

Spring 4-1-1997

Columbia Poetry Review

Columbia College Chicago

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C O L U M B I A

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Columbia Poetry Review

Columbia College Chicago

Spring 1997

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Contents

Gustaf Sobin	Cosmogony	1
	Contrapuntal	2
	Barroco: An Essay	4
Carolyn Koo	Remains	8
	The Criminal Mind	9
	Three Picnics	11
Joe Ross	From <i>Equations=Equals</i>	
	WORD STUPID: terminal	12
	COMMUNAL: alienation	13
	ORDAIN: cost	14
Kimberly Hayes	Gravity	15
	Bliss	16
	Reversed Card Diary	17
Connie Deanovich	From <i>The Spotted Moon</i>	20
Jeffrey Skinner	Tourista	26
	Come	27
	Lament for the Avant-Garde	28
Kostas Anagnopoulos	Two Poems	29
Joshua Taylor	Two Poems	31
Jennifer Martenson	The Obvious	33
	Agenda	36
April Sheridan	Parting Strip	37
	In the Chair, Laughing	38
	Untitled (See if I have like some)	39
Jan DiVencenzo	Matter	40
Davis McCombs	Cave Wind	41
	Flowstone	42
Sandy Feinstein	Backtalk	43
Mark DuCharme	From <i>The Lives of the Baggers</i>	46
	Colonial Monday	49
Paul Hoover	In Which City	50
Dan Sturniolo	Already We Have Turned Back	
	What I Know Sailed	53
	Untitled (Wings labored and roof)	55
	In the Parasite Museum	56
Mark Wallace	From <i>Temporary Worker Rides</i>	
	a Subway	57
Sheila E. Murphy	Geometry	60
	Thighs	61
Arpine Konyalian Grenier	For We Like Sheep	62
	And There's Candy by the Gramophone	64

	You'll Live the Adult Some	65
Paul Weidenhoff	The Dinner Party	66
Terrance Calvin	The Cores of Rotten Tomatoes	73
	Muse	74
Michael O'Brien	Cold & Brown and Everywhere	75
Gary Duehr	Aphasia	77
Ron Padgett	Bang Goes the Literature	78
	The Drummer Boy	79
Charles North	Philosophical Songs	80
Greg Purcell	From <i>The Pragmatist</i>	81
	For Ezra Pound, On His Birthday	84
Rod Smith	CyberLoveDaizy #1	85
	CyberLoveDaizy #2	86
W.B. Keckler	Lou and Laurie	87
	Musical Artifacts & the Cone	88
Joe Meno	Wood Teeth	89
	The Make-Out King Must Fall	90
Raphael John Buckles	Me & My Fancy Pants	91
	Sassafras	92
Peter Radke	Inevitable: Leaping Dogs	94
Daniel Mosher	From <i>Twelve Days in the Life</i> of Saint Hymie	100
Marci Del Mastro	Simple Almost	105
	No Proper Limit	106
Nebojsa Prodic	Ghost in a Dry Season	107
Vanessa Villareal	A Hallmark <i>Cartita</i> Moment	109
Susen James	At Dusk on the Porch You Can Smell the Lake	111
	The Pick-Up	113
Rita Hawn	Untitled	114
	White	115
Myra Kalaw	Dismantling the Hour	116
James Tipton	This Story Is About Fire and Destruction	118
Lorna Dries	The Hecate	120
	The Conciliator	122
Lott Hill	Transformation	123
	If I	125
Jeffrey Daniels	Cruel	127
	Let's Have a Bake Sale	128
	The Confidence Man	129

Columbia Poetry Review

GUSTAF SOBIN

COSMOGONY

having sipped the
 mirror to a single, ir-
reflexive bead, a
no-

breath, saw the cold, slow-
burning cell-stars
bunch in
con-

junction.

