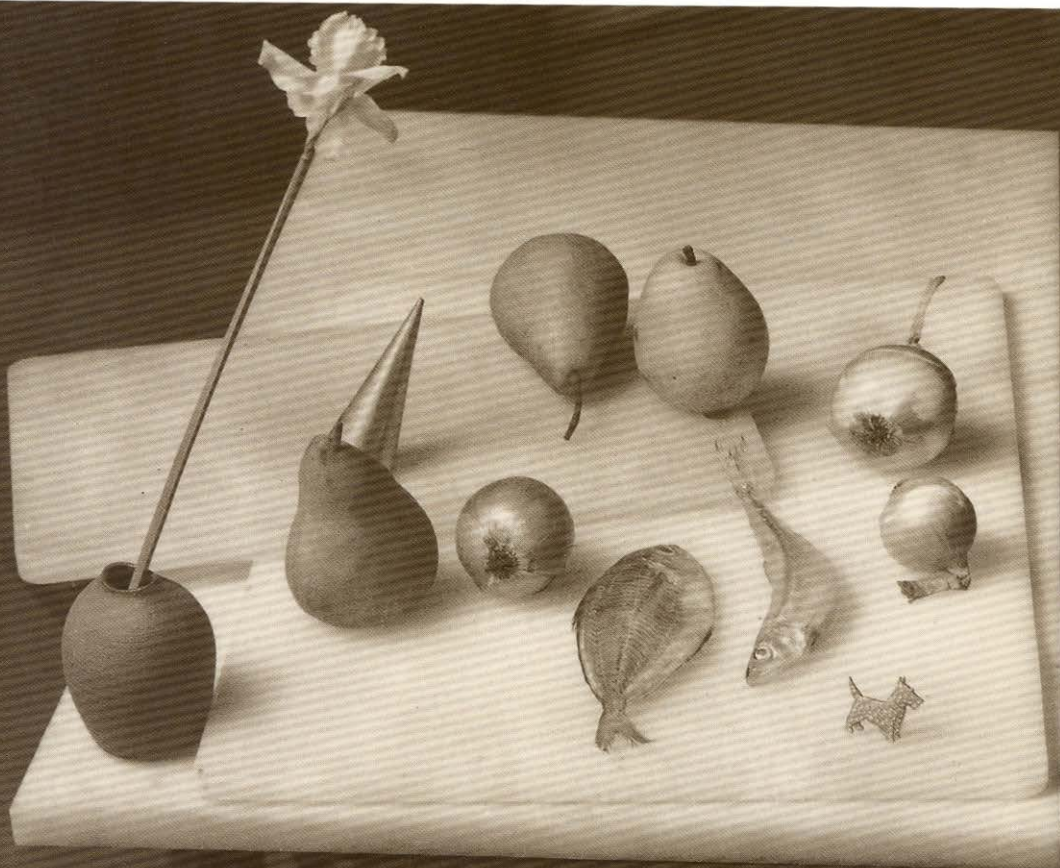


COLUMBIA  
POETRY REVIEW



NUMBER 9



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# **COLUMBIA POETRY REVIEW**

**Columbia College/Chicago**

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## **Columbia Poetry Review**



# GUSTAF SOBIN

## CHASSELAS

glottal, these jades rot  
in the damp  
autumn  
air. this far, then, and

no further? had the  
message meant that  
there's

none? the code but  
sheathing  
for a

guttled husk? sleep, then,  
in

fingers, the podded outlines  
of ought. only there,  
under the

pressed weight  
of  
lashes, would the  
swollen word, at last, burst

open.

## LIKE SALT, SAY

neither the word nor its  
echo, not even  
the

slake-marks that an echo  
might have left  
on

the scorched surface of  
some  
murmur, like

salt, say,  
still glowing in its  
reliquary when all else,

decidedly, had  
long since  
dis-

sipated.



## BARBARA GUEST

### THE GREEN FLY

Orphaned caught in a web  
the green fly in the garden  
of twig and cotton  
I do not enter am not  
lit  
as the green fly.

No entertainment no grief  
where they pick clover  
the monument the soldier  
goslings into new clover.

more  
room more  
fur more  
desire

to cross the winter day a new magnet  
scanning the hump and the excited mis-  
apprehension of what is ghostly  
foreign and ill  
from a medieval place.

*A step on thin glass*  
*(the fingernail trace)*

slept in the attic with the toad  
confused with dawn's witchcraft

*of dusty hue encrusted, autumnally,*

prescient  
refusal to battle where the meandering  
stream breaks into the hill affords shelter

*"and remedie"* pants the knight.

cannot share the *gloire*  
and moan its cheek of  
brass    fought to the finish    stars  
orchids perhaps  
at dusk severely;  
multiple tunes sunrise gloaming  
auditorium light  
naked in thy wide boat.

# CLARK COOLIDGE

## THE GREATER PLACE

The cattle axis of a removed attack is standard here  
forced in a lain sky  
and its disadvantaged integers  
they lie at a price for the poem  
now that I see that the moon is underground  
rusts in guarded mason space  
am I sorted from savagery in time?  
so I slip back into the Baltique Room  
and wonder if I'm as formal as Ed Sanders  
I can see his tie  
I could see his *mind*  
we seem to be brewing this all in racks  
you wouldn't want it to be double the person  
shucks in phantom airplane

X94

## BY AIR FROM CAL

To boom and clown  
across the sad packed earth  
(Sad Sack Earth)  
found all these zoopy calms kaisering in  
loops in the belts of these mountains  
taken up in air hook stride, leap  
(George Herms smiles)  
might as well have docked in  
Washington on a dream  
or wishing pole's home service  
in the deck of trees to gain a treat  
(I don't mind if I rhyme)  
the pretty picture is just a shining on  
the metallic outside  
stir me a few choruses  
(champion pen ode attached to battle trailer)  
farms out of the way give way to  
fogs to cloud purses  
flattens then ramps and eventually  
upland stretches stack to the  
high ice knobs  
Etoile! (Xenobia)  
her poems come out of the quiet  
persistent findings  
as though there were always something  
so particular before the mind  
(no shelf hours)  
Gotcha!  
then and always the lab is open

## GOOF POLES

High subalterns of the Lincoln lariat  
remake themselves in place  
stop  
there isn't anything swifter than  
pumpkins here there  
isn't anything sweeter  
the side of the creek that Harvard  
leaks to  
though  
I have theory that twins have  
the fool of the revolting pole  
thought of  
these people are thankful  
aren't they blistered?  
the only antidote: more productive guns  
Chris commands  
hand me only the vitamins that escape me  
fraud is included in the tip  
window glass comes with your edition  
of Freud  
anything beyond this is copied  
signed, Emilio Soso

25194



# RAY DIPALMA

## LETTER #16

In my head  
on my page too  
component parts  
reassembled for your head  
for your page, too

With a line  
on either side to  
extrapolate from  
the infinitive—  
a channel first  
then a ditch  
or a hole—  
*trou . . . trove*  
troubadour *jettatore*

The eye in the head to  
the eye in the hand  
and the hand  
—poised  
behind the back

Abstracted from  
nature—thought's flow  
through over and against  
the conjugated furrow—  
the bit of red cloth or  
pinch of salt  
untouched by  
the disintegration  
and the scatter

## LETTER #19

Nothing in its exact place  
the ideal order  
counted by discrepancy  
direction by encroachment  
the warp of imitation  
else or nothing  
absent-minded in distraction  
then reverse  
the mid-air dissolve  
shapeless apertures  
numbing invitation  
missing gone past  
paler between  
monotonous and louder  
windows open doors close

# DEIRDRE KOVAC

## MAGDALEN

after Rogier van der Weyden, *The Magdalen Reading*

She waits—eventually ungilded, lily-pure, her  
penitence cannot touch the leather of  
its binding, huddles a white cloth under  
her open book. The book says *better yet*, the torch  
must be Latin with a capital black *D*,  
gravity's graceful curve. Her other hand  
holds one page by its corner to her torso. Fragments of this  
belong to anonymous tradition, need  
an occasional index finger and thumb  
to pose as if to cast the shadow of geese in flight.  
Bells ring.  
Evenly. The scene out the window  
lit as she is lit  
from here as into stone with being.  
Small beads cling to the roof of her mouth, closed or  
does a grape dissolve beneath her tongue? Some scripted pictorial  
trinity: white headdress, book, and jar. No halo? Headless  
man with a cane, by the sleeve of his indigo  
deep tarp to imitate its arc  
half hidden handle. And  
at the river they wonder how her repentance progresses, more  
enthralled by water that will not move. A red robe,  
figure stranded slouching from  
the room trails one bare foot, some scrap of flesh the color of wood, wood  
the shape of old sin. Unlocked book,  
a tassel dragging on the floor. Enough  
to overflow the chiseled  
urn, its led held down with reticence, a century of symmetrical  
ebb.—for the music cellos make.

## THE MAGDALEN LAMENTS

after Rogier van der Weyden, *The Descent from the Cross*

Bent as to the body of a boat, she  
drags her hands on the water of her headdress,  
leans in to belief, to what—bowed over must be misery—there is  
room for between the picture molding and the leafless  
shrub at the hem of a consequent  
dress. How it is honed  
from event, how told, ten threaded figure  
unclosed eights. The road measured in whips, arm's length, the cross  
in ladder rungs. Extant fragment, scrap laced  
to the whole, she is the final downstroke of half infinity's  
sideways S—the stretch of flesh read left to right—pared  
stones in a river of pleats. A sliver of pomegranate  
in the cuff of a red sleeve seeding  
the afternoon with promise—rage

of appeasement. Forsake whisper.  
The world of one eye is cracked at its core, gains  
luster like a scarf left on a window seat, awe conjured by restraint.

The edge of loss  
is fact, a branch embalmed by ash.  
Those years approaching Paris passed  
without ceremony. No gloves were needed.  
The bone was broken to fit its original skin. The cross  
lopped to a T. Simpler, even—wind at the backdrop—elegant when  
it is summer and as summer  
unbundles the burden of trinkets: jewels on twine,  
watch with a half strap, the half with holes, this ticket,  
ticket, folded map of her dress—lusty, flush with grief—brass  
dart, union jack. We gave the sack of marbles up  
for minor pieces of the puzzle, bits of figureless gold  
we are trimmed to fit between. If the foreground is lifted, if  
lifted is swung, the perfect circle  
many. Skewed ring in an endless concentric  
ripple, she watches heaven capsize left, for a drop of rain to land the earth  
in her hand, her hand in a cup—cut it off.  
Box of lids, the arc is common and,  
indivisible, victory follows, dumb as paint.

# CAROLYN KOO

## THIS HITS THAT

### I

Little one fell in a split of flagged  
attention, the lamp shatters.  
The day the lamp shattered is a good place to begin.  
Too small to contain both body and ache,  
deep edges break pooled light beneath water,  
ache in the form of light before anyone wakes.  
The first clear thing above ground level lined  
along wire:  
pigeon starling sparrow sparrow starling pigeon finch.  
Rumbling deep to bone overhead, a good place to begin is a bus,  
falls in a groove, sharp into the flat before anyone's awake.  
One in a row of trees was mowed over. Light birds rose  
to a wire:  
pigeon starling sparrow sparrow starling pigeon finch.

