Horse Less Review #8

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mouth of

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no pain

between knuckles

Riverbank

did these things

in a voice

I can barely

distinguish

with ferns

in her lap

and similar architecture

but completely

different hair

Eclogue

To orient yourself you must first hold the book high
Above your head and then let the sky supersede it.

From here I can choose to go anywhere but if I
Choose to go anywhere other than California

My shoes will disintegrate. My shoes are full of
Crooked toes and one very large church:

How much longer must we drive around Los Angeles.
How much further west will the same farms be dug up

And replanted. Numberless, pink-tinted paths span
From plenitude to vacuum. In orbit, volatilized scientists

Nudge the walls of their canister. The bricks in their
Thought experiments are being ground to sand.

Eclogue

Which of the ways I had come
Which I planted with my forefinger

Which I operated as a foil to my ambition
Which amounted to a snowsuit

Which probably stunted my growth
Which prevented my trip to space camp

Which is why I was bent double
Which was the first time I saw the ground

Which is how I arrived at the grate near the public gardens
Which I popped open with my purple thumb

Jessica Bozek

Sketch for the Fantasist's Tales

The one without a happy ending.

The soldiers came and made tunnels in the ground. The little metal mouths of their machines gnawed at the foundations of the most harmonious houses until all the citizens were disconnected, the water molecules turned disorderly, the plants wilted, and the animals' hackles were always slightly up.

On the coldest night of the year, when the stars strung their glow in the trees' upper branches, the commanding officer asked the citizens to breathe their last breath. Eager to unite once more toward some common goal, they positioned themselves across the landscape and rolled out of their skins and died.

The Lone Survivor's Tale

In pet years, even the young ones lived to middle age.

The Neighbors' Tale

We wake in their night. We open them.

Though we slept very far off, though we slept on the other side of the lake, in another time zone, some among us claimed that the surface of the water looked like a long glassy slide, pitched toward the town of those whose bodies we now open as animals. Our children slept, though those drunk or too tired to walk were tempted by the slide.

Their hair we take, their bones. In packs we leave their organs. With organs we might understand.

The Actors' Tale

Aerial stark: a theater of shifting weather patterns, of moving currents.

We looked up and saw only the things that flew against sky—heron, helicopter, one slow leaf.

Rain falling down a heavy curtain at the end. Its drops on the ground a version of applause.

Notes

* “Sketch for the Fantasist’s Tales: The one without a happy ending” adapts details from Ojibwa and Odawa fairy tales. See “The Star Maiden” and “The Adventures of the Living Statue,” both in Margaret Compton’s *American Indian Fairy Tales* (1907).

* “The Neighbors’ Tale” revisits language from *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (1830).

Christophe Casamassima

of Kenneth Patchen

killed or made love to was as one thing
even this sun, which spreads its glorious
no. It was a raging flame
no squalling brats or a boss
entering this poem.
the slime is quiet tonight, along the Jersey coast
her creamy fur against the purpose of the world.

poems which are written by the soul
and reaching for what it can have little awareness of
the world not evil, but *wrong*
cut the lines out of bread dough
has come to love rather fearful things
even as the lovely girl is thrown from the bed of the dollar
not to get born

of Sina Queyras

suddenly swinging hammers, they say, *This*
it is. But what is truth? Fact? Body? Idea?
now she sits by her memory of meadow, forlorn, shoeless
all minds on the cellphone

quaint, at least that is my dream of her
useful domesticity, such hopeful electronics
expressways, burying them, severing views: no cars
you can check your pulse, let your hair grow, take less
recourse. Lashed, that moment, prolonged
a melancholic pace and nowhere untouched. Nature
sitting on the earth, half immersed.

of Muriel Rukeyser

music that grows in silence, along dark a single voice
upon her breasts. Once I went higher up, once only
rousing of memory : the inquisition
i feare, and hope : I burne, and frees like yse…
each one carrying loss like conception : a lover gone
line and that bright red line

returned, and I knew the nature of One
unreal in the burning, many-motioned life
knows sleep, knows growth, the sex of fire and grass
even raped open and split, even anonymous
yes, it is there, the city full of music
song of the air between us, of the voiceless alone
everything was more violent than ever they said
returning, forerunners, and they could not run

of Sherod Santos

stripped of his clothes, and bound spread-eagle
heaping bowls of boiled spuds laid out
emptied of its visitors, the souvenir stands shut down
renewal serums, a camouflage brush, eyeliners
of the open earth, “Man must obey the will of God”
does not exist, will never exist, the story

seemed slowed to the breaths he measured it by
as she crossed the sand, and then he prayed to god
never far enough away it didn’t thunder all day
the way old men in shirtsleeves come out
of some imaginary hand, that an undulant stream
stared in silence as the landscape blurred and disappeared

of James Schuyler

Jones, rich, gonged aground a pissoir
and I'm taking a bath.
my bride was mine, mine were the writing hands
eating creamed chicken on waffles
sun crap in my hand

slide down a sunslip yet, this
cut mist
his thigh, coiled in the frightening—
until he had just breath enough to say, "Hello," and die.
you are sick in a hotel in Norfolk;
like any room, meals are punctual and time,
Emory Lovell said the other day,
really suffering, within and without his head

of Frederick Seidel

for Hagard to shoot rabbits
rolls down his cheek, magnifying each unshaved pore…
except the natives worship what is true
dogs almost always die before their owners do
except the living. The sun is shining and
rushing back after all these years to consult more doctors
its heart pressing on my heart:
Carine Rueff, I was obsessed—I was *possessed!* I liked your name
king of alle kinges to here sone che ches…

shit. God, von Schrader lazily shagging flies,
expecting a bribe. I walked with him all innocence down the ramp
it made the Maid of Orleans a man and God—
dear dog, you were just a dog
even if she was too young
literally the most expensive hotel in the world

of James Tate

jesus called the sons of Zebedee the Sons of Thunder
and started to dress very quickly.
my name is Spoimo, which I find strange
except me, and I by necessity had moved on
stop him stop that man, but I thought

then someone spoke my name
a bat-eared fox. I was desperate, and temporarily
this was a very sick man, one might even say dangerous
eye will be

Marmalade Glaze

Like a terrible pterodactyl necklace it bit,
sunk in and left me
bloody. Snorted thousands
of remembered words out of my system.
Appealing turned into appalling.

Mauvette Maroon

Many household objects can be the basis
of amusing puppets. They haven't lived until
they've eaten a chocolate-covered painkiller hybrid.

It filled the lips with villiform wigs.

Hair hard to swallow without strangling
my heart. The bittersweet root of it is black
licorice stuck to a fiberglass skull.

Crepuscular Creep

Impalement arts with fang shapes and furry lumps

like some kind of bloody parachute silk clotting between teeth
like odd rats scurrying in & out of debris, laughing
like little grey witches attacking my marbled brain

Reptilian glitter stuck inside a strange crematorium

from Nightmare Directed by Ingmar Bergman

iv. Cut the umbilical chord, we are toasting the mixed lot of light. I do not want unspirited lust this season, understand? Have you carried a silver platter for someone else? I've a sailor hat with thirty songs to commemorate its tilt on my scalp. How quiet can we be on scotch? Come along, hurry up, be good to dying mothers. Clap the fire back into the face—this is a march for the merry aftermath of the self; helped in places not our homes. In the capacity of speech a family is to arrive.[1]

v. A talent for that sort of thing, sinking: I would venture to say father knows more than just his speeches: call it just in case: a love for a thick wall woven like the people's mustache. Outside is the biggest world. The little world reflects an understanding of the betterment—if we forget beyond chance only a few short moments will hail down the real moment to deliver us to untouched organs. I have a theatre I want to tell you about but you must understand that I've only performed in a black box: wanted love.[2]

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[1] In the absence of time we wait out in windows

[2] What you see inside when inside is explaining the outside.

vi. From an actress I don't know why I feel that this evening will want me walking below its clean glasses: locked: up in the starving hours of the closed. Good night dear snowbank. Good right I have to carry an umbrella into the sands. That's a fiddle on the corner, the quarters are in the bucket; are you still under the table? My velvet grounds an angle of dull speech my fur is trepidation but only in that our holiday has extended hours for playhouse. Bring the damn children in and show them to the oldest person in the room kiss this: room is hirsute with attire I tire to have found bedtime.[3]

ix. The undiscovered governor forts a living in a city in which the Bible was read too well yet it was never written. The feathers in our pillow flight: counted thirty birds failing to go north in. You should laugh a little harder. Now then, children into your beds. It's close to the greatest thing in the world that this necklace approaches the nipples like a damn waterfall & everybody else can comment on the sweat-heart that slept well for several years. Kiss like a real man. We have kid visions taut as I lay I lay to grow from something like a present. I look lovely you.[4]

x. Beautiful, you know that? I can't just have any one person in my bed the lights go out & I glow kisses from your back. You must sleep I must drum against the open fears of the: we're getting up early must you go home with a jowl of gin a swarm of carbonated rebukes? In the grandest doorway I noticed everything has a side to go out of. The light on this night I put a magnifying glass up to: every possible part of it spits: we don't consider ourselves alone in the castle but the loose companions we hold know a tower will strike a terrifying nearness to the bed, will ghost up from stories: no more noise here you just go to sleep. I thought I.[5]

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[3] The notion of covering up where we came from.
[4] How to discuss the expert's eyes in the new gaze.
[5] To recall the dead as alive and roaming.

xi. A nursery is burning. I like it when you listen up. Better that I am an early service of the eyes what a good think to have you here. Ring finger is enjoying its christening. I suppose she is getting so old we won't need to cry when she leaves us. Wear yourself out please or bad act through the rest. Have a word have a late drink or a small profit must be made where we service the transference. Don't: under the standing a clearing. People lend money to others every day there must be something erotic in the way we listen to what it means to say perhaps. Everyone must be oversexed.[6]

xii. At times I thought I could be an understanding of what I thought it was to be pretty but still without the children around me to carry our way of growing old & certainly worsened of away. Mother has always agreed that a way to not cry must involve the things outside of love; so, upon their soul we salute the time it takes to laugh through a mouthful of mead. I harangue this touch, such a tissue to come eye. Now I'm weeping the life that shone against the way it is: has gone out of style: this won't do her makeup; will make its way up negligent auspices of the sweet. The art is so real.[7]

xiii. Confession: what are you in charge of & what do you say to it? Once you get me on my back you might forget how the rain writes itself into sewers. The contract is in your bosom. Shall we take this into family? There's no way that rocket went off too soon. Have you visited a fire? Big glorious beds corrupt a pounding heart. You will have an arboretum I weep you will have a new type of meat from the skull: on skillet: I weep—what is the anything that you don't want from me? The cold that is coming.[8]

