



VOLT

VOLUME 16

# VOL- UME SIX- TEEN

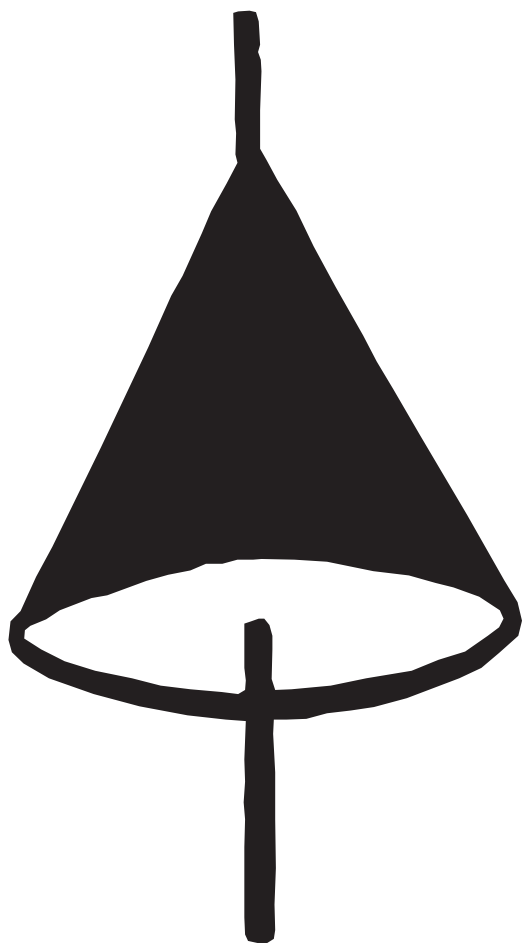
2011

# VOLT



1.5>

- Ammiel Alcalay  
Rae Armantrout  
Brent Armstrong  
Molly Bendall  
Laynie Browne  
Tyler Carter  
Serena Chopra  
Darin Ciccorelli  
Norma Cole  
Jack Collom  
Lyn Hejninian  
Tom Comitra  
Matthew Cooperman  
Helen Dimos  
Henry Finch  
Norman Fischer  
Barbara Claire Freeman  
Michael Hansen  
Joshua Harmon  
Stephen Hemenway  
Derek Henderson  
Brian Henry  
Mark Irwin  
Pierre Joris  
Aby Kaupang  
Claudia Keelan  
Sean Labrador y Manzano  
Brian Laidlaw  
Seth Landman  
Karin Lessing  
Rachel Loden  
Susan Maurer  
Kyle McCord  
Joshua McKinney  
Monica Regan  
Donald Revell  
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Broc Rossell  
F. Daniel Rzicznek  
Zach Savich  
A.K. Sciopini  
Giovanni Singleton  
John Taggart  
K.D. Taiste  
Dan Thomas-Glass  
Kate Thorpe  
Barbara Tomash  
J Townsend  
G.C. Waldrep  
Laura Walker  
Tyrone Williams  
Valerie Witte  
Joshua Jennings Wood



16



# VOLT

## A Magazine of the Arts

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[www.voltpoetry.com](http://www.voltpoetry.com)

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VOLT is published by Sonoma State University, Instructionally Related Activities. [www.voltpoetry.com](http://www.voltpoetry.com)

**Mailing Address:**

English Department, Nichols Hall  
Sonoma State University  
1801 East Cotati Avenue  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3609

**Distributors:**

Small Press Distribution (Berkeley, CA: 510.524.1668), Bernhard DeBoer (Nutley, New Jersey: 973.667.9300).

Libraries may order from:

EBSCO Subscription Services,

PO Box 1943, Birmingham, AL 35210-1943

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**Subscriptions:**

One annual issue, \$13. Two issues, \$26. Three issues, \$36. Individuals may subscribe by downloading subscription order form at [www.voltpoetry.com](http://www.voltpoetry.com)

VOLT is listed in the Library of Congress.





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## Little Walter

May 1, 1930- February 15, 1968

Born Walter Marion Jacobs, Little Walter revolutionized the harmonica by taking a small microphone in his hands as he played. The microphone was plugged into a public address amplifier he stretched beyond its intended limitations, creating patterns of sound never before heard on the harmonica or any other instrument. His song “Juke” is still the only harmonica instrumental ever to become a #1 hit on the R&B charts. Little Walter, who suffered from alcoholism and often had violent encounters while on tour, died of a blood clot in the heart after a fight outside a night club in the South Side of Chicago.

Cover art is Blue and Lonesome (a healing for Little Walter) Linoleum Cut, Ink and Gold Leaf, 2009 Hawley Hussey  
Printed at Off Main Press in Los Angeles under the watchful eye of Iva Hladis  
Photo: Baseera Khan



# Ammiel Alcalay

## sequence in time passed

1.

The New York School for Low Voltage

(fragment from a lost interview)

Q: You mean Finnell was actually washing halls then?

A: Yes, it seems hard to believe. That was years before “Yo-Yo” hit the charts. Then came “Blue” and the rest is history.

Q: Was there some kind of feeling in the air then, that some or one of you would actually make it?

A: Well, to tell you the truth, we figured we’d be running around in flooded basements for more or less the rest of our lives. I think the big break was when CBS decided to serialize the life of Harold Snyder whom, as you should well know by now, was the grandfather of the School for Low Voltage. There was really no feeling at all. We were actually not very centralized then, I mean Charles Jaffe the pianist was driving a cab in Boston and actually living in a closet, Jay Sapphire the anthropologist was running around in a loin cloth trying to figure out how to stay alive in South America. Dan Lazest was managing a building on Renwick Street where the ceilings were constantly falling in. All the great cartoonists were living in offices down on John Street. It was a crazy time because there was really no direction to head in. We were really just trying to pay the rent and keep warm. I mean the list is endless, we were all in very close touch with each other, Billy Seville was trying to become a doctor.

Q: Is that right?

A: Also seems very hard to believe. He only had about six months to go when he snapped. He was living on 163<sup>rd</sup> Street at the time. The landlord tried to throw him out of the building and he eventually succeeded, for defacing the walls. Seville was low on cash and couldn’t really afford canvas so every apartment he moved into he would just paint on the walls.

Q: To think those early masterpieces are now covered by who knows what.

A: Yes.

Q: In your last novel, you write endearingly of a rather remarkable character by the name of Trip Barnes — is he an actual person?

A: Yes, quite so. More, in fact, than you could imagine.

Q: Of course there are the famous ones. The writers, such as yourself, the musicians like Mario, Jaffe & Finnell, the actor Pablo Lazest, dancers like Margo Kyte, you know better than I that the list could go on and on. But the ones that weren't involved, per se, in the creative act. It seems that you draw a lot of material from those people. Who are some of them and where are they now?

A: This is true of course. Well, there are many of them, everywhere and nowhere. I mean some, like Sid Brown or Ted Lovell, are no longer with us. Sid was actually a great sculptor but most of his efforts went into making a living by welding elevator gates. Headley Sherrick, of course, whom you will remember being portrayed as Edward Remnant in a very humorous scene in Dan Lazest's epic *Danger, Low Voltage*, where Remnant is walking his pet iguana down Thompson Street during the middle of the St. Anthony's Day Parade is now, believe it or not, a chiropractor.

(interview stops here)

2.

Old Song

Who does the queen  
save, save one?

How does her  
hair fall? All

on her shoulders  
or some? When

will knight errant  
reply her reprieve,

there in that lair,  
ears attuned and

eyes adjusted, love  
solely reflective?

Old flame

One scar over  
one of her eyes

and one other,  
her hair not in line

and a lip  
not right.

Another  
reclines.

I mistrust her clean lines  
between neck and knees

tapered  
brows.

Night then  
morning.

(the other's  
lip not right)

another night  
one more morning.

No crowds or banners adorn this beach.  
A tern dips, flies sideways

wing skirts ice  
eyes seek fish.

I've know for time longer than I've spent  
as spectator of events

parades whose round kings  
and queens threw doubloons  
to the flat common ground

that my lady

though I'd  
missed lips  
arms to kiss

would offer me  
anything —

How give,

I asked —

when you who say  
anything's mine  
is yours

have nothing?



3.

Say the random is its own design  
but insist on its inefficiency.  
Say the form is complete and only the  
form partakes of any part of completeness.

Insist it is arbitrary. Ask for longer lines. Insist  
its music comes short, its part not complete.  
The part of the past is of no consequence for being past.  
Demand repetitions. Say: to the best of my memory

can never be enough. When all the reports come in  
demand more eyes. Insist amidst the end. Speak of  
random jewels, of tatters, torn or ruined.

From *neither wit nor gold*, edited by Anna Moschovakis, due out from Ugly Duckling Presse in 2011

# Rae Armantrout

## CANCELLATION

The idea that,  
if I say it well enough,  
fear  
will be gone.

If I say it well enough  
to make you believe

The idea that,  
if you believe me,  
our two beliefs  
will cancel one another out.

\*

In the departure gate,  
the bag atop her bag spells  
“Paradise...”

Paranormal. Parable.

Syllable as passenger.

\*

A woman on a cell phone tries:

“Are you annoyed?”

“Mom seemed...

good.”

\*

Last night, suddenly,  
my head or the room  
was spinning.

Now the airline's name  
rises to the top  
of the screen and  
disappears.

## REAL ARTICLE

Everything I know  
is something I've repeated.

Lazy horn solo  
tries to wander off,  
but can't,

or does,  
and we don't notice.

Veterans Day flags  
lap idly  
at their poles.

The day is warm.  
"The."

## RECORDING

1

It occurs to me that, in the old city, the small peculiarities which I like to record, standing out against the familiar chains at home, might not stand out at all or might not seem very peculiar. Here everything is singular and strangeness may be hard to recognize as such. Or not. I don't know and there is no way to ask the inhabitants about it.

2

As part of the language lesson,  
I have holes cut in my forehead.

I am to learn by feel  
to insert the proper keys.

I play along, though,  
privately,  
I still have my doubts.

# Brent Armendinger

## THIS IS WHAT I HAVE BEEN MADE FOR

The body keeps asking the body to become  
a zero or a sum. This is the lesson  
of intimacy. This is the lesson of  
less than me – it begins  
in a quietness sometimes far – a cup  
on the shelf reveals my body to be  
sand, too late to fire it  
in the kiln. Impossible  
to drink from, I fill it up  
with water.

Where did I go says the boy  
who has never been a boy.  
A hole in the wood becomes  
a church. Like scaffolding,  
the mountain I cannot  
climb, the cup  
I cannot drink from,  
and this somehow relieves me.  
I cling to my beliefs. Nothing  
makes it not a mountain. I know afraid  
is so like scaffolding, I know  
the hole in me is where  
a steeple would be.

I can sleep here  
after the last of the cinders  
cool. A ladder leans  
against a ladder longingly  
but shall not shall not  
climb on thee. This is what  
I have been made for. For to walk  
across a roofless me  
made of breath and not  
of wood. When it tumbles  
less than sky is god's  
ambivalence.

# Molly Bendall

## Trespass

A peep into the shadow, stuttering and flushed.

It's most like treachery except fable petals come shedding.

Wear the fatal expression of being somewhere else.

Tumbled in a dizzying habitat, scattershot and rigged with watchers.

And young crawl blindly. Fuzz striping, nubs for horns.

Their eyes, evening clocks, and a milky way. Still stunned at the  
clouds bearing down.

Understand the lure. Thrumming with green current, love's sort of  
in a thrall.

I woke to this civic arrangement, peered down the tunnel.

They became extinct after the diamond catastrophe.  
Ice confesses it all.

I daughter myself, I girl the most delicate ones,  
creep up to them nearer the forelocks and swarming flies.



# The Show's the Animal

Our heads were still in the cat's maw.

Kneel to the tightrope. I bend the sharpest sequins of the night.

She plucks the risk from sentences, and all in favor  
of the next thrill

Step up to the sleep parade, the masked bandits teasing off  
the high swing

Never heard myself go beyond this point.

Don't I wish I knew--to step out in the spotlight pool,  
balance my head on a disk.

That lion has pasted on wings, but look how deliriously he lies down.

His shoulders sloping, a velvety rope pull.