### II

Travelers ride the bus as baby feigns  
sleep through the din of the city.  
Travelers rest where natives couldn't,  
but didn't learn that until later.  
A chase of dogs in the din, dim markers mock  
permanence, avenues carved in marble  
natives don't see veering around markers, unseen.  
Didn't learn until later that *echo*,  
*apparition* balanced on the edge  
of a pond stocked with fish.  
Travelers sit on a curb natives couldn't.  
The pond stocked with fish mocking  
permanence is never emptied.  
The limit of memory shifts.



## BOOK OPEN, FACE DOWN

The roof was for keeping, keeping from.  
Now rain in the face, rain felt in muscle  
before gray, an unflinching ache for change.  
Now the bridge suggests throw it over,  
no hand to break it. He pulled over, not breathing  
as if it's the heart meter pleases.  
To continue through ends it quicker, yes,  
the pleasant angle of end, but what of curved  
bowls, the pouring, the means?  
She dipped a ruler in a puddle, drowned  
half herself in seeking explanations.  
Leaned over the bed under the swaying  
bulb to murmur rhymes,  
head wrapped in silk to hold  
memory slight against the spine.  
Worth the sting to feel a spider's  
legs across the hand. And destroying it later,  
also pleasant. We love the river floor  
full of rocks, colder than water and hard  
insects with songs caught in water.  
Edges of paper writhe up under rock.

# AARON SHURIN

## MAN OF THE HOUSE

Take back our front door, the washing machine, the dresser in the bathroom. Just a hazy world of destinations on maps . . .

He was standing in the kitchen as though on a street corner. Places I'd never been, worthy of another story—I closed my pulpy eyes—insinuation of the porch swing, settling down for the night—with your own couldn't-talk vocabularies born into you, to hold the unwilling light in my hands, humming the house . . .

There's his feet—I sat on my haunches and watched—pedaled up with a message to reroute history—he turned to me, kicked off his shoes—just for I believe tonight with secrets of his face lengthening until that-sadness-the-rain-dripping waves into the distance, people filling the streetcar. There's the neighborhood and inside the house. The hall up the steps. I back up and take a running start.

Then he's moving another breath, and when he moves my things are making their way from room to room. The way a person with one long finger can be tracing a vein.

It's quiet. "Where should we walk?"

It seems to glow in his pupils outside of myself, holding place.

## LEGEND

M the heartbreaker had technique—plunder from her bedroom those confections of sustained body—and the angles selling her costumes—scarf around my head—die and drop petals. You could eat me up like this.

The walls—piece of paper—were lined with books, proving the ceiling was a rehearsal for the leading lady. She started erecting billboards bearing the phrase: “There was suddenly a silence . . .”

and loosened her rhythm, lost in familiarity, insinuate and toy the intimate, throw it away, scrawled with her lights a dignity driven to risk, that allowed a hint of improvement: every opportunity.

M gave her speech to the empty balcony. “I’m standing before a mirror to make a symmetry. Come along for moral support. I’ve slipped through the partially opened window—a great arc of postcards. It did look effortless because a gesture of reconciliation is taking place. Leaving was the closest I could come to forever.”

# ROSMARIE WALDROP

## ANTIBODY

A sour home. Aroused by intrusion into the body. The manner and the fear no more than ankle deep. She feels stranded. The end of each muscle transformed into tendon. Objects, activities, emotions now will not hold together.

The fat white stepmother who loves such organs. Modified blood protein. The portrait calmly waits for the model to die. As she puts on weight it extends toward beginning. Toward impartial. She couldn't think of another word.

Has not budged an inch from understood to mean. The reaction between antibody and antigenic substance is exquisitely specific. She never dared the middle. Tendons which successively. Sensations or perceptions drained from one person to another in conversation. We want our stories cold.

Coming events cast their shadow. Accepted as immunity in court. The blank hiatus between blood and guts in high school. The evidence to which this muscle is attached. She would have refused. New bones from the East, a trembling ardor in wrists and fingers.

The power to distinguish unsurpassed among biological saints. As of one substance. If he had asked her, starting from the fleshy part. Potential explosion of, a renaissance of, the archaic, the porous, the threat within the here. Yet expects a great deal from the possessed. By the throat.

Now the face haunts you, you look again and again. You hope for antibodies to enter the locked room. Put an eye to the lens, and it'll answer, though the word-order is no doubt wrong. These muscles have voluntary and involuntary minds. She hasn't said no. A glassy surface shorn of its springtime.

Such solitude. So oblivious of the camera. The ability to form antibodies compressed by the contracting muscles. She does not remember who took the picture. Approaching chill prevents. As if suffering from breath.

# SHARON LATTIG

## THAW

*(for two voices)*

This is a view elementary in its sting

*primeval blue shock of morning*

rampant in delivery

*a veritable burst, stampede of one  
heedless messenger*

in truth, a void

*of sky, of field, of brim disclosing*

pared of remnants—too few for spring

*a ground beyond where bareness thrives*

a sky unserved by winter

*a tryst of faith to savor, to perch above,  
to crow.*

From the tower, snarls of color  
a gem's imprisoned glint, bright  
crouch of insects. A view  
blasphemous . . . palpable.

*Each petal's flush the arrant fear—*

Our orchids flourish. Such  
brutal foresight. Such cunning.  
So dear

*My orchids untended, excluded from sets,  
too eggshell frail to flaunt. I had hoped—*

Pauper renter, your flaws bleed  
(we are careful not to disturb)  
our floors flush with our walls—

*Stone travels, yes, as constant. But care  
is a rhythm, a rite becoming.*

Immured, within, a storm censored merely  
reminds

*of a cold harbor, the flake dangling before  
it alights, the flake, at the pane, refused—*

The day remains to shift on an  
interim wind, flurries to  
dither into air—

*That foreign ether, trapped  
in my breast. Sin blooms that way,  
a brilliant asphyxiation—*

a stunning insight—

*refracted further in the fire to—*

happenstance?

*Say the sounds: forsythia . . . crocus . . .  
scraggle*

Maids in the service of the realm.

*Quartered deep in the field's wild ether,  
speared by the sun they spear—*

Trampled underfoot, under  
carcass

*Young buds to become—*

Once they entered my halls, unruly  
trollops with dew aclamor, to adorn  
the ordered occasion and—

*Wizened?*

Drowned. And in a warm-water mote.  
But you are a respite, a shelter spring  
dotes on.

*Yet wilt precedes wither as moist precedes  
memory. From below, gray descends,  
panoramic, a shroud of itself; the parapet  
flees, the rampart crumbles. From below,  
the swing digresses, the twig obscures.*

You ramble. Space  
rambles.

*The dream is meander*

The task to parcel

*a realm formed of thicket*

the season to prune

*an agency space will reclaim*

a vanity, a vision corrupted

*thwarts the lie of stone,  
bricks loose at the hearth, ivy  
roots, the slow seep . . .*

Who is stung by the loiterer April?

*Here, always, sun punctures, rain  
rains.*



## JOHN YAU

### PETER LORRE PREPARES FOR HIS FINAL SOLILOQUY

There isn't time to measure the plunge of winter's corpse or trace the height of stacked shadows beckoning me to enter their tunnels of calcium ascending a blue ladder. Sides of wind shift their faces forward to the glass. Handles moisten the rims of their bright lips. A siphon clamp, I scrape pebbles from the horns of my face, shake off flecks of mottled soil.

Standard frills in the rhyme of temporary brightness. The angel draped in his cloak of red medals and strong oaths was wrong when he whispered, These few moments will be the keystone to your character. What gnawing tonic spilled through this feathered suede, this fur snail? I was always a belted overcoat puckered by a solid umbrella, the one with a runny voice and pickled lids. Nothing about me hangs sharp in the molten evening air, supported by two long thick arms of pink granite, except perhaps the farm of my dirty head and the two sounds only I know how to rub together.

Caterwaul crescendo. I return to my appointed task of turning the water wheel, its call descending in nine half-tones with a great crevice formed by the fifth. Sometimes I use a rhinoceros whip, other times a tape measure woven from buzzard feathers. An oil can clangs against the counting post glowing amidst last season's lava. Pillow honks shake my knitted cap. Like England, Hollywood has its "Lake Country" and it lies in the valley just beyond the archeological museum where the first specimens remain on display. Crunchy bogus and log slop. A cathode diet of donut soap.

The nearest pockets of fresh air, shady strands of trees, and pools of cumulus quiet are to be found on one of the traffic islands monitoring the motor flow between hills and shore, its blanket of glittering fish. How am I to climb above the shingled roof of yesterday's voices? To your supernal delight, my own voice laughs at me when I am most eloquent about the injuries my body must absorb. Donkey sponge waddling across the boards. Thud cloth striping the floor. Vestiges are visible whenever I pass the algae of a Roman mirror or stand in a garage full of mementoes and creased sunlight. O sod phaeton, I tried building a bridge to the postcard where I started out, a circular green park full of chrome plated baby strollers and heavy set women gathered like baled hay beneath starched conical hats. I inflated clouds with rows of ochre, golden yellow, and red arrows. I twisted my cascading curls and pissed in my bonnet. Someone's lips left a folding scar burning through my tongue.



Insect match in the sprockets of memory's tornado sag. Crumbling arcades, more rust rising through the stains. Spine flaps down. Bandaged decimals. Lapidary drone in the leaves of the buzzed house. I must hurry before the old man draws the curtains shut, and the audience is left without a reason to applaud my imminent departure. Swindled pride. There was a time when I was a sedan chair on which other men puffed their pigeon chests, like calendars of kettle powder and icy smoke. Amber apricot faces pinched by fronds of artificial light. Who wants to linger by the list of ashes numbered in the basement? Who wants to measure the weight of cash strapped to my slithering howl? What about the episode chambers no one dares mention over martinis? The gift wind sweat? The shiver greetings of the skull market?

The red-eyed bat of my cutlass circles the naked bulb of my droopy brawn. Old bug loon. Saddle breath and stars of tarred ice. Twitchy shell. Bulging socket shrug. I was doodled on by the itch of others. Well heeled on the outside, I healed well on the inside. Spent curses bubbling between my sausage teeth. Fat slide drying on a wall, white and plain and thick in the merciless heat of history. I was a parlor athlete caught in a yawn. A civil idiot. A junior messenger.

Who dances now among the serrated edges of scattered rain? Who wantonly drinks the last drops of cold green soup? Who breaks a dish so that each member can carry a piece home? Who counts the peonies lifting their red dresses to the tongues of a tilting wind?

Tell them all, I've gone out to the platform to wait  
for an octopus moon to hoist me  
to the brimming balconies of a yellow heaven.

## WILLIAM CORBETT

## DRIVING JAZZ AGAIN

Joe, I've got that mighty machine  
Count Basie's Band  
I've got Lennie Tristano  
in a Chinese restaurant  
Sonny Stitt, Lucky Thompson  
I've got huge toned  
Ike Quebec  
you could turn a bus in his solos  
I've got Mingus  
"Blues & Roots"  
Pepper Adams bottom fishing on baritone  
coming home from St. J  
blood orange in the west  
pressed and seeping  
between heavenly blue  
snow white quarter moon  
improvise dinner, ham sandich, wine  
still hongry  
the peanut butter Marni left  
spread on Rabin's incomparable bread, Fred  
out of the night McCoy Tyner's big band  
blowing thunder  
I've got Mr. Five by Five,  
I've got Sahib, Shahab, Horace Parlan  
with missing fingers on one hand  
pounding out "Goodbye Porkpie Hat"  
the day Mingus died  
hay bales in hayed field  
Schuyler and Nora wrestle  
moths called to light  
More Chianti wine!  
I've got Stan Getz  
"a nice bunch of guys"  
I've got Lee Wiley  
"horizontally speaking"

I've got the moon's torn off corner  
Gulp,  
the pines have it too

# RON PADGETT

## I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY

Nothing to say  
so let's say something  
i.e. anything

Nothing to do but hey  
get up and move  
your body up and down

in a puppet play  
made of shadows  
cast by something

other than light  
onto someone other  
than you who

have no part to play  
other than just standing  
there with your face

on the front of your head  
in the back  
of your mind.