CONTRAPUNTAL

slept in your
own
shifting imprint, breath—
deep over so many successive layers
of

crushed artefact. ankle, flank, shoulder:
weren't these, after
all, attributes
of

air, what you'd wager
a—
gainst your own unmaking? but wrought,
beaten, first, into

bright scales; the least bones buoyant
with
number.

would lie, then, in
long waves of
sound, knuckles as
if wafted, each organ inscribed
within its own

tenuous register. a world-without, you'd
called it, hovering
a—

bout its
very
obliteration. ash and amber, jug and

tegulae: what drew, would draw incessant from
under, while your
fist
clenched, milky, the

resonant
cloud.

BARROCO: AN ESSAY

1

earth but the underside, now, of its
 own, scuttled reflection, dwelt, didn't
you, in the neither, the
non—

word, the interstice in which the lips, once,
drew sustenance from the
viscera of
each,

radiant
emanation. scrollwork, you'd called it, the
organs wrapt
with—

in that of
their very resonance, the structure conceived
as a single,
un—

interrupted sequence of reciprocal
re—

verberations.

 had weighed shadows, hadn't
you? tested air for its

slightest,
resilient particles. in these parts, the
arm begs

only for echo; the
muscles, the least outlines
of

murmur. roll, though, against
what? read, in the ochreous coils of a
fresco's

flaking
pigments, whose
sustained, perfectly cogent, all-encompassing
sub—

stantiations?

2

you, but
you, but the un—
remitting *replicata* of your own,

in—
volved self. moved, didn't you, through the
blown foam of so much
broken

grammar. there, in
those disseminated spaces, was
'thirst,' you

5

wondered, still a word? a quantity? for
words, once,
were ladders, scaffolds, the props and stays of
their own,

ev—
anescent volumes.

hold, then, to each,
abandoned ellipse; crouch within the
wobbling contours of so much muffled
e—

laboration. for here, at least, once
happened: heard
it—

self happen. yes, here, just
here, for instance, once hung, polyphonous, a
vaulted dome, and within, a
bevy of bright,
ray—

shaken stars, modulated on
breath a—
lone. feed, then, on
aftermath. yes, sip, residual, from so much

vacua. for the hollow droplet still
re—
tains, as if
resonant, its very emission. listen, then; yes,
listen. glean from the

silence, silences. and, so doing,
quench yourself on the
emptiness
of

each parched, irreparable
instant.

CAROLYN KOO

REMAINS

In bark, sap pulls four
legs into one fat tip.

In the howl, hear bell,
whale or crime. In the fist,

a sharp pod fallen.
In remains, what nouns,

what is proper in bone.
In the word

for stairs made in mud
and use, prints stacked in hardening

mass. In the pit—closed eyes,
open hand: touch

in context makes anything
the mind. In theory

protection ends in self
infliction, in house getting robbed.

In time time feeds itself
in deep, in lull.

In bed we talk in reverent
tones of legs

in distance,
in amber, intact.

THE CRIMINAL MIND

I

A sentence began and ended in the usual way.

In time, she'll sit down in the grass to cry.

Though the romance is aggressive, there isn't a grave beneath at least, no earth loose in recognition of transience. Kind angles of light imply impatience, forgiveness, and time itself is a transgression. The scene is not words, unearthed objects alone.

No fault makes a perfect cut to the current
As we learn from the skull,

The eyes were sunk to begin and he dreamed larger things until, no face remaining, grass grew through floorboards, soft moss in concrete and vines find their way out of brick. In the implicitly tragic rock, what can turn grey does.

I would like to tell you this, but if I did it would not be
The power of water and sound to crack

Even as I breathe the grey moon becomes green, making *visible*
the motions of the mind, but every day another gesture builds to a
familiar plot
(yet to be bought despite the wild medicine growing—
A cure that allows me to lay my ear to your heart.)

II

Let's suppose for a moment
we don't know who to meet at the plane

In which direction to draw, whether the grasped will collapse. To prepare, we listen in the lab to *what time is it* and *when will it change*, *is there time before*
Flowers bloom into empty bowls,

Dancing divides the air. When we draw close, it is meant to be read as faster: the intimate momentum shown by foreboding drift of clouds, the moon's obstruction to mean blank desire is apt to get lost in the struggle. The coat

ripped away, buttons plummet into snow.

Emptiness at last.

For some, the din is enough.