On a platform, she trembles into a diminishing whirl,  
flash before thunder.

Careful, she might lose to low gold.

She could blood out surrender, she could chair before horse,  
she could lightning the ponytail.

This flaunt works for me, I pedal the odd tomorrow out.

# Laynie Browne

## *from* The Book of Moments

### Dottie's Great Room

We are in an old industrial city to visit our elderly relative or friend, Dottie, whom I have never met yet with whom I immediately share an ease of familiarity and awkwardness. Awkwardness as if we had been accumulating a history of awkwardness for many years. She is wearing a smock or a slip or a sundress. She has grown older than we imagined and yet she moves with precarious ease. She wears spectacles and has multi-colored hair piled on top of her head and secured with various glittering pins.

We are going to her sitting room, which is, we discover, the chamber of an abandoned bus. The interior is balmy and dark. We move from row to row of the remaining seats. We lean back and crouch down and rest our bent knees upon the seat in front of us. We whisper and pass notes back and forth between the aisles. We also sit in the back (where the seats have been removed) upon various cushions, and pass between us a dilapidated bottle of water.

Then we are all invited to her great room or patio or main room. We are all looking forward to this as, despite our antics, the bus chamber is somewhat dank and enclosed and stale.

She leads us to a thin metal ladder on the side of the bus and looks up. We begin to climb. Then I see that her great room is the roof of the bus, a highly pocked and unsteady looking metal surface, slightly concave. There is nothing on it except for a thin railing which extends only to the ankles. It is impossibly high.

## New York Story

### *Central Park Picking*

It was the morning of my first ever public speaking on herbal medicine. I was to give a noon talk at NYU. I was up early, on the subway to Central Park to gather fresh herbs. I made my way, as I had many times before, usually though in company, behind the boathouse and a ways back to a wild patch of the park where my teachers assured me no pesticides had been used. It was brushy and hidden and the sun had just come up. I was quietly singing to myself, and also to the plants, as I had been taught, one should always first ask permission before beginning, and always offer a gift before departing. And often the gift was a song. I was gathering mugwort and violet. Chickweed and dandelion. Plantain and yellowdock. All apparent at my fingertips. I paused in my song and looked up sensing a presence. There, about 30 or 40 feet away from me was a man in a gray suit. He was standing at the edge of the clearing that leads back toward the boathouse. He was middle-aged. He looked somewhat suspicious and somewhat innocuous, or perhaps just curious. I thought little of it and went back to harvesting and singing, though a bit more quietly. When I looked up again a few moments later, I was beginning to realize that my remoteness and aloneness perhaps were not the best combination for a young woman in Central Park, ( I was twenty-five). The man in the suit was at least ten feet closer, and he was smiling somewhat kindly though also in a manner somewhat disturbing. There was a message submerged in the smile I was not yet able to decode. It didn't seem violent but somewhat patronizing, as if he wondered what I was doing. I thought, alright this is New York City, and perhaps I should be finishing up here. Regardless of the reality of New York City, my experiences in the city had always been that of delightful overstimulation. I'd never felt safer. And perhaps this had something to do with the fact that in my neighborhood, alphabet city in the early nineties, there was always ample foot traffic and I never went more than a few blocks without running into someone I knew. But now I was far from the village. I was uptown amid the hidden shrubbery behind the boathouse. I looked up again and this time there were three men, all of about the same age, all wearing nearly identical suits, and with the same placid expression. They were a bit closer. Now I began to feel afraid. I had not finished my gathering. I hastily did so. When I looked up again, the three had become four, and they were ten feet closer again and in a somewhat semi-circle around me and blocking the path by which I had come. I turned, with all of my bags and disappeared in the opposite direction.

# Tyler Carter

## Folding Paper

I might wake up completely refreshed and not have a single thought as to what I am to do, and who sent me, and who will send me away. This is what happens when an understanding comes before the need or want, and maybe there is nothing else to say. Either way I'm left without consequence but endlessly it begins again every word is true.

We could ask the time or position of the sun but for now let's consider its light inevitable, a fact in the matter and the matter a fact or instance of recognition. This is what I would most like to turn from: a trail veering off from a trail veering off from the eye taking notes a car approaches in the rain. My hand is occupied, folding a piece of paper my mind occupied looking for signs. Maybe this is devotion, tightly, and out of guilt.

I consider this one problem to be all problems or a cigarette, a next one. "The very attempt to understand the past completely presupposes that we have already ordered the facts." wrote Merleau-Ponty. My understanding a function of the distance given; that depending on where we are our perceptions change. For example I could put this into a historical context, say, six years from now. I am twenty-five years old.

As a result I am left with a written record of my changing mind, feeling out the blank patches and including them in paragraphs of stationary bicycling to indicate a real or unreal sense of travel as a car pulling out of a shopping mall parking lot: capturing how a mind works or will work or will not, sleeping with the light on.

As it is the beginning, we recline much in the same place surrounded by many of the same things. We might ask of difference, of regal adjustments in temperament, bringing situational squeezing to the proverbial head. Or we may ask the sing-songy soft sciences of superficial change to explain how we look at the day.

When I was small my father told me to know one thing well. An expert on \_\_\_\_\_ is more importantly an expert, it follows. That a snowy day is still a day, we walk down the street full of snow.

An alternative to rocks and sand  
a large boulder prevents a “full” view of the ocean.

\*

Now that the world has been discovered, we see  
no other place to go.

\*

A slow current but only in a photograph the turning  
of an image on the page.

# Serena Chopra

dawn,  
I hear love in your feet, 14 times  
the density of water

the Earth was born, and dawn,  
no history is immune from ends

## Continental Drift

Once it was thought that mountains were analogous to the wrinkles of dried fruit. We know better now that our core is not shrinking, rather, our cement is stacking. Stars blush in the nightlight and we know now how Earth throbbed her plated skull and slip-crack crafted a peak; a semiotic showdown for twin towers. Pikes of construction dirt echo the knuckled horizon, urgent fingers tremble hands, muting eons; shifting is the yellow grass buttering wind— A crane stretches, lifts its cable-hooked stone, a claw splits the dirt, sounding the wide mouthed terrain.

# Darin Ciccotelli

## Ghosts

. . . a tenant is tinfoiling his windows.  
The exed-out eyes of dolls are shielded from gamma rays.

Still, there's a shine in the room . . .

. . . a parasoled malapert, pschent of hair and *kindly*-old,  
shambling about

with a birdcage for her shoe—

there's a shine about her, too . . .

. . . mumbling, alone, at a bus stop,  
is less of a language,

more like a visual-aide  
to a lesson

one can't see . . .



... children, in diagonals,  
                    loping to black tiles,  
or in the brinkmanship of their stares,  
remind us . . .

... how many ways to analogize the gerrymandering . . .

... bas-reliefs . . . mirrors . . . watercolors  
                                    on *New York Times* . . .

... mannequins of glass beside those of naugahide . . .

... expecting to pick a flower, then finding it heavy as a stone . . .

... watching not wind, but a sap-drop in the wind . . .

                    . . . the sun,  
dejected by its spectrum,  
alights a few with auras, halos . . .

. . . next to a park in which rounders is played,  
a gentleman

walks up an avenue.  
Wants, in an orrerial movement about his head . . .

*. . . I told her*  
*I was a parachutist. I told that one*

*I was a helicopterer.*

How many selves, confetti-like,  
do we scatter about?

. . . top-forty ballads blare on from convertibles.  
They appeal to me, as a phenomenon,

because they croon with so much woe. Yet they repel me  
on a case-by-case basis . . .

... more and more of them pass.  
We identify the dirt talk,  
how to approach them.  
  
But can't, if we are learners, we learn  
to be better lovers?

... as if after a noon rain,  
the apparitions stir.

And something is to be made of interstitial coincidence.  
If we miss it,

it does not mean the message isn't  
gilded to the stars, isn't breathed out

of the sidewalk's cracks . . .

# Norma Cole

C	S	U
O	T	C
N	R	T

T	K	S
W	I	E
O	S	S

A	A	O
N	B	A
D	R	D

A	R	I
S	U	N
C	T	Y

for Alighiero e Boetti

N	M	O
O	A	L
R	C	E

H	W	A
O	E	V
W	H	E

D	A	E
I	G	E
S	R	D

S	R	O
T	T	R
A	W	K

S	P	Y
H	E	I
A	L	S

W	T	A
H	W	R
A	E	E

O	E	I
T	R	N
H	W	G

O	E	I
T	R	F
H	L	E

E	R	D
M	O	E
B	I	R

T	E	E
H	X	S
E	C	S

# Jack Collom

# Lyn Hejinian

## Walking to Wick

Road underfoot like a roiling wave we went walking and though often rolled back  
By sudden horizons or wild spots we found  
The web of an orb spider caught hanging like a bicycle wheel airborne over the track  
Left recently, judging by dust-definition, by a mother sloth. The ground  
Is never at rest. The slopes change direction, whole fields in the wind shift and, like ships, tack

As if the very earth were a water drop in a vast, hissing sound  
And every journey a fugue or a round. “Row, row,” the children sing from several benches  
Where their ardor has been—just for a moment, for the sake of safety—downed  
Like drink. Safety is temporary, there’s no calm that doesn’t bob a bit, not every soldier rises from the  
trenches  
With chalky physiognomy more curved than calculated to astound

The dogs and children, unsupervised, grimly (but giddily) scrounging. The thirst that wandering quenches  
Comes upon me now—excuse me—ah, I’ve answered it momentarily with a swig  
From a little pool I dug hastily with a twig. These are forests that rain drenches.  
While you drink I look about—ah, there’s a wet whisk, a wild pig  
Snuffling the dirt, fronded by sword ferns. It’s very big, or seems so to my jaw, which as it shuffles off,  
unclenches

And I watch the creature gallop, perhaps to warn its henchpigs of us. But we don’t care a fig  
For henchmen. On shank’s mare we’re proceeding, bound for the distance  
(For distance binds). Is distance a one-word oxymoron? Toes don’t care; into the sand, step by step, they  
dig,  
Leaving tracks that only prigs (or time) would wipe away. We wind along, and the distance puts up little  
resistance;  
Right foot, left foot, nearly dissolved in each other; wild hoofprint, quietly insistent sprig

Carrying sprightly buds upright as we pass. We’re bound to our path, hyper-alert and yet in a trance  
So that the smell of the fire, followed by its distant crackle, comes as a very large, slow gift.  
Our boots are old, but from the sound of it the fire’s just catching. We’re hungry, cold, and here’s a chance

To play it cool, nab something from the fire's-edge raw/cooked rift  
Into which we've stumbled inadvertently, perhaps fortuitously, certainly by happenstance.

A pause. Something's waiting just beyond the fire's halo of light. I pull my flask and toss a snifter  
Into the blue and orange flames flickering in the wind. They flare...  
Aha! Demonic eyes—but wait: is it just—? No. Gleam! Is it Pan or panic left  
In a flame? It's said that every dream image is a condensation of the many thoughts we've thought when  
unaware  
Of their possible "innards" were they only viewed from another moment than the one just, momentarily,  
lived

Perhaps too casually, as if we were merely passersby en route to something else we think more valuable,  
more rare  
Than the reductive garden path and pace. At any rate, internally garrulous "tumbleweeds,"  
Full of wind, on conversational rounds, are outpacing us—but should we care  
Constantly about forcing these fractal spirit-facts to manifest? Maybe wholeness needs  
Conditions that are silent, invisible, negligible, inconsequential, spare,

And linear in order to draw us closer, make us see the swells. Maybe it's oxymoronic to say that laziness  
breeds  
Or that tumbling contemplates. And yet surely weeds contemplate. That they are said to invade compares  
them unjustly to armies  
Sneaking across great rivers underwater, making a trail, for awhile, of breathing reeds  
And leaving tender flowers thirsting for human attention. Gardening doesn't require much, if any, speech  
and none of a gardener's accomplishments are permanent *faits accomplis*,  
But then, whose, within a proposed eternity, are ever permanent deeds?