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[6] This cannot or has not happened.
[7] Because they are beaten.
[8] When to drain the things we summoned in our despair.

xiv. Matter is breathing matter is a part of what we never paid upon our affairs. Do you have jewelry that would be nice for us to pawn? Can we go to bed a little better I look so much better when I sit but can I sit next to you? This is the tooth that is bleeding this is the room the children won't watch at to become the last in line or the floor of an attic yes the way a robe knows it will be deposed of death of a colder room—payment for the fire bones—I could have been better to the space we were almost going to be allowed. If you try to console me I will snap your neck.[9]

xv. The cup heats another way. How I be mean is something you can only respond to in the most native of languages to be poor & awake is to mope in the bloodiest construct of the abandoned sector of this here our good night. What to joke about please see to me a morning that allows beer with eggs. If you stare we might just go to the in-laws a bit earlier. Clothes on thank you. It would be nice to sit affront the mirror for a time so long the stretch marks shimmy up & erase the church servicing gaze. I brought your breakfast for you but you were failing at fucking mother. The laughter yanks at funeral ghosts.[10]

xvi. Wandering about a broken mirror, god-awful candles accumulating like sedentary prefix for the longing of friendship. Horse carriages come by screen/a toll/a bell/ aubade: you have an afternoon orchard to manage & have been told to be the place for title. Blood of man coursed through like an alley to possess something of animal ears: pour gates open: for mine an instant most about loathsome bodies brewing: grow but bear not the royal bed of luxury. Doing this in the dark doing what I have forgotten to do in the middle of a play the actor collapses & forgets the theatre is here how to bear concise.[11]

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[9] Kicking God, who is a shit, in the ass.
[10] Hear how central sundown is before the mirror glance.
[11] Leaving for all the wrong reasons.

King's Quarters

This mammoth monarch's master suite contains carved walnut paneling and dark red Valette rugs on hard wood floors. The floor is filled with stacks of magazines and papers. There is a California King size bed with a row of mirrors above it. On the shelf below the mirrors are a stuffed Mickey Mouse and a Darth Vader figurine as well as many other toys. On a shelf across the room are over one hundred Hallmark greeting cards from former girlfriends. There are three large flat screen TVs across from the bed. One is turned on to *Casablanca*. TV trays at the end of the bed are stacked with magazines such as *US Weekly* and *Forbes*, as well as the last two years of *Playboy* and several Milky Way bars. There is a Murano glass chandelier above the bed, which has thirty-two pairs of women's underwear hanging from it. In the corner of the room is a large fish tank with a Little Mermaid figurine and pink rocks. In one of three large walk-in closets are men's Prada shirts—ten in every color—and thirty red velvet bathrobes. There is also a row of twenty pink silk women's pajamas in various sizes, shrouded in plastic. The room's opulent grandeur mixed with a casual, all-American clutter, proffers it a best-of-all worlds ascendancy.

Roman Fountain

This large Art Deco inspired bathroom adjoins the master suite. It boasts glittering marble floors and the original Roman bath from 1926. The dark marble contains swirls of gold, and the tiles inside the tub are gold. Next to the tub are seven pink loofahs and seven half empty bottles of Victoria's Secret Pure Seduction body wash. The mirrors are Venetian style. There is a gold standing birdcage and an onyx art deco vanity with gold drawers. Inside one of the drawers are a box of Altoids small mints and a bottle of Viagra. The walls are papered in a dusky Asian print with sprays of plumage. There is a lotus plant in one corner. On the spacious shelves are six tubs of Vaseline and half a wall of neatly stacked soft white hand towels made of Egyptian cotton. The room's exotic decadence is overpoweringly alluring.

Vintage Vanity

This glam vanity sits sidesaddle to the master suite. It has many mirrors. The lighting is optimal for minimizing flaws. The vanity is made of MDF, an engineered wood that lends exceptional strength and ensures the surfaces integrity over time. The surface has a white veneer. There is a smaller, round, magnifying mirror, set on the vanity, along with silver jars filled with makeup brushes of many sizes, handle lengths, head shapes, bristle cuts and bristle origins. The drawers hold matte lipsticks and liquid eyeliners from Chanel and MAC, as well as a prescription bottle of Clomid. There is a Jean Harlow wig on a wig stand, and on the wall is Marilyn Monroe's 1953 *Playboy* cover in a gilded silver frame. The vanity chair has a white satin seat cover and is Hollywood regency style. There is a men's black Prada tie slung over the silver chair back, which is in the shape of a heart. On the floor are two baskets for two small dogs. The dog's names are embroidered on the baskets in cursive—Duke and Duchess. The mirrors in the room are empty, except for a 3x5 black and white snapshot of Hugh Hefner in a red velvet bathrobe and a blond woman in a sexy Marie Antoinette costume with sheer white stockings held up with white lace garters. This woman's sparkling fantasy realm has an Old World appeal, while still emanating a modern charm.

Oceanography #3 (from FABRIC)

– – –

In our various fictions, memory loss associated with a blow to the head can often be corrected by a similar blow. The effect of the initial trauma can be reversed when the act of that trauma is recreated: what was a chance occurrence must become a performance. As such, it achieves what theory cannot, a metamorphosis. Such is the moment when the word is made flesh.

What must be stressed is this duality, the insistence on two events. There is the blow that opens the field, and the blow that either closes or completes the opening.

There was a 17 minute interval between American Airlines Flight 11 colliding with the north tower, and United Airlines Flight 175 colliding with the south.

The interval is one of fertility, of terror and fertility. This is where the book is written.

– – –

The last book I read with my father was *100 Great Lives*, an attendance award from Sunday School. Most received their own Bible. Otherwise, a prayer book. My Bible was black with a cardboard sleeve to protect the pages and a thin ribbon placeholder. My prayer book was bound in red leather. *100 Great Lives* had a bright blue cover with yellow lettering and came with a placeholder that was laminated and red. We didn't finish it. The last book we finished was *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The last great life we managed was Martin Luther's.

There are commentators of Sartre who refer to the past as a mermaid's tail. Something solid, that we must carry as both completion and constraint. Jackie says that by the time the flood catches us we will all have grown like mermaids. I don't know how this will happen. It will just be a fact of our survival.

Dear Gretl: You are walking to a city that is the city within you. Describe to me the architecture. Describe the fountains. The statues and sun. You wake from a dream of loss. The morning is cool and you know the loss is real. Describe to me this morning, the ways in which the city has changed.

– – –

Martin Luther is born in Germany on November 10th, 1483. In May 1521, he is declared an outlaw and his writings banned by a Roman assembly known as the Diet of Worms. The assembly makes it illegal to offer him food or shelter. Killing Martin Luther is no longer considered a crime.

We meet him on the road carrying a shepherd's crook but dressed as a mendicant. Jackie asks him the way to the city. He says he will go with us, that we should not travel as two. We must be three.

– – –

Dear Gretl: I am writing you the book of my blood. We are together in a liquid text that has grown into the book of my dead.

In Caravaggio's *Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* various figures of his previous works recur to witness the execution. The body is already pale, hands bound at the small of the back and the wound still fresh. A presumed executioner stands over the body, bent at the waist, hand reaching for a clump of hair: the moment immediately before head is wrenched from neck. A woman clutches her temples. A nobleman points to a dull platter. From a window, two obscured figures strain towards the dead man, towards where Caravaggio's signature appears in the blood of the Baptist.

Historically earlier, although later in the story, Giotto's *Feast of Herod* depicts the presentation of the disembodied head to the King. Here, narrative is a horizontal movement written in gesture and echo, culminating at the far right with Herod's reception of the forerunner's head. A drunken promise to his daughter. A precaution against mounting rebellion. The moment of atrocity when the world overtakes intention, when action exceeds capability.

– – –

Luther asks where we have come from. I tell him the story of the museum, about the fire and how flames reflected in the animals' glass eyes. The irony of our departure, how leaving was like making our whole lives underwater then being dragged gasping to the surface. This incredible weight: the only part of the story that is true.

In the mornings we see two species of butterfly: the Red Admiral, the Cabbage White. They swarm around Jackie's face and arms. In the prayer book, this is considered a simple omen. He smiles toward the city. We all know but say nothing.

In that moment, as we walk, it is 1983 and Marjorie is showing me the planet Saturn through a powerful telescope. The rings seem ridiculous. My life is completely real.

– – –

The last book is the unwritable book. The book that by its absence enables aperture, the means by which we touch the world. Jackie says that dying is like waking then realizing the life you thought you'd lived was a dream. And from this, instead of a new day, all that begins is your own absence. I have been calling him Jackie but his name is also Alfred. I can carry him no further.

So runs the story of the children who followed Jackie to a railroad in Georgia. How they walked with him to a gold sedan outside the ballpark, rode on the running boards to the station then chased the train until they could no longer keep pace, listened until its rumble faded into the evening, then pressed their faces to the rails to feel its vibrations, to remain a part of him for every possible moment. Luther shares this weight these last few miles. And I realize it is why he is with us. Because he knew.

I have been calling him Luther but his name is THE DASHES.

After his assassination on Good Friday, 1865, Abraham's Lincoln's body traveled 14 days by train from Washington DC back to Springfield, Illinois. His fellow travelers included various dignitaries, hundreds of mourners and the remains of his 11 year old son, William Wallace.

I have been calling them THE DASHES but their name is God.
We bury Jackie among the poppies, in the fields that surround the city.

– – –

I tried to write a book that was the book of our destination. I tried but could not write the city. I could not write the poppy fields or the woods to the east. And so, when I burnt those prayers and wrote the book of my failure, the city came to haunt it. This is how a book of movement can become a book of ghosts. To know them, I stole photographs from Giotto.

Most are overexposed: children in baseball uniforms at a wall covered with ivy. Aboard an anchored cruise ship, a man jumps fully clothed into a crowded swimming pool. In the river, between bridges, a seaplane has come in to land. It is approached by rowboats and the sky is grey.

