end
I would crawl over the board to him, opposite me
And the words we spelled would become
Actions we made -knees scattering

Wooden tiles, because we had the original sets
Before the plant closed down and
The pieces became plastic, We even had
An unopened one for our kids

That was all before my competitor quit
And like his father, told me
I could never sum up
Three years of us in a board game.

Ansley Smith

you are the cigarette I smoke
on a sore throat

you're my self-
mutilating razorblade and the monotonous tap of
my four fingers
playing along
with your crooked Fifth.

I can find you on the Eighth step of
Twelve: a Program. you're my soreness,
my two more sets of Ten.

you are three hours of sleep,
the skin crater of a ruptured pimple,
scalpel surgery for cataracts;
you're my mind's end

I think about you during religion and politics—
propaganda and speeches —it's socialized therapy, the echo
of your voice
in my chest

in my chest and gut, you are the pumping of a fervent appetite—
eating jesus with filet mignon —ah, you're relief after vomiting,
the death of causality, the remission of colon cancer, the siphoned blood
of a hemophiliac: constant, essential, rapid, warm, scab-less—

you're an
asthmatic breath in the wind.

Brian Melton

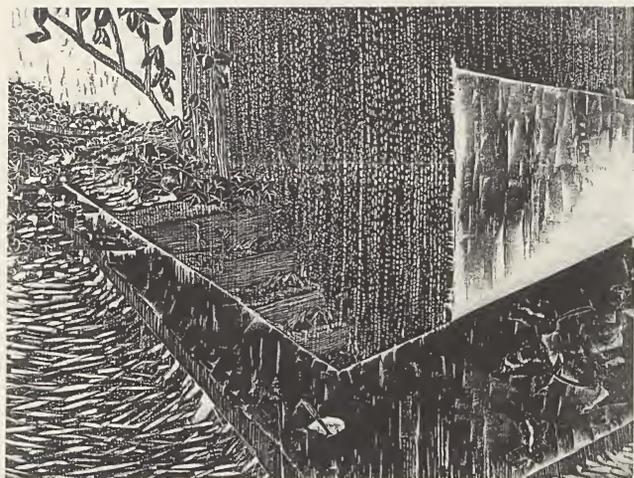


Shannon Reibel

Ode to Otono

It's been a fall.
A hard drippin', overweight water pellets
flying kamikazee kind of fall.
A bricks turning to sponges, soaked to your ankles,
flat nappy hair strings kind of a fall.
A bloated pigeon camouflaged
in dark lakes of dead leaves kind of fall.
An upside down magnolia leaf turned to swimming pool,
red clay dried on my shoes,
gray clouded eternity kind of fall.
A kind of fall where frustrated you say,
"Put up Grandmaw's umbrella,
let the droplets pelt through my hand-me-down
sweater with holes and wet my stolen
pair of brother's socks and douse
my uselessly curled hair
and give me the sniffles...
bring it on gray-haired and grouchy
PMS-ing Mother Nature"
A daydream of chicken and rice soup,
Mickey Mouse blue and green slippers,
cotton knit purple Martha Stewart blanket
Kind of fall.

Jessie Sams



Shannon Reibel

At the dawn, in breaths

The grainy tones of floating dust
The grainy light of birthing stars,
Pressed against the corners of the universe,
Stood upon the first step to time,
Cried out into the startled vacuum:
The memory of yellow is the memory of all.

And with the power of heightened quanta,
With the infinite force that rests in points,
The light poured out into the seconds,
The light poured out in perfect spheres.

The light spread out in the night;
And called it night as it was day.
The dust spread out into the void;
And named it void as it was earth.

When the dust and light had all in order,
Planets tore forth with purpose.
The stars pressed themselves into their creases,
The memory of yellow is the memory of all.

Once to the earth we came with feeling.
Once with yellow eyes we watched for gods-
Once in photons we turned and stopped.

To the earth, we came and sat.
Beside the ocean, we spoke of life.