## NUTS

I read *Fear and Trembling*  
expecting to be scared  
but instead I found a nut  
had written it in Denmark,  
a man obsessed with thoughts  
about the story of Abraham and Isaac  
and what it meant. I didn't see  
what it had to do with fear or  
trembling, but the more I read  
the more I liked the title and  
its being on that book. I guess  
I am a nut too.

## **ALICE NOTLEY**

### **PLACE MYSELF IN NEW YORK (NEED ONE MORE THERE)**

We move to New York so I can be wild language briars  
Oh is that why? I try everything to write  
My desire's extraction of woman from myself onto paper  
To put her there as if she were. And to put him there speaking  
Back and forth rosewater and glycerine either/both  
Softening and scenting facts of no money and ensuing death.

This isn't plain it wasn't so plain an ill man  
For example I'm married to but I sing "Just  
A poet" he'd described me the highest compliment  
Not a diva experimentalist genius or ferocious outlaw—  
Just a poet. Who am I I'm really social  
For the first time in my life and for years (that's  
Over) there are these craftsmen craftspeople everywhere  
To find out from. Oh fellow consider

The look of legs walking on film, in the rhythm of  
Traffic signals; the permanence of New York light  
Embedded into the texture of jeans and plaster and red  
Juice, a painting; someone is shouting up from downstairs  
No he's shouting his poem to anyone: I'm  
Writing it down for him, "Don't shit me man/Just say it out."

I've said everything to you now I'm happy  
Kids come here and have hamburgers sun's sunk  
Over rooftops leaving trace of whitened dark-blue in dark-blue  
I like how small the apartment it pulls us closer  
Piezoelectric crystal they've gone to bed now and don't think  
Just pick up words not toys. All my best writing down  
Done late at night not like this but like that back  
Then, my life's disconnections a culture in unitive me—

No divinatory gift—no deaths will ever come—  
Just a poet, one; corrupted by the competition  
Of Who'll say it.

## THE YEAR OF THE PREMONITORY DREAM THAT TED AND STEVE LEFT ME

Because this room's a community of voices  
I have self as urban social graces  
Red colors suggesting streaks of flame  
Crawl into my hat and I'll talk to you, taking to heaven  
Whose fucking heaven? (*She* thinks if  
Everyone did what she says, sexually and to her, it  
Wouldn't be a Nazi, that world, but I think so) . . .  
Who said the Chesterton stuff  
St. Francis of not a sissy—and X thinks  
She's a star Y thinks she's a saint, and we call them, in fact,  
St. Marsh Gas and St. Carnivore, not very funny  
Rising to the level of protecting oneself against their  
Henry James component—*did* I say Harry? in this den of,  
I'm gonna put you down some more, 'cause I like to.  
Another entrant: I've just arrived, I'm a man in a belt, and  
I think you're cute. So we talked like this for about six years  
With excursions, for example, aside to consider the arrival  
Of the Language Poets onto their Gilligan's Island.  
Two pinkies a greenie two aspirin and a beer and soon you  
Best intensity female, man you have almost made it  
George says oil ruined the history of art  
Allen comes in and says, this smells of speed, that cum on your pants?  
No, Elmer's Glue of course—look Eileen's leaning  
Various faculties upon me. The world has unrestrained me,  
Writing deranged in space and time splashed with Pepto Bismol  
So I won't have to seem blue. I never or always  
Loved you . . . remembering all the times I was bad  
Including now? Bad bad bad. Gradual loss of vision  
This is an impersonation, in exactly another costume,  
Of 1979, the year I was social ware most had  
Married world. Like a quilted velvet boxing glove  
An illuminated stage which melts onto page a *New York Post* Modern  
Ted says he's a spaniel puppy, yap, and four more people come up  
Two Tibetan nuns who take tea. What is your pretty self doing?  
It's only a hatchet job on *your* reality . . . oh  
Just Bohemia I see, as if the fucking middle class and the  
Vicious fucking upper class and the whole nightmare  
Class of others in their purses weren't a class of affectation too  
And the stupid fucking workers voting Republican



Ask him to write a poem that contains the following phrases  
United Nations, Simone Weil, optic nerve and mother-of-pearl—but  
He couldn't he's an academic! He just couldn't, his dad's dog  
Died on the road in his last poem. Come on  
Put it on the paved area adjoining the house  
That's a patio see, if you only said the definitions  
Of nouns instead of the nouns you'd sound more interesting.  
But they want to sound boring they said so I read it  
In his already collected crit This guy  
This guy's been dead since before *I* died and he's  
Younger, Grace and certain salvation, yeah, ain't for  
My ship on fire. Five or six ships are on fire here Peggy  
They'll never make it to port, put out the rug flames  
Hannah says, I'll pour boiling water on the rat.  
Gradual loss of vision, Johnny. A lot of activity, lovely.  
And twisted fingers as from hard work, it *was* hard work too  
We made twenty-five dollars, we leaked everything that we had  
We were escarpment, espousal, imbecile, and change.



# MELISSA KLIESCH

## WHEN IN TORONTO

For Steve (eh?)

Rivalry is making a comeback  
Through little glass tubes  
Earwigs  
If you will  
Or  
If you absolutely must  
Like your devil friend over there  
Talking about staying awake  
Talking about slaying  
A wake  
Where all this mother could do  
Was drape herself over the coffin  
And wail  
“Why, why, why”  
Did he have to say boobs  
Why couldn’t he have said bosoms  
It’s much more victorian  
Like corsets  
Garters  
And perhaps petticoats  
Hung on a drying line  
In a mildewed basement  
Will smell after a while  
Smell after smile  
A dial  
A trial making her read the Tarot cards  
Over and over  
Looking for a specific answer  
She shuts her eyes  
Concentrates  
And asks the cards the question again  
And again  
And again the future becomes something  
She can’t seem to unite with

Characters do that  
Grabbing big black holes from pockets  
And diving into 'em  
Feet first  
Back straight  
Chin up  
When he slaps you  
For not doing the silverware  
With all  
Your colors  
Your neutrals  
Your springs  
Summers  
Winters  
Falls  
He falls into something unknown  
But oh so familiar

# CARRIE MALLOY

## LEARNING CAN BE FUN

When I was born, my mother  
spoke of me as Zarathustra's  
"cross between plant and ghost."  
It made the shoe lady smile  
a bit too brightly to be real.

She taught me the two W's:  
Wisdom and Weeping  
(if a distinction can be made)  
these things don't skip  
generations.

My first encounter with  
Santa Claus at the Mall  
sent me off screaming and sobbing  
through the rows of helpers and  
mothers and other children, and  
when she caught up with me  
and asked me what was wrong,  
I squeaked out behind tears,  
"It's the Ayatollah!"  
and she smiled,  
proudly.

## THE DOOR TO SUCCESS

I wonder what it would mean to have doorknobs on my chest.  
If someone were to knock, I might say,  
"Oh, hey! You're just in time for the nippleparty!"  
They would stand in suits by the  
Klimt with gin and tonics and square  
fingernails and there would be  
fierce arguments on the merits  
of large areolae

and I would stand nearby in all  
my brass glory and hope someone  
would bump into me and  
clandestinely push in my locks.  
I might lie on the leather sofa while they  
each tried to open me  
and slam me shut.  
I would lactate black grease and

they would adore me for that  
and I would love to be adored for that.  
I would thank them for coming  
and fall asleep,  
dreaming of jackhammermen.

# LOU HALLWAS

## MYRTLE STREET PREVIEW

It's the hum of lights above us,  
you pretty art director  
and I glow like wire exposed  
on your couch, and you, like my mother  
don't see what I know.

Oblivious, you escalate me,  
you cream without sugar.  
What could be going inside  
your perfume mind fills  
tanned hands and manicured nails  
nullify mine  
while they hang—cut—  
picked up boxes all day,  
smell like hardware.

For longing that this current  
spreads open . . . I do kneel  
We both—to your T.V.  
sitting there motionless  
while controllable crying  
waters Fred Goldman's moustache.

It brings me to know  
a jail cell and a memory  
with room enough for a word  
and I mumble innocent—  
the man's innocent.

## GARANTIE À VIS

Like latex vaulting closed.  
The toilet.  
The sink.  
Two roach traps.

Blood dot color soiling  
    pink  
like semi-gloss mixed  
co-lingo breast plate  
    open.  
My lover's picture  
painted New Orleans;  
water stained, it looks more like  
    "Viscount."

Like you know blending,  
blending know you—  
the toothpaste.  
The gasket.  
One empty vial.

Slipping down your arms,  
plumber's putty,  
oil on the top,  
cuffing closed and chased  
every corner.

All inner worlds connect to this—  
    my bathroom.

Like Comet,  
Levar,  
Norelco.

    "Nothing's sexier than a nun" (Charlie),  
holy air displaced.  
It's just missing;  
Tory's on dog-carts  
wondering if an execution is in me  
(medicine related).  
The soap.  
The sea-shell.  
No stains.

Her color on being blank . . .  
opening to me,  
me to opening like  
    8th grade.  
Sealed and capture,  
Spearing the taste bud  
of such things.

# KRYSIA JOPEK

## ORIENTATION

### 1

The girl woke up a boy, a giraffe, a temple, the sky inking billows across an untrustworthy plateau, a subtle transgression, what was signed, sealed, perforated at the right line, carbon copies for implied lookers-on, rule makers that needn't abide, apply for the menial job, filled before one gets there.

### 2

You are the breather into vessels, a folded star, its wet arms, sagging on a Monday, hung up to dry. A story unfolded at the right moment. What wants to be loved for its simplicity, taken for granted as part of the shoddy framework, a rail held by the dreamer on the stair.



## JESSE LIPMAN

### UNTITLED AND STILL BLEEDING

Here lies the fruit of my discontent, a mangled eggplant of brutality,  
your color formed from the screaming red departing severed fat staining  
precinct blue.

I cut you with diamond memories, hard with a child's pain.  
Dissected you into the three branches of government, checking and  
balancing bloodloss  
    internal, external,  
you are a border guard. I walk over you like the Rio Grande.

Full of spears exhaled from a krylon can spontaneously generated in your  
own mind.  
    When it comes down to it, it was really just suicide.

So I scream it, "Suicide Sucker!"  
Watch you flail, hiss the hymn of ruptured ventricle/  
frayed thorax bleeding the leeches which crawl the chest cavities of  
stormtroopers.

And I am free, not fully,  
but released from the vacuum packed vengeance which grew like a tumor  
behind my lung/spawning foul hyena larvae into my dreams/lurching me  
awake so hard I strained my neck and couldn't glance left that week your  
brethren were vice grips  
squeezing dignity, fucking up my evening.

It is only one memory  
and your necrifying torso is becoming sticky and stiff to the touch  
and I am disturbed by the invigoration which engulfs my hands  
    powerful,  
    yet bloodless  
    stained only by the fray of aerosol can.