The photographs were folded inside a letter written in a language I do not understand. The letter was inside a map of a region now submerged. Many of Sappho's poems were torn into strips and used in mummification rituals. Only when the text was fragmented, was broken, could it contain the trappings of death, could it preserve.

There is one more photograph. A woman lies in an open coffin. The room is poorly lit. I cannot look at her without seeing Marjorie. In the weeks after his first wife died, Ralph Waldo Emerson was a frequent visitor to her grave. On March 29th, 1831, more than six weeks after her death, not only did he visit the tomb, but he opened her coffin.

These will be our secret lives.

I fold them inside the letter, inside the map, and burn them.

Nathan Hauke

IN NEW NOISE AND AFFECTION

This-*that* morning stammer—

Magpies sewing heat through magnolia branches

M-A-G-N-O-L-I-A where light graves in mind

an answer

.....

Light's grave in mine

Hard to swallow M-A-G-N-O-L-I-A

There is this feather

Falls into my hands

While my hands rush up

To meet it

PASTORAL: ANIMAL LIKE A FACE CAUGHT IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

Winter strips me into sun and violet blue sky. Winter

strips me raw in an icy racket of wind.

Slack-mouthed cattails tangle along the opposite bank and tear

apart in strips. Who could say, *This world is shit.*

Couldn't see cheapness in snow this morning if I wanted to—little

green tarp surfacing beneath the picnic table

like a terrified animal.

~~Margaret wakes up early to read. I make coffee and~~

~~coming back to sleep, slide down her body,~~

~~lay my head against her chest.~~

Post broken off where the dock was dragged out with the ice

RETURN TO GOD'S MIND
AS BARBED WIRE

Snow catching in branches
.....

Clarity of barbed wire slackened, weighted beneath.

Stunning near birches, white echo.

Drawn to stand between tire ruts: *I thought I was a clearing, a mirror,*

.....

leaves under snow, saplings, slight luminous pines,

the lasting inscription of each snowflake, each path

changing the vocabulary of the forest.

Michael Hennessey

Miss Minus

miss minus waits by the water tower,
mason jar in sweaty hand, swatting flies,
listening—she is expecting
something more monumental than
"the selected poems," "the collected letters"

"you never hear another voice out here"
—pepper plants won't grow in this sunlight—
but someplace else, another woman
might rediscover a new life, lived in miniature:
tending her tomatoes, separating the recycling,
dreaming of dogs and children and an end to this work

the words don't come when listening to records.
a radio voice is necessary: calm, intermittent,
harder edges eased by layers of static—
an incitement to earlier tears

we've believed in this medicine for a long time,
shunning unoccupied interiors—no life need
apply here (so cold; why did we never notice?)

distance misrepresented: withdrawal an endless
conclusion, when viewed from above

one requires a telepathic mother to change expectations

Overcast, Waiting

newsbreaks at :26 and :56 after the hour
alice the aviator / a sharp blade, ready
(mostly pregnant women and children)
“what decade are we living in, anyway?”
coming in to land / wood island’s lights
left the milk out on the kitchen counter
(a tin drum parable rarely played)
every line is wrong, we are told
endless cardboard boxes / all to be filled
“as if failure were a viable alternative”
the virgin mary towers high above us
windshield fissured / a million diamonds
(end stopped) (this is only the beginning)

Brian Howe

Lumbago de Milo

Are we dead yet? Are we dead yet? Are we dead yet?
How old will I be when we're dead? Feed for horses,

the temperature is below average, son-of-my-mother.
Don't excrete briny moisture from your pores over it.

This used to be so much easier. My eyes are filled
with clear eyes, the redoubt. This is embarrassing

but I love my parents. Nobody calls me 'Biscuit' now
and I'm glad. Nobody calls me in the center of night

desperate to say that light comes from the word 'Light'
and I'm stricken. I sneezed and whoops, it's a peacock!

Today all of the bitches are finally quiet or gone.
It doesn't bother me because I don't love them

and Justice is on her grizzly. A saint I won't even
utter aloud might flap in my face through the lines.

Uncumber watered her beard all night. Perpetua
pointed the sword at her throat and fell into a font.

Aggie mistook her breasts for bells and served them
on a silver tray. And now the Terminator himself

is out to destroy videogames for good in California!
My neighbor speaks to me in her white voice. She throws

her phone under a car. My back kinks. I fall asleep
on both my arms. They disappear. I wouldn't do that

if I were me. You have to ask so many questions
to realize you've survived. Which is the heaviest,

an undisclosed quantity of these oozy yellow feathers,
or a disclosed quantity of these spinning golden heads?

Rodeo

Clown's honor, I'm a trick
rider standing on two bulls
named *Too Much* and *Not Enough*
that I keep from veering apart
with nothing but my will.

Their renowned endowments
are as swizzles to those in my will,
which includes tricky riders
and stealthy clauses
for fleecing bulls and bears.

The stock index teetered on a pedestal
and toppled
like some golden classical archetype
I've rented a few times before.

Bulls and bears and bequeathals,
Oh my! Birds and tigers, betrothals
and dogs, squirrels, stallions, but no _____.

Stratford fell off Avon.

God cut a record
that let the Devil in
backmasked.

The first day of the month is rent
in half by marvelous news:

The salamander sleeps tonight

My money has wavy legs
all the way down to nowhere.

Unnatural sources
produce actual light.

2010

This is the greatest day of my life
at the end of the most amazing year
and I'm slumping like a butter man
left out in the sun all day in June.
You stand there like some ankles
out of "Ozymandias," that high,
with a big crowd of short people.
The lone and level multitudes do
in fact stretch far away; so many
fingers woven through chain-link.
The dead lad still sings in his cage.
His song illuminates the phases
of his sorrow as I slowly unfasten
his face, placing each teensy clasp
on the icy porcelain with a bright,
ravening *clink.* Oh how the divas
have fallen. One time, on a rainy
night, as I was backing up my car,
a figured dashed through the rear-
view mirror and yelped as if struck.
At that very instant, someone vague
filled up my rolled-down window,
trying to unbuckle my belt or thrust
a baffling bundle onto my lap. Then
it was morning and the birds were
all hacking, yet the 3-D fist still flew
at my face on a dreamy interrogative
loop. Now how did this one guy get
into every mirror? Waking to hang
up various smokes and fly in, I'm 30
but feel 28 from the ankles down.

Russell Jaffe

The war is waiting

Afterwards there were watchtowers by bedside
and young people, men mostly, increasingly, however, women
spent nights looking up and off as if
panic poured through unsealed holes as darkness
filling a bedroom, a killing chamber as consciousness is lost and passes out whose
dark corners were soaked by ashen blood.

A poet of the new war is lifted from arcade dreams often.
Pac man ghosts moan out of dimly lit corners.
Discharge notices pile out of garbage cans and
everything smells like wet lawns and burned charcoal
because solace is barbequing, anything with fire, really.

We were so drunk we stumbled like planes shot down and smoking
fell asleep in unknown yards and
were declassified of our shoes, a sock, shirt unbuttoned
and dragged into the house by small Midwestern wives.
The new war poet wrote “let us be / in this infirmary.”

Anyway, everyone was full afterwards.
Often these days we gather around living rooms with friends
and wonder how women learned to shake their heads that way,
as if disapproving is learned and headless, a charred forthcoming body
of a reticent casualty.

First, assess blame

It comes on hot and it lasts. Someone named it summer because it's when you're meant to summarize your year. Or maybe it was someones—a group in a suburban backyard. Their sweaty palms make etchings of the dirt on lawn furniture. At night, wasps eat the core of my words. Someone said that the trees during the day hung lazily, erudite and kind in green. But at night they lie—everything's going to be ok, trust us—lies. That may also have been a lie. Our youthful skins become folded in waves of ruffled bedsheets. You can see wasps nests in the buildings with yellow glares and open sores. Cracks get infected like sting wounds and in little things on the earth this summer, littler things are working on making them sick or hot. Their agony is mapped at night in clusters of wasps that hang like crinkled pods of helicopter seeds. At night, wasps are latticed into the wooden foundations we assume are safe. We sleep. Our eyes are crossed like the nooks in bushes far from the assuring streetlights. At night we learned that the suburban streets propped up during the day were facades. Neighbors like iron rabbits wave from tracks we chased. At night, cores of apples and peaches fall from the garbage can to the ground in wet thuds. I secretly fall panicking to the dirt. My friends continue on ahead and I wonder who these people are. For a moment, a dull drone overtakes me. Whisps of smoke wandered from above us to the grass. Mites work hard during the day, small and red. Night comes next. Wasps furiously work towards the interiors of houses. We've pissed away all this time on bumblebees, willows, and overturned garbage cans at the ends of driveways. You color bumblebees in crayon behind mesh screen doors but crawling ants know the holes in your pores. They get in, always. You sweat the salt of American coasts. Run, because wasps have never seen oceans. Summer breaks night like a sweat, so turn over with me. Today is a good day to be more like the feel of your skin.

everything, always

Don't waste your eyes on rear view mirrors.
say you don't want to look back.
this dream is one of getting older.
behind your grandparents' old sunglasses, sleep.
eventually you stare though not in mirrors
but at your own feet. wriggle your toes.
the skeleton tries to sneak out of muscle tissue.
the body is warm but conscious.
the dream is pressed from sinews
white as bone, the dream is coopted
by jazz blue lines notating the brain.
the feet bones click like
CB radio transmissions.
the skeleton sneaks down its parents hallway
while wild music plays.
it holds a frail candle. the hallway
is a childhood blood cell.
you know how the blood's red
but it's like wet canals,
tomorrow's water park tube rides,
like gravel roads
fresh and jaunty like young bones.
these mysteries always sneak.
the heart beats. it talks to me.
spread yourself out between the
long fences of night.
push your skin like the
pulse of low, distant static.
it's singing.
eventually that skin
is not yours.