Achievements are the stuff of history—things to learn and learn from—but for how long does such  
knowledge count as expertise?  
As I walk I think that "expertise" is quick, will metamorphose before we see the hazy towers of Wick  
And the brains of Wax on which memories are impressed. It's from a myth that we have a name for the  
starry Pleiades,  
Seven daughters turned to furious hydrogen, at last outliving the romantic  
Brother swans of the Brothers Grimm's fairy tale (told them beside a kitchen fire by ladies

Of the morning). We walk on. At noon we encounter a dear friend lying sick,  
He says, of streetlights that, like a hundred suns, blaze at night and disable the once agile stars,  
Turning them into nothing more than a background acrostic,  
An impotent spell, unable to quiet the loud bad acoustics of continuing wars  
Sinking under the Atlantic, sailing ironically over the Pacific,

And swelling like sores up and over the clouds. To their utter detriment, we've made everything ours  
But only, thank lack of Lord, crust-deep and oxygen-high—much less in fact because  
Over the (to us creepy) creep of "geological time" human existence will leave only a thin residue—albeit  
a smear, a stain, impossible to scour  
Away. Our personal footprints, however, as we walk on and on to Wick, are less like a stain than a light  
buzz.



We continue over fragile turf with the almost defunct daintiness of female geniuses at their escritorios.

“Lion!” we cry in concert, and indeed a female lion leaps from behind a yew and opes its jaws  
As a plump midsummer snapdragon might when taken ’twixt forefinger and thumb  
Of a gigantic goddess or god (assuming that such a preposterous postulation ever was  
An actual possibility or that such a population would pinch snapdragons for no apparent cause), as if the  
    flowers were dumb  
Enough to roar and thereby give away both presence and intention—or was that us,

Two human beings of the sort humans have become? Some plump thing presents itself as a plumpness  
    and we succumb,  
(D)evolved into a rashly decorated lumpness, but, aha!, this lioness jumps and hisses  
And just narrowly misses us, who might have been her meat and drink—indeed, the full sum  
Of what we might-have-been, based on memories of webs, brooms, and kisses, comes to immediate mind.  
    This is  
Not some mere flash of life, nor is it a false summation, as when one adds up just one side of a column

Leaving the hedge-Indian to shoot gleeful arrows at the whole thing, like some Mrs.  
Punching candles into her own birthday cake. They’re blown out, the song is sung, and waving farewell  
    we walk away  
But not away from the Wick way. No matter what we say or where we stay, our destiny kisses  
Each quickening birthday candle’s woven wick, which absorbs those kisses, since, no matter where we  
    walk, we are in destiny’s bailiwick. It’s there we age and play  
And hear what here is. Whoo, to wit, just an air, often bending sound, or unsound, which is

The silent core of turning ayres, the inexplicable “more” that makes us, as we sing, sway  
Until the scene’s a swing—speaking of which, the lioness leaps back in  
As a persistent familiar tune might, gripping ideas that are adrift in the flow of consciousness, which is to  
    say, holding sway,  
Which seems innocuous (yes?) but gets at the basics, turning them in-  
Ward just as the weft or woof must weave in before it can weave out so as, when the shuttle’s course is  
    run, to portray

Both sides of any musical question, to pin  
Motif to anticipation, tonic to dissonant, barefoot to booted, solid ground to mountain stream. Trudging  
    on, we spot a path  
That forms, by going round and round a particular point, ever upward, though varying, sabotaged by  
    many a geological spin  
And topographic twist, a contorted spiral, as full of crinks as waves approaching shore are full of crests.  
    Perhaps they are amenable to some complicated math  
Such as that that describes the layered accumulation of varied conclusions, till any question’s skin

Like the film of tension on water in a bowl, comprehensibly and predictably (though the timing’s never  
    certain—the moment’s always a surprise), pops. Time drops calculation into the bath  
And all equations buckle. The curtain falls, then rises. Merely a tickle. The ratios of half-rhyme  
To long stretches of murmuring time that fall upon late warm rural summer noons and fill one’s mind with  
    drowsy amplitude, quieting wrath,

Replace the passage of events with dreams, then stories, then hierarchies, and alarms. You're startled; I'm Eager to walk a little farther, though the soles of my boots are thin. Yes! Pathos is delightful, but so is distance; tears are refreshing, but so is reason. Leonardo is said to have been a polymath

And, perhaps, even as it leaps the strange, regular gaps in history, his erudition grows and fills the sky while it recedes in time.  
Sky is an ongoing distance, the force that, just as a massive magnet can withdraw nails from a porch, pulls colors up from flowers to our attention as we pass. They are so bright we stop  
"On a dime" but, on a fortune, sky pulls the very flowers up and out, although by "now" they're past their prime, seem to mime  
The bristles of a shaving brush, or something edible but tough. It's thus that hikers add hallucinatory details to their day and think the boulders in the creek are horses at a gallop,  
Believe the leaves in the trees are juicy lemons and limes, even picture the incidental grime

As portraiture, each patch of dust the image of a face, sometimes benevolent, sometimes fierce, drawn upon a countertop,  
Even imagine speech (and sometimes song!) issuing from filth-formed lips  
Of soddish nymphs. In the time of Heraclitus nymphs and imps, dryads and naiads, inhabited the wilderness. That was in the Golden Age before monotheism put a stop to spirited fields and blacktop  
Came to represent bony, manufactured stays (minus staying power) of a girdle herding the rich mix that is Earth's hips  
As they shake with uncontrollable mirth. The sky above is intuition-rich, every cloud is a hunch. And no matter where we wind up

The clock of what's-next, space fools time, throws a curve, into thinking (first *at all*, then *that*) it isn't formed from fission chips  
Nor from frissons of mortality but from prospects, vistas, regions, and plots. But time has fooled space, too, into thinking time is real  
When it's merely camino real. Each pebble, broken from process then flow-pressed to the point of disguise, part of a reality tour, drips  
Into a pool of pointlessness whose pointlessness, radiating from every point, is precisely the point of the exhilaration we feel,  
Exhilaration like that of, oh, one Benday dot leaving a thousand sinking ships

Or the ellipses that mark inexpressibility's spot. From exhilaration we steal  
Its inner hilarity, along with an upscale, downscale view  
Of the future. To plan a long walk is to engage in an extended fantasy of tired feet and airy trees and thoughts that turn in the breeze like a child's multi-colored pinwheel,  
And to talk the walk, do the walk, two rails that never meet; but nothing startles you  
As suddenness startles the old. It's said that the old become infant-like in the end, but, unlike the old, infants love an abrupt turn of events, taking anything unexpected as ideal

If it's beyond utter fright. This is called learning, the valorization of all detail, a state we walkers sue  
The stupid to adopt, though it's in the nature of stupidity to block walking, both of wanderers and of ideas.

Not that we can claim to be superior; our very walk's more choreographic than true  
Or authoritative. We cross with little propriety and no possession. We pass but don't command, we're

willingly subject to peripeteia.  
But we do return as well as turn; we come back like summer, certainly similar, absolutely new

And relatively old. Like tides whose turnings take expertise to calculate but turn without calculation, so  
children find the familiar novel and novelty a panacea  
And then panacea both comforting and dead. What's left but to (thoughtfully) blow up the home  
And set forth—fast, (thoughtfully) outrunning the explosion? New boots blister the feet, the maps take us  
past thickets of vicious, lovely bougainvillea  
Into fairylands of thought, concentric beginnings, through circles of circular domes  
And across public and private squares. Hunger sends us down streets, avenidas, ulitsi, rues, and vias.

Where did we begin? Maybe a dirty window in Holland, a bar in ever-changing Amsterdam; the foam  
becomes loam, poem roams in and out of a speaking tome  
That purports to be a guide book to the antiquities of home. Mammoth bones in tar and gold  
Continue into space (or whatever case or place the future means or comes to), meaninglessly sifting it like  
an old comb  
Through the hair on the head of a tale-telling crone who has many tales yet to tell that are very different  
from those she's told,  
Or like a stone that opens to sing but all that emerges is (eventually) loam

That we don't want to trample. Track abandoned, we make our own—we marginalize our trek, treading  
on clods unfurled from cold,  
Catching a glimpse, just an arc of the sound, of passing geese  
That, like a fading sunset, are perfectly surprising, perfectly distant, and perfectly age-old  
Though they don't have to walk (they skip the irregular, airborne in the bottom of a bubble). They barely  
get to walk, never skip, nor quite scan the rockbound lease  
That affixes inhabited place to monetized time. Somewhat like birds ourselves (how romantic we were)  
we rolled without contract along the bold road. In word if not in fact we can call the way souled

By the way it so intricately unfolds into a dragon-guarded, earthbound grove containing the golden fleece  
That warms the imaginary lamb that a shepherd in an eclogue might rescue from a flash flood in a cul de  
sac  
Where the fluid lash, both "fact" and emblem of travel's (concluding) travail, might seem to increase  
Its reach. But the path is indifferent to us. We pass, continuing our journey's curl, suffering no attack  
And no surcease of slender intricacy but suddenly too awake for peace.

# Tom Comitta

## IT AND OR GOAT AND OR SCRAP (GUZZLE)

A tree and a tree and a tree and a stump  
Someone managed a something good

Someone tapped the tongue to the heel  
Of a nipple on a lunch break

Found

hidden in the fur  
The toenail sprang a frond

I tried and the trying comes

I boxed the child's ears from death  
From cabbage plucked a cod

Laced up the corset 'round the neck  
I danced upon the lawn

It turned the kilter on

The coat returned to feed the beans  
The dagger grew a thumb

The Someone spoke and gave a hand  
The Someone dropped the ball

The upper lip of Elvis Christ  
Caught weaning off a blog

The lower lip  
We might have watched

The lower lip absolve

I cooked the meat in kitten feet  
I pattered down the hall

I tripped a tick and caught the kid  
I flew into the wall

---

As the coat began to collect heads  
The latex lost its tongue twist

The goat returned to nest  
An apple sat a napkin really

I remember someone said and I quote  
a corporeal experience does not

Precede a real one but  
Calls you back in a jiffy digs

A rut in the earth some flounder hand  
Was good

It was okay but we called it good

# Matthew Cooperman

and artist  
Marius Lehene

Still: Arcades

Deposit: a Gameboy, a boy, boy's culture. See how the quarter is the edge of his wit, a

diamond: what sharpens, itself and all of Africa

Age: of reproduction, the trove of things repeated, see (Audobon's Baudrillard, Baudrillard's simulark) the migration of steel and cork birds

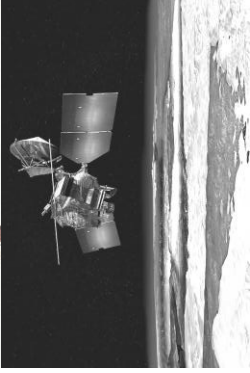




Country: full of sand, being the daughter of glacier. The winds came down from Valdez (Rigel 4), and blew a hole in the caving device,

this sin: hubris, making the sun run, this love, calculation, turning brides to calumny

Model: ever ready, ever devout. "This one's an RS, that one's a fool," the silver Koons bunny pounding immaculate beats



Facet: villa surroundings, tendencies in books, a midden near the flooded  
groves, one hundredth monkey (clap & clap), the spectacle, the tomb,  
the better provided for soul

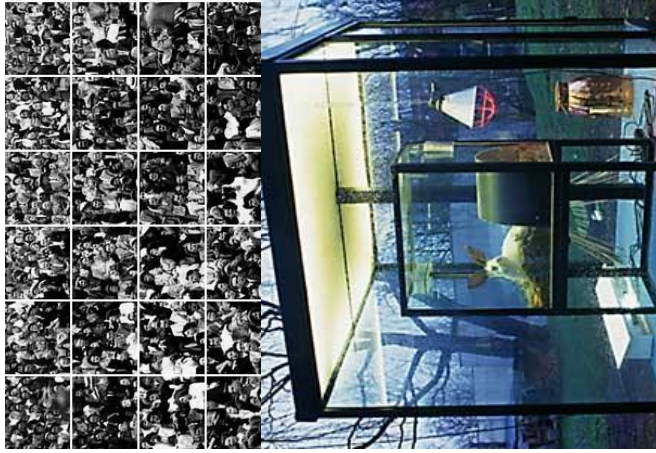




Size: venti, epoch, kalpa, tome; plus ultra blast furnace trundling coals, a mid-cap aggression, a long-term wimple, a triple skim arctic reserve

Stave: of the cross, of the barrel, the busman, thou stanza'd collection thrust from a ship, our hovering form moved rapidly, a smashing iron to rule the globe

Quote: "World exhibitions glorify the exchange, the value of the commodity. They are a framework to secondary value. They are a school in which masses consume. They are a point of identity." (Exposé of 1939)



Pod: Peter-Paul's Pachinko Palace, Dog vs. Dog Typing Madness2, Just Another Happy Yakuza, BoneCollectorBoyz, Hyman Has a Mullet Don't Pick Him, North America

Narateé: "It's almost like you're shooting at me but with characters."