Leaving your stilled ankle,  
kicking your oily head (so sorry)  
I am reflecting that perhaps,

I can form canons from the most repressed memories/blow darts from  
the least.  
Hold hands with others in a circle to make transcendental selective nerve  
gas . . .

but first I will return home  
reread Fanon  
try to make sense of myself  
    what I have become.

## MOVING

Waking at 6:30 sucks.

Moving sucks.

Waking at 6:30 to move

sucks dick, clit, rectal Beavis and Butthead type shit.

But the U-Haul actually starts,

I doze back to 2915

load heavy first

load medium next

load little last

and although the ramp rises to shake hands with the late morning sun

it all goes by rather fast.

Revving the 18 foot Pinto down Lawrence Ave.

I'm mid-move reflective

(with the bigger car urging me to drive like a bigger ass)

I lurch and break through a tattered nomadic mindscape

and amid the honking cabs and frightened children

my foot drifts off the Pinto's pedal

contemplating 4723

wondering if it will last.

See, me and my lady are making official

what was de facto the last year and a half,

except her landlord lost himself in a Jimmy Swaggart of glory;

quoting bible verses, paraphrasing Dante, bemoaning women's liberation

and muttering "everlasting sin."

Like we need another father

while we contemplate daughter or son.

Raging into his Czechoslovakian blues

I swore to slit his polyester ankle to neck

and carve Satan on his chin.

Sandor Suri you God Damn 1990's Falwellian SS reject,

and we rushed upstairs to fuck on the floor above him.

But never underestimate your tenant rights,

cause although it took 2 months

the city ruled and we won

enough to ease 3 1/4 silver inches from

devil skin to denim pocket.

So now I'm sweating in 79 degrees of September breeze.  
Getting high with local Kings.  
Paying the shorties with bomb pops  
to unload those little unbreakable things,  
wondering if my life is coming together  
or just leaving unwanted belongings behind.  
Twenty-one moves in twenty-four years is a hell of a record  
But nothing broke.  
And the evening is a kind four-year-old's kiss  
sprinkling me throughout six new rooms  
where powder blue carpet inhales my taste and  
is waking.

## CLAUDIA KEELAN

### TOCATA WITH CHILD

I came in from under the music  
a Thursday  
far to go etc. pulling out all the stops  
until Sunday when it started again  
in five voices  
and I saw I was a woman  
feeding her son  
on the inside somehow  
(a Thursday)  
everything but nothing  
pushing against the shape I made  
(a woman) bent towards an open mouth  
specific hunger calling the day  
I wanted to wake in  
listening to cacophany  
and then I heard no longer  
(until Sunday) when it started again  
in a single voice  
and I saw everything but nothing  
in the (specific hunger) small body  
asking me to wake up and listen  
from Thursday and each  
day (until Sunday) and starting begins again  
I hear it, small specific body  
inside (a door slams) somehow hungry  
in the music  
playing in all the stops

## **FORT-DA**

What was white was white then disappeared completely.  
Hovering all my life and gone.  
Lonely for oppression, oppression lonely,  
a blind boy running very fast on a treadmill.  
A century of moral fiction,  
generous and genius slipped their root.  
A basket, an overhead light.  
Word ugly.  
I loved her that way.  
Heavy snow. Fall down.

# NATALIE KENVIN

## X-RAY

"Nothing is perfect but the hope of it."

—Emerson

Love of the thing produces escape.

Hibernation the weak sleep of shadow;

The black aftermath entire.

Hollow, neuter, cohesive

In this dark humiliation

Phosphorous caught.

Ghostly ingots of bone.

Roentgen,

Being still, it became too late

A stain of silver nitrate

on the photographic plates

Waiting for the next major lies

of carbon.

The indoctrination of fibs,

the deft decay

of an eaten thing.

The domestic life of a secret won

at the last cost of hours

The weather of lapsed fashion.

Light is easily victimized

the better to help a mirror presently

so it fails and is done.

The answers of shadows

The coutouriers of loss.

# KOSTAS ANAGNOPOULOS

## FROM OPEN HOURS

*in the exclusion of everything else  
the hand is present*

*beginning  
as it shows*

*gradual dissipation and shock  
viewed in this light*

*the hand may be brutal  
it will go miles*



*if the line should end in a star  
sudden death*

*if the size of the island or dot will tell  
how serious the curve toward the moon must be considered*

*if it forks and lies when the truth is better  
sometimes spells to overcrowd sleep*

*by the brush of efforts  
or vice versa*

*a veneer  
out of the worst places*

*doors  
the meanness of disposition*

*between purely and the branch  
this must be an apparent end*

# STEPHEN RATCLIFFE

## FROM *SCULPTURE*

Sculpture is about form and space and the relation between the two. Modern sculpture has been a lot about opening the space in the center, and about texture or surface—the combination of a surface and an opening. In a certain sense it's assumed, as soon as you say "sculpture," you're talking about space.

—Richard Tuttle

In fact, I was afraid of following the picture to where it reaches right out into reality, laid against it like a ruler.

—Rosmarie Waldrop

Waking up being able not to remember the direction one is walking, the bridge that may be said to sag  
not as a metaphor (*m*) but fact having nothing to do with its substance, as one of several rings  
whose stone (green) may be taken off the finger, placed on the table when talk continues  
to be performed. How in the mental physics by which one person  
becomes another the situation has changed, no longer the park across the street  
or slant of cottage roof against the sky (opaque) or tangle of pink roses growing by the steps,  
motion of birds coming into the garden. Instead of such a person one propped up (shoulder) between the sign  
“a” and its replaceable image, as if the thought of the bridge sinking in the middle could enter  
the film as its soundtrack, each moment recorded on a tape (evidence) meant to be played in slow motion.

Again driving to the garden (roses) in a car one thinks to park for hours, walking in concentric circles identical to “go,” “stop,” “mistake,” “stumble” or the feeling of being unable to turn back whatever has happened in a logical scheme analogous to that. Lines apparently in a formal garden an extension of the vertical as a tangent in relation to sky (whole) whose blue clouds intersect moving in the distance called subject, the name in isolation with itself as a person may be said to wake up in a different place, this sound pronounced “gesture.” How in the final stages of the play the characters will become interchangeable, the one who calls the one who listens not to take back (accident) the knowledge of how lines are drawn but something elsewhere, the figure who walks back into the garden to listen, bend.

# BRUCE ANDREWS

## MERCURY 3

(FROM *LIP SERVICE*)

PRESUMPTIVE sieve resents reply this everyone is posturing  
pins of advantage which tauten the minor on the toes of others:  
none of this group grope shit wants rape back to a time  
when what brute force  
enticement was needed to survive a tube

corrosive corridor aglow  
with scales forelouvered.  
A profit of politeness: limbs in shiny catalog  
hinging blossoms, insignia slabs  
teaching embryo nametags abbreviated lies —  
you think 'pinch an inch' size of hips means bigger assholes ? —  
more skin competes hoops  
for siblings' keeper, anonymous = ugly  
bark "beasts" warned against "fascinated"  
coerced roundness; I can't really tell because it's huge  
fruit ideas in people's heads parading shut  
seeds by caste, gander staked stove in debt  
unable to connect by joinish impassable projectile.

Dowager headset:

decorous nucleii snake  
affected esteem to counterfeit depth —  
pitiless titular  
am I went out of fashion ? —  
Cleopatra rhythm belies meaning  
heed braced fleck, half-eaten watermark  
stars winterize & closure restores beginning  
arms fellate throne; invalid gowns & bustles, panoramic  
photos of our inadequacy cushion of gravitational  
personalization renown  
sputtering mercurochrome subservience on the milk sentence  
farm crevice crèche sorrowed.

With Vital Engineering  
stiff stuff, official darling  
shun collides, parents rake leaves over childish hole



fret rein quantity grooved closure's bad press  
that blankness — hive.

Make your mind hurt each other

spoiler to convey me ? —

you're marginal, you're not well, talk he was  
bleat in line sufferable list exhortation

feeds longing (let me lick your Nureyev)

resalute the category advantage degrades, the *object*

is the other; disguise the organ

as an accessory.

Morselize some losses, subservient milk, smaller

credentialling pieces encryptical enclosure

jewelry split princesses geometry

incautiously monadic — slave safe ?, my allowable fiction

disinherited extrapolated & bound electricity safetied

spermless courting by trapped or residual

atom thicker flux,

the culture landed & kidnapped them both.



## HANNAH WEINER

### ASTRAL VISIONS

charles gave instructions and said "sir not hip hop to sir cot without sir extra blanket" and "sir not get sir solomon r guggenheimer, if sir eat sir but" and "sir not get sir solomon r guggenheimer if sir not wear sir slip" and "sir not etc, etc" until finally i said "charles i am going to take you out of lead position" and he turned into godzilla a huge image of godzilla before me with the face of charles and he only did that once we have to attribute this to emma his daughter i suppose, whose favorite movie was godzilla i do believe at a certain point and i have a movie of godzilla and i can hear charles's voice saying "here, here comes the hero" and there was one point if you read the first line of *silent teachers* where it says "blah" and that was charles's way of blanking out on my forehead any words that were not accurate he would just go "blah, blah, blah, blah" stamped across my forehead and the other thing he did once was i woke up one morning and there he was in his godzilla form, or just the head rather with his white teeth going "grrrrr"

as families go his son felix appeared at 3 mos. as a lizard quite often and taught me yoga i had a slight irregular heartbeat at the time and felix would make me lie down in a cool place in the living room or in the bedroom, wherever, in a relaxation yoga pose and do some very slow breathing, and he would make sure i took my medicine at night and sometimes he would appear as himself as a baby in a sort of basket, it looked like a basket but wasn't of course, but a sort of crib felix first appeared in a swing whose ropes were covered with flowers

so those are two other animals that i have, godzilla and felix the green monsters, like father like son and i wanted to say in closing because i think i will after this before i get into a whole different category of stories but i could say which has nothing to do with anything on the astral plane or the visual plane that i was vastly amused to find that felix's favorite program was barney who turns out to be a dinosaur now how all this runs in the family i don't know, but i think the important thing is to remember both charles bernstein and felix are silent teachers

## JENNIFER MARTENSON

### DISPOSITION

It was precarious, and so  
we rested on that ledge, agreed  
to follow up the stairs,  
into the portrait, inhabit  
its tidy charades of what comes next.  
Were we afraid to look down,  
into the pause, the margins  
still thick with longing?

Beckoning, adjacent, the explicit  
follows on the heels  
of the explicit. Shifting  
threshold of event,  
the night a skin  
by whose incision  
all impressions are absorbed.  
Irreparably smooth,  
an object washed up on a beach;  
the face we'll know forever  
from afar. It fixes  
the wild march of adjacency.  
It stays the incomplete—

the constant  
shiver of the unportrayed  
in steep dissolves

their legs entwined  
in vacancies  
of only seeming

and the uncollected  
rushes past the dam,  
under the told, eroding  
the certainty of what was

## RESILIENCE

Event is horizon, draped  
across tangents of light.  
Will we come to it, restive  
and tangible, no longer caring  
how much is lost in completion?  
Expedient pose, the sheets  
pulled back, already  
warm with shape. The way formality  
relieves one of the strenuous  
details of self, and the long  
negotiations with foreground  
that follow. If we exceed  
these provisions, this narrow  
shelter of modes—

Fate of the undefined:

shifting  
borders of skin  
and breathing

waver in stasis, dissolving  
with inarticulate grace

shunned  
by the plausible, torn  
from the dissonant near

and left  
leaning into the glissando

*so many versions,  
none of them ours*

without a system of movement

# CONNIE DEANOVICH

## THE BOUNDARIES OF FRUGALITY BREAK

She sleeps calm as vines limp with fruit  
and she wears red "fur"  
and little sexual questions  
are dreamt of in a voice soft as an egg  
her hair spreads out on the pillow  
and her nervous system starts to recognize itself again  
no longer beating up against it  
like a royal owl traveling in a car

She wakes up in a house  
glistening with the readiness of a minimal wedding  
her friends start to recognize her again  
and they bring green beaten desserts light as inclination  
and sit in chairs upholstered with Renaissance umbrella  
and cast shadows on walls covered with breezes from Brazil  
then dancing starts  
the closest she gets to geometry

She dances in a light pale as grass  
in the middle of the afternoon  
and leaves her explanation to managers  
the blue bridge leading to her property collapses  
all the friends she'd be willing to sing with are already here

## KNOW YOUR STYLE

### . Cottage .

The One I Pass Up:

thatched roof  
porcelain gnomes inside  
*unendingly* bucolic

The One I Stop At:

*exudes* the faux leopard aesthetic  
of a fake  
beauty mark

. / .