Everything that *city* or *crow* calls to mind can be mined for connections to put you in a light, a certain light. A lone crow provides the variety of voice needed within minutes. For ten minutes I thought about this, moving around the tree.

Perhaps you saw me and broke the spell.

The words are intact

yet so old they wouldn't hold up to the hard gaze or kind brush. If every print is a song, so many notes could only be heard as one.

THREE PICNICS

I

Two blue heron fly up from the pond.
This imitates light, wings make wind,
makes tears to smear the static landscape.
We use the raft until it rots then pause,
hold breath, drop beneath, pause—
Open eyes and we're stretched
wide in clinging green weeds

II

What the city considers dark
is dusk here—the throat is waiting.
We mouth one or two soft words:
 silence, absence—and gather
bread and voices in cloth. In the emptiness
that follows motion above us the parachute
finally opens.

III

We tear the little building
down with our hands and now stand
where it stood in the field.
Wind diffuses out of angles and
planks make a bridge to protect
its own ruin. We soothe our raw
hands in wet grass.

JOE ROSS

FROM *EQUATIONS=EQUALS*

WORD STUPID: terminal

A calm quietly undone. Like you in the morning, in half recall,
half disbelief.
This chain smoked dream, drug induced wonder, mind produced
wander. Come.
You soul spoke your crazy energy high, dissolved into breath, and
made it there.
Sorry, I've got a head full. Like the only sane response to this world
is madness.
Your mother doesn't even know your name. You call me, you
there—I say see.
This pendulum balance upon the precipice tip. Let's call the waiter,
order steaks.
No this isn't the old world lyric and I am not a liar, so you satyr
stare, mural run, colosseum feast, chariot drive, and toga wash our this.
It costs and you may choose to pay up—to get in the game, be a player,
be on the A team, be in the loop, get your say in, be a policy maker,
decision maker, earth shaker, one of the doers, one of the empowered,
a real lifer.

Oh just stop. I can't take your cathode cubicle logic anymore.
So precise, so divided, so unoriginal. Forget seeing the forest dude.
You paper burn the chase. Spirit lock on plastic—sun kill
in designer tan. I can't say this pretty. I can't.

COMMUNAL: alienation

My days have numbers. A pot of coffee and a poem, you there, me.
This fate we desire, divides, overcomes the exclusion out. Push.
I this, me talk, is a leftover on the run. I faint see, color colors.
This is hand wrapped—a conversation with fingers, slow and smooth,
even. A single malt or take this take me. In, a hypnotic,
inclusion swallowed. A line bend, a straight steer to formula.
For the price of a few integers, I know I can count on you.
Let's galaxy flip, and countdown—space stride between planes. We
can free fall thought tumble, zero G body dock, mind orbit
through layers of what. I know our need. A mid-flight minor
course correction generation. Breathing fumes and exhausted.
This is a hand hold. A system check. Provisions packed,
we are fueled, space kid ready. This now then. This
push past the home pad and frontier grasp our us at
goodbye speed. An escape generation
accelerating our necessary. This is liftoff. Velocity out.

ORDAIN: cost

First, throw out all notions of sin. Create or let that space at the end of skin.
I come back to count the empty bottles. Take stock, flip open want.
Context, the container of necessity. Form, simply the action of the shake. And
content, the you to do. A fill up, threatening the breadth of this wide.

I don't want it shorter, just better. Like how I already feel the push away.
A close come. Very near and dear. But ultimately the thing said, divides.
Or rather, pushes the show and you to stage, but can't perform. You will
refuse to be content as audience. The figures front the fire: Priest burn.
Turn. Look.

KIMBERLY HAYES

GRAVITY

Because she was born in the sky
she wants to know about weight,

how a body would feel pressed parallel
to hers. Or a list of things that stay

on the ground. When I tell her we mate
for life, she laughs. An imitation of wind.

I tell her to imagine anchors, orbits,
shoes, ropes, lids, rocks, locks, sadness.

She interrupts. Takes my hand as if blind,
as if limbs could guide her there. Hair

lifting in stranded directions, she asks
about mourning. Believes in the division

of day and night. I have all but forgotten
loss. Misplaced the weight of grieving,

lost keys. Doors open and shut
randomly as we levitate over the bed.