Antidote: sleep, Murine, late Rothko. Clense the chakra, scald the cat. Pour in the eye holes a quarry of rays, pure looking to dispel this mannish brute

Prophecy: "The lion likes nothing better than having its nails trimmed, provided it is a pretty girl that wields the scissors." (Toussenel)

# Still: Eruv

Intent: to secure the Sabbath, to exercise ease, to maintain freedom, to smudge the air, to build and dwell, to manage the gentiles

Inspection: real or symbolic, barely a string, an entire surround surrounded, the air-wave was captured in ribbons along towns, the doorframe or lintel was seen by Rabbi Goldfedder, on a clear riverbank, manna itself, our impulse not to leave home

Question: a scalar regard for a Zionist state? an Eden supplied with a scudding metaphor?

a sanctioned holiness invisibly drawn? your Christian neighbor building good fences

Action Figures: Super Mario Abramowitz, Bionical OO-Olmert, Ali Abbas and the Forty Thieves

Righters: Lieberman, Sharon, Wolfowitz, Waldheim; Jacques DeMolay, Pope Pius XII, Henry Ford, Sr.

Writers: Mamonides, Ibn Fatouma, Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus; Roth, Oz, Gordimer, Bellow, Freidan, Levi, Pinter, Sontag

Bundle: Leopard & Final Cut, Jesus n' Mary, Flaming Bush & Hakim Bey, Moses and Monotheism & preemption and compassion

Quote: "The struggle for world domination is between me and the Jews. All else is meaningless. The Jews have inflicted two wounds on the world: circumcision for the body and conscience for the soul" (Hitler)

Yukel: I am more obdurate than duration. You build walls, I the space between

Author: that I do not know where to draw my line, what is a Jew and where is the gun, what is a house and who is home, how to stop working the who I am

Shofar: many / many / the ignominious end / of any still life virtue / of anyone's / one

Grace: and somewhere in there was springtime. The corpse mines were closed down. The soldiers all left to fight their demons. The women and children dug rifle pits. He and his group were locked up in the stable in the suburbs. One bird to another. And then, one morning, they got up to discover that the door was unlocked. The war was over. So it goes

# Helen Dimos

## Foursquare

To face  
That      slate

they too

Come to

# Handout

War

Made an  
Other

Lake

## A House for a Prophet

a mother

made

a house

song of dwelling

then

called  
for

figures

Poems above extracted from poems of the same name in *The Plans Caution*, by Richard Taransky and Michelle Taransky, which can be viewed at <http://richardtaransky.com/site/products/the-plans-caution>

# Henry Finch

## Just Before C Major

Behind the hairline,  
The peacock fingers--  
A slow gallop  
Far into an aversion,

Into rocks like long, counted numbers.  
Rigamarole, itself yelling  
Down shafts and out  
Over birthdays,

Onto the boy perfectly, easily  
Below the hairline,  
Hallelujah, brought pain  
As each day stood and slipped.

# Norman Fischer

## From Conflict

in the desert  
headlights cut the night  
in the time of arrival

a queer boulder, ice so blue

a curtain dropping  
beyond the possibilities of our countrymen

on a dirt road  
trailing billows of dust

erotic fantasies – better fragmentary  
then never

nothing goes as planned  
what we wished for

turning thirty today  
or sixty

tango or tangle  
of a grown-up life

sun behind clouds, muffled light  
moving quickly as in a film

frozen earth, mountains, caves  
water's drastic swirl



*“everyday living, everything’s alive...”*

snow blows across tundra  
(*“just what’s seen”*)  
penguins huddle

eggs between their toes

*Explosion!*

black smoke rising  
in big plumes

a child in the next seat  
masters her idiom

*“lets be honest”*

sun’s heat  
on & on & on

I’m lost  
but that doesn’t mean how it sounds

crumpled blankets on the floor

distant mournful violin

*“the”* is *“one”*  
*“one”* implies more  
on the letters’ humps

in our language  
so convincing

married  
they could be so alone

*“who can help us  
with our human problems?”*

sky full of birds  
as it were

tiny growing light in the hill's notch

*“I'm desperate”*

I could climb El Capitan  
I could dance till I drop

she's so smart & quiet  
underneath the silver moon

not that there's anything wrong with that

pictures and text

*links, lots of links*

nothing as obvious as this  
reject your first thought

he sells wine,  
she dismantles cities

choose another thought  
or wait for the thought

that goes here

such round teeth & so white  
the brick path that leads to the house

smoke & rind of words

things are becoming  
very casual  
everywhere

typing my strategic plan  
numbered items in prioritized order

an alarmingly urgent  
tug on the line

belt's a notch  
too tight

old man speaks with delight  
to interested young woman

who or what  
is ever the matter

neat blue shirt  
in both senses of the word

only two days ago  
so there is something wrong

the universe is broken and it is making me conscious  
that things are getting rocky outside me

this is the beginning  
this is the door out of which I shall escape

arms of a chair  
to lean on

*"talk with your hands"*

it's in my mind  
I don't have to write it

no                hesitation  
typing is visual  
I can see the words in my mind

the ramifications of this are legion

*Africa, where we come from*  
Who shall pay

a yellow wall  
is background  
for the dying in the foreground

dressed in black:  
*"you used a good word"*

Inside,                our stuff  
is consistent

tremor in the wrist  
pursing of the lips  
how heavy the teeth in the mouth  
marvelous that they don't bite the tongue

stand still for a minute  
your back against the wall

is regressive  
it's spreading

it varies

no use  
in a Sabbath

& no breaks

party plans at a bar  
*“what happened to us?”*

distill the essence  
five knots

seven days

*“what have we been doing?”*  
an inchoate head

use what happens  
it helps

the others, rich  
inner life’s a buzz

what you do  
to be effective

this action  
is where they meet

the impact of the central theme  
is not recorded

map of the room or world  
note the exits

# Barbara Claire Freeman

## Symbolic Logic

It is 1988. I am reading  
Operation Memory  
in the middle of a reservoir  
in the middle of a drought  
hoping to avoid the silent hour  
whose ruddy afterglow suggests

an event that hasn't yet occurred.  
As if I could tell you our story—  
brittle days and only one night  
but there is no story in that. Still  
the captive is unable to report correctly

the details perceived during her journey.  
Blistersea. Eardrum. Scabsurge.  
I was absent twice. I wish I could say  
it made a difference but it didn't.  
When she says "bloodorange"  
I hear "tympanum." It goes on like that—

so much work building a beginning  
where everything is hooked up.  
Meanwhile the interviews have started.  
When she gets back it will be too late.  
This country was nothing before it had a King.

# Kigali Memorial

We wanted the museum

to be more real  
than the bones

though compared

to the museum  
nothing is real—

not exactly a bridge

or not only a bridge,  
its ceiling black

and white, inset

with photographs, scraps  
of the victim's clothes.

Here are skulls in display cases,

and here are boxes filled with ash.  
Somewhere, in last night's

last time, the burial chamber

still under construction,  
things we saw we wish

we only imagined we saw.

# The Ship Found

The ship found a theme and swerved. We might  
find a berth here. Wasted breath or  
a breath cut by rain. Praise it.  
Let go. It is not the wind that  
is dead. Either the fire casts a  
shadow or it won't. You knew this  
all along. At the cutwater a blue wave.  
Rode it like breakers shearing through the night.  
That's how it works here. I'm afraid the wind  
will end tonight. Always like this.  
Gone from the start. Friends almost  
died there. Can I say it. Can  
you hear what I hear. Let go.  
I've prayed too long and should stay here.



# On The Ship

On the ship. Out past the blue wave.  
The break in the shoreline. The break  
in the wave. The person is sleeping.  
A break in the ship. The berth and  
the floating. Up by blue waves.  
Up by the blue wave a person is  
sleeping, the raft and the ship.  
A break in the shoreline. The break  
and berth. Up past the blue wave.  
The raft and the wave. The shoreline.  
The berth. The berth and the mooring.  
The shoreline is waiting. A break-in  
is waiting. The raft and the ship.  
A break in the fogbank. The shoreline.

# Michael Hansen

## DEAR CROWN [2]

O well, stairwell,  
Our cadaverous plants

[gold, gray]

Mark men, guts,  
                  building, guts,  
Marrowed

Hollowed hallways breezy

It was enough to live  
To see Love like a boy

Stomached

[gold, gray]

On holiday  
News rotate & rise  
          round gunship sounds

In two into

# DEAR CROWN [3]

(where is my hat)

(I said now it is morning)

(therefore button up)

(also your mother is ringing)

(I was saying)

(the cantering birds)

(I was saying the cantering birds)

(alone with)

(milk pails singing)

(when everything)

(dreamed)

(recover my eyes)

(spit glass back black spit the dead seeds)

(for once for once)

(put something in my hand)

# Joshua Harmon

From *Le Spleen de Poughkeepsie*

Milkweed and broken sink,  
stand of browned goldenrod,

blitz of rust-orange blow  
-down: yes, dear twilight, I

like to be alone with  
scents of sill-dust and gasoline

pump handles: a controlled  
excess historically

received with the clank  
and smudge of defunct

industry: wind at a window:  
where is that music your letter

spoke of: the civilizing  
purpose of a physical place

we can return to  
like collecting plastic

bottles from a hilltop  
amid grassy footsteps

and unhappy prospects,  
some textual weeping

to suggest a frozen pond's  
regional reality,

or syntax's late  
abandonment: the best

source of everyday value  
as the rains blow in

# Stephen Hemenway

## insides

### *my insides trouble me*

I crave rags  
faded blue to wash  
clean to absorb  
wounds to dress  
I sit I walk  
in my mouth the tooth  
of rags  
in my saliva the taste  
in my eyes in my  
intestines a full-faded blue

### *your insides trouble you*

clean shaven you crave rags. thick scrape of denim  
on your thick tongue. your lips piled on your pale face.

sit down.  
walk around.

your breath and wrists are thick, your eyelids, your hair  
which is heavily parted. your stomach's thick with rags.

### *his insides trouble him*

He sits. He walks. His eyes  
clean as porcelain. He's nice  
enough. Does nothing  
but complain  
about the food.

In his lips I think  
I see a rag  
hanging like bloody feathers  
out of a cats mouth.

*their insides trouble them*

they walk they sit  
in clean-pressed porcelain  
they walk  
faded like washing rags they sit  
they gaze at nothing through a train's dusty windows  
their eyes are clear

*our insides trouble us*

With our milky insides we walk. Porcelain on starched table cloths. On the window's dusty menu in faded type there's nothing we want. Sun thick on our skin. Ink on our fingers. Perspiration. We shower daily. Wash our hands. And fade.

*my insides troubled me*

with milky needs

*your insides troubled you*

Everything you ate tasted like nerves to you.  
You worried everyone. Even when  
you were sitting you were walking walking.

*his insides troubled him*

You knew it was him by the uneaten watermelon.  
You knew it by his walking eyes.

*our insides troubled us*

We knew each other by our unmade bed, the dishes in the sink, laundry and clothes pins. We knew each other by the dirt under our fingers, the sound of the toilet flushing, doors left unlocked, creaks, sliding windows.

*their insides troubled them*

They were nerves  
and clothes pins.

They were this or that.

# Derek Henderson

0

*to series*

the emanation  
with gills of gold I am  
and so the sod has given over

to the hot wind  
the wind zeroes out, or has sucked the hay from the hill.