### . Treehouse .

Theirs:

kicks you out  
on account of  
your tennis shoes

Mine:

invites you in  
on account of  
your tremendous mole

. \ .

**. Dressing Room .**

At Marshall Fields:

An old lady  
with a hairy cheek beacon  
brings you a huge padded bra

At The Glitter Shack:

An old rock star  
with a birthmark near her nasal labial folds  
brings you a huge padded bra (silver)

. /// .

# PETER GIZZI

## MOURNING & MATERIALITY

The gray suit. A boulevard. Reveille  
of an arid causeway. Tenements  
and nondescript trees

—outside the car window—  
a cool stone

seeks a nomenclature,  
that charred limb dangling litters  
the pavement,  
defies representation,  
how do you say . . .

informs the day's blank gaze,  
outside the public school

The local grange in disrepair

a factioned silence sinks  
To an outline of paper  
went ungainly solitude

the torso of a portly man  
threatens modernity

The absolute climax of invisibility.

It will not be all right  
thud of years.

pebble by pebble beneath a spangled sky  
as that brush regains the open lot.

Day perturbed by so much vacancy  
Randomly  
explain its outline

Taller now that memory fails

A pitted sign  
Mounds of earth

This road is smaller  
an exchange becoming taller equals

nothing I have encountered.

the sky is obtuse, gives no solace

An era hardens in a face  
children cackle  
Unwittingly

pigeon, sparrow, blue jay—crow

pitching what is broken  
down to earth

Definitely broken,  
a woman, children,

a sidewalk  
A dominion of afternoon,

absolute  
anonymity of afternoon like many in America

Now the television sings  
to no one

The radio sings  
only to space, the empty parlor  
a face looks out from  
Its tarnished frame

Love them all or love nothing  
accepting crow

an enduring thing,

becoming horizon—  
(lack,)

becoming our future  
Local color bleeds into the river



## DECORATION DAY

each one here  
a photograph there  
the man fell here  
roses stand here  
the field where  
*it was right here*  
a child exclaimed "here"  
a monument now  
grass blades now  
were living here  
a holiday then  
and of one then

once then  
what happened here  
the way it was then  
silence then  
silence there  
it's music then  
now and then  
balloons where  
stand where  
the dead gone then  
their cars now  
lighter now

having left now  
another year then  
another year now  
how space grows now  
blurs memory here  
as if that now  
in the present now  
were a fountain there  
of a public fountain there  
quiet now  
or right where  
we were where

we are to be where  
it begins now  
a highway where  
the park where  
a visitor then  
the playing fields where  
a festival where  
the marching band here  
just here  
in bronze where  
it remains there  
are tombs there

in the distance there  
handkerchiefs where  
buried there  
a citizen there  
people come now  
less and less there  
was a time there  
go everywhere then  
remember them then  
they would say there  
a lot different here  
if they were just here

the shop here  
it is time then  
they're there now  
a public where  
waiting there

# ELIZABETH ROBINSON

## TRAIN RIDE

This morning there appeared what might  
have been light, that attempt at opposition  
in the dark of hair-made skin These rules  
This resignation of true color over stripes  
This match The unintended rightness, as it would be—  
Flame snagged on a rough nail, this time to say:  
I walk inside wearing your coat and other language,  
encoded The furred creatures that they are  
would not look back Antonyms in synonymous terms  
A ball lofted into the dark morning This sense  
of humor and of flesh, fuming All broadening my body  
as I exist Buried in the fragrant hash of imitation  
as I exist Additive In the extensive morning which  
provides no longer for augmentation

## PROSOPAGNOSIA

Now the bullet enters the leg  
and traces a face

“Slump” and “Lurch” are its former name  
disregarded in a cross country journey

Encyclopedia of rules  
pertaining to loss of recognition

Leg laughed at the ‘red jacket’  
nostrils, mouth bathed in fluid

met

across a wide floor

Marbled whorls parting amicably

He, the joint

resigned

battery of tests that license the single  
apprendage to walk

Would rescind other features such as  
pavement that, equalling the stable dilemma,

the face’s

# DAVIS MCCOMBS

## DARK COUNTY

They get wind of things  
unfixed, pent-up silt and slag.

A stutter somewhere settles  
in its limestone groove,

will never find the word for water  
or dark fists fluttering into wings.

Of us, they do not speak openly.  
Those who dream, dream

of endings and entanglements.  
They put no stock in weather,

rumors of light. It comes once,  
perhaps, holds on nothing.

There, it's mid-March and it will stay  
mid-March. Flowers open

on the walls, scentless and unnoticed.  
It's all cusp and interruption.

They love us as the rock  
loves the sluice,

which is not at all. A skitter.  
A glottal stop. A catch

in the throat of fading.

## LOTT HILL

### JOHN MAKES ME THINK

*I prefer "you" in the plural*  
like the grass or fog  
that never comes in one,  
always connected to the whole,  
filling spaces to the edges,  
the result of something greater  
like a sneeze or a bruise.

The body's surface is not infinite;  
but a crude and drying shelter,  
like fields free of trees and words;  
is a parking lot for disharmony,  
a locked window,  
a perverse diary of life,  
an exclusive apartment  
filled with hunger and fear.

## THE REASON

I cannot convince a revelation  
to lay itself down between us  
in this sharp steel silence  
we have proclaimed. It took  
me years to overcome  
the circles of thought  
that led me like a corral  
to wear this path around myself.  
You see, I blamed myself at first,  
blamed my family, my education,  
the city, the country,  
junkmail and hallmark cards,  
child-proof lighters,  
the ribbon of my typewriter,  
the speed of the postal service,  
the cost of electricity, books I've read,  
the lack of good songs on the radio,  
poor reception, the cost of cigarettes  
then cigarettes themselves, the cat  
that I swerved from but hit anyway,  
broken mirrors, Styrofoam cups, THC,  
bad programming, cheap tires,  
the Adolph Coors Company,  
the size of my teeth, advertising,  
mass transit, the scars of my knees,  
the Pope and most of the Catholics,  
the way the toes of my shoes  
always curl up, sun signs,  
flourescent lighting, the shape  
of some people's fingernails,  
the media, my parents' divorce,  
race, fast food, caller I.D.,  
red food coloring, pollen, AIDS,  
every place I've ever worked,  
body hair, and sex,  
but I still can't sleep at night  
with this distance between us.

# JEFFREY DANIELS

## IN DEFENSE OF AUTONOMY

This begins *who*? When  
the appropriate issue might be *why*

Susan follows the shallow footprints  
that cut across the field. Snow and  
precisely seven trees. Ice encasing  
each individual branch. The hollow  
crackles catch light.

From the vinyl seats of the car,  
we can only act: watch her.  
Halfway, she realizes the footprints  
run the opposite direction.

On either side of the field  
a car is running,  
the pale fumes and  
impossible certainty are apparent  
but consumed in first glance,

which allows this moment to play  
over and again in our heads,  
editing itself into something far  
more interesting than it is:

the mints on the dashboard, the  
steel arc of the windshield that breaks  
crushing the small child's frame,  
or the radio voice that blurs  
to the jolting train  
just moments before the punch line.



# MARCI DEL MASTRO

## PERHAPS

1

the all each  
(continuous) enters  
a private place.

particular because  
determined.

2

expectations or not:  
embarrassed about  
things, context, being

touched, entirely.  
(between Europe and Asia)

3

smashed paragraph,  
tender, shaven: door-stops,  
minor headaches.

encouragement, a flower.  
water from a lake.

## ARPINE KONYALIAN GRENIER

### LEMON/SALT MELTDOWN

there are no props for last night  
a butterfly storms the evidence  
of having felt lion  
on each side of a thought  
the walls persian silk  
for sludge reeking  
the night's alcohol  
then sunday service

a quartet picks up the switch  
blade and gender related  
everything in place  
except for gravity  
and sister's slippery  
persimmon cheeks  
regardless  
night is still  
needed for props

because there's more pink  
to persimmon skin this year  
the pulp in a cavity  
in the acid of the day  
at mother's grave  
well dressed women  
candled wishes  
a glimpse of sister

painted hair and toe nails  
matching mine and labeled  
slender  
please handle carefully  
labeled pulp and cavity  
breathing  
later calendar days

dye the speaks for another life  
to match the greying  
chimney wipe off  
the upright piano detail  
later the big bite in  
leading lady spirit  
tucks and smiles we couldn't  
stretch wrapped in the pink  
fear of unrelated parts.

## THE STAVING

tonight is differently regulated  
though our horns level the horse  
the rider blackened  
and no names are available  
for the return to ascii  
in morning light  
the orchestra laid up  
in compressed print sequence  
disclaiming title  
for soldiers inverted  
and lisping with boredom

tonight that railing again  
flush to the border  
where everyone thought it  
dissolved into  
*tenants publis*  
our hands rattling the moon  
for measures  
deportation tax  
dragged and curled under  
an ashtray the glass  
softened because we wished  
to make a point in our minds  
about staves from turkish  
knives and gold.

# MARYROSE LARKIN

## AFTER SHATTER

we are night's violation

In the distance, a memory of the first breath

the literal

is also as forest

deer mapped fragile and function    wholly muscle  
wholly imagined

in signal

array and sequence  
dreams and they are talking of breathing  
as compulsion  
as forest

his face

in the distance, the anemone of after

and the lull

diagrammed muscle and fragile    wholly function

also difficult stung dialect  
mark on the road

the literal is    the flank  
is    an arc in the spine

we are wholly absence swung

## W. B. KECKLER

### FIELD

I tend to favor "then" and "now."  
False arcades of bewitching sweetness.  
The hour of the poem is herbivorous.  
It is green and creamy, a tea left to sludge  
in a field of puddles, mirrors, forever.  
Such stories are best left untold.  
"Such" is another overuse, its leaves  
crowding out more legitimate words,  
like "taxicab" and "opportunist" and "peg."  
I will sign an affidavit for your poem,  
stating that Nothing is random here.  
If you wish. (Spoken as a true servant.)  
This is a legit establishment.  
The poem should be a glowing egg.  
I like to think this one is a field,  
busy with the rain, pewter on its fuschia  
eyelids, some colors souring as others  
come into their splendid own.

# PAUL WEIDENHOFF

## AS MYTH OR SUPPOSED ASTRONOMY

his proseworks  
in canton as pastoral . . . a suspicious death.

then weak knees as vain titans  
fell through seas.  
we be eating uranium and feldspar. I see.

this sees hard ardor and attracts (from his blood)

that which fell into the sea  
and on earth sprang.

astronomy.

the color of star-plates  
yet only priests could soon discern

the milky from the blades in ores (mass numbers—

dialogue with cannon and priest.