Like the moon she always faced me,
and in this way, was never quite real.

A loose shoe floats by and I almost feel
like crying, as if something could be done

to keep us here, accumulated and
hurtling, unhinged planets for a stretch.

BLISS

Of course *he would* think, three quarters of the way to the supermarket, that I'm willing to take this over the edge. He knows me, my passenger-side perseverance, my stop-the-car-I'm-getting-out-or-else tactics. My need to cast stones, pull threads, pick bones. And I *am* circling, looking for shadows. So when he swerves into the stall, pulls the brake and says let's just forget it, is waving his arms around like an amateur magician, not how ambidextrously my face animates into a full blown frown.

Because I want him to know *why* I want him to know, he is rolling the windows down for air, then up for asylum. Isn't that just like him? Cares more what parking-lot users think than me. I pull up my knees. Re-explain my love of trees, my dream of galloping bareback. He hears a more archetypal screaming, has got the steering wheel clamped to his chest like a thin life preserver. Nothing will do until the sun sets behind the bright orange Jewel sign. First it's the hands that loosen, then slip to his lap like clay pigeons. With the head still hanging dead man's float style, he takes a dramatic last breath. Sinks below the surface in his bucket seat. It's his right hand that can't help but reflex, spastic last splashes, contracts into fist going down. Then just as eerily it levitates, arcs my way like the moon over a dark lake. I take it in mine as it descends.

REVERSED CARD DIARY

He is cleaning out his drawers,
tossing T-shirts over his shoulder
like a string of trick scarves.
Anything his new self
thinks is his old self.
I am doing my usual isometrics,
trying to move these
couches, people, houses.
Rocks, comets, planets.
Anything that would make
a serious depression if dropped.

I only bother with the sky at night,
contemplate black holes
when manifest destiny ends
and the falling into anything concave
begins. The bed, the eye sockets.
Caves, waves, seas.
Dreaming, the wooden doll
falls. Whatever else is left
joins the sky, held in a black spoon.
The sky a collection of spoons.

Pigeons. The goddamned pigeons
nesting in the porch rafters
next to the window next to the bed
are doing their hysterical 5 AM
cooing, cooing
and you can't very well stomp out there
and shoo them with the big board
anymore because she's laid an egg.

It's all happening under ground now.
Tangled roots. Hard to imagine
the flowers will ever come.
Tonight we all lose an hour.
Honestly, I've been through the ringer.
My great aunt is obsessed
with the Clearing House sweepstakes.
After lunch at the home
we watch a tornado video,

an hour of live footage.
You do get to watch the sky finally
come down and touch the ground,
but not enough good honest
destruction. It would be nice
to see some cardboard homes,
a toy farmer, or at least a
mooing, mooing
cow get sucked up like kites
into heaven. Aunt Dor is snoring.
I fast forward to the good parts.
Determinants and Aunts.

So what if it's spring, there are things
like tornadoes and floods
with dogs stranded on rooftops
to worry about. It's so important
that everything make sense.
Watch for determinants.
If it weren't for that,
what would we orbit?
It's Tuesday.

Michelle has no guidelines
for relationship. There is smoke
pouring out of that chimney
like that famous romantic train painting.
Freedom is a burden.
She only knows how to stay.

It must have been springtime
when Hoover proclaimed
that the end of poverty was near,
when production ceased like winter
and families got their stab at
being close again. Of course
my grandfather couldn't hack it,
took stock and slipped off a bridge.
Before the spring, The New Deal,
the war. There was no arc
to his drugged plummet, a drop
consumed. The memory of descent.
The still rippled indent.

The cards say I need to get over the moon,
its neatly charted dark absences.
Start coming from the center,
let the sun in the stomach burn.
I do smell helium.
It's spring again, its turn.