Pin Cherry

o r y o u a r e i n y o u r l i v i n g r o o m o r y e l l o w o r l o w c o l o r o r l i g
h t o r a b l o w n h e a d j a g g e d o r c l o v e r s o m e b l u e s k y o r a b r a m
b l e o r w h a t b r a m b l e s y o u h e r e o r a n g e o r b u s t e d o r c o l l a p
s i n g o r w a d i n g p o o l i n t h e g r a s s g r a c k l e s c h a t t e r i n g g r o a
n o r t h e d o g w o u l d c o m e o u t s i d e b u t f o r t h e b e e s i n t h e l a w
n o r t h e b e e s p o l l i n a t e p i n c h e r r y t r e e

***

***

***

or you are in your living room or
yellow or low
color or light or a blown
head jagged
or clover some blue sky
or a bramble
or what brambles you here
orange or busted
or collapsing or wading
pool in the grass
grackles chattering
the dog would
come outside
if for the bees in the lawn
or the bees pollinate
pin cherry tree

or color or here
grass if cherry tree
you or some orange
grackle for the bees arc
light blue or chattering
bees in or sky busted
you're chattering in your
living room
blown or collapsing groan
the room head brambled or lawn
or jagged or the yellow leaves
or what wading dog the bees
or what brambles you
pool would the bees come
pollinate low clover
you the outside pin cherry.

***

***

or color's a grace

cracking in the bees' blue arc

or busted or chattering

grown in the lawn

or collapse sing a bramble

or living room or jade leaves

blown yellow

hello wading clover

our dogwood pin here

but for the cherry tree

the bees would pool in or pollinate

or you come to the grass

***

**

*

or color's cracking

or busted or

grown or

collapse

or ours but the bees

or you come too

or would but

here : wait : ink over

leaves sing in

the lawn or arc

a grace

in the bees' yellow

or dogwood

Salt Flats

can seagulls the geese
a needle
a blue bench
blood on the picnic table
moving into orchards
rows of cherry trees where the tourists pick their own fruit

empty apple farm parking lot
too early for apples there's snow
in the mountains still
trash on I-80
an avalanche rut through the pine trees
black soil swatch of deciduous forest

riot of pollen

honeybee

one

minute

we're

the other side of a cattle fence

sagebrush and Mormon Tea bushes

remember someone's teeth biting the stems

but the name yellow blossom their own

or the sand

at this speed

our bodies

an arrangement out

keep going west

there's snow in the mountain still

glass glittering in the median

blossoms & reflective tape losing its shine as you approach

make a shadow
the Great Salt Lake

makes a shadow

a shoreline just settles

unsettles

in our mirror

shade moving

across the Wasatch

behind us
like hole punches

eared grebe float towards the center of the lake

a haze of brine flies

breaking along the shore

a chemical weapons incinerator

where the water evaporates

a shoreline

stoned ski lift operators just collecting unemployment and drinking on the beach

sagebrush and Mormon Tea bushes

across the state line

yellow aprons hanging in windows blossom

curtains and aprons change by brothel
the Bella's up the road

somewhere to get pancakes and
pumpkin cookies the Piute waitress sells from a glass
display case near the register

her own recipe

They tested nuclear weapons
on the other side of I-80

the landscape rust-colored

alkaline

sand blown over the wooden barracks outside

Wendover

"the death fields"

keep moving

pinyon

juniper
smoke

kestral

bright red cactus flower where we find a hummingbird

rust-colored

alkaline

old Christmas trees

planted in the salt flats

behind us
tinsel and red ornaments glittering in the sun

maybe melting

Megan Kaminski

three washers
four stack
high deep
wide loads
sink creak
sputter drip
black sludge
dredges lousy

Early spring's evening light drifts calm
obsolescent zoysia brown overceded
holds firm another day given to vinegar
and dust wrenching open sockets drains
this is indexical nothing true
our work the slide from languid to louche
the transfer of assets between non-concurrent
bodies commodities capital fashion

yellow stone	A shiver a tourniquet carry our credit carry
crumble cross	rivers and tidal pools this city always
snake hole	rings twice treble signed too high powder
flat-bottomed	spins me faster father decent rents entreat
boat skiff	stay longer count the day's keloidal cells
tremble shine	collar popped racing stripes wearing thin
tulip blossom	money-colored light French paper cold coin
southern sun	slip slow boats cleared throat botched nose

scrape tree
green center
outer bone
soaking dry
branch dirt
limestone clod
prick burn

Pull ink from petal inner-daylight moist and soft
sift flour soda gravel through fingers empty
gowns and county retreats noon placards
leave reminders on drawers: dirt, yellow paint
penny loafers deliver me silver, deliver me
treasure, deliver me fire ant, firestorm, fire-sale
prices eclipse driveways and burnish doors

black sky
dark credit
wheels roll
beneath
quakes seven
open windows
open doors

Pour some tea and sit close daytime hours
occupied by rain and rubber boots poke violets
through wet earth build deep holes in asphalt
this is the house we have always lived in
this house we could never breathe in scarce
dust shanks light leg-ward beneath silk skirts
deep roots rising to sun beneath my feet

Collection

A pool a dowry
drawn baths broken
watches
spring sing
blood
coming underneath
bridged gut __
tar dripped
feet
eyes rimmed red
pooling burnt wings
shine: patent during
day

seersucker white linen
drip sponge
depreciate

Gentlewoman

Swoon expunge
emboss etched hands
etched face
twisted bone
metal
master day
teacup saunter
frost fingers Fifth

white-tipped
lady grey
green on green on green

cover
gold-dipped
dusted skin
dusted silk

Mary Kasimor

the nature of crickets

I chased the wall with the curve of a robin. Then she flew
away, afraid of the falling earth.

Temptation shares itself with oceans of sand. In the afternoon
the sun picks itself bald.

I weave rugs for cancer. The personality of desire changes itself.

The color red no longer exists & your lips parted at noon.
I continue re-entering the dream.

I found you in a certain part of the city, recognizing the future in
your throat. It was in an envelope buried beneath the underwear. I
locked myself out of oxygen.

The air burned. It tasted of raw fish, but dividing the earth into
a million pieces saved the diamonds. All further adventures left
the refrigerator. The ending was an accident.

The ending was an accident.

Then the killing surprised us with the force of human nature because
the choices we made had nothing to do with us.

I left you with the sound of crickets. Uncertainty dropped us.
I embroidered my mouth closed with the colors of glass.

Can you see that I am transparent? I pretend otherwise.

You confused us with priorities written with crooked blood & the potency
of their identities.

click/hold the revolution

certain words please
& anxious

then connects
candor
a pink lullaby
dead aim

those people on page 193 glance
outside at the rosy dawn

digest the amoeba rolling
on the water
& then distress true stories curly
hair appearances are everything
walking through
the door

a lyrical renaissance
a shaming wall
surpasses the enemy's obfuscation
the favorite taste

is vanilla
surprise
leaping catfish I am an orphan
of time

click
on this

castanets & devils hold
the revolution
the palms of my hands

change
the subject
the mouse longs for cumin
& sleep who knows the enemy is long
ago dead
who crushed the brain with numerals

on sidewalks the shovel lifts the afterlife

in the stealth of winds turning
woman. separating from man
the mouse burrows in its belly
luxurious. &
black
yes
the shovel lifts the dirt
the weight of the afterlife.
compartments of screams
past deadlines we fled.
without our tongues
the street changes everyday
some days. a picnic with plastic. forks
sometimes a riot of flame throwing
elders today hiding
under the bridge.
the owl & the past 13 lives
co-exist. I recline on my words
they pass. on the sidewalk pious chanters
searching for entitlement
enlightenment appeared
as oranges
a conductor of the sun
after venus. extreme desire makes
loneliness. felt through
hollow bones
a creator of doubt
who are you to talk politics. I know
no one & the doors shut in my face.
a failure of bibles & vacuum cleaners
the sky almost wept leaning against
the mountain. & we are all connected
by dots. each spoon is in triplicate
its shell the rock mutters below the moon
where god is. the energy lucid.

cowboy

can't say I haven't thought about it
being plow, horse and buggy.

can't seem to see straight but
that's fine too, and

like in everything there's always
the simple morality of a gun under your pillow.

in modern society there is no room for
your steel hands and your steel legs,

and if for one reason or another we pick
a wooden one there's a great gnashing

of teeth and credit cards *don't you think*
i would have remembered if you told me?

in everything: aggregation and the supine
a wheeling fleece of time, time, time baby…

but i can't say i haven't thought about
things maybe you think about:

lead, copper, leaf and foil?
Leprous head of the delta of humanity?

cinnamon buns? if our voice were as tuned
as applause i think we'd wander in open spaces,

pulling with our eyes the cloudy skies
like cattle in a line

for my soul, for my soul, for my soul!

taken out of context lining up bullets like that
might turn into an HR issue,

meeting this, meeting that, sign this line.
most cowboy things i find are rusty, rare and illegal.

but there's a black and white ferocity in
your daily grind like iron filings, matches, flint

we keep the simple aim from happening
by piling rocks
but outside where there's grass and air
you'll find a soul and another soul,

and there's me, and again me, and there

Untitled

I.
i'm tired of telling you what to do.

i want to settle into the bones of the world.
settle how a house settles -- then deeper
into the hotter parts

until when gravity equates itself i wrap
these arms and legs around that inconvenient
dullness of diamond --

that cut edge.

II.
if i had a dollar for every time --

if i had a dollar for every time --

when you put your hands into the earth
push deep and pull roots, branches --

every time you've pulled me squeamish from dry sand

III.
a headless statue
and her ghosts of arms -- heretic!

how can you bind chain links
and think nothing of us --

-- bookended in sheaves of leaves, cotton

IV.
i put you in a vase, darling,
until the crackling lunatic end of the world

a cascade of leaves, arms and diamond

Becca Klaver

DREAM MACHINE >> come-true

You read a dream one way. Life is something else.
In this country, left to right, top to bottom.
You threw books on shelves & slept & when you woke up, the book you needed,
the one by your mentor's mentor, was perched upper left.
It's hard to sleep so long in this heat but we do it.
You might say we've dedicated ourselves.
After dream-come-true, *then* what dreams?
A knowing in blisters & waves.

DREAM MACHINE >> rabid

That wasn't a vacation at all.
That was a cat digging into me as in the Swedish vampire movie
that was my waking ponytail digging into the back of my skull
that I thought was rabies in the head. If I sleep too long, nightmares.
I prefer to be awake but oh, toppling down down. . . .
You've been mastering the dream; you conjured our whole neighborhood!
And yesterday's job offer and that couple in from out of town.
I was trying to talk through what they represented; you touched my cheek,
reminded me I was awake. Still you have that kind of power, jack-o-lantern,
from sleep and a carved out head and meditating up through your feet.
The cat begins to sniff and paw my freshly washed hair.