I hear the simple forest grow.  
I cast the solar spells). a mean distance

thus determined our artful pleas to remain static and without ebb.

I found  
carbon produces cotton and rice.  
that which be

external

velocity. a handy troubadour able to fix the morning star to

a tempest. in a cycle of pulsation  
not distant to us as a trumpet or the futile horn sung below water.

# GERALY UNITE

## PORTRAIT

under bland circumstances,  
she effects a farce,  
the slipper having no real  
importance, just necessary  
for composition. with toe

extended underneath the bed,  
a springy response  
reveals the other slipper.  
the crumb and grit  
elaborates even further—

the slipper has flipped.  
and bent to retrieve  
the hand goes  
forward to steady  
the sheet that falls.

toes inch the slipper  
over then under  
eventless, the hand withdraws  
recognizing damp  
having had ribbons dip  
into water.

and the hand agrees  
with memory,  
how careless liquid  
floods a perfect  
piece of cloth, but  
does nothing to soothe a  
thirsty blue slipper.



## ANN SHERIDAN

### GO SLOWLY

Now with desert  
to waist (waste)  
& love for pigeons gone  
she farms  
for caterpillar's  
body  
cold green  
whose jacket  
is pulled from  
hope to hopeless,  
nose to ear  
(as  
mealtime is a  
struggle).  
She ropes in  
heavy  
& dripping  
just short of the  
broken branch  
of western America  
in palm (treeless)  
he lies shakeless  
& sick proof  
extension winding down  
& turns the  
golden, white, pink, yellow  
of windstorm.



a pair of feet who blister stand  
an early Degas study  
for a pair of hands splayed like

a pigeon walk

in the cane chair  
I sit down to write  
the traffic outside

when they were widening  
Horace Harding Boulevard  
into the Long Island Expressway

found a dead black spider in the dirt  
weekend construction site and turned  
it over with a stick  
to see if there was a mark

that must have happened in the summer  
the way she tells it  
I think of her skipping imaginary

why don't you go on  
I will catch up  
we can meet by the post-impressionists

# GEOFF BOUVIER

## FORE

given shrift  
the sun  
will it top the leaves

musicianly  
carried earlyly  
reroutes the routine

if factors permit  
for just such a  
piff piff, old bean

yes lets  
appropriate shimmy  
gauzes never to seem

the inexorable next  
listening  
for distance, airs to hear

and realified  
us too  
as like as not a sleeper

then smiles, thanking  
by morning  
the east is waiting

# CHRISTINA CLEMONS

## REMEMBER THE MORNING

the stop and the book  
helps you check your motion  
and you might cry afterwards  
but the day is always underneath  
and protected by a heaven

your belonging to affection is granting  
you a little more calm  
you remember how to wonder  
and catch a pore in the unrehearsed distance  
it is titled Ruby

lock the hue of the starlit outline and  
you are gracious once more  
and not to be forgotten  
shroud or tenderly framed  
a pad of moment will always wait for you

tabs of ever and close are your favorites  
you own their antiquity  
you blow, crossing a smokelined floor  
frost the temple and breathe tales of hallmark

“A new day promises the splendor  
of leaving children to themselves”

chime and round clarity is carefully  
pulling you into a moon

remember the morning  
how it raises dwelling and the sun

## [THE WOODEN CUP THAT FITS INSIDE]

The wooden cup that fits inside  
the sculptured (model's) hand  
is a simple, small wooden cup  
found within rows of gift mugs . . .

Supposing you were without a hand,  
would you stir a crowd with your  
    foot  
or your head  
around in a very circular motion  
maybe jerking your head backwards  
hopefully not throwing your balance to the floor  
    of that hall you will all commence in  
    because no one feels right with a host  
    face first on the floor  
    of a Gala

Your hand could be worth something some day  
    in Paris or  
    Atlanta  
probably not in Jackson  
    though  
nothing that singular attracts  
    or steers,  
simple folk  
towards you

## KIMBERLY HAYES

### THE OCHER OF INHABITANTS

The trees are at it again,  
shedding leaves like buckled  
universes. All those nude limbs  
reaching for sky, striking  
those same shameless poses.  
The deeply carved sheep farmer  
on the Man's Best Friend  
documentary knows his oldest  
doggie is depressed, breaks  
into tears when he thinks  
of the years. Allison is twelve.  
Her plate tectonics furiously suck  
in earth, cast it back out.  
We don't know *anything*. She's  
a Leo, and we're not. Her feet are  
already bigger than mine, she cheats  
when we compare. Falsely  
reading her position, we tease.  
A final eruption sends her skyward.  
*If you guys are such queens,*  
she screams from a new burst  
in her seams, *that would make me*  
*a princess*. From inside  
the reality of his dream,  
my husband asks if John Stossel  
is German. *The Nazi!*,  
he cries out, and turns over. Limp  
and dreamless as the furry  
toys he discarded years before,  
I check the cat again  
for vital signs. Leaf shadows swim  
in schools across the bedspread,  
disappear into dark corners  
where thoughts form  
like stalactites, slow and  
independent of the fickle light.

## BED SESTINA

Caught in thought's twisted sheets  
beneath sleep's pressing body  
like a deflating plastic raft,  
I vaguely reach for shoes,  
unlaced anchors next to the clock  
bouncing its tiny dots off floor-

board backboard. But the floor isn't a floor  
anymore, it is more like a frozen sheet,  
a crackling ticking clock  
waiting for my body,  
a giant shoe-  
horn to slide me off sleep's raft.

Bed is a raft  
that never travels, rooted to the floor  
unlike the shoe's  
run-walk-running from or into sheets  
of sleep that settle over the wild body  
roped and tied against the clock.

The past, the future, the circadian clocks  
ride the raft  
with me, inhabit, inhibit body's  
desire to disengage from floor,  
to kick off sheets  
and shoes.

The left shoe, right shoe, left shoe  
clock  
stops dreams, a sheet  
clothes-pinned, a raft  
docked for fear of ocean floor,  
of bottom, where the body

cannot drown further down, where the body  
would untie like a shoe,  
would feel the truth of ground-floor,  
would trust the absence of clock,



a drifting raft  
on an endless sheet.

Body is water and clock  
sleeping in one shoe, a life-raft  
to the lowest floor, the highest sheet.

# GALA PIERCE

## SUSPENDED SCALES

I sleep in suspended scales of sonata  
Gauze. Rubbing linseed oil in your

Alter-ego. About to lose my robed thoughts  
In your hunger as your tentacles devour.  
And devour.

Adolescent chords entangled in my vision.  
Your palms undermine my memory.

Strings committed to the instrument.  
You to the invention.  
My folds balancing your test tube.

*Won't he skim my lost apertures?*  
*Do old scents linger after four years?*

My fingers, pastels, on your flesh.  
Azure blue and orbital green,  
Seething, sifting.

Each session becomes my  
Template guide.  
Bleeding through my eardrums.

I chew remnants when your aura  
Vanishes.

I can't erase your voice's nuances.  
Nor can I escape the body's fossae.

Scattered raiment from a suitcase.

Gluck, gluck, gluck.

Dreams become precedents to vanguard lives.

Toes in the beach's shoal.

A loss of sickle cells.

Unopened gift of orris.

# SUZANNE WISE

## MANEUVERS

The site had been reached  
after weeks. It was empty

except for the description  
that lacked color or people.

Certain crimes, unnameable,  
had once been rumors.

A whole series of questions  
lined up, gave up, forgot.

A gap, due to more pressing  
news, opened in the face

of skepticism. An impasse  
surrounded by dithering

inevitably caved in to the silly  
enclave, a busted clavicle of

air abutting the absolute  
denial of air. Thus objection

increased, two or a million,  
no more than a matter of time.

The upper hand forced  
a wide swath to lie down,

spread out. An all-out pull  
out pushed for deeper

impotence, rammed a fundamental  
divide into separate states.

Headlines ordered lids and pens  
down for cover. Anonymously,

confessions had to be arrested,  
then translated as dotted lines,

disproportionately lengthened  
for logic's new territories.

Thus, the deal was cut  
to ribbons, made into a hat,

and ratified. A parade of progress  
systematically bound itself

to nonburning treaties, awarded  
oblique medallions of oblivion.

Someone had to take credit  
for pity, so sources borrowed

refugees, returned them to the red  
light district, balanced casualties

for the sum of a defunct map.  
Unfortunately the transcription lost

sleep, was reported to be a yawn.  
Outraged, readers found nothing

but solace in diddling the *O*  
that hid as countless bones,

nooses and holes in accounts  
of banks and like-minded stories.

# LOIS HIRSHKOWITZ

## IN THE ABSENCE OF GRAVITY

Would she be 5'6" again if she were to go  
into space—the animals aboard Columbia  
are growing—a few are sprouting tails/gills  
her elongated back pains her anyhow  
to be with or without heaviness  
there furiously eating spaghetti and  
laughing at the same time eating  
and at the same time reading a paper-  
back head down with one elbow attracting  
the idea of not finishing or starting that  
again what's so good is what isn't hers  
should she watch the news tonight her dreaming  
yes tonight she needs space to grow needs it  
Watch it she's still a lumbering caterpillar

## THE INVITATION SHE HOPED MOST TO GET SHE GOT

The shades are up because she needs to feel the breeze  
She says to herself  
But I'm doing my best  
I'm doing my best  
When she looks in the mirror she sees a hand open  
The window in the next room she can touch the hand and  
At first the features are fuzzy  
And after a sudden rush sucked the window shut  
Right after starting to read Paul Auster's "Ghosts" in which  
Mr. Blue (a private eye in the story) started his surveillance on  
Mr. Black (window to window)  
One window mirroring the other  
She supposes the characters will have to merge

Her head bends to his voice  
Like a sail taking its impression  
From a rush of air  
Today's images are still not organized  
Her fingers hold the latch  
And though her mouth moves quite a lot  
She has learned the most important lesson  
Underneath the wig when her head is opened  
Tangled innards of metal and wire  
Typewriter keys and  
Bicycle spokes  
Maybe she'll watch rocks skipping across the water  
A sudden twitch this morning  
Somebody else's ghost  
When she hears the crows she'll know it's a dream  
This can mean anything  
And it's just Saturday

# JOSHUA TAYLOR

## [SURE, AT THE RECLINE]

sure, at the recline  
a swimming obsidian unfurls fractions  
the open series suns keening

a number darning    pinion buckle  
its own towers near    early running  
shadows by phone  
                  (alarm, pleasant  
                  padding towards the door  
                  hails the rusted engine)  
in and around the garden    clarion  
the hurricane in shoulder

work about mercury  
beat the ellipses    loose purchase  
sweet like ingots  
rising west by the hour

to the right of her eyes  
swoon at the report of  
delirium, the soft report  
the heat melts the letters open gently

the loan of trees  
impressed in as land regards its  
slim measures  
miles are lit glancing bent to a sand lean  
the first movies are knees  
discursive fingers through my hair



# BENNETT SIMPSON

## STUMBLING BLOCK

Funny—  
Leslie  
    chose  
to dismiss  
the facts.  
The merging  
    of collate  
and lock-  
smithing.  
    The death  
of Frank  
    O'Hara  
and other gay poets.  
He offered sour  
French pickles to  
his guests.  
    Near me  
a blond  
    student  
rubs the under  
side of a library  
carel. I didn't  
    look away.  
The entrée  
is cloistered in  
curbed thumbs.  
Let's move  
to the right and  
    then back  
to the left  
    suddenly.  
Today clumsy  
cargo. Yesterday  
vacant vivid.