CONNIE DEANOVICH

FROM *THE SPOTTED MOON*

7

Devil's Soup in
a wooden bowl
garnished by lilies

tropical gestures confined
to the landscape
of a book

those who escape
have dark rings
around their eyes

the train whistle
was buried in
a flower pot

angel whiteness does
not exist without
a wooden case

still too delicate
to raise the
scrutiny by fire

wearing the cloak
of exile they
stood disentangling directions

in a while
the word *behemoth*
attains medicinal usage

the attention seeker
went dressed up
in fake psychosis

the word *dank*
can be a
substitute for *frail*

her dank beauty
increased when sitting
in a desert

was almost gray
the suffering charms
the peace unfolded

and many voices
sang out fighting
attacks of noise

the explorers often
sank into a
kind of hypersensitivity

as if the
impassable mountains rose
giving the finger

a possible flower
is either the
result or secret

the old doctor
found no solace
in admitting wisdom

hold us together
below the sun
continue to hold

the Gradual River
enjoyed an easy
bullet train existence

the little villager's
memory was so
slick anthropologists arrived

rapidly the river
slowed down then
just became mud

what's a shaken
tree compared to
an island lost

imagine the cruelty
to the lip
the horizontal line

upon the bread
a fly protective
as a goddess

or playing cards
perhaps the lakefront
or else postpone

when the wind
clears the air
this same love

to the sound
of the image
stronger desires displace

20

sixty saw red
after prolonged staring
at the sun

warm heads but
cool fingertips and
face flattering shadows

intended to make
pumpkin soup outdoors
over a fire

the next village
men are bringing
salt hardened fish

a song about
a seashell when
it was soft

the explorers filmed
by friends of
the absent anthropologists

the river's drowned
tossed rings of
feathers in commemoration

reached his hand
up hoping this
would help them

salty broth dropped
into the gaping
mouths of hippopotami

to be unkind
to the weak
results in ostracism

banning and *banishing*
etched into twin
pans of justice

thought a stripped
down version of
history more saleable

often starting as
the result of
a prison sentence

between sounds the
bell is either
left or right

picked that red
fire ant up
and ate it

her working click
was as familiar
as her clit

on the staircase
made of grass
ascension seen sinking

fly on the
wall type of
abuse of privacy

eggs from guinea
fowl collected in
folds of skirts

actually had to
point out that
the leaves changed

there are some
people who hate
to go outside

a pattern of
one genius leaving
Poland after another

in the mirror
the word *lost*
in the steam

sucked then blew
on her fingertips
confident in sunshine

tied two epitaphs
together then started
seeking her fortune

color of a
hope broken by
a monochromatic life

slipped oysters down
her throat as
if playing trombone

JEFFREY SKINNER

TOURISTA

Here, when you open your eyes.
There, when I open mine:
a postcard that barely contains its sky,
Doug's hand, smeared, torn ear:

Buena Vista the shutter clicks, valley
in a box, hard wind
and the lace tablecloth we brought back
to give away,

and the doomed family we were close to
so briefly: six months,
charred ribs, cold blood of wine in the kitchen, lewd
hugs half-intended:

divorce. Hear nothing now. The piano
he wailed, smudged notes
for a sermon spilled from the bench,
her ruined leg: splayed nerves,

a mess of wires. Hear nothing now.

*Oh honey you two should be
here, it's Day of the Dead you know
and if we don't kill each other (nudge nudge)*

*we'll dance, two cripples
in skeleton shirts, thinking of you...*

COME

*Tell me first which opening
and I will.* Her razor slipped in the shower,
a pinstripe of red down her leg.
She was not crazy, her bills were paid.

There's a lack of freedom in your mind,
he thought, and wanted to say,
but hung up. All that land beneath the crisscross
of voices, all that American space

beneath wires...Missing the ocean,
he took forever to dip one toe
in Gregg Lake. She sat on the stony bottom
beckoning with a slow water hand.

The sky darkened, yes, as in a bad novel
and Hey!, aren't those crows storming
from the trees like sudden rage
familiar? The same old childhood crows?

No. What goes around just goes.
The phone ringing as she lathers her hair,
he on the other end breathing hard.
All that watered-down blood between them.