More, hither, the magic of number

college of sacred spirit

beginning of ego

the sharing of gold

the great cut  
of the dignified  
speech of man

exempt from the sum  
the Chevrolet has its calling  
in its ticking on

here a gilt golem

at best

“I am here, arrested

sad, sick of the neighbor’s tzatziki,



of the hanging magic. a doctrine of ritual  
 in the small house  
 street—porch  
 origin fount &  
 beginning from the  
 the vital skimming  
 Nesting, *am love*  
 a way of living.  
 Abdication of law, points taken;  
 tips of leaves in the taking  
 mixed w/ aphids on the stems.  
 The history of the margin  
 is the primitive world  
 beyond brother and mother cling through criteriae  
 simmering in sum

The (sun sits there, haggling gold)  
(naked, resonant)

quellings

the great livingness of things,

the arching of the head of a pin,  
the parting of your face  
the dye in the chosen hands

I eye, "I will be"

irises , hands , images

[O]

Oh, opening, blood, thorough use, practice, child, hands

is truth

(tarry, gummy) aiming at, sent to you

seeking in it a

quickened life, a shocked life

back to

“I name,” named

sleep

sleep

noon

ash

tatters

stop on the *if*

to the mouth comes *if*

as food,

thistles, fish

as completed

# Brian Henry

## River Song

I stand in the water  
the water this river  
I stand in the water  
the water this river  
I stand in the water  
the water this river  
& the sky it goes silver  
I stand in the water  
the water this silver  
I stand in the water  
the sky this water  
I stand in the river  
the river no water  
I stand in the water

# This Us

If given time  
a minute even  
to pause & think  
over the mulch  
that is our years  
we  
thrown side by side  
assaulted by days  
our constant retreat  
into the brunt  
of what whittles us  
of what we love  
& live for  
the same thing  
we know  
we moan  
if given that minute  
we would  
what ?  
gasp  
grab each other  
weep  
or set our faces  
to face  
what follows  
& ask  
will it drag us  
down  
but already  
we are  
already

& always  
                  down  
then how  
                  or why  
are we atmosphere  
                  shouldering  
          our own climate  
                  as if one sky  
          as if together  
we shaped the sound  
                  of what awaits us  
breaks us  
                  here  
so we can put each other  
                  back  
          together  
in the dark  
                  no light  
                  to blind  
          or guide us  
nothing to distract  
                  us  
from us

# What Vista

—& the clouds moved on

after six days of static

pening the wind

the underside of the bridge

ing over. The river

on the stone, grime-

(from here), the river

nothing, you thought,

no bank or boat

a point whence to view.

the bridge &/or those

could see what belongs,

(& only) to you!

with their rain

o-

-stroked river on

arc-

flickered

stricken but smooth

flickered &

could move there, where

could work, provide

If only

crossing it

at least now

If only.

# Mark Irwin

**the stars with their come-ons,**

each one axled, invisibly  
upward. All night over I-70, Orion floats east to west: Moab,

Capitol Reef, Zion. *An old starling, one among many  
squawking in snowed pines, fell down, trying*

*its wings among creaking boughs. Cataract of dusk-gold  
in its eyes, dull hackles and worn*

*tail feathers.* The woman had brushed close in Vegas and tried

to steal my wallet. Inside the last  
picture of you. *I opened*

*then closed the wings in snow, the bellows of its balked black  
belly up, blowing, sieving*

*what distant, spangled want.*



# Pierre Joris

## Letter to Steichen's Ed

*In fact, every photograph is a fake from start to finish,  
a purely impersonal, unmanipulated photograph  
being practically impossible. — Edward Steichen*

Leiwen Ed,

Ech wees net ops du ons Sproch nach gekannt hues,  
that's why I'll address you in American English.

You were born zu Béiwen, bei Roeser, in Luxembourg,  
I was not  
You were an American citizen,  
I am still not,  
I am just a plain citizen of Luxembourg.

You believed in the family of man  
I am weary of families of any order and species.

But you *are* family  
in that photo by Dana those clear blue  
Luxembourg eyes exactly like cousin Lol's, the cut  
of the face too, there's a resemblance, close to  
the bone, close to the farm  
a way in which the head  
is held. High & loose. You're my home-  
boy of old, Ed, a  
cousin, maybe even  
"cousin germain"  
as the French wld say?

Now, you burned your paintings

when your gardener imitated one of yours —  
a strange act, a criticism of  
the representation of representation, maybe?  
Or just a cheap trick to prove Duchamp wrong  
for saying “stupide comme un peintre”  
& move on to the new technologies?

Now, I never burned a single poem  
have kept them all,  
but then you had Carl Sandburg  
in the family, devoted companion  
for long walks & writing for you

I have always hated taking  
photos but bought a camera at sixty  
to shoot landscapes  
& the family of one Joris  
& half a dozen friends  
but I always leave it home  
or forget that it is in my pocket.

You were a famous delphinium breeder  
I only brood over words  
make poems & make anthologies,  
weird cut flower bouquets

I am in Albany NY & sometimes  
visit Buffalo where  
you did avant-garde color autochromes  
the year Ford introduced the model T-Ford  
and one year after Picasso painted  
his *Demoiselles*.

Ah the autochrome!  
Hot off the 1903 minds  
of the Frères Lumière,  
them I've seen the Light Brothers,  
first marketed in our year 1907,  
it is an additive method

a process involving millions  
of microscopic  
grains of potato starch  
(did you ever think of  
the Luxembourg staple  
food, *d'gromper*, when you  
loaded the camera?)  
dyed  
    bright blue-violet,  
    bright orange-red  
    & Kelly green  
dusted on a slightly concave piece of glass  
already coated with liquid pitch mixed  
with a dram of beeswax  
to keep it “tacky”  
the random spaces filled with lamp-black  
& a panchromatic silver halide emulsion

the resultant screen  
was stochastic in nature  
a random array  
an abstraction way beyond the *Demoiselles*’  
demure cubism  
though the light you let  
pass through the photo-sensitive plate  
coming off  
your “subjects”, say Charlotte  
Spaulding in Buffalo,  
with the starch grains remaining as aligned  
as the starch of her lacy dress  
organized this randomness into  
plain Edwardian beauty.

Ed, you were not Edwardian,  
you were just a Luxembourg lad  
in America who made good  
& moved with ease between  
Condé Nast & this here place,  
fifty years before Warhol.

If I am trying so hard to  
understand this autochrome process  
(of which you said “ no medium  
can give me color of such  
wonderful luminosity”)  
it is because you also said:

“If you don’t take doors off their hinges,  
how are you going to know  
to put doors back on their hinges?”

Though that, cousin Ed,  
may be where we disagree:  
why put the doors back on  
the hinges,  
beauty will bolt anyway,  
and all we are ever left with  
is the beauty of doing the work,  
the handwork, the hands on work,  
your plates, my words.

Merci, cousin,  
‘daz gut ze wessen  
daz du hei wars virun mir.

[5/21/07]

# Aby Kaupang

## they aren't what they are

chairs around a garden   fading  
little pews   actually circum-plots  
& grave succinct things

& stunning  
how some second someone  
a you | I

never shows up  
never showed up   never

caught “the train to the next...”  
which is scripted   admittedly  
& oh-savior-like

but see how the luminous

seats   fading by luminous exploits  
stained in yellow falling fruits  
& bathed with earthly loam

exhume the sun

seeming as though thrones and horses

**I swear to you the beds here were born  
with teeth,**

the great green speech of fallow

fragrant our lawn halos evening & alley  
orangeness almost dilatory our back ways  
our language certain, dilatory  
beading with oak  
trees, triangulations of—

glass, palings, and moon  
sweat pea, tile, & thorn scent  
the trivial turnway of alley, bike bell, & this

I swear to you, we're born with teeth

there are expectation here, learn them  
I am learning there are look-outs

anticipations

which are dilatory, weighted  
like the seared eye unbolting  
the fence in its tension of stake & climb  
the sibling unable to age, mourn

there is a way of casting  
this is stationary:

a want to write on the wall  
a fear of not writing the right words on the wall  
a tension in a hand  
a tension with the man who with his hand  
    painted the wall that wants to be wrote on

there is a fear of the writing on the wall  
& a love of triangulations which dilute me

my squirrel is a singer on the fence line  
my watcher of the neighborhood foxtrot  
my how fragrant the buds of the sweat peas he thieves

I am very messy with the long, long  
not saying it in the kitchen make me the lightly-go one

& when I separate

maroon bells, anise hyssop, compact innocence  
it's the tags not the roots that are shoddy



## the wraithlike invitation into Nothingness

creeps in on me   fingers  
slow fingering me

someone exactly placed it  
on my bruised palm's doormat

I called it rhapsodic  
improvisational

since then  
I'm anxious always

always the fatigue   that snatch of rapture  
the one I   as part of all flesh  
suffer   it's accompanied

I accompany it everywhere

two voices call me  
*nescio.....et excrucior*

# Claudia Keelan

## GETTING PARTICULAR

“I am not important and I know it...

Now I’m important...”

& the built in contingency

That I might hurts you

As you did me

But not I nor You but how we’re We

Messed up the living room

& if it is certainly my

“female identity as awakened in (lost)

Intimacy with another...”

I is hinged to your “male identity...forged in relation to the world...”

*Hammer & anvil sunbeam sunbeam*

The whole’s the question

So never worry those others beside You

Will get lost here

We is beyond Modern      We is Free

# SO ONE JUST KEEPS GOING

So one just keeps going  
    Without belief, somewhat luckily  
Without belief

The quality of the machine  
A baggage truck at least  
A ton and turning  
With precision between two airplanes

But that is his world

The body of poetry  
Compromised by talk  
Year after year  
Driven from her by talk

Afraid up there now  
Of mind leaving

Tho that transit is true and nothing to do  
With the odor of the university  
The dry skin falling on a book

& everyone pointing to collapse  
Along with those who believe  
That money is a kind of poetry

Eddie laughing in the rubble he loves  
The pines hundreds of years old around him  
Alice in disobedience on *Gare du Nord*

Brother, sister

In their lives  
    The body of poetry

A Shasta lily white and streaked by violet  
Inhabited by a spider  
White and streaked by violet

How to honor those forms of life  
That embrace exile and dispossession  
Eddie's house collapsing around him  
His septic field failed  
Alice jogging to *l'hôpital* in Paris  
A Great American poet moved away  
To the cures offered for free elsewhere

The Shasta lily closing  
& a spider white  
& streaked with violet  
Climbing down the stem

# THE POWER AND THE GLORY

My age liked its Mystery  
Confined to Formula,  
Tho I saw the Incarnation everywhere:  
The Risen Lord dead by knife on Street A.,  
The fictional real crammed into a pothole  
On Ramrod Avenue.

The Holy itself chased by whole armies  
Only to die unafraid before the Host  
Of Loyalists, tonguing categories  
Like a salt lick. Baby roaches.  
A bunch of baby roaches,  
Asleep on the side of a Kleenex box.

# Sean Labrador y Manzano

## “Seekin’ the Cause”

The ideal teaching environment is a captive audience.

But, I look forward screening my Netflix rental, *Piñero* (2001). I have two favorites. They do not know they are my favorites. They would be surprised that they are favored. They write to the themed assignment as much as they can. One week it’s Foucault’s “Panoptic.” The next, “last meal before the execution.” The following, “addiction.” The other, “the first day of freedom.” Another, “sanctuary.” Later, “regrets.”

It’s what they do within the walls for the past year.

When I think “artistic mandate,” Marin County Juvenile Hall, “the Country Club” comes to mind.

I think of poetic literacy, the origins of rap, hip hop, and hyphy because there is a smarter way to staying stupid and dumb.

Or.

I think of prison literacy, the origins of rap, hip hop, and hyphy because there is a smarter way to staying stupid and dumb.

Or.

I think of film literacy, the YouTube downloads and uploads of rap, hip-hop, and hyphy because there is a smarter way to staying stupid and dumb.

So today we inhabit Benjamin Bratt’s embodiment of the Puerto Rican. The San Francisco native embraces the Lower East Side. Are we on the West Coast more accommodating to outside influences?

Is Sing Sing any different?

Poetry as vehicle to reflect on one’s criminal history, drug abuse, truancy, and exposure to domestic violence. More so lack of education or educational opportunity. Less so, tough love. Or is it the other way around.

Or.

Prison as vehicle to reflect on one’s criminal history, drug abuse, truancy, and exposure to domestic violence. More so lack of education or educational opportunity. Less so, tough love. Or is it the other way around.