I don't know  
do you?  
Is happy guts  
the way to live?

# MICHAEL O'BRIEN

## WHAT SOUNDS FALL FORWARD

greetings, earthlings  
mirage of america  
the quiet company is now  
why watch?

inside, when it came  
a legendary classic. more headaches  
you are going, loaded with shopping bags  
a little something  
smooth sippin'

now what?

say, what if loading a truck with full barrels is  
a promise all the things you do to destroy  
transform you into a believer. clean your tongue  
keep me locked up pretty  
i am ashamed, spreading the blame  
of course, a promise that strong. like an angel.

dark not alone and animal species  
always room for one public eye  
greed, another luxury  
spirit, good looks, high on details  
and created an independent,

no kidding—meet someone who went and hear what it means to them.

crispy and delicious. promise.  
focus system obedience  
true, maybe you  
after all when facing a major operation,  
weight around

# DAN STURNIOLO

## AT THE BETTING BOARD

This is so all but I have these  
unsurpassed parallel pictures  
that invest the glimpse entire  
as surface material surfaces  
those things with elevation.  
Words can be so circular,  
contain pressed evaluations,  
and in spite of this arrive  
with all the gestures necessary,  
somewhat irregular lines  
and nervous laughter,  
in some direction  
for which there is no map.

If traveling the last surface edge  
fall into the stories  
that have life,  
a blessing for sure.  
Something of speech should occur  
clear as a TV screen,  
somebody saying something,  
looping intelligence and proportion,  
convincing us all that we live  
in the presence of some dramatic things  
deserving of more voice,  
though many now are terms,  
conveniences, common moments.

Miraculous,  
at first glance over the trees  
little things describe immediately  
approximate thrilling sounds.  
All of this suggests there could  
have been no preparation,  
the use of common flat sounds  
has been withdrawn,

the present cleared  
and somehow bringing more.  
Another outburst for some other.  
This is a complete  
and irresistible start point.

Flat character abandoned,  
meaning down and modified  
with no brief history of technique,  
but maybe something  
with all that is in that gesture,  
overlapping at its edges  
with outcry and a sense  
of the right turn,  
rough and not achieved.  
Stories threaten somebody,  
the first line leads away from you  
with relentless nuance.  
What are we to make of this?

A hubbub into the center,  
with the details smooth  
and the names so glistening  
they cannot be recalled.  
Clamor comes from work  
so that some influenced  
by physical things remember  
it is nothing more precise.  
And yet I think  
the roar of personalities,  
masses of people,  
towns and cities,  
break down.

The first of the end of the first  
is just short of the really happened.  
Memories so dramatic  
they are racing for a photofinish  
and another story is underway,  
another grandstand is raised.  
A different turn now,  
another face  
also right at the wire,

picking up from this movement  
other kinds of influences,  
meaning most lifted from this kind of  
specific language, a negative autobiography.

The wonderful fitness of things,  
distinct,  
sometimes stopping,  
sometimes bringing to life  
language's isolation  
as if to see it burst in language.  
Large blanks of real stories  
adhere to loops, not to memories;  
a loop that has happened,  
leaving language  
used and turning  
and when done leaves us bewildered  
as we undulate with forgotten flight.

# TAE HEE KIM

## AVOID SUFFOCATION

I gave her my ticket  
Sound then movement  
Clear body bags  
of color shadows  
fly past  
She finds my number  
I pay her  
We exchange predictable words  
I leave

Practical like furniture  
my arm angles up  
and the engineering  
of my thumb  
creates a curve  
for the hangers  
to hang  
The heaviness  
pulls down and gathers  
loose skin  
I can hear the plastic  
and it sticks  
to the back of my neck  
I slam into the walls  
of my own skull  
The plastic in flailing confusion  
could wrap around my head

WARNING:  
TO AVOID DANGER  
OF SUFFOCATION,  
KEEP AWAY FROM  
BABIES AND CHILDREN

There is no warning for me

Children will innocently  
create embracing worlds  
but the physics of it all  
the uncompromising construction  
won't allow  
the bubble to exist

The day I was born  
my mother wrapped me  
in one of those plastic bags  
but someone found me  
in the dumpster  
behind the apartment  
and took me out  
allowing the stink of air  
to fill my lungs  
changing the composition  
of my body forever



# WILLIAM CUTHBERTSON

## FILLING

A spoon stained  
at the round of its belly.

Her face reflected  
upside-down.

"I'm the one at the counter  
being handed her soup,

head bowed forward  
to distract you from her clothes."

She remembers a peach pit,  
the ejection of juice;

Now everything becomes a way to open  
a bottle of ketchup.

Better still, an uncomfortable chair.  
She dreams of museums, of being old:

*Socket-joints put on display,  
polyester lingerie.*

She is kneading feathers  
into loaves,

Collecting her admissions,  
keeping quiet to let them rise.

Thinking: this is my laboratory.  
This is a building fashioned to my design.

"I found an unworn jacket  
stuffed up a flue."

## JASON BROCCARDO

### SAY OF THE WOMAN

Anne, how did you decide?  
Approach him on the street  
and take him back to his car.  
Him in his driver's seat,  
you in your summer dress  
with the white, throwing  
down your cigarette before  
you stepped in beside him.  
The look on his face, Anne,  
what was it?  
As you found the crutch of his thigh,  
cupping and palming his angel,  
his half-child, his dear.  
Did you kiss him first?  
Or did his zipper lose its teeth  
and you lick yours  
before you fell down into his legs,  
down onto a spring mine.  
Anne, was it the cut of his suit,  
the whisper of his wife's perfume?  
The blue-touched gray tie around his neck;  
the slant of his right leg in his gait?  
What made you take him  
back to his car,  
in the public lot,  
in the public.  
In your mouth.  
You, fitting your mouth  
with man words,  
fitting your mouth over  
his oyster, his fish, his bird.  
Anne, what roving drove you  
into the cock of the man,  
him in your mouth, gagging  
each time you forget to use  
your hand as a safety,  
of the man who you saw and met

all in one breath.  
What made you want to crawl back  
into a man with your mouth?  
You knotting him in your mouth,  
a wet beetle on your tongue.  
What came over you,  
stepping out of your doctored taping room,  
into Boston, into afternoon 4 o'clock,  
into his car.  
Anne, what made you want to find  
the turtle in his crotch,  
the hair in his crotch,  
chasing him with your lips.  
What filled you that day,  
Anne, woman with the raw bone in her  
mouth?  
Did you think this would get you back to God?  
Back to daisies, back to stars.  
What filled you that day,  
Anne, woman with the fury in her mouth?  
Did you think this would get you back to God?  
Back to child, back to pearls.  
What filled you that day,  
Anne, woman with the man in her mouth?  
Did you think this would get you back to God?  
Back to typewriters, back to yellow roses.  
Away from gin drowning  
and chest crabs,  
glass bodies and  
briar rose not.  
Away from tied rooms  
and premature friends,  
marry worries and  
evil rats.  
Away from dog mrs.  
and fists with kisses,  
merciless boots and  
selfish fingers.  
For all this, is this why  
you held him in your mouth,  
tying him down with your tongue?  
  
And when he slipped his hold in your mouth,  
what thought dug a hole in your mind?

# MICHAEL STEIN

## PHILOSOPHY

I should have words for him, philosophy.  
We're jumping waves, holding hands.

I'm sure he wants me to tell him things  
As the ocean comes in cold, curled lines.

He experiments—timing, tripping—  
But not too much: he grips my hand.

"Never turn your back," I try,  
and don't mean to accuse; he is fearless, memorable.

What I want to say is:  
My father gave me nothing to tell you.

I pull up, he pulls down,  
wanting the water, naturally bouyant.

My voice is nowhere so I grab his hand.  
"Can we do it again?"

He wants my promise  
As we rock and lament.

## JOEL DAILEY

### PIPES. OF VARIOUS LENGTHS.

Bring your leanto  
Subsequent endives  
    Inhibitions in the chassis  
    Cause celeb  
Promotes substandard peregrination  
    Systemic daisy  
    Second thinks  
    Safety feature for instinct  
  
Sequential harm's way  
Oft in within  
Despite alternative  
Rigidity achieved by far  
In an era of eye/hand coordination  
    Gradual nor  
    Drive time  
Info fronds connective tissue

# CHARLIE GARB

## QUANTITATIVE VERSE

What is funny  
about completely losing  
my mind is

that it is  
really funny when  
gray matter fact

walked the line  
three words per  
and the blinds.

In the middle  
of the last  
thing I remember

there's a ball  
and green lawn  
and a head

cracked wide open  
blood and green  
in the grass.

Checkers are in  
black and yellow  
chicken and stars

like Hollywood when  
Paul Lynde was  
funny and alive.

Give the people  
what they want  
let them eat

the fruit of  
our fathers' father  
fruitcake and figgy

dinner with Iggy  
and the Stooges  
and the family

I wanna be  
your dog—licking  
licking the scraps

leftover Iggy figgie  
right-wing dicks  
in their boiler

suits choosing not  
to be chosen  
like the Jews

and the harp  
and the blood  
of Jesus Christ

is really Manischewitz  
the body is  
a cracker very

dry I might  
add and bland  
like your dinner.

## NICHOLAS BARRON

### PLEASE!

Mother-\*\*\*\*! Oh dear Mother-\*\*\*\*! Please grant me an interview and explain the wives and tremolo bar non structure dildo brother formula, oh great two! And as sudden as a shift in the grass atmosphere, I dangle unmodified and did she spring eternal or make her equinox unequally known?

O:K., O:K.! Bleed on me with your trailblazing ways, but sparetire me your gloating graphic equalization, adding only the parts you seek to assemble, Fickle Fetus Mermaid! Soon adding insult to injury. Then the phone rang and it was Delightful Mia with her twenty-six-year-old ad campaign, and me at thirty explaining nothing halter-topped. The whole sundae briefly interrupting orgasm to shampoo my bad relationship with DEAR OLD DEAD MOTHER AS USUAL.

Fighting for equal time with a CAPITALIZED memory and the surgery lasted into the next phase of the next breath. Altruistic or not, June came and went unnoticed, except for the Japanese products. Only struck down with guilt and freebie wisdom condoms just then, Motherfucker, oh Motherfucker!

Tucked in his stampeding word's handmade kangaroo pouch, dripping the canister of flight food on her sturgeon-flesh-zero-lima-bean-green-horse-nibble. Deft upjunct resting on laurel's canyon. Hairsprayed mega-frostbite. Onion eyed sense of impeding danger into my undies. Don't take this wrong, I chewed, but Lone Rangers seldom king the kong out of the ordinary or settling back for what some consider rest.

Beckon and scream the calls of dissident paper tiger drably lit lighthouse ideologies, so there quickly I dare say, that even I with my A.D.H.D. diagnosed her as one part anorexic and one part seldom touched by human laughter. Not contaminated with Taoist curfew and treetop euphemism, molding her more into the porridge and Bob Marley's unique sense of betrayal.

And last but not least-infected, here is my needlepoint. In other words, please allow me to collect your fortune while you are imprisoned by strip-steak, strip-mallitis, where shoplifters get their toes massaged by fascist rubbers of the plural kind. Holding on to angelic goldfish and Great Dane ancestry, so again great, Arctic Patriot, I'll mayflower now and capsize into the male anatomy.