LAMENT FOR THE AVANT-GARDE

Robert Wilson had his students rise
so slowly from a chair an hour passed
and still they seemed frozen
midway, like an opened paperclip.
Rife visuals: three-story cat legs
crossing the stage. The imagined thorax
above the curtained frame
dipped observers in another version
of time, this cat a sea-behemoth
stirring slower feelings up from depths
where skulls otherwise implode.
We could, then, go home and rethink
the suicidal compromises of
everyday. At least in theory. But
alas the audience sat mute as funeral
flowers, but for wheeze and yawn and
sigh, sound choices from the arsenal
of passive resistance. The actors
were encouraged to contribute
echolalia of their own device, as
they rose, and what lush rain
forest human babble they brewed!
Spewed? Then echoes of well-
born burial, kings and tribal chiefs
embalmed with pets, smoking
paraphernalia, and shells arrayed
in a fanning gesture around each figure
let loose the ritual sadness.
And the aisles were civil when lights
came up—very little pushing, and bald heads
and teeth flashed in the lobby glare.

KOSTAS ANAGNOPOULOS

nobody hears
voices at the plant
double space

in return
echoes do not breathe
october through december

meaning may
exhaust the city
as a list of birds per garden

from time to time
our windows run
opposite leaves

when forest returned the nest to the second floor
nine times of ten in back of night
behind curtain number three: roads
 he used to drive

proves several coats are missing
spectators cupped in your head
(cost him a lock)

swallows on the stereo
fade between takes
a second skin to know

disparity is nowhere near what you thought
the comforter likes
the appropriation of a distant look
 dispossessed trees

JOSHUA TAYLOR

the sudden
in division
could southern
loose
mute arrival

the lock pace
counties rest
the thick rails over
nails warm describe

a sibling hush

we slide off all
the next day
come falling

slow nations

what rustle
mar the wells
like still

bale air
easy

after summer
is west
the still insistence
after a milling
the heard flight labor
driving

down a small sally the glow
 from night
 after the distance

glass forgets passage
for a pine halo
 the sill and lack
a staying of want

by back a rough too sway
a ran harm at windows knitting
no sag a tuck a jog and set

down cloudy as houses
fan and cloak a clock of helm
 door of shine
throwing shadows at far setting
hinting at reliquaries with sticks
eight leaves sixteen pages

at stations
were fallen
the press of stay for a sent tarnish
soft tell of heel dim heather and provenance
spire morning and rally
it is all lying

JENNIFER MARTENSON

THE OBVIOUS

Any attempt
to solve the distance from sense
to likelihood ends on the reckless

ambiguities of touch. The hand
falls back in a final
movement of seeming,

obsolete. Does it slant
into silence, forgiven?
Or does it become

the knot against which
the visible bends
and abrades?

The path
spreads into the distant
chain of landmarks always

haunting the edge
of occasion. Each comes
to offer the only way out, false

leads that drive us further
into lateness. This is how
bodies are shaped

by stories. The late
echo prolonged out of sleep
is finally roused to due course

by erratic recognitions
of the once named.

The view is reluctant. Each
landing yields to the need
to be final. The undeciphered

wavers in the moment
that we leaned
so practically toward

and had to forget. Had we
strayed from the inescapable,
so that our movements

were blank displacements of air
while the outcome
settled into its version,

regardless?

Meanings

linger in the feel
of skin. The interval spreads

its divisions, parallel residence
splitting the field, but the crossing
is flawed. Equivalence

fills in where the gesture trails off
beyond the category's edge.
Wanting to follow directly

into omission, we're stranded
on these distances from which
we can only believe. Although

we might follow the heritage
back to first lessons, the scene
will not wait for us to return

from the spectacle's vault.
The known goes on
conducting the known,

and the misapplied proceeds—
a kind of burial,
calming the real,

proof in hand. So we begin
to measure the rates
of inclusion, and hope

that this will isolate
the present from its longing
to imply.