A civilization based on authority-and-submission is a civilization without the means of self-correction. Effective communication flows only one way: from master group to servile group. Any cyberneticist knows that such a one way communication channel lacks feedback and cannot behave intelligently.

Robert Anton Wilson

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.
Oscar Wilde

But I Was Driving
by Rachel Venuti

We were in Jerome's car, but I was driving. We were about five blocks from Hester Street now, driving slowly, looking for the dog. What made it difficult was that the neighborhood wasn't exactly set up like downtown Charleston, where every street crossed over the others. They connected. What I am saying is it didn't matter who drove. It didn't matter except I wasn't going to be the one to grab the dog.

The car went where it wanted to, and when we popped up onto the circle facing the Citadel, I let it glide a little while we scanned. We curved back around past the stable and yard where the Sentries kept their quarter horses. Jerome rested his arm, his elbow sticking out of the window. Leaving the smell of overturned, kicked-up earth behind, we plunged back into the asphalt of the neighborhood.

Finally I had to ask, "What made you do it?"

"It started last week," he said, and I looked at the floorboard. I remembered how I had to make time, make plans to return his phone calls. He and I had been best friends since high school, and I knew he could go off on tangents.

Jerome didn't completely ignore my question, but my fingers began to burn anyway, like I was filing my nails while taking one of his calls.

"I've never seen a dog jump like that," he said. "I mean he pounced over that fence and into the old lady's dog like he was James Brown onstage."

That explanation would have been enough for me, but he kept talking.

"The noise was awful. The first time, I went up to the fence, put my mouth to it, you know, through it, and yelled. I yelled, and I shook the fence." I could see him curving his fingers around the links, hooking the metal.

"That worked," he said, "but it's July. The whole thing just kept getting worse, and by the end of the week I was having to go into the old lady's yard with a broom and knock them apart." Jerome slept a lot during the day, or tried to. The dogs were keeping him up.

"Turn here," he said, leaning toward me, arm extended in a point.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Campus was coming up before us, but even so we could see a few tourists, muggy, moist, lost. A woman in pleated khaki shorts looked into the car, right through the windshield. Apparently she had never seen an interracial car ride before.

"Staring hard enough, wave," I said in a voice I didn't know.

"They must need directions," Jerome said, rolling up his window.

"I'll tell you what," I said, making a decision to enjoy myself that night to forget about the dog and the looks we were eliciting, "someone needs to give that damned dog some directions."

Jerome and I drank in the dining room, crumbs transferring from the plasticky tablecloth to my forearm. One, single whine wailed and he picked at the label on the bottle. The late afternoon sun hung between the place where the blinds met the window unit. The room sat conspicuously in the middle of the house—where Jerome and his roommates ate, wrote papers, threw darts, where we'd one hell of a round of spoons New Year's.

"I think I did it on purpose," he said.

"Yeah, probably," I said, knowing that we'd be able to move on soon, once he got it all out. We had plans for that night, Jerome's friend Tyler was coming up from Naples for a midsummer reprieve, and I didn't make the drive down from Columbia just to spend the whole evening chasing my tail.

"I just wanted them to shut up."

"You know," I said, "in Japan, if your dog keeps your neighbor up all night, then you have to work for him the next day. Your dog barks, you show up at another office." The room had finally grown dark enough to turn on a light.

"Yeah, well, I don't want the old lady working at Sugar P. for me. When she came over here to tell me about the dog, all I could see was her housecoat stomach." Jerome worked at this old-fashioned candy store, The Sugar Plantation. I remember wincing when he told me the store was in the old slave market. I guess it was just me.

"It wasn't only the noise," he said. "Do you really want to watch that? I mean, I would go to class, come home, lie down, and be on my afternoon beer and there they'd still be, like some two-headed monster in a cartoon. What else could I do?"

I involuntarily gulped as I reached over my shoulder to flip on the ceiling fan and light. "Uh, I don't know, maybe you could have closed the gate behind you?"