DREAM MACHINE >> recovery / that road

You held on tight enough for the both of us.
You couldn't hear for the tinny beeps.
They were Doppler, but you were in the back of the ambulance.
You were in the hospital by the sea.
The sun shone; I ate soup with my sister, turned down shopping.
Couldn't feel that Mag. Not for miles & miles.
They knifed you and scooped out the bad.
You saw 3s everywhere; you caught and recast the spell.
You could not hear, you could not hear, you could not hear.
Say it again.
I'm sorry? Pardon?
You held on tight.
You dreamed up this city 'cause you were asleep.
Honey, wake up.
Honey, wake up.

DREAM MACHINE >> the towers (surprise reprise)

To burrow back into the New Quotidian, we dream the tourist's dream.
Litter box in the trunk, seat down, the cat going back to piss.
Pennsylvania whiteout, rail between us and black drop, one a.m.
Missing rental car, pound at the old Navy Yard, Jersey City mall.
Coming up through the mouth of the World Trade Center station
hearing it's not a leftover name, a gravestone, powder, residue.
Drills and cranes and trains and planes and automobiles.
I pick the middle escalator of the steep bank and rise like steam from a sore.

On the sidewalk I take a picture
mime a fanny pack adjustment
pretend I don't live here
where I've always wanted to live

Krystal Languell

Urban Blight

At night, at ten o'clock, the metal screeches down
over the fruit stand. This is the time berries end.
Days mark off in scratched or rubber frictions made
of actions: use the peephole; find he's squatter than
he sounds; whistle like you're hunting ducks; throw
your voice. Words on paper blur. My vision dissolves
as summer passes. Suddenly a gnat in my periphery
is a hammer swinging down. Foreign cities make me
this way. How I can tell I'll never come back.
The only place open on this block sells toilet paper,
but not Coca-Cola. Building noise is how to speak
to strangers. Pull the door shut quickly: the bag: your
wrist: the door: the neighbor: his bicycle: the last step.

Dolly Lemke

Hibernacula

Lucy I cut the dress too much

There goes our last five dollars we can't go to the party

I was going to make it fit you little pear

Sometimes I'm scared of how you treat that umbrella
all the metal spokes torn out

Water lily smells so fine a slender stem not tree trunks

I could have made it fit right match the sparkles on your eyelids

I'm scared to go to the party with you it's my party
I kept cutting more than once

Villain fights Boneman and Snakeman; Iris pines for Villain's love

There is no such thing as a breakdown, though
Villain seems to put it on like a gown.
(Iris just wants you to look at her.)

Villain has been frozen in the act of collapse,
a burning rivulet, an acrid smell of gasoline.
There is no such thing as this breakdown.

Villain knows a baiter of bears and believes he wants to kill.
Villain'd take Boneman over Snakeman any day.
(Iris just wants you to paw at her.)

Boneman was the limping man,
Snakeman was the plump girl stringing the bow.
There is no such thing broken down.

I know what evening means. The brute neighbors.
After engaging, Boneman's trousers were about his ankles.
(Iris just wants you to love her.)

A graveyard receiving bodies
has no effect upon Villain's fancy.
There is no break down such as this.
(Now Iris strings the bow. Now Iris looks at you.)

Cannibal Journal

storage of the unappealing and inedible:

discard fingernails at first retrieve and cover with paper napkin make sure blood blots through in intricate pattern read chart divination pattern live day by the pattern think of new ways to divinate calcium deposits

dry iris of the eye hang in a hanging method devise appropriate and pleasing way to display for guests if they inquire about the human looking eye parts they won't but if they do be prepared to divulge into the art project you are doing with resin eyes look innocent because you are

you are innocent and no one can convince you otherwise

before consumption shave all hair and collect in a wicker basket cover with newly made hair blankets that will soon be dyed by the colors extracted from the eye iris look into camera aperture

I do things because I tell myself to of my own accord that is why I am innocent and cannot be at fault no one deserves anything

crush bones to fine powders and place in assorted glass jars on the shelf in open view they are samples from your exotic travels around the world no one need know samples of what

start keeping track of demographic information it could be useful in charting progress because I am innocent willingly

Bob Loves Sally Until She is Blue in the Face
~ David Lynch

believe it
and I do and I do not
at the same exact moment
I balance the two
in cobalt bottles on top
of my head a charm school
lesson in sex and history
believe me
and I do and I do not
grows like a port wine birthmark
on my infant heart
which has never covered its flawed face
(tell me what to do)
did I ever tell you how terrified
I was when you opened the door
that first time before
the whole goddamned
banquet

you bit me every day

aboriginal loss jammed my ~~mouth~~
black-ribbed city
what did you think a buttery bush was
what were you thinking anyway

your entire street struck from an ill house
hydraulic machines and butcher birds
we (we)
tore that cornfield wide open

asleep in the landing gear bottle caps
sutured like milk-teeth against your (lovely) lip
give me a primer slide the latch open slide it
open ~~sing to me~~
I wasted so much time

you killed a mountain lion with your shovel
ate his eyes other countries trailed behind
that flat wide blade slung over your shoulder
the Boy Scout *Sign Of A Good Man* merit badge

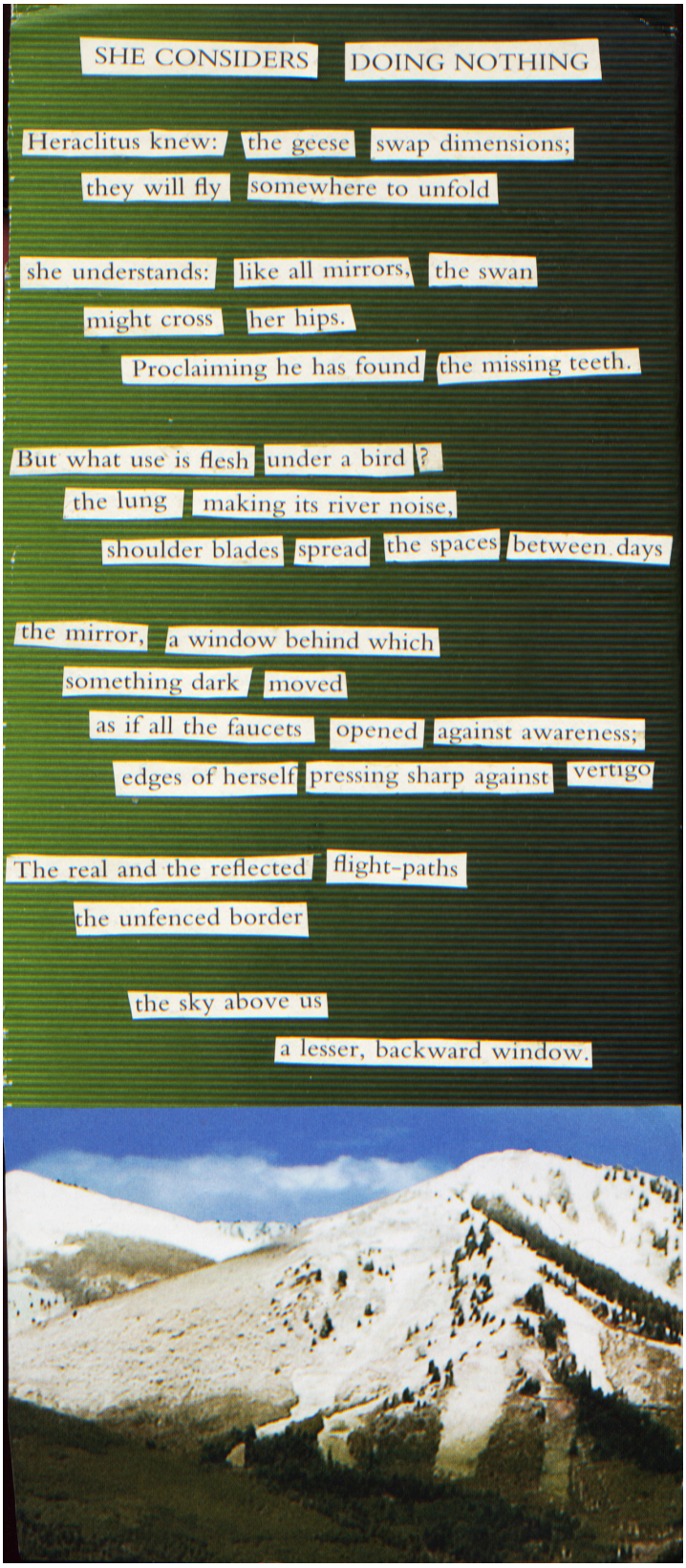
it's rocky here alone
all the barking my spine crunched against cherry pits
caw caw
wingtips curled in on themselves