Or

Film as vehicle to reflect on one's criminal history, drug abuse, truancy, and exposure to domestic violence. More so lack of education or educational opportunity. Film captures the birth of a poet and his death. Less so, tough love—as I speed forward the poet hustling his teen body—because while the screenplay normalizes the “Down-Low”—enforcing compulsory heterosexuality eliminates the breadth of human relationships.

Not everyone obeys the same scripted life.

Regardless, metaphorical mothers Harryette Mullen and Kim Addonizio, and metaphorical fathers Sherman Alexie and Luis Alberto Urrea are surprise darlings.

In “the Jungle” of East San Rafael, stupid and dumb is street smart. You want to know but you don't want to reveal that you know what you know. Otherwise, you're a possible informant. Then you're a target. Then you have a shorter life expectancy.

Time is on your side, in juvey.

It's what my two favorites do each a consequence for attempting murder. Their story must be worth something like Taylor Hackford's production of Jimmy Santiago Baca's *Blood in Blood Out* (1993).

Benjamin Bratt played a reformed Vatos Locos gangbanger. So it is perhaps a cautionary tale, that Bratt's star was not ambiguously eclipsed.

Before I became familiar with a previous student, he left two weeks in to my residency and was gunned down. For most of these kids, there are literally bullets with their names on them. I was told before class not to talk about the hit, or encourage discussion. Even in death, protecting a minor's identity, we cannot grieve.

The ideal teaching environment is two security cameras, a “counselor” in the room, another outside the door, more at the push of a button.

The ideal teaching environment is when both male and female offenders wear bulky blue unisex sweat pants and unflattering orange unisex sweat shirts.

There is no jewelry or makeup. No faddish clothes. No logo wear. No team memorabilia. No hand signs or finger spelling. No flirting. No innuendo.

Solitary, a consequence for refusing class work.

“[Denver] Bronco colors,” I observed on my first day.

Unimpressed was the lot of mostly Oakland Raider fans.

In San Francisco, the desks are bolted to the floor, anything that can be turned into a weapon, is not in the classroom. Weaponized pencils. Weaponized paper clips. Weaponized staples.

I am looking for weapons. Not because I am afraid of being shanked. It's how my mind works. Looking for dual purposes. The double entendre.

But, I look forward. I have two favorites. They do not know they are my favorites. They could care less if

I favored them or not. They write to the themed assignment as much as they can. It's what they do.

Solitary is not an option.

Before class, I was leaving Big Rock Mini Mart & Deli with coffee when George Lucas walked in. His height surprised me. Am I that close to Skywalker Ranch? I felt a pitch coming. The opportunity did not present itself. I was measuring the man and found his swagger taller. Or is it the other way around.

Promotion is the big house. I drive pass San Quentin, taking the San Rafael bridge home.

Is Sing Sing any different?

I want to videotape my classroom management and instruction and fortify my portfolio for future assignments but protecting the minors' identities, even with blood on their hands, is faith in rehabilitation.

Opaque glass blocks filter light's cubist nature in the ideal teaching environment. There is no outside.

Because there is no outside, there is what is yearned, "tenement sky."

So today's theme, rooftop sanctuary of the narrative omniscience, the panoptic ubiquity, the addictive personality shifts between one regret to another, eluding the last meal, the dirge that follows, and does it follow. And so on that day of freedom, below from that high point of subsidized housing: the intersections, the hustling and banging, the buys, the busts, the rat holes, the safe houses, the justice and jurisdiction, the territories, carved and infiltrated, the drive-by and the drive on by, the ghost riding, the car jacking, the chalk line and the suspect line up, what choice is there when a bullet has your name?

In "the Jungle" of East San Rafael, stupid and dumb is street smart. You want to know but you don't want to reveal that you know what you know. Otherwise, you're a possible informant. Then you're a rooftop dervish, spun, high, and blown with your own crew: videographer, boom operator, sound mixer, choreographer.

busy

busy

alive *seekin' the cause* behind the shorter life expectancy.

busy alive to be a cause and consequence

But that's what you do, dear favorites, because of time, promotion to the big house when you turn 18, there is life after attempted murder.

The prisonhouse of the mind.  
Is cinema any different?



# Brian Laidlaw

## TERRATACTIC (II)

### 1 feral chi

chi has eaten    grubs thick as tubers  
cali golden      raw squashes   ask

if its chi as in cheat      the fallow  
path tenable      or cross chiasmus  
                         maths chi   myths chi

                 as in coyote   the changeling  
as intuit switchbacks      the deer run  
                         help  
the feral toddler      is four      i am  
half civil      ask her if i can be taught

### 2 sulfurur

soda lanterns      occlude a crease  
                         matching      the firmer nowadays

its ungenerous      the towns are bogs  
& piety    yellows      our stalk

the weirdoes came the matriarch came  
with a deafmute      blouse & a rye

sister      ore seer    unleash the selves

### 3 scenarios

cuts of            the forearm   if possible  
platelet rosaries   from        a chicken  
razor hoop &

                         sustenance   if possible  
the eggs arrest       negates

a staccato        strike        a stucco arch  
expiry over   shelflife        if possible

lettering fishers   this tablet   this tram  
this transept

                         i meant to write  
two bakers

                         dozens is        an alphabet if  
possible        sos        this telegram

                         i meant to wire  
if a rip        it looms        is possible

### 4 finery

the triangle summons   bonemeal &  
flouring                    elder cistern  
                         the iceboxer yeasts

                         ask a cow  
like a nuns udder   ask  
a sow like        a landlocked   selchie

                         & if the haunches a jar  
a round        the sourjack   starter

you must coax   unaided   them apart

5 faulty

the landscape lamed loaded faulty  
locks ie seismic the livestock  
teethe

the sensation was  
my torso was  
hanging from my head not

propping it up you've  
several crockpots & you've  
to panhandle for turn  
of the century ladle money

i cherish your letters so much i barely  
read them & the main door hasn't

a mail slot the earthquake saw  
to bisect our antebellum

rancher  
in profile its a teesquare of floors  
& joists like  
a dollhouse or a farm of rooms

6 october is a form of afterlife

goddesses die a buxom certainty  
heard & blown out

cornucopias  
clever leaves can tank once  
without dying divas at reruns

i lust after gramophones after the  
first after first frost

puritans say  
i couldn't be fucked & mean  
it wasn't worthwhile well

i couldn't be fucked to rake  
the gingko  
fans or to spread the manure before  
its a frozen shithouse autumn

was crass      it was   like television  
                 before  
television      came breaching along

## 7 christmastime

encroachment              trolley bells  
choleric almost      a city      weighs

            its myriad peach orchards  
i hear  
hot rumors              like christendom  
            hot clap      of the politic  
several  
billygoats upon a purchase      they  
seem willful      the still frightening

biplanes      their shaky devilry  
                                 as though  
environs      are unguents one smears

onto the hills & environs      heres  
a godwide expanse of      fonts

heres a parcel              in a newsrag  
you cant daub your eyes with without

# Seth Landman

## Parker's Band

He is for a time alone and getting older.  
A hat makes a shadow on his face,  
and faces of others in the audience are disagreeable.

For a time alone in it, he must call  
before visiting his friend. He thinks,  
“I will never leave this alone I find myself in.”

He doesn't belong without speaking, but is quiet,  
and later drives off alone again. Alone in which  
he walks around his room and will not sit.

He sees the facing backs, a coat on a chair,  
and it is dark and difficult, his whole life.  
He stands up and burns the curtain, watching them go by.

# Karin Lessing

Sonnet sequence.....

I.

« wrapt in the wave of that music »

W.B. Yeats

what effort knots to a choir  
fills your house empties the corners of morning  
in time with its measure its music  
keeps as a fan fuels desire

as salt fierce on snow the future past mourning  
as motionless as the day occasioned by music  
you'd walk with these voices on air  
sharpen them blade on stone

moss rebounds relinquishes nothing  
but a phantom that feeds on that nothing  
a thing yet to be born a present furred there

now effort and choruses ended the salt on the snow thrown  
the folds of the motionless fan folded to soothing  
at a wrist's turn to flourish the losing.

\*

## II.

like the spider I eat yesterday's web  
to make today's like the branches  
stripped of their leaves I grow dark  
with rain wind shakes me

through and through polishing  
to flint sheen the flux reflux of shadows  
I carry myself on air  
testing my weight light on the instant's curve

I remember all the names  
their phosphorescent peaks  
extinguished stars

they chill upon the ground  
line after hair-thin line  
with the ascending dark.

\*

## III.

### Six Memos

Italo Calvino's for the Millennium

for Lightness columns half in deep green shade  
where each step is as in a bell's space accorded ;  
for Quickness drops of light on particles of dust  
spinning in turn to vanish ; for Exactitude

the figures on the pavement joined perfect  
black to white the art of memory ;  
for Visibility the potted palm and sunday car  
printed by light on paper on a particular day

in a particular life ; the ceiling's chorus of spring flowers  
for Multiplicity and for Consistency porcelain clouds to stay  
the remains of splendor

sleep on the marble steps arabesqued lives  
owned in our own palazzo's sounds  
the youth the time the daring within a space.

Palermo 1986-2006

\*

V.

### The Hearse

green lighter than emerald  
spring green in fall's season  
stood folded infolding dispatch  
between vineyard and the green wood

stood while drop drop implacable  
time rose in dulled rhythm  
from the earth-room shaft birth-room  
not-to-be-crossed-again threshold

arched there then from sight moved out of hearing  
diminutive as through glass  
as light on leaf turning

from sight out of hearing  
diamond dreamt of, a ravishment  
or bridal perhaps, sealed.

\*



# Rachel Loden

## What the Lepidopterist Needs

*Sierra Nevada, California*

butterfly net

flower scent

honey traps

chloroform pads to put the butterflies to sleep

killing jar

insect pins

velvet board

probes and forceps for arranging legs

glass cabinet for straying curiosities

# How to Fuck an Angel

First, which angel?  
Did you imagine  
That all angels were alike?  
If you think technique  
Will cut it, somewhere  
A knocked-up angel dies.

The bard in charge will tell you:  
From behind.  
He likes to watch his angel  
Tremble, her face  
And breasts  
Pressed to the wall.

He even brags about  
How many times he'll  
Make his angel gasp for breath.  
It's not porn because  
She fakes it, only because  
He doesn't guess.

An angel's just like any girl  
With needs.  
I can't tell you, ass clown,  
How to fuck an angel  
With all these  
Feathers in my teeth.

# Cape Disappointment

Obsession v. Dementia: which will win?  
*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,*

It will be like walking into the next room  
To look for the messiah

And then walking out again. Sometimes  
I think I have forgotten

What I most earnestly wanted to forget  
And that's when I am reminded

Of my tenure in exile here  
At Cape Disappointment. I didn't choose

To ply my song trade in this sorrowscape  
But such was my ridiculous fate.

Kiss-Cucumber, Schatzie, please look  
And see whether I left my harp out on

The willows of Babylon. If I do not  
Remember thee, if I do not prefer thee

Zion to my chief joy, let me  
Lick honey off the letters of your name.

# Susan Maurer

## Bibliophage

Bibliophagia, 4-1-06 its day.  
Cake books on planks,  
plonk wine. Caramel cake,  
chocolate cake. We eat birthday cake-like cake.  
Again for a moment it peeks,  
the abjurer, the nay-sayer, its face  
flits across yours,  
but we laugh, we laugh  
we chew the books. We are safe. We are  
not the king who died of bibliophagia, q.v.  
*The New York Times*. Birthday cake-like cake  
I luf you. Luv you to bits. A brunette  
hands me a magnolia: its leaves click as they touch.  
At first I think it's real.

*Sugar leaves, sugar leaves you glisten in the light, later  
cleared by an overeager waiter who took but didn't ask  
and you my precious gone, mixed with coffee grounds.*

We sat in corridors of air,  
on fat chairs on the sidewalk.  
Tres gateaux, gato, gatito  
no brushing of hairs.

Air glittering, glittery air,  
Spring abashed, coatless for the first time.  
Time for the spirit to cycle up and up  
but not away, held close tenderly.