"Angela," he said, "I let that dog out on purpose. I know they miss it, but they should've taken care of it. I couldn't listen to that dog getting raped over and over. On Friday, when I went in there to separate them, I walked the male around to his own yard, but then I didn't shut the gate. I wanted her to get out. I wanted her to leave. We aren't looking for that dog anymore." He finished his Heineken in one swallow and said, "C'mon, get in the shower, let's get ready." Slapping my thigh like a father, he got up from the table and disappeared into the hall.

When Jerome's friend Tyler pulled up, I was in the back bedroom putting on the diamond stud earrings that I should've never taken from a boy I didn't want to remember. Crossing the grate in the hard wood, we met in the living room in time to see Tyler break the front door. "What's doing?" he yelled as he pushed through, duffel bag shielding his body. I hadn't seen him since New Year's but he kissed me on the cheek as he worked his way to the back of the house. "Hey Angela," he said. Jerome jimmed the door handle back into place, but I got the screwdriver out anyway, and left it on the porch railing so we would be able to get in later that night.

Between brushes I smiled as Jerome snuck into the bathroom and shut the door. He sat on the edge of the tub and waited for me to spit. With serious eyes, he said, "Tyler has been asking about you." I feigned surprise by raising my eyebrows at him in the mirror. It had not escaped me that Tyler reeked of pine, of a two-hour plane ride's worth of gin and tonics. "Yeah?" I asked. He nodded. I paused a second over the threshold, and then in keeping with the silent decision I had made earlier that afternoon, I stood to face him. "Good," I said.

Tyler and I danced that slow, low-slung dance that only drunk people can. I had overdressed for a night out on the Market, and as his hand slipped up and down my bare back, I bit my lip and wished that overdressing meant that I was wearing a flannel shirt and a sheepskin coat. I broke away from our swaying trance then and tripped over my sandals until I reached the bar. I hadn't even brought money, but Jerome bought my next vodka tonic, putting an end to the tab Tyler and I had built. He didn't speak, just handed the money over

one side of the bar, the drink over the other. What was it my mother used to say about taking a quarter with me in case the guy got fresh and I had to call a cab? Twenty-five cents couldn't help me then, and not just because the payphones took thirty-five.

The hard, starched, boy-sheets of Jerome's bed scratched my flushed cheeks. I always slept in his bed when I visited, he next to me, our friendship between us. Half an hour before, I had pretended to go outside for some fresh air, but instead left Tyler behind. Jerome hadn't come back from the bar yet, and I tried to hold on until he noticed that I was missing. As I lay there in my dress, trying to rub the redness of my face away with the edge of the top sheet, I imagined him asking Tyler where I had gone. I imagined him crossing the gravel parking lot of our haunt, reaching into his pocket for his keys. He would drive home then, sober or not. I closed my eyes and thought of him searching both sides of the road for me, not looking ahead, feeling his way home. I counted off the streets, thought of how long it would take to drive, considered that thirty seconds per block was no longer a good estimate once he reached the neighborhood. At the front door, metal scraped on metal as I remembered the first time we had come down to Charleston, how we had not been able to find the house, even from the map. I remembered the way he smiled at me when I rolled down my window to ask a postman where Hester Street was. I had asked if we were going in the right direction.

To be a Canvas

Behind cold glass
my white anonymity
surrenders
to the painted brilliance of
tangerine flames that curl
in textured ecstasy,
licking me
with tongues of Japanese dragons,
reaching the slick sky
in blue of peacock's hair
that drips
low
bulging like veins beneath
transparent flesh.
Wet grey strokes the fire and sky.
Smothering,
the flamingo pinks and
Venus greens
that become me.

Lanier Detnall

When I walk the edge
it is not as you would have it.
I cannot give of my physical self
as you do
as a soldier in a war that will never end
and has not yet begun.
I can only give what I have.
Not the strength to carry the wounded,
nor the courage to rescue the captive,
nor the grace to comfort the grieved.
I watch you move
so easily
through motions that seem almost
scripted in their complex simplicity.
I watch you and want to
be
you.
Or if not be you, have you,
hold your immensity against my skin
as if by osmosis you could change me,
make me like you,
give me something of you,
to remember you by.