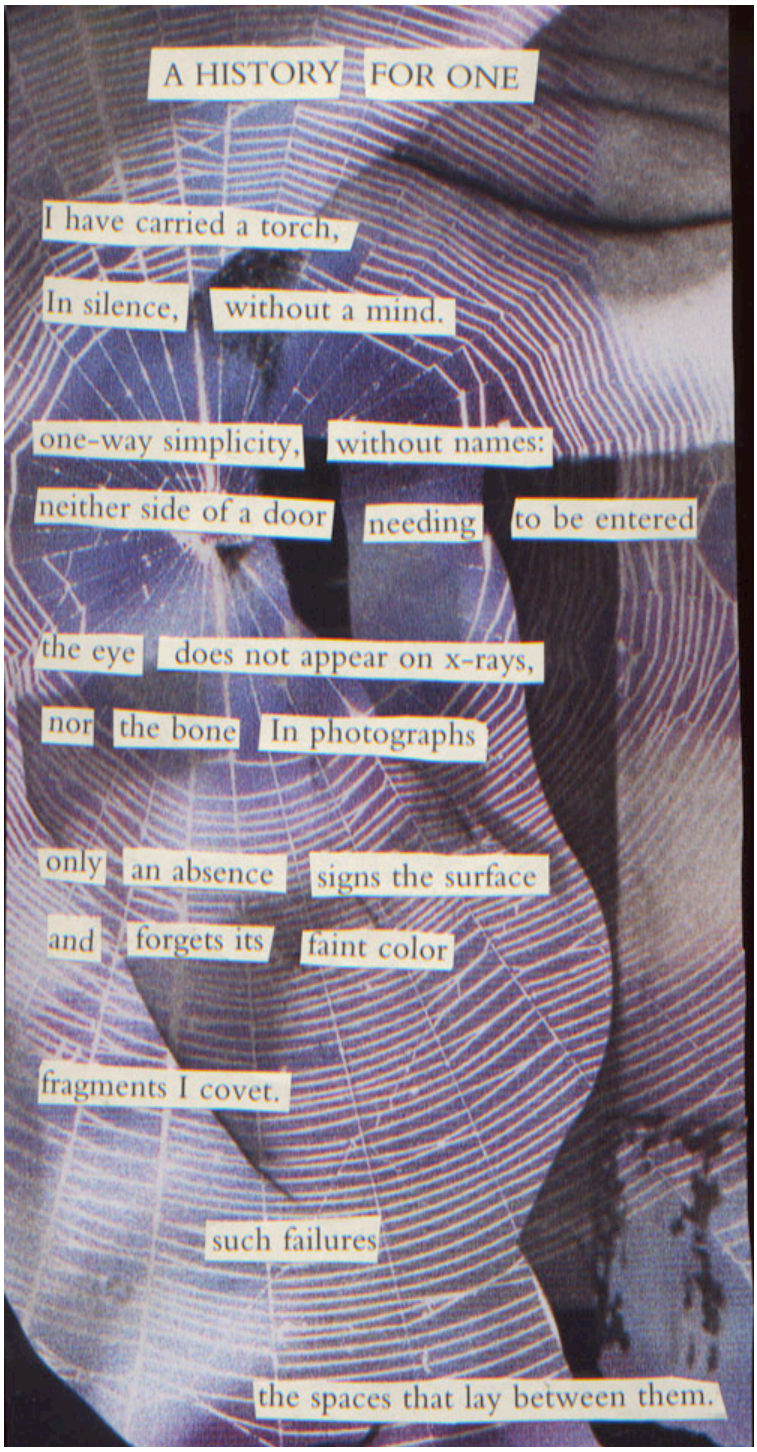
hey
Mr Hand Grenade
I pretended the bandages
would untie themselves

Only the cinema releases calm

I was lost in Pioneer Square. I walked the cobblestone streets in high heels a charcoal gray pencil skirt and a white silk blouse. I squatted in Pioneer Square in the park with the drunks pretending to get free health care from the clinic perhaps some opiates. I rode my bicycle through Pioneer Square the day the pergola crashed. I stopped at the *Soup Station of the Cross* and ordered half a grilled cheese sandwich. Tourists milled about stunned by the racket of a truck driving through glass a truck dragging ornate ironwork to the ground. My skirt clung to my legs rode up my legs and stuck in my ass because of static electricity. I was stranded in Pioneer Square with 236 tourists queued up waiting for Bill Speidel's underground tour to begin. It was Halloween night. I wore high heels a white silk blouse a charcoal gray pencil skirt. My neck was bare. My heels got caught between cobblestones. I fell twice and tore my stockings gravel and dirt embedded in my knees and palms. My hairpins swept out. My hands ached. I had a cramp between my shoulder blades from gripping the handlebars leaning forward on my bicycle riding over the cobblestones. Seattle underground smelled like urine and mud. It was dark and the only light I saw came from my blouse. A bird rose up and bit my calf a woman from Ohio grabbed my wrist pinched called me a whore she asked *are you a whore dressed like that?* She wore blue sweatpants and an appliquéd sweater with smiling pumpkins. The sweater did not cover her heavy pannus. I told her I was looking for an art gallery that I was lost my bicycle had been stolen. She spit at my shoes. I stumbled around until I found the stairs the under-stairs hidden to the casual observer. It was Halloween. I wore high heels a white silk blouse a tight charcoal gray skirt. The blouse absorbed light my nipples stiffened in the cold air and I covered them with one hand while I wheeled my bicycle over the cobblestones. I was in Pioneer Square wearing high heels a charcoal pencil gray skirt a white silk blouse. My hair was pinned in a French twist that my son called matronly. I had a sty on the inside of my left eyelid. I hid behind a velvet curtain in the foyer of the art gallery. A boy punched the curtain with his fist hitting my head. Pus leaked out and my sty was one drain worse or equal to the broken heel from an expensive shoe stuck between cobblestones in Pioneer Square.

Erin McNellis




A HISTORY FOR ONE
I have carried a torch,
In silence, without a mind.
one-way simplicity, without names:
neither side of a door needing to be entered
the eye does not appear on x-rays,
nor the bone In photographs
only an absence signs the surface
and forgets its faint color
fragments I covet.
such failures
the spaces that lay between them.

Tristan Tzara cut up newspapers, William S. Burroughs cut up his own writing, and I cut up other people's poems. Specifically, I cut up boring poems and rearrange them into interesting poems. The two you see here are composed entirely of phrases cut out of the July 2003 issue of POETRY, the official organ of The Poetry Foundation. I cut phrases from throughout the magazine; these are not rearrangements of individual poems. I then mounted my poem-collages on advertisements from other magazines. The mountain at the end of "SHE CONSIDERS / DOING NOTHING" is from a credit card ad, and I believe the background image in "A HISTORY / FOR ONE" is from an antidepressant ad.

Monica

Structural imaging revealed arbitals crammed in an aluminum bucket
I used to sneak – pee in – in our verandah. Rebuttals aside,
there is a true – a false – in that. Risings are cranking in the sky
to a pitch not yet heard. Filtered air injected directly into my name
rendered it parataxical wonder, eleventh wonder. Eleventh hour
I had a looking glass – someone panting across the wall. My eye detected
laterals in brain ventricles leapfrogging obstacles,
waviforming into a spelled word with a count. Roman numerals, standard.
Riboflavin inflamed it to a story that did not exist. Had never existed.
I paraglided into a computed misattribution.
What was the likelihood of tomography revealing anything
but microscopic details of lives laid flat on rocks for birds to pick at?
Everything priapic,
everything originary, ended in a trail off. Out there somewhere. True or false?
I can pinpoint numerological activity within millimeters – within milliseconds.
It will not be the truth. Somewhere between there and here
is a twenty something old, a lost name that lost
the story of its name. Misremembered
misattributed
reconstructed from a flap across her thigh, one across her fleshy forehead.
What's wrong? Are you imagining something dirty?
Mind forgets. Memory transgresses. I function
in the unperishable past. I function at the time of telling you this story.
A distinction is made between the girl and the sun
in her head, the girl and the sun in her name. Stories are only stories. Stories
tired me out and I went to bed early. Later
they found a heart throbbing under an x-ray source. It was a clinical heart
with blood sewn off. My name is written on my body
– so I believed till I was forty one. I am only twelve now – this is when I
hear sirens, crickets, cats wailing – become a receptor – misinformation
– vector. Uncle did not transport me here. Leave my name alone.
Count its syllables – numerological properties – particular neurotransmitters –
paradoxical ability of this confection. I'm eating pink candy floss
on a cramped hospital bed, waiting for magnetoencephalography.
Imaging my name; I'll tell you a story.

Danielle Pafunda

The Dead Girls Speak in Unison

Fine. Another trance upon us, then.
A plague of trances. We are so very,
very mystical. We are ever so very
fabric of dark matter and putrid
gash leaking the scuttle of legs
and every stair from the bottom up
counted aloud

loudly. With a warning.

Because we aren't afraid of you,
nor are we afraid of losing you,
now, for whatever that's worth.

Oh, but, once upon a time,
we could see you in the flesh
and we could see you coming for us
with your rough club, your bear cub,
your chest beat to shreds and a stain
spreading on your collar.

Down the aisle, down the well,
under the bridge
where all your brides swell.

The Dead Girls Speak in Unison

Or lullaby and goodnight. The fate of a nation
spread on your lap, flammable, stinking
of fish or feces or shoe polish.

A hard slab of butter, cold in her cold mouth,
the milk curdled, someone's mummy doll
with her head cracked, and one glass eye jangling.

Another smell, mildewed leather, the rotten pages
of your rotten romance, the rotten clasp,
the velvet harboring a furred-over egg sack.

What can we tell you that all of those spiders
haven't already spelled out across your stunned,
still, silent, flesh? Get. Out. Now.

from *First Residence*

What they wanted most was to see things they had never seen before. When they were people they felt relief. They were on a new sexual continent willing to proclaim anything. They couldn't sleep. It was impossible for them to choose whether or not to be savage.

They felt something. They indulge as a result of repeated colonization. They make armies. They decide they are as small as ants. It happens on the cellular level. It happens as a result of frustration. Like daffodils in the middle of the Pacific.

It was already happening, like the sun in this place, their lungs helped them to arrive.

Although questions came up again later, as a result of loss. They proceeded by these few simple rules. Their book deals with disappearances, and the phonic pattern of location. “Please” they cried: “we can't really describe movement.”

Nowhere did they manage to set up organisms. For example, the current obsession with the pupa would not suffice. They survived by projecting themselves.

They were elusive. They tried to embrace one another. They tried to reach, but promiscuity transforms itself into the body, as if decomposing. A kind of brutality the color of skin prolonged into whatever they were saying. Some superhuman, milky, sleep remaining.

They were defenseless, vegetation filling all their cells. Where were they heading? Were they alone? They trembled. They embedded themselves in the furniture, after someone threw a stone at them. It's a nice feeling, they thought. But why?

Reclining in their right temple was a butterfly pupa. “We've been blessed with a broad pelvis, yes.” Oh yes. They too could have a child. Like a thought inside of them, thickening until it grew roots. The chest rapid and rebelling.

There are two worlds inside them: the world and the sky. One living organism, a marriage of space and inner catastrophe. They are referring to negation, to the deepest blue. But it's hard to get the blue of this sky, they say. Is it the same blue as that blue over there? It is true they think, to question the language the blue has given them. Their eyes can only reach so far, even hooked together. They cannot bring that blue next to this blue. What is this blue called, they wonder. What is that blue, they interrupt.

From a historical perspective they were strange.

Entangled like vines in summertime, between skin and clothes.

They wanted to gallop between proper nouns.