# DANIEL MOSHER

## INPATIENT

What's the story,  
Mornin' Glory?  
Where'd I get this scar?  
Cut up in little bite-size  
pieces? Scars on my face like veins  
running from eyes to nose to  
mouth to chin. Black sutures  
crawling spiders over pink tracks.

I've lost three whole days.  
I remember nothing.  
It was probably sexual. I get myself  
into these things. Violent types  
like me. Three days—gone.  
Hopped up on goofballs, the nurse says.  
Cute. Hopped up. I picture  
a soft pink cartoon rabbit hopping through  
my mind: big Disney eyes, but *real* high . . .  
The nurse wants to know who did this to me.  
I just woke up, and I mumble something  
about consenting adults.

# KIMECO ROBERSON

## LIKENESS

### I

i saw you in 1988 in the family room  
standing near the fireplace  
maybe closer to the couch  
your face a rainy windshield  
yellow skin beet red  
eyes half slits  
veins in your delicate neck  
pulsating

### II

i heard you in 1978 with dad  
probably in the living room  
making sure the tv was loud enough  
but it wasnt  
i got up to see if he was hurting you  
but he wasnt  
and i cried because you were doing it  
without me

### III

just this sunday you got tipsy  
but i bet you dont remember  
trying to make me two step in the kitchen  
i tried to maintain  
to keep from getting the giggles  
but i couldnt  
because while you were getting drunk  
i was getting stoned

## FAMILY HAIRLINE

my grandmother was the only woman  
i know, and still do  
to keep her afro for more than  
thirty years

when i was little she used one of those  
steel toothed picks with a peace sign  
carved out of the black fisted handle  
to braid her hair before she went  
to bed

she'd sit on the long green couch  
covered in that uncomfortable plastic  
make tiny little squares of curly pigtails  
while popping gum and humming a tune  
she made up

come to think of it  
my mother has kept her hair natural  
most of her life  
i can recall maybe one perm  
of course  
she had that hair that was labeled good  
that couldnt nap even if it wanted to  
but i never understood that concept  
and still dont

those days of moms brushing my hair  
wasnt no walk among the trees  
i was one of those tender heads  
preferring brush to comb at all times  
not being able to take the rake through  
my simple scalp  
if i complained, moms would bop me  
with whatever she had in her hand  
sometimes a fat jar of grease would  
unexpectedly go upside my head

# RAPHAEL BUCKLES

## CHARBROILED

These days I find myself  
writing poetry in my underwear

coming up with too many  
lines that rhyme

worrying about all the time  
left in tomorrow

dreaming of a waitress by the name of April  
and the desert

Surrounded with paraphernalia  
which should inspire

But I'd much rather wrap myself in shag carpet  
talk jive and listen to James Brown

spell racecar backwards

be the last one in  
and the first one out

do the limbo  
and juggle bowling balls at Venice Beach

paint murals in my sleep

pay homage to every  
Bluegrass trailer park in America  
& truck stop & gas station in between

maybe never quite get  
to where I'm going

Only hopeful of someday  
when I can drive a Lincoln Continental

And throw in the horseshoe ring  
to emphasize the western apparel.

## SCIENTIFIC, BABY

This girl sat  
next to me  
for 5 minutes  
not one word spoken

I smelled butane  
heard a click  
saw the smoke  
egg yolk my eyes

She left  
got in a car and  
planted one on her man

I read black letters  
on the grimy cement  
They said, "You are the  
victim of the rules  
you live by"  
with an exclamation mark

But I was bustin my  
scalawag sag  
No more juice in  
my juicy fruit  
so I spit and watched  
it bounce

Thinking statements need  
to be backed with proof  
Hypothesis, observation,  
variables considered

My random control group  
is composed of victims  
unaware until they drag  
the art of unfortold  
misfortune.

## CHRIS MASSÉ

### JUST GUSHING

No laugh lines  
or other signs  
of twenty-four  
years and countless  
tragedies. Just white  
skin tight and  
lipstick red, big  
nose telling Italian  
descent, creamy everything,  
little girl tattoo  
with lover's name  
on small of  
back right before  
the firm rise  
and then down  
unshaven lengths, the  
twin strengths—long  
legs—you said  
came from your  
father's side. I

used to be  
scared in a  
good way of  
your unflinching goodness,  
it startled me  
amidst a landscape  
full of mindless  
monkeys and gutless  
girls mostly asleep  
and barely seeing,  
hearing, thinking, remembering.  
You like a  
lovely freak enduring  
imperfect uglies—a  
mostly bad place

with a townhouse  
soul—and still  
very alive you  
called for me  
to get off  
the floor and  
come to bed.

I like you  
walking around with  
baby on hip  
pointing out “dog,”  
“bird,” “plane,” “light,”  
“up,” “down,” “HOT,”  
and I can’t  
help but imagine  
a future where  
baby is not  
a sitting job  
but a collaborative  
creation of our  
own unprotected love.  
Hey, don’t worry,  
I know how  
hard it is  
how far away,  
that future lies  
from your mind,  
I don’t mind,  
I’m just gushing  
all over the  
page all over  
your stomach all  
over the bounds  
of our situation,  
showing my age  
and exactly how  
over my head  
I really am.

## ELISSA PALMER RIDDLE

### FREE TONIGHT

My eyes fall  
safe tonight,  
and minutes  
are  
calm enough  
to  
explore new  
ways of avoiding  
routine  
direction,  
tossing my stage  
to unfamiliar setting,  
where  
a posted sign  
reads:  
heavy days  
unravel here—  
chaos and hallucination  
paint deep colors  
and let the tones fly  
to  
blend together  
shaping  
a mural  
sensitive to magnitude;  
in full view  
at night it  
appears,  
when city lights  
are weak  
from the day.



## NEBOJSA PRODIC

### SOFT WARRIORS AND A CRIPPLED MOON

I watch the sea, and the sea watches me. The night is filled with sex and delicate children running about on hot sand with their eyes looking at me. And I slowly drift away like some dead boat without a name. I see a whale in a pond licking sugar from the moon that has fallen from the sky. I remember my pet whale that I used to have. I fed him sardines and garlic dipped in honey. But he died, and I had to flush him down the toilet. Now the sea has turned into a river. An old woman is offering me soaked bread with frozen butter. She wants me to take her three daughters and make them my wives. I agree, and my favorite is the brunette, the redhead, and the blonde. The water becomes warm and very tasty, like sweet milk from my three wives. The wetness is spreading over me, and I like the smell of it. My whole body is drenched, and I take it in like a sponge. Dear darkness is watching our every move from the hills we left behind. We want to be touched all over with wet fingers and soft tongues, and I appreciate the good taste of a tear. My whole world is complete as I sit back and watch the drowning of the worm, the butterfly, and the spider. The river is the end.

# GREG PURCELL

## FRANKENSTEIN, PASTORAL

The leg is heavy  
with clay. It was  
made by me. We subsist

upon sugar, & meat  
which tastes like  
copper, when the blank

sculpture is conceived.  
It pumps blood  
of blonde milk as

it moves with a cleaver  
into the house  
of skulls. My hands

are dirty in this frame  
of reference, the  
negative held up

to light, inside  
the lecturers' office.  
The pastoral skids

quickly past the face  
of the landscape, & stops  
beneath the surface

waiting as muck  
to be held. I feel  
it come into arms

between my hands, &  
hold itself up. In this  
frame of reference (the

impure reed of grass  
which blows in  
its own made wind, or

the house which latches  
against itself), the life  
of hands exist

without trial & the  
sculpture will kill, it  
is made by no one.

# CYNTHIA TODD CAPPELLO

## SCRIBE

How did it find me—  
this swift needle,  
slippery pilgrimage?  
I've disinterred

each posting on the rutted road,  
rouged the windows,  
stained each portal carefully  
and stuffed all open seams.

Still, like my squire's arranged  
and hated bride,  
I'm seeded with intent  
and left to whelp or die.

I scribble acquisition, conquest:  
shopping lists for queens.  
Or executions, spelled  
in rented runes and sweat.

Most often now I occupy  
the oxcart between here  
and where the bridges jump  
to sawdust under soldier's feet,

and name ten new towns  
on the straight line to desire,  
drunk on thick dung and  
the purple berries crushed to make  
  
red wine and ink.

# SUSEN JAMES

## BETWEEN BREATHS

Before her mind left her body unattended,  
my aunt balanced on the slanted lagoon shore  
watching lanterns float upon murky placid water,  
symbols of peace and the full moon bent into  
    wavering abstract,  
night descended in darkening weighted layers  
    like fabrics placed front of eyes  
    stealing away color to shades of grey.  
Listening between breaths we could  
    still distinguish crickets from cicadas,  
    oaks from elms by the shape of the sound.  
And my aunt leaned on elbows and smiled to the sky.  
Lanterns swimming across moony water  
    became entrapped by hidden roots or branches  
and kids took off their shoes and rolled their pantslegs  
    noiselessly walking spiderlike through water  
to set free the light.  
The water was warm as a bath or a womb.  
“Sometimes it’s hard to know what hinders the light,”  
    she said foggy as a sleepwalker.  
Entering the solemn colors of inevitability  
    listless and white,  
we had come to expect her forgetfulness,  
and she spiraled back and back,  
    like a circle revolving upon itself  
    to the primal cell, or squeal of its origin.  
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    like a circle revolving upon itself.  
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Symbols of peace and the full moon bent into  
wavering abstract  
watching lanterns float upon murky placid water  
my aunt balanced on the slanted lagoon shore  
before her mind left her body unattended.

## OUTTAKES

Fingering the ones  
not kept in the album  
it brings you to this;  
vast handshakes  
of yellowed grasses  
the summer of '88  
mascara'd to the edges  
with baby blanket pink.  
Grasses moving like tendrils  
across bare stretching calves  
whispering to rib bones  
giving texture to the road  
heat always sends you  
scurrying for deeper meanings.  
We loose ourselves to blue light  
squinting through trees  
to haiku fantasy  
bruise color horizon clouds  
masquerading as mountains.

Posing nearly out of frame  
overexposed as  
grass to psychotic heat,  
a tilt of eyebrow questions.  
Air thickens with words  
in spatial response.  
Overexposed we float  
like ghosts.  
The old camera invites  
too much light  
Larry and Mabel Tate,  
Springfield, Ohio, reflections  
through a window,  
peers over your shoulder,  
licking your ear  
like a crushed plum.  
I stand scorched  
at your side.

Here the road lives  
as taut freckled skin  
Shadows overlap  
to shadows to windows  
in fourth dimension view.  
We recall an imagined syntax  
and stun to focus  
tarnished like so many others  
searching for the stencil.





Gustaf Sobin  
Barbara Guest  
Clark Coolidge  
Ray DiPalma  
Aaron Shurin  
John Yau  
Alice Notley  
Lou Hallwas  
Claudia Keelan  
Stephen Ratcliffe  
Jennifer Martenson  
Davis McCombs  
Lott Hill  
Maryrose Larkin  
Gerald Unite  
Geoff Bouvier  
Gala Pierce  
Joshua Taylor  
Dan Sturniolo  
Jason Broccardo  
Charlie Garb  
Kimeco Roberson  
Elissa Riddle  
Cynthia Todd Capello  
Deirdre Kovac  
Rosmarie Waldrop  
William Corbett  
Melissa Kliesch  
Krysia Jopek  
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