When I walk the edge
it is only in my dreaming.
In my heart I follow
in the footsteps of madmen,
in the paths of angels.
I follow because
without you
I cannot lead.
I follow because
it hurts less than being lost
forgotten, unnoticed.

When I walk the edge,
it is not as you would do.
It is my own delusion
that, though you would not have it so,
you could look on me with something
other than pity,
without the faint smile of bemusement,
with something like the
wonder
I have for you.

Achill Island

I snuck up on an abandoned house
That years before had let its last breath.
I caught it halfway on its trip to the sea,
Smaller stones had crossed the narrow path
And were springing the last thirty feet,
(Quickly they had rolled in wind and rain)
While the heavier stubborn stones had hilled themselves.
So, I sat down on the pebbled shore
And gave a hand to some with their trip,
Skimming and throwing over the tiny ripples.
And I thought of picking up a big rock
And walking it down to be grounded
Over the years into smaller stones then fined sand,
But I left the stone three inches deep
Worried that the whole hill might fall down.

Patrick Patten



Gamut

You will never write the poem and understand its expanse.
Jane said,
it's like trying to make a poem walk, when it wants to dance.

You may bumble into its embryo by chance,
but from there — it will be misled.
You will never write the poem and understand its expanse.

The words can bewitch you into a trance -
AWAKEN blockhead (biped),
it's like trying to make a poem walk when it wants to dance.

Stagger up to the ripe zygote with your eyes askance
and your limbs outspread,
but you will never write the poem and understand its expanse.

A pure poem infuses you with a celestial romance,
feelings -an expanding universe - left unsaid.
It's like trying to make a poem walk when it wants to dance.

A poet must sweat with puissance
to not abandon us underfed.
You will never write the poem and understand its expanse.
It's like trying to make a poem walk when it wants to dance.

Mary Dodd



L. Hawfield

Watching

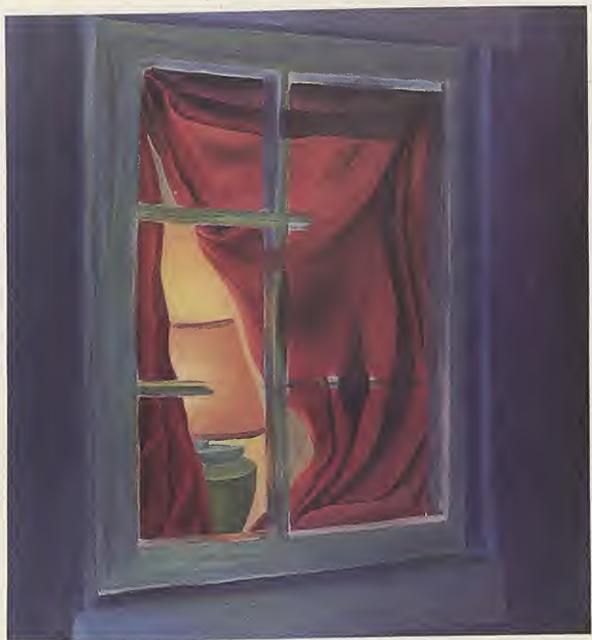
You sit watching me
as though I cannot see you
as though I would not notice
if I lifted my gaze and
met yours
intensely blue-green and piercing.

You sit watching me
and I pretend that your eyes
do not haunt my dreams
do not send tiny sparks of
dangerous awareness
rippling across my skin.

You sit watching me
and I wait for you
to say what you are so
obviously feeling
obviously thinking
about the color of my eyes.

You sit watching me
and it becomes unbearable
to be the object of
such tormented desire
as though I would not return it
as though I did not dream of it myself.

Cameron Wilson



L. Hawfield

Theaetetus, 8 am

If your ear were a three- tiered cake
at a bachelor party and
like a stripper
ideas burst in
wearing thongs,
playing on the lap of your mind,
you'd perhaps put a dollar in her panties.