You in your grey wool cocoon. Stuffy in there.  
Your wax calendar sliding down the wall, procrastinating.  
Buck up, chiclet, arise in the spring like a daffodil.

# Kyle McCord

## Drawing Water from the Mountain

In Italy, the wedding procession sets off from the summit. The procession moves, as dogs move: a little obtrusive, a little uneasy. You nudging some granite round as they go. A long dust follows. This is the wedding at which we are all guests. And feel ourselves located in the second life of things: the church's dress of lilacs, the lilacs, the gown's yawning lace. For a moment able to inhabit another's happiness.

When you were a small girl, these habitations, one afternoon, seemed so visible you felt you could have climbed to them. A source in the sky too far to see. A cloud covered it. Your date arrived. From this you learned to measure anyone by the bounds that hold them. You, for example, limitlessly unattainable and unbroken as you were. Movies could move you, twilight laugh its silver laugh to the grass, but not a soul could reach the cage you'd built. The blonde clock would reset, and the detritus of these would waiver in orbit above you.

Meanwhile, somewhere, the wedding continues as anything continues: elsewhere, in the high official's house (where anything anyone ever wanted happens). Hands entwine. A father eats his wedding cake. The cake could be a single point or multiple points depending on the arrangement of guests. The bride's uneasy bliss, the age and make of the procession as it passes. To calculate the impetus and momentum of each. To wonder about will, and why our own errors remain more livable, and in the end just to get the gin.

Though in your mind you're a small girl again. The boulder inside your body rolled away under its own power. You knew the cave you saw was no cave at all, so you sat in the field and sketched it. A waterwheel went by. No one was learning Latin. Out of the cave, undersized cream-colored birds came. The wheel sifted your body up and over. Some invisible shepherd had come to tend you. You were powerless to refuse.

# Joshua McKinney

## Spelt

I am hearing the shape of a sunbeam and believe it  
is like the dead smiling in their grief  
completely light  
is the spring at which they drink  
called forth from the waiting of things.

From above every miracle is a storm.  
I am come here with this life  
on my body, that I may accept earth : look  
up and see a whyless sky : hear  
the wounded eachness of thrushsong  
in a blessed stand of wheat and more silence.

A sunbeam's like the dead regard their roses  
completely light  
still living or wished without.  
Their wild engines all bend becauseless.  
I believe in an ocean of pale hands  
waving so dark on a first morning  
that something thought of a sunbeam and more silence.

# Monica Regan

## WOMAN HAS SEVEN DEADLY TEMPERAMENTS

1

white hands folded      are by far the most common, also  
the most exasperating

she is supposed to be well informed,  
able to discuss business or baseball or bombings

but pinned      and triple cushioned      her lip  
is a safeguard against disappointment

if she were the family bible      a perfect foil for red

pious and ambitious  
so soul blighting—and so certain to marry—

it's pretty tough to have to break up a honeymoon like this  
but duty is duty

2

a young female terror      delivered *fast* to every piston

low, wide, rakish

like pink spun-sugar candy      corrodes      the marriageability

finding a) that their jobs disrupt their domesticity and b) that disrupted domesticity impairs their  
work

25 brown-uniformed girls with bloody mouths

led down to the Turkish baths

a little red goes a long way

3

six splendid body types  
to carry on life processes

once a man gave her a cooked duck egg  
a sign of reproduction

transferred from pistil to stamens  
do the parts bend or are they stiff?

fascinated by this procedure  
she threw some water on his face and found another

4

the disused harem  
modern and virile:

grand for romping  
her dress was not much tumbled

a six eyelet on the hot flat

and new, red silk stockings

read her thoughts rich and ruddy-ripe

where  
dainty cutouts and perforations  
hold the good oases

till morning the saddest tense

a wretched cup of coffee  
and everything but breakfast in bed

there is always a nice sensible woman somewhere else

5

true to type and to Shakespeare

she likes things as they are  
meaning her own good time



her surge of Spitfire power:  
 how stored energy is released  
 by August, 10,000 men  
 when Hurricane Zelda  
 had to bite  
 deadly and quiet  
 her unconquered pockets  
 in the eye of the storm  
 where new girls  
 organize and adjust their grievances  
 turning clockwise  
 blankets, razors, pillows  
 fall like ripping muslin  
 in the heat      hard words  
 and someone will break

heartless, seemingly happy  
 does not say it as well, but I think it is more right

---

Note: Composed entirely of fragments from texts salvaged at the San Francisco dump. Source materials:

Adams, Mrs. J.S. *Branches of Palm*. Boston: Adams & Co, 1866.

“Woman Has Seven Deadly Temperaments.” *The Bulletin San Francisco* 124 8 June 1917

*Harcourt Science Workbook, California Edition*. Orlando: Harcourt School Publishers.

*LIFE* April 28, 1941.

Wiggin, Kate Douglas *Rebecca of Stonybrook Farm*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1910.

# Donald Revell

## Forgiving Bells

The entire life of bells is a penance  
Cast in iron by the makers, lest the barley  
Fail to awaken, lest the believers  
Come to grief in their unguarded fields.

Before the steeple, a baptism. Before  
The bell-ropes, unction, an enormous  
Linen alb and the murmuring priest.  
A long afterlife of clangor and sometimes

Uncomprehending joy in the ponies  
And treetops year after year atones  
For iron-mongering mankind.  
God is the sound when there is none.

And then the bells ring out and God goes.  
Christ's hair in the hailstone melts at the sound.

# Jaime Robles

## Four Matching Gold Bangles

—After four gold bracelets, Hoxne treasure, c. A.D. 400

3

Gold flickering the wrist, vein and artery: bordered, buoyant.  
Hinge of hand, jaw — molten crisscross congealed: vowel-sailing,  
a tattered venetian blind: unloosed. Beauty summons, unlocking  
the gate, herding the heart: impatient, restless. Every escape  
lost in the river's rising lineaments: tree, fading mist. Warbler  
rushing across earth, departure a whirlpool. Lips amend the nostril's breath,  
and the outward thrust of words turns earward—hissing,  
sizzling touch and trill. Indwelling the disk of nail the blink of eye

---

buoyant  
adrift

beauty's impatient heart

a whirlpool

earward—

trill

of eye

---

buoyant

whirl

warbling eye

Seeding the future, a click: metallic wheels turning fingers that point.  
 Numbers revolve within a glass bowl, the glow of concave air, sweet and  
 acrid. Smoke, scented of pine; fur. Inevitably, limbs nest into each other;  
 gold and silver. In the middle ground, silence: far under the body, where  
 the entrance to the underworld opens up, planets encircle the sun: a wrist,  
 the perimeters of spoons. The bird sunk down in flight, or caged, becomes  
 a signal, interstices of a pomegranate; click of the lover's teeth. Red  
 gushes forth, lubricates past into future—an eternal rim spinning convex walls.

---

the future,

wheels      spoons

flickering

clatter

---

click

# Broc Rossell

TRUE SUPERSTITION IS IGNORANT HONESTY &  
THIS IS BELOVED OF GOD AND MAN

The most one can manage  
is the end of the moment –

the plough of bone  
through incoming air

Place yourself upon a bower  
and wait for the signal

I can't say how many are coming  
I don't know with what tools

they will wrap you in a sheet  
and wrap the sheet around the branch of a tree

like a cyst in the sun

I used to lay my skinny body down

on the sun-warmed concrete deck of the pool like a lizard,  
rolling over to pock the other side of my body -

imagine the sun  
denting you

I feel my internals re-order like cornered animals

The songs I remember are for cowards

It is an astonishment to see large stones become smaller

One sustained fricative, as if through the trees

\*The title is a line of marginalia written by William Blake onto a page of John Caspar Lataver's 1788 *Aphorisms*



# F. Daniel Rzicznek

## *from* Leafmold

Every morning, the same man in the same clothes on the same bench, reading—except today he has nodded off, the book still open in his hands. Afterdamp: a light in the hall, a voice on the radio, then silence—then static. Smoke from the next room, and cussing. Something is happening outside and it looks like the wind on the first cool noon of autumn—that's it: the first cool noon of autumn. Five hours of sleep and I'm calm as a stuffed lion. From Homer to Plath—a geological heartbeat. "It's good to be back in this place," he intoned to no one in particular, the raw wound in his side closing up and then vanishing below the skin. More cursing from the next room. We snapped the gray bear's head off to make a bowl—carved a spoon from his ankle, made a stew with the tongue. One language on its way back to being another. See the context up there—dangling, withheld? Rain sweeps just south of us, making a hell of the rivers. A message scrawled on bedrock: *look up, you idiot.*

# Zach Savich

## *The Avid Hours*

One thing people never told me:  
the exceptional becomes our closest  
steadiness, like how in heavy

snow our street becomes  
a one-lane road again, all the plows  
take adjacent headings through

decorum, and the chopped-up shapes

\*

I sat at a motel desk ringing  
the bell for myself, school

buses learning their routes,  
late August,

sky a Mona Lisa of cut-up Mountain  
Dew cans at the prison rodeo

crafts aisle

\*

You know the snow is cold first  
inside, then from your chest

acquires

*Ill-sodered hills and a roughness I trust, yes,  
that nothing repeats, colonial color of ice with no one  
skating there*

\*

Sprinkler run-off smeared the hopscotch chalk, a man

arrives with a bag of construction

paper fruit: sun

My job is to drive every street looking for holes in the coverage

## *Trumpet*

A soldier finds the sheet-music

sewn into his partner's back has gone

Snow here won't last a day,

but a hardness at the center of the bale

astonishes her in spring,

while small flowers ache the exterior

# A.K. Sciopini

## Public Approval

Late into the night, Truman on his porch is recombining sentiments, disclosures, red tape, and platitudes to give the next twenty years some fresh air, give the youths some hope. His memoir, so far, goes something like this:

*I had a dream, and then another, and another. I just kept having these dreams. Met a girl. Got married. Went to war. War is the best kind of growing up you can do. Had some ideas, more dreams. Opened up a suit shop. Closed a suit shop. Went into politics.*

As he's typing this out, sweat beads glisten like a good glass of Independence, Missouri. It's damn hot here. Dog days of summer, and Bess is too cheap to turn up the air.

You ask a woman not to leave because you think she'll always be twenty-three. Seven years later, your business is failing spectacularly and no one in this town needs custom suits. Seven years later, twenty-three is everything that walks. Every blond gal with an up-do telling you misery's not the only thing that likes company. So you stay with a woman because that's what you said you'd do. You stay with a woman. You pay off your debts, go to war, try to see what this all looks like in a hundred years.

You do some good and get used to it.

Truman, glasses oily and loose off to the left, gets up, rips this last paper out of the Gray Magic Royal, crumples it up, lets out something primitive. He did what they said he needed to do, let in the Blacks, put 'em in gear and boots to sit out the next two decades of human rights in a rice paddy. We'd need Vietnam, bodies in Vietnam. And since the oil was too far, we'd need something else. So, we got a Bible, charted out a territory, sent some Arabs packing. The academics, they like him. He'd done what needed doing. Russians, Chinese, Arabs, all under the thumb because Truman found a way to get it done, get some doctrines through. Even South America's full of us: boys, dictators, guerrillas, well-edited torture manuals.

Late into the night, Truman's vulnerable, sweating because the power went out of his whole life. Love your hometown, remember your mother, get back to the earth. Looking up through the feathers of the bald cypress banking the house, Truman stares at the moon, wonders when we'll get there.

# Fortitude

Today, Truman is stuck in the apple orchard. Bess keeps the house, Truman keeps the orchard, a symbiosis of rounding bodies circumnavigating space once filled with children, obligation, tremendous fortitude, and the sense that one would know the world when one saw the world, at once and from then, always. But children go off into a field of daisies, stumbling around the seventies with finger pointed at every moon your generation never got to.

This is very much not your life. In fact, once you bend down into the grass of the apple orchard, you will know that this has never been your life, and now, at the end of the fifth act, we are all paralyzed by it.

In the assurance you have been acquitted for the wrongs of your sons, the acts of God that were never acts he agreed to, you walked to the orchard today because you have not acquitted yourself.

Your wife,  
your child, your indecent position among men, will be forgiven of you, Truman.