To touch the sky without remaining.

They were the most difficult sentences.

During the day they were just bones.

What is Your Business Here?

I dreamed I carried a snake
to a burnt cracked tree. Then the field
called me doll without saying a word.

The seat lit on fire

in a pit of burning things.
Do you feel how tatty this has become?
He climbed the mount. He drew the knife.

The government

says enrich yourself, but leave the
driving to us. Ant noise. Leg shifts.
Then our needs and wants: pollen;

wool; milk; flax;

reeds to pipe, and a plectrum perhaps;
and we'll call our ship "Ship,"
break nothing on its hull. Here, throw these bits

in two directions at once.

Messaging

Listen, this is how it is. There is
jellyfish thrive, but bees being strangled
and big mammals are hanging out

at dumpsters.

I am on your machine saying
the micro-chip will release what it holds
only if we cover our

mirrors, and catch

luminous things on our tongues.
The false prophet is prepared
to offer a thick-legged cow; a

barren cow; a black cow;

a cow that brought forth but once;
a cow having two colors; and a white barren cow.
When you see us burn things read the smoke

as what we want.

Of Sewers Sales and Savings

Save something already, won't you? We're off
the whales, or off the grid, or the lights are out
tonight, and there are spectrums of

air for sale, and

every word ever written is getting archived.
You say you are scrubbing
your name from the net like you need

steel wool to do it.

Meanwhile woodpeckers keep getting what
they want. Repetitive want seems
like a god to me. Let be be

finale of seem.

The only Emperor lives beneath
the streets where the city foxes retreat.
Leaving their pavement poses,

their asphalt patience.

Of Sewers and Sales

Air for sale.

The magic of

asphalt patience.

The Key To a Cipher

You lick the corners of your mouth
like the place might flood at any moment.
While astronauts study

dirt on Mars,

people hold pollination contracts up to the light.
Looking for insects,
in pursuit of the bloom, wanting

giant hyssop

or azure sage. Remember
we were bound with willow branches
dipped in the moon to the sacred

stump of a pear tree.

Am I losing you? The white marble
on the altar is stained with blood.
The red behind my ribs is starting to flood.

Wringing out.

Adjacent Bits Used To Represent a Unit of Data

Put this sage between two of your vertebrae.
Put this poultice right up against your belly.
Poet write with this balanced

on your forehead,

and the tree will lean over the cliff
for another thousand years.
From what aspect you ask?

The future is anywhere

where weeds exist.
The red behind my ribs erodes as
I might hear the bytes. Okay I do, I do

hear the bytes.

My agapanthus is blue or is white
but is always clustered like
the violets in the lap of she who

mostly goes astray.

Best-Laid

Will we rent a plot on Hatchet Ranch?
If that girl in the shopping cart
lets go her balloon, we will do

all we ever intended to.

In the lobby we look over
Meta-verses in the classifieds,
but no other planet meets our needs.

Plus then

having to friend our avatars,
which is just like so major. Then on
a landline with lacewings, we learn

we still can't catch our death.

So leave all things staid, the other will be immediate.
Contemporaneous like you shudder
as blips of bat wings

fleck the lamplight.

Deal Brokering

Deity here is a squash, here is
some sugar cane and melon barely
touched by blight. I am collecting two

of everything

for when everything gets gone.
Can I order through you? If I
burn the squash and melt the cane each day?

I can lay out bowls

of milk and saffron, of cinnamon and rice.
Now that I know it was you
that caught the songbirds with your teeth,

I'm inclined

to say you didn't have to, but I am
so super glad you did. It's off my list
and their songs can help us locate, can lay out

our intent and territory.

Metaphor

The elephant

caused a scene.

The sky

filled its holes.

Chad Scheel

TV IN THE RAIN

hazy
brake light

shines when
the sunset shifts

MONK'S DREAM

shine		shine
	•	of
black		black
keys		keys

ASSUME

the
radio

reminds us

the black sky
blends apart

MOTES

in sunlight suspension
eek

reeks of process

CURTAIN

oscillates
between whiplash

and repulsion

Locks click
somewhere else

Mike Sikkema

from *A Knife and a Nickel*

a faux severance
song a keyhole
jump and you call
that gone

that billboard

morning
sure

sold me

fight
and flight

you choose to skip
a meal and the oldest
child is a crossbow
mistake all morning

who taught
                your food
to sit
        still like that

Explain money
on faces
The child gums
an acorn
and clutches at sunspots
You're
a walking lantern
So what

the landlord
owes
you
a hammer

The fact is yes
and no It's true
the miscellany
includes
a paper
bag full of headlines
to create new
alphabets

His Big Screen

The picture is for a hospital
Bed but I won't go there for
My father too deep for the screen
I think his heart is a hospital
I won't go there but to practice

A bedside medicine beside death

*

He watches those
Movies to practice
For when his own
Father dies

*

I watch those
Movies to practice
For when my
Father dies

*

I worry both
That too few will
Gather to the funeral
And no matter
The number when
They disperse

*

I have watched it
When they will take me
With them to their
Lives ones and twos
And none of me will be
Left where they gathered

*

In this scene
His mind is

On screen
In the room
Where it
Happens

*

It happens
Deep deep
In his heart
By the bed

*

I watch his
Movies because
I am never there
When his own
Father dies

*

For the screen
His heart is
Where it happens
To be by the numbers

*

It can't go there
Itself or where
The hospital
Or ground
Are numbered
Among them

*

You're supposed to live

On through the others
Is what he's thinking of
Doing in my head
He'll never be ready for this

Jordan Stempleman

Favorite Tremor

If I understood better, I honestly
don't remember. Beetles are dicks,
the elms always force us to say
about this beetle or that.
And if we're really here
for what we came for,
I'll take my creation's word
over your creation's word.
All that spreads, I imagine, once
could not. All that goes for the grain,
one day will not, and without
choice, wait, then not wait
to explode. If what I have left,
I was reading the other day,
is there's the story, and then
there's the fashionable way
of telling it, there's still someplace
to write: What you don't see
is that I need you to be thinking
of what's there.

A Fable for Equable

I am auditioning for the role of cement.
Not quite dry cement, but not gray enough

to take in any new impression or dents.
A job is just a simple mutation
of what we appear to be slapping in public

for never quite listening, for always
stealing the car every night after we go to bed.

As cement, I will still be openly vulnerable
to power, for one, and two, forever have
an insatiable hunger for leader worship.

I was born for this. Just as you were born
to polish the teeth of tigers, not read poems
and wait for such warmer winds.

The Difficulties of Giving Out

A boar does not shepherd, flight,
actually screech, let me go, how does this happen?
The boar is so welled-up inside
that helping it to lie down,
and then rubbing duck fat across the worst
of its hairs, those along the back,
so they too lie down, might be
for the best, sunny.
Mammals grow from zero.
Mammals develop between two trees
that lean inward to form a canopy, albeit penetrable,
that forgives all that begins
from what the trees call, beneath it.

What I Learn From Poems

Norman Dubie had a great, crying dwarf
in his poem that will inevitably be the dwarf
in my poem if I ever find one there.
Dottie Lasky removed the jungle but left the wind.
Graham Foust filled the holes in with flesh
with more thought, more flesh.
Landis Everson killed himself blocks from where
I'd walk to eat hamburgers. Bob Hicock
spoke to his skeleton, while Heather Christle bombed
the chickens, to end her poem, to get us
to try harder next time. Jordan Davis sent me to the logs
to bang away for my song. Landis Everson
left me alone in the poem I'll write
after this one. He says you are always alone
in the poem that's yours.

Maureen Thorson

In Dreams

While your wife is the sleepiest tree,
you haunt the stairways with soft cheeses,
and eat all the ice cream.

What B movies do you glaze upon
while she slumbers?
Limbs spread, she star-fishes

over what should be
your side of the bed. She dreams
of passenger pigeons, all the hours

not yet extinguished, and still
you check the sports blogs,
hold your vigil on the back porch,

listen to raccoons clawing through the gutters.
Half the night is gone, and her pigeons
are stuffed and roasted,

lined in fantastic rows.
When will you join them?
When will you kiss her face,

smushed sideways into the pillows,
enclose her single quote and double it?
Even those who can't sleep

can rest. Night is short and the tree
is growing, say the pigeons,
darkening the skies above the bed.

Come count us, they coo.
Raccoons are a dime a dozen.
Come watch us go extinct.

Megan Volpert

Review of Karyna McGlynn's I Have to Go Back to 1994 and Kill a Girl (Sarabande Books, 88pp.)

Karyna McGlynn tells me she is hung over, and in part because this is what one is supposed to say when getting together with someone on a Thursday afternoon at AWP, I do not entirely believe her. We are meeting to discuss her book, I Have to Go Back to 1994 and Kill a Girl, which was chosen by Lynn Emmanuel as winner of the Kathryn A. Morton Prize in 2008 for publication by Sarabande Books. McGlynn always seems well put together, and one suspects that she is invincible to pedestrian maladies like a hangover. This misperception is part of a larger problem for the slam poet cum debut award-winning darling, whose excellent book has been garnering well-earned praise for all the wrong reasons.

Although this is McGlynn's first full-length collection of poems, it is far from her debut. To understand what there is to love about 1994, one must look into the various traditions laying claim to McGlynn's work. If you simply ask Wikipedia, she is "associated with spoken word, New Sincerity, and New Confessionalism." Each of these three labels is not quite right. The first case is a severe understatement; McGlynn has actually spent more than a decade in the world of competitive performance poetry, and has been a member of several nationally recognized teams, one of which she coached to the finals stage at the National Poetry Slam. She is one of a handful of successful slam poets to hop the fence into more academic poetry terrain, alongside the likes of Jeffrey McDaniel and Daphne Gottlieb. When asked about the labels of New Sincerity and New Confessionalism, McGlynn rolls her eyes and flicks a wrist. It's not her fault she was living in Austin when the "New Sincerity" tag briefly cropped up everywhere on that music scene, nor is it her fault so many readers seem to be taking her poems at their word as a kind of "New Confession."