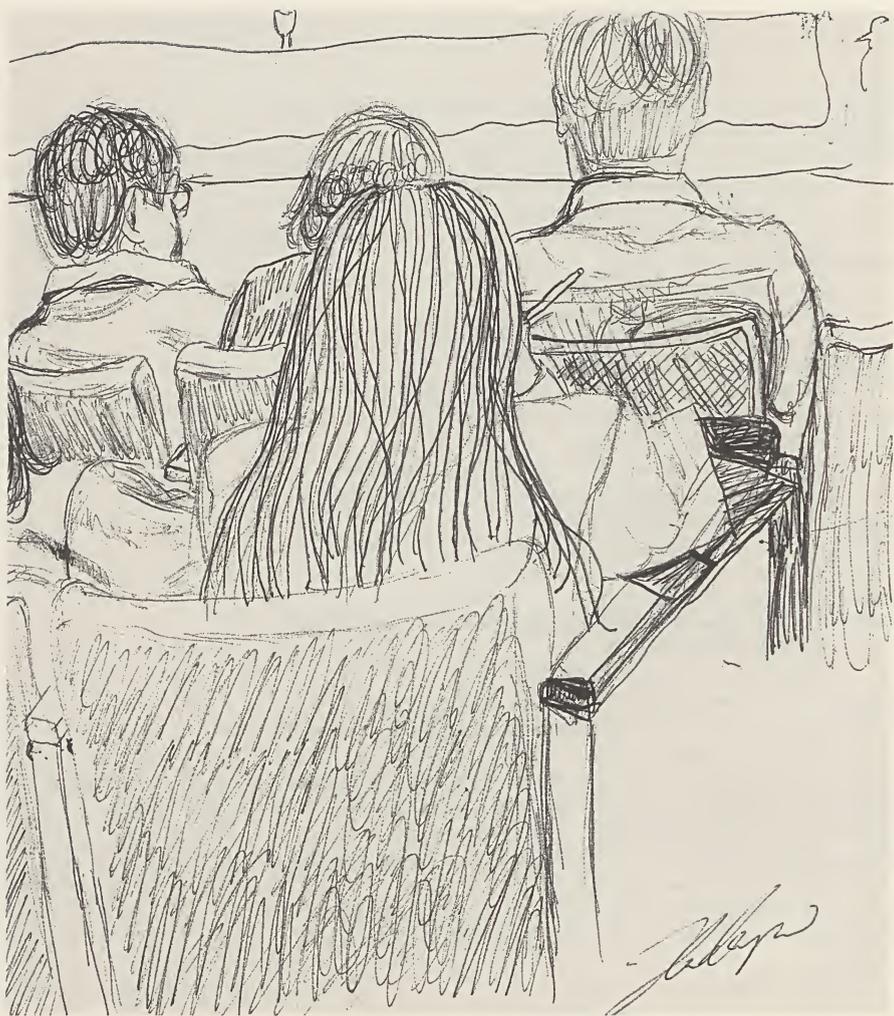
Would this make knowledge a Whore?

Or simply a hardworking girl
struggling her way
through college?

Nicole Giuppone

Babies come now like a scheduled lunch date with an old friend.
Of course, the kid's calendar is pretty daggum clear.
First priority make sure carpet's cleaned after six years of Buck's accidents
so thick wafting scent of soap burned vacuum odor
mixes with the dampness of mushiness under bare feet
and Grandmaw's cackling has subsided to murmuring in the guestroom after flown
in from Tallahassee where
the 'weather's gotten so cold'
while the answering machine at the office
retorts a month pregnancy leave after the beep.
The anticipation smells like Christmas
but it's hot outside cause it's early September in the South.
Dr. What's His Name is swinging a nine-iron at Shelbyton Country Club
with his mooch friend Cal
and that girl who's around a lot who's 'just a friend'
looking quite the caddy in her red skirt and thigh highs.
Maybe it was Cal swinging the putter.
Well, lordy-geez, Cal always seems to send me on a tangent
Because his nose is crooked and his ways crooked too.
Time to get back to the rat pack.
The pink and yellow splotched squiggling bundle of joy
was already turning flips
so had to be cut straight out of the belly.
We all became worry warts.
For no reason, of course, science these days could practically allow you
to walk on water.
Not to second cousin lil' J though, whose faith rested not in this modern day science,
believing it to be about daggum time for the pendulum to swing back to religion.
Dono a tu' que mi tengo totalmente.
Even as yellow polka-dotted munchkins come on planned dates
with their matted dark hair
and then the land of the Eagle smiles with perfection,
The Light which floods over it all will not be ignored forever.