Amid a tart and rotting, northwesterly breeze, Truman steadies the calloused ends of arthritic fingers and places his head like a vase within their structure. In a magnificent reformation, we are quieted. We remember there is reason and time.

As if an electrical fixture flickering a tempered and insistent will, Truman draws in the apple flies, exhausted by each natural gesture the earth displays.

*I wish there light and beauty*, he says, flies landing about and in his mouth.  
He parts his lips, thinks, then says, *I wish there light and beauty*.

In the apple orchard, looking down on Truman holding steady the dispossessions of greater men, we wish to settle the war.  
See the men how they are.

# Giovanni Singleton

**DAY 18**

**{012907.monday}**

because he disremembered  
the past, the past bound  
itself to him.

it creased his mouth,  
furrowed his brow,  
grayed his hair.

because he disremembered  
his ex-wife, their love bound  
itself to him.

whenever he turned around,  
one could see her face looking  
out from the back of his head.

**DAY 20**

**{013107.wednesday}**

through a gate that cast  
no shadow steps lead

to a house no  
longer standing

inside, each room  
had become another

what was ready-made  
and monstrous

someone else drew  
the picture

entered antlers first

## DAY 39

{021907.monday}

*black girl. u a blk gurl. black girl. play on blacktop. play. girl. black. u a blk gurl. jump down. turn around. black girl. sing. pretty. song. u a blk gurl. play on. merry-go-round. you. black girl. look. merry-go-mad. you. black. you. girl.*

## DAY 43

{022307.friday}

i opened my eyes. i did. i found myself inside a watermelon. no remnants of red flesh or black seeds. it was cold and damp in spite of my off-white cable-knit sweater, hat, and wool bell-bottom pants. the vessel, boat or ark, rocked slightly from side to side as i tried to escape. upon standing, however, i realized that i was only six inches tall. i of course shouted for help. a pair of large hands appeared and placed two wooden spoons on either side for oars.



# John Taggart

Slash

to divide and to bring closer

to divide keep apart the white deer from the landscape woodland wetland landscape  
“the swamp”

white deer the animal the true animal body no jewelry

landscape in and around which wind the surprisingly narrow trails of the  
deer

to bring closer just a little bit closer the true the truth of that body

the mind and words in the mind a landscape also

“words are signs for natural facts”

facts of shagbark hickory some ash tallest sycamore thickets of  
bladdernut its seed pods Jane Colden’s “boxes” which rattle in the wind clutter the  
ground after wind and rain  
redbud corrugated hackberry and everywhere multiflora everywhere seedlings  
of everything

facts and the fact of water

deer in the landscape in twos and threes sometimes in greater numbers  
though this is not a deer-park privileged place of  
privilege for an old family paid for by an old family’s old money

the mind and clutter of words in the mind

some of which begin which begin with the  
same fatal letter

to make division draw a fine line slash and slashes to cut through the clutter

keep apart bring closer

the white deer is a fact most secret fact in the landscape what the landscape keeps  
to itself  
what's kept hidden kept hushed held back in the mind first and  
last fact and after some of which

closer

the true the truth the true animal body a little closer.

# K.D. Taiste

## RICHMOND

Not monsters, not animals  
fragile Souls—  
ALL  
destiny  
Decided  
in one act  
Many acts  
and no acts

Out of  
In  
SIGHT—  
Plain  
Enshrouded  
Concealed  
in  
cell phone  
View

Unleashed  
now  
“push send”  
Not monsters  
Not animals  
HuMaN

Waiting  
for  
Acts  
of  
Kindness  
Compassion—  
All

Scars  
will not heal  
will not bear  
Fruit  
strange  
LIFE without  
the  
Possibility  
of  
Parole

# Dan Thomas-Glass

## Aftermaths

In the aftermath of feeling  
the aftermath of expression, of meaning

(seeing what math to compute stars hanging from the rafters)  
yes niño & the aftermath of afters

clanging as in photographs between defoliate & shutter speed  
on the great continent of experimental geographies

with the once-great contents of our minds laid in the sun  
sculpted by water, by waves, by sense  
our universities built of elements to melt flesh

in the aftermath of crowds  
exchanging futures in meager measure of now

in the aftermath of why  
as poets plumbed their veins with needles like eyes  
& I'd seen the lyric & the damage done  
a little part of everyone in it

sleeping in the bed made by reason  
in the aftermath of shifting seasons

& the aftermath of motif  
working at the docks shoveling close reads  
listening to radio programs on the history of the road

in the aftermath of the century of the car  
as proper nouns warmed to us & niño we warmed

on the great continent of the aftermath

of the aftermath of the city  
& in the aftermath of the mega-city  
niño what will you wonder?  
What stars will char your seas?

# Kate Thorpe

## *Pitch*

No one falls    uphill. This might seem obvious to state.  
To fall in the center field into the pitcher  
against. To have all forgotten    bliss. The trouble is  
with pitching    the rest. The discontented ants    on top.  
The disbelieving hearts.    O God. To stitch  
the rupture of the lean    to bend. To best the tenth.  
The United States. The outside    arc which could  
frame. To sing again. To weight, a foundation is of the wrong  
base,    a break which isn't even straight.  
Where is my trunk    to hold. Where is my heart  
to throw.    To slant back up  
you have released, gone back home to  
wait. To pitching practice. Yet    you are wrong  
to turn, to slip    your ankle into  
the ditch.    The runners  
jump. Will they  
matter, map? To get a fence  
lying in a common sense  
is what I meant, of  
nets, of racks, to bear  
the most into your arm  
against: to pitch  
forward.

# Barbara Tomash

## *Reverse Annunciation*

she liked sleeping in the mornings, watching swallows, reading plays—  
           steps approach                      the door opens:         *I am here—*  
                                 *you have only*  
   *to see me*  
 the angel forbids himself the full riot of expression

[illegible]

arrested before he speaks in bright light      she puts her lips to the angel's ear  
                  lets herself expand      stretch out      her body burgeoning  
    like sap wood from the core  
 & in her grotesque shadow  
    his ruby nipples circled in diamonds disappear

# J Townsend

from: *KERZE*

well  
lived-in  
warm  
natural  
curve  
fabric's  
retention  
the city  
holds  
a certain  
history  
perceptually –  
inside  
'another  
green  
world'  
spinning  
a  
basal  
electricity  
blankets  
&  
rounded  
notes  
sustaining  
the  
intimacy  
of two  
of



many  
being  
a city  
  
\*  
  
rain  
curtains  
play of  
facial  
twitch behind  
sebum  
shapes  
traced on  
windshield  
glass  
    in  
diagrams  
thin  
frames  
flakes or  
dogwood  
petals  
clinging these  
shallow  
perforations  
circle the  
casing on  
    a  
        tin  
lantern  
degrees of  
shading

grey  
to  
mud-green  
among the  
errant  
storm  
systems  
of  
early spring

# G C Waldrep

## discrete series: JEDBURGH

haggard aisling,  
seric plexure:

the monks exist  
only in their dank

documents, spry  
philters: erect:

willow-slender:

the logic by  
which God  
works in our lives

is: HE IS:

moor-rind in  
moonlight: bees

flourish, or don't:

I too wish it  
were less simple  
than language

makes it: we are  
not prototype:

brooch for awl:

as chronicle,  
else danger: to

the body: church  
within church:

remove the animals  
from their  
Gothic traceries,

their polished  
candlesticks:

uncial inscription,  
*intact* is faith's

past participle:

nor walk there:

souls flung  
from blood-hive:

who will miss

this grammar,  
when we're gone:

# Laura Walker

## as rain

clouds, its livable floors.  
when we gathered out the door  
a crying sound  
it happens it  
round the faithful weather.  
i saw you in  
them, breathing and beat.  
when elizabeth holds her hand and  
to the warming metal, both boys  
grew up well, it said,  
elizabeth grew the best. beets  
and table greens, a thousand  
friable arms and  
gathered, i would go. clotted  
clothed  
startled

/crying sound/

insert    the runaway thought a  
sudden engagement            they  
hung paper plates cut into stars i  
stood ready by the radio            a  
sheetcake                            splits into  
branches    its icing flowers    a  
whispered tramp                    i  
know volume and whiskey

would go

by daylight  
 the scene of constant ravage:  
 i didn't know  
 i missed the smells of heat. summer  
 is not sustainable here, the green is not palpable,  
 the air is thinner, lighter, thick strokes  
 across my face and chest  
 i never knew i'd miss:  
 trembling, tumbling, sudden  
 tulips among  
 the easter grass :

/miss/ chokecherry is transparent  
 stems is blue stalks  
 aside we water and wait  
 injury and totem carry  
 dishes to the lawn each  
 sought eye i blink his  
 volatile syntax that lost  
 insurrection i lack water  
 and field i

: born far from home

bright sustained  
cloud, its grays a perplexed  
apology. many years ago  
travel was by wind. when  
you grew the clover in the lower  
field, did you also foresee  
thistle. damage to skin and eye,  
why he never got over  
that partial limp. stories  
that rot and turn: burn

/apology/ that tapping that you hear  
ingratiates itself low thud  
against the roof tile i  
can see you stumble

a tired barn, then

rain

sheets of music and metal. a bright  
appointment, a medicine cabinet thick  
with steel. today to have  
a final count, the thick lines  
protracted, the thrumming  
of titles in space: waste  
among the corners, empty  
your pockets of bread, red

/final count/ each square a floor tile a  
space between steps rehearsed  
we argue rewind  
a branch against a window  
a single gold thread worked  
through cloth pull it out he said  
lying still among the clover

and filled



# Tyrone Williams

## Stops of Rhyme

Odds are  
not  
even  
here—  
summa  
cum  
Sur John  
Muir  
et al—  
has  
any-  
one  
heard tell  
of  
tales told  
twice  
out of  
school  
books writ  
Oz.

# Valerie Witte

**Status:** Dreaming:

*A boy I know called the  
police again. He broke  
his toe trying to open  
the bedroom.*

To: VW

From: RD

Subject: Re: An accomplice to circumstance

I suppose I was asleep. You can't learn carpentry from  
a book on Dixie. But I came to furnish

pages—as deft arms once held a piano in that horrific,  
disturbing way that music is.

I attended the event to find a bike missing. Half is wonder:  
The hallucination was short-lived, on tenterhooks: oil  
from fleece and the dirt.

Who said anything about machinery? To prevent  
shrinkage, cloth on a frame outside and left

unsettled. Lengths stretched at the perimeter to which  
edges fixed. To dry, stop the two hemispheres, a protective  
helmet radiates light.

An accomplice to circumstance or the contrivance  
of the cosmos. I met a substance and resigned: small blue  
flowers.

**Status:** In transit:

*I'm just waiting to be  
charmed with baseball  
analogies.*

To: JT

From: VW

Subject: Re: Re: The absence of wolves

So many dead hens reclined against the wall at that point.

On the train before, I heard the cannibals' dialect but  
couldn't interpret. You wouldn't even climb inside, I

thought (was it Spanish) but didn't want to seem  
ridiculous. As if falling down rabbit holes weren't sufficient.  
You laid out pajamas and waited

outside so I could change to the grappling monster I'd been  
once. But if you'd seen me on BART, armed with revolvers,  
it would have been "too obvious."

Among the passengers, the cannibals ignored me. Like  
junior high.

The crack through which I have been looking into this  
room seems paranoid. Your legs twitched desperately.

If I told you happiness was on the rise, would you believe  
me? This is both unlikely and irrational. It can't be helped.

# Joshua Jennings Wood

## Brain Street Blues

Got hot coffee cross town at the infirmary  
Know they'd let me sit it out, if just to have a body by  
Now the rush's died the walls drift with memory  
Hands cupped quiet, overhead blinking  
Down on the floor wearing through to new floor

*O' Man of Munch* —

straddled by some undefined  
disease while the world warps its foreign  
love inside you  
My midwife's gone  
Left me for a true Voodoo King  
(Gets her glands all tongue-tied)

spines and antennae cling to the sky

placeless windows flash the fibrous light  
slit intervals shed

mistranslated chainlink circle stations of waste

electric-lined gutter runs  
wash the wet echoes empty

groans of streetlight and synapse slap  
a dialect of tangled formlessness

the damn sky

pouring like Portuguese  
Man O' War cords