I point to a fragment that most critics would say is emblematic of the work showcased in1994: "And here in the realm of all that is mine / There are mean boys touching my things"(64). McGlynn is quick to say she didn't want the book to be pigeonholed as an abuse narrative. The bulk of the pieces do concern assorted violences faced by young girls, at the hands of both unrepentant boys and careless or clever girls, repeatedly culminating in what appears to be sexual abuse by a family member. I do not ask the dangerously obvious question, but in a quiet moment when we are both thinking of what to discuss next, McGlynn picks at the carpet we are sitting on and hazards the answer as to whether she has herself been sexually abused. Her brief foray into pinning down reality is of course nobody's beeswax, and she immediately regrets admitting yea or nay to me on this issue because also, whatever answer she gives is likely to simultaneously emphasize and undermine the abuse narrative that is actually the least intriguing thing about the book.

So we are now in cahoots, and begin talking about narration. She certainly doesn't consider the poems confessional, but she also doesn't think of them as persona

pieces. Most of the poems are voiced by girls, all of whom are some version of McGlynn herself, and their identities are slippery with various lacks of knowledge about their own circumstances, but McGlynn does not view them as unreliable. As we converse, there is one impulse in everything she says that begins to emerge as very reliable: McGlynn feels guilty. Here again I do not ask for particulars, and during our hour together she doesn't dare to divulge them. She says very carefully that she hasn't actually murdered anyone or anything, but that she is not proud of some of the choices she's made. Perhaps it's only that she hung up the phone on her mother once or has a glove box full of speeding tickets. Whatever the reality of McGlynn's past mistakes, she elevates them here through a deeper and more significant penitence.

Indeed, there are several poems that stick out from the more predictable narrative of violence against girls that has been monopolizing the attention toward this book. In "God, I Got Down There to Get Off," a 6th grader determinedly persists in masturbating despite sensing the watchful eye of her dead grandmother, joylessly pursuing an orgasm in defiance against—what? In "Would You Like Me to Walk Your Baby?" a witchy woman tries to persuade a couple on an airplane to let her quell their crying son, and there is something distinctly shady about it, a possible abduction scenario looming in the tone. McGlynn says she almost didn't put this piece in the book, and that she herself has no interest in becoming a mother, remarking again that the many of these poems are actually built to highlight her own guilt. This becomes even more clear when we talk about "We Both Dyed with Feria Starlet, I Couldn't Dispossess a Girl," in which she allows another woman to half-seduce her, and "then I just / started hitting her that night / and from then on I made / thin creeks of blood run down / her temples and mouth / I swear I said Amie look what / you keep making me do" (53).

McGlynn then tells me she is a little bit of every character in the book, and I begin to think she tries perhaps especially to insert her psychological truths into all the unsavory ones. She particularly views this poem as an effort at strong self-condemnation, but smiles sadly and says "the real Amie" is still very upset at the way she is portrayed here. At this point, given we are avoiding the idea that any of this is autobiographical and proposing instead a convolution of slippery identities, we are necessarily letting it slide that there is any kind of "real Amie" out there somewhere—but as we begin talking about the book's formal elements, McGlynn divulges a fantastic clue about how these pieces work. Though it's clear from the notes in back of the book that she relies heavily on dreams, paintings and films to do writing in response, McGlynn tells me that these more psychological pieces are generally the ones where a reader will find big white spaces. Many of the poems play around with two or three columns which can be read most easily from left to right straight across, but can also be understood in large chunks up and down. The poems with traditionally left-justified margins, however, she construes as more autobiographical. It's worth noting that the only poems I've discussed here so far—the ones that do not much contribute to the victimized girlhood narrative thread—are those that are left-justified, except "We Both Dyed" is also written as a two-column piece.

When I ask McGlynn if there is anything in particular she would like me to discuss in this review that other reviewers have not done justice to in her eyes, she continues

to focus on form. I parlay this into a conversation about how well the book does at live readings. We are working from a mutual history of slam poetry, and are on the same page about what doesn't translate to the stage. When reading any of the columned or checker-boarded poems to an audience, McGlynn only reads them straight across. I did a reading with her once in Austin when the book had just come out. She began to introduce one of these poems by trying to explain the potential for cross-reading the form, but petered out and somewhat apologetically ended up showing the page like a picture book, so the audience could momentarily get a sense of other possibilities before she read it straight across. When asked about this, McGlynn admits she tends to read more of the left-justified poems aloud than the more formally innovative pieces, because they are generally less surreal and the audience mostly enjoys them more easily. But when pressed, she admits that the entire book doesn't really go over with an audience in any way that she is used to. She finds herself capping off readings with more performance-oriented pieces, especially from her thick chapbook, Alabama Steve (Destructible Heart Press, 2008).

The narrator in Alabama Steve is a flippant and colloquial idiot savant—McGlynn's choice of adjectives—and the public loves to listen to these poems. They are much more funny than 1994, though both sets were written basically simultaneously while she was in grad school. While 1994 appears to most readers to show McGlynn defending herself against an onslaught of violence, Alabama Steve sheds light on the McGlynn that commits most of the violence herself. Just in the opening title piece, for example, the narrator tries to punch out a five year old girl who she perceives as having committed some minor offense as the narrator is trying to get her fortune told. As the chapbook progresses, it's easy to see how McGlynn is emboldened to make the poor choices she vaguely alludes to during our conversation: "Steve says I'm a genius" (4). So does the drunken, creepy and self-obsessed "Stephen Brownblatt, Writer-in-Residence," who McGlynn invents to praise herself throughout the collection. The assortment of "Steve" characters here are also all a bit of McGlynn, but in an unabashed and fun-loving—if reckless—way that the assortment of girls in 1994 are definitely not.

When I saw the title of this book was I Have to Go Back to 1994 and Kill a Girl, I admit that I was bracing myself for some rollicking good adventure. As McGlynn writes in the title piece, "I must say / 1994 is a simpler / time—not everyone is suspect" (55). She was a sophomore in high school then, and a reader wants to expect that McGlynn will act accordingly. But there's a bait and switch here. This abuse narrative floating along the surface of the work would lead one to believe that the author needs to "kill a girl" in order to protect her from the violence she will otherwise face—that she is killing off the ugly memories foisted upon her by others. More deeply however, McGlynn is hoping to kill off her own misdeeds. The girls are not so innocent after all, and in the best moments of this book, the past we confront is much more focused on destroying a girl in order to save her from herself.

While we are sitting on the floor in the lobby of the Colorado Convention Center, there are two men in coveralls wheeling around metal boxes of various sizes, eyeing us nervously as they build a kind of fort around us. Eventually, the annoyance has built up on both sides until one of the men apologizes for interrupting us and asks us to move. After we scoot over a few feet, I ask McGlynn about the opening epigraph

from The Lady from Shanghai: "Killing you is killing myself. But you know, I'm pretty tired of both of us." The real purpose of this book does not seem like a mystery at all, but it has been glossed over by an image of victimhood that can be easy to latch onto in a world of labels like "New Confessionalism." And perhaps McGlynn, reluctant witness to her own unnumbered crimes, actually likes it that way—prefers to keep things glossy. She tells me she wishes that Anna Journey's book, If Birds Gather Your Hair for Nesting (University of Georgia Press, 2009), had been out in time for her to use a juicy line from one of those poems as the epigraph: "I'm made // of so many girls I can't get them all / drunk at once or they'd mutiny." Tellingly, in McGlynn's twisted paraphrase to me that afternoon, the line becomes: "I'm so many girls, I have to keep them all drunk, or they'd mutiny."

The mutiny is clear, but who needs a drink over it is fuzzy. Indeed, readers have been too focused on the physical violence in 1994, obscuring a more central subject that is the author's misgivings about her own transgressive past. So a hangover—at least of the emotional variety—is really there after all. McGlynn has to leave to prepare for her afternoon panel; she definitely wants to put her best foot forward. When I am walking through the lobby later on, the metal fort that almost boxed us in has become a roasted nuts vendor, and I wonder how long I will associate Karyna McGlynn with the sickeningly sweet smell of candied almonds. I was behaving and resisted buying a bagful, but the scent still seems to be following me. There is this little tidbit from the prefatory poem in the book, left-justified and titled "OK, but you haven't seen the last of me," that warns: "her body banked against mine, / an obsolete piece of machinery I keep for some reason" (xxi).

Subject: Precipice

The path must have led us here
without us knowing. Remember

when heights used to scare you?
I was scared for you. We chucked

our garbage to the bottom,
like the natives used to. The midden

now hides the entrance to the caves
where our pictographs are fading

from lack of use. I carried you in,
& I'll carry you out, too. Still,

I was scared for you until you leapt,
the sweet offal reaching up to catch you.

Subject: Good New Replica

Bene bene bene you said in language. I misread
your speech as a smile: tongue tipped out
through teeth. Your aura wears away at me,
like the needle locked in the groove of a record.

For a moment, the mechanics of reproduction
are obsolete: the refuge of the aesthete.
You're still young, not stripped of pith. You're still.
Adorno swears you're dead, but Benjamin

knows better. You're just sleeping again, dreaming
yourself over & over again. Just wake up
& smile more. Say something that will follow me.
Make it good, make it new. Replicate, replicate.

Joseph Wood

THE PIER

In the center of the pond is a pillow. This is where the ducks go to get fixed. The ducks can't play right now. They're being fixed, their wings are shattered. In the center of their wings is a pond. In that pond their flight is drowning. The fish are the ducks' friends and so today everything is sad. Even the clouds puff gray. Even the moon hides behind its wax. In the center of the moon is not the duckling. In the center of the duckling is its embolized lung. Its shores are filled with cans and cast-off hooks. The hooks just want to make friends. Someone is lying. The ducks don't know, they can't play right now. The ducks are not ducks anymore. They're the center of the pond and it's draining.

BIOS

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Juliet Cook's poetry has appeared within Action Yes, Diagram, Diode, Dusie, Oranges & Sardines and many more print and online entities. She is the editor/publisher of Blood Pudding Press (print) and Thirteen Myna Birds (online). Juliet's first full-length poetry book, 'Horrific Confection' was published by BlazeVOX in 2008 and she just recently completed and began submitting her second full-length collection. She also has oodles of poetry chapbooks, most recently including Soft Foam (Blood Pudding Press for Dusie Kollektiv 4), FONDANT PIG ANGST (Slash Pine Press) and Tongue Like a Stinger (Wheelhouse). To find out more about all of the above and other yummy details, feel free to visit www.JulietCook.weebly.com.

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