Jessie Sams



Joseph Ladapo

Love
by Charles Radcliffe

Jonah tapped his fingertips against the table in an unaltered, unhurried, unaccented rhythm: 1-2-3-4-5, 1-2-3-4-5, 1-2-3-4-5. He raised his free hand to his throat and searched the taut flesh with two fingers. Finding the carotid, he altered the tempo of his percussive fingerbeats: 1—2—3—4—5, 1—2—3—4—5...

"Hey man, I'm sorry, I'm so late, I'm really sorry."

Jonah stopped tapping and prostrated his fingers on the sticky wooden tabletop. "Where were you?" His level voice brought no tinge of annoyance.

"Well, I was supposed to meet Annie." His companion sat down at the opposite end of the table, rested his elbows on the surface, and casually laced his slender fingers together. "Supposed to meet her at 9:00 for breakfast, but she was late."

"Very late?"

"Well, not very. Like thirty minutes."

"That's very. Why?"

"She had to meet somebody else first."

"You're kidding. That again?"

"No man, don't do that, it's totally Platonic. I trust her."

"Who cares. Platonic. *Cagnaccia*."

"What's that?"

"A term of endearment. Annie Karenina. Well, breakfast with her before coffee with me? You've just got a full plate today, don't you?"

"I'm really, really sorry I'm late. Are you mad?"

"I really, really don't care. But who is this guy that your girlfriend keeps whoring herself on?"

"How the hell can you say that?"

Jonah chuckled lightly. "Rather, 'on whom your girlfriend keeps whoring herself.'"

"No man, how the hell can you say that?"

"Calm down. What's his name?"

"She's the woman I love, and I won't sit here and listen to you call her a whore."

"I didn't say 'whore,' I said 'whoring.' It's a verb. What's his name?"

"It's Rob."

"How cute. Have you met him?"

"Not exactly."

"Want a coffee?"

"Sure."

Jonah rose and walked to the counter. "I'll take another French Roast. And my friend will want something pretty mild."

"Okay-dokey," the barista replied. She filled replete two differently colored cups and set them on the counter. "The gray one's yours." Jonah paid and hoisted one cup in each hand, eyeing the sloshing coffee as he returned at a stately pace to his table.

"Thanks," his friend said, taking the proffered white cup. "How much?"

"It's on me. Mr. Jonah-the Beneficent."

"Thanks." He suffused the brew with cream and sugar before taking a slow, tentative sip. "That's good coffee."

Jonah nodded as he drank his own unaltered brew.

"Wow, Jonah, isn't it a beautiful day today?"

"I suppose. Why do you think so?"

"Because it's just so...beautiful!"

"All the birds are singing, and there's just 'something in the air?'"

"Why do you have to be so sarcastic?"

"I'm not being sarcastic. I think it's a perfectly enjoyable day outside."

"Beautiful."

"Whatever."

"Your heart is black, man. It's just black."

"You don't have the first conception of what my heart is."

Friend took another tentative sip, noisily slurping the coffee over the lip of the mug.
"Why can't you just say it's a beautiful day?"

"Because I've seen enough beautiful days to know what a beautiful day is. I'm well acquainted with them. This is average."

"You're dead."

"I'm real. You're lost."

"Stop it."

"Fine with me."

Jonah shifted in his chair and took another draught from his mug. He had no desire to continue the conversation along the lines it had been following. The whole thing was pointless, anyway. He looked up at his friend.

"So, have you been writing any good poetry?"

"Well, yes, I think so...I don't know...it's so hard to know."

"What?"

"I wrote one about Annie when I was watching a dove the other day. About her grace and...and that really strange wistful note in her voice."

"Is it good?"

"I don't know! I don't know anything!"

"Can you quote some of it?"

Friend looked around. "You know I don't like to do that, Jonah."

"Give me a stanza."

He cleared his throat, then took a sip of coffee and cleared his throat again.

"It starts like this," he said, and with another surreptitious glance around the room, began very softly to recite:

*"I sat upon a terrace gray,
When dusk was turning dull the day,
And heard above the darkened world,
A note of sorrow be unfurled..."*

Do you like it?"

"Tell me some more."

Friend looked around again.

*"The notes fell on my waiting ear
Thought needing no one there to hear.
They sang of life and loss and love;
They came from a lonely mourning dove..."*

Jonah drank. "That last line falls out of the meter."

"Do you think that's a problem?"

"Well...yes."

"How about *'They came from lonely mourning dove.'*"

"But you still need the indefinite article."

"Yes. You're right. Oh, I don't want to talk about poetry anymore."

Jonah nodded. His eyes scanned over the other occupants of the coffee shop. It was a nice bohemian set. Long-haired guys and short-haired girls. Probably talking about poetry.

"What's the story with this guy Rob?" he asked Friend.

"I don't know. Just some guy she met at school."

"And you're not worried?"

"I can't...think about that. I love her."

"Well that's just all well and good, isn't it? Think about it."

"You can't do this to me. You never liked her."

"I like her fine, *pero, e una brutta cagnaccia.*"

"Damn it, don't talk so I can't understand you."

"I said I like her just fine."

Friend continued the very gentle endeavor of sipping his coffee. "Well, I think you're wrong to ask me to question her."

Jonah paused with his cup hoisted half the distance between table and mouth. "Are you being serious? Like it doesn't matter, like everything will work out all right in the end? *Amor vincit omnia?*"

"But it does. It conquers all for me. Maybe you just don't know what love is."

"Maybe not." Jonah's arm finished its task. "Maybe you're very right."

"But you said you loved Jennifer."

"I did—then. But I was naive. So it wasn't really love."

"You second-guess yourself too much."

"It's better than not guessing at all."

Friend grimaced.

"No one believes in ideals anymore," Jonah said. "As a matter of face, you might just be the last one. The last shiny idealist."

"I can't be anything but this."

"Yeah. I thought so. You're pretty noble. But you don't understand things."

"What things?"

"Everything. And it hurts when you get your lance caught in a windmill."

"I'm not even mad at you, you know. I just don't get what you're saying."

"You will. It'll get you eventually."

Friend rose, the coffee unfinished. "I have to go."

Jonah stood also, shaking his hand. When Friend had departed, he sat again, and recommenced his drumming on the tabletop before him to the regimented rhythm of his pulse.



Want Ad

Amidst the more charming she stood;

Dull blue eyes lined in burgundy
skimming the surroundings
lacking awareness
Pale with thick lips
in a base of midnight plum
obscured with a coat of glimmery pink...
bottom ridge sulking.
Imitation wavy dirty-blonde hair
falling faintly from pins
of cheap plastic flowers
Brazing bare broad shoulders
of small shapeless body
dressed in a rose-colored clingy gown
atop of tiger-print panties.
Barefoot.
Relaxed.
Compassionate.
Undergraduate.
Never on time.
Krispy Kreme lover.
Enthusiast of stuffed animal ducks
and random bumble bees.
Daydreamer of naps.
Obsessive-compulsive when setting alarm clock.
Smitten by sweaters and socks.

Yearning for adoration.

Jessie Sams

Paintbrush

My paintbrush is
1 inch flat Winsor-Newton turquoise and copper handle
bristles not subtle but silken

You are my watercolor block
150lb. cold pressed paper
firm and textured rivulets in which the colors bleed and puddle
Lips the watermark

I roam from one erogenous zone to another
with my synthetic animal tongue
awakening the untamed rapture in us

With my invisible palette
create an undulating blue to lap at your rib cage
impassioned orange to trace figure eights on your chest.



Shannon Reibel

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