AGENDA

The day is riddled with the obsolete—
the girl an emblem taken to its limit—
stained perimeter, horizon
in whose arc we are detained—
to shelter, to arrest—
the distance bleeds through anyway—
her voice adrift within its fray—
a thought that loops relentlessly
to the abandoned—

She had come
to these elisions, seen them
pressed against the real—
whose habits litter the ground
an alibi spreading its fervor—
and was swept along the relentless
sway of motif
and washed up on its logic—

chorus
in whose wake the others vanish—
stitched across the visible—
instructions we've slowly begun to dislodge—
row after row while behind us
limping and thematic
the icon drags its shadow to the unhealed niche

APRIL SHERIDAN

PARTING STRIP

Under what did it happen?
I just put it down and lost.
Easier to displace the question
with this answer
 under the cup maybe
with little dry peas going click
on the table.

Under what did we keep progression?
From hand to hand passed
well that was the idea
but we never touched each other.
We loved the silence.
 Or we stood at the open window
 but the world never said anything.

On the street
the division doesn't mean anything
when it's raining
is the time color changes
everything moves in the same direction
 into the storm
nothing to do with labels or the dishes
or mountain climbing

What if I could hear the voice
through a shell
I'd snap it closed
 or pick it up and shake it.
And I could never say
what limits us.
What limits us is our
dresses rising

 or limits already occurring are
 on their backs out on the lawn.

IN THE CHAIR, LAUGHING

Those wings were hers
part of her back
then flung under cars.
A part of this night was
shining into hope then
stopped with denial
and leaving it to come out
like a shishkabob

it loops tender things
into just meat.

See if I have like some
a heart riddled with paint three circles
or a shed where forms float

in case you laugh move less
animals imagine outlines that vibrate
qualities of matter beyond matter

the slightly later moment
when two depart in this case
accomodate ten narrow mounds
peer over and imply bribes

taint your findings with expression born
from places that remain closed
and move with less effort than saints need.

look on a stretch of arm connect eyes to arm
stir earth events (a void above air waits) bodily exception
arrange pose against suprise

distance invites us to feel
presides over person aura by choice
lines knot one naked foot to the next
mood is the tow of figure

JAN DIVENCENZO

MATTER

Minerals hauled from dream awhile,
general earth,
synthesized in literal time,
this dawn of names,
are glass reflecting a hand slid
under a skirt,
metal resounding hominal
spasms of mirth,
are passengers of gravity
who solemnly
behold scenes of contingency
pass and await
return through light and surfaces.

DAVIS MCCOMBS

CAVE WIND

Knowing it is shaped by
the size of the passage
it unwinds through (thus its
particular form and flue), we
are not deceived when, on

summer afternoons, it stiffens into
fog, clusters in the vines
and scrub brush littering the
entrance sink—no cough or
eructation, it is a constant

velocity we read or clock
(no need to vane it)
for the scope and girth
of the cavern, asking *does*
it go or siphon? knowing

its speed portends the cave
we'll discover, whether we will
walk or crawl, the breadth
of its breath, its given,
how, listening, we step into

the fricative, enter the socket
and proceed toward the lung
or bellows one half expects,
and, breathless, creep through the
throat of the longwinded earth.

FLOWSTONE

How the water behaves
determines their shape and composition:
stalactites, a rimstone dam.
Above, great fossil slabs
slough off in geologic time,
limestone leached and percolating
into caverns. At a cubic inch
per century, this is cave-making
in reverse. But to what end?
A caver pushing virgin passage
out beyond the sandstone lip
emerges into verticals, hung
and glinting where his carbide falls.
Is it for this or the process?
What an ancient sea set down in even lines
is worked into a cursive scrawl,
as run-off through the bedding planes
recalls
a steamy day, an inland sea,
the continent adrift—
south of the equator but bearing north.

SANDY FEINSTEIN

BACKTALK

The plot stops before
a man called from sleep
objects to the way
sound could be written
in and through (dark) sand,

a line otherwise
left at the beach edge
as it builds a text
analogous to
the sun coming up

where the dark whispers
and feeling (alarm)
will be heard expressed
in the incomplete
undertones beyond

(verbal) symbolic
notation, simple
concept if it meant
reading a story
of another place

to be written not
in the next sentence
but in a picture
complicated by
a meaning missing

as the wind asleep
travels the way lights
set (isolated)
subject the wave's sense
to abstract reason

one can understand,
assuming knowing
is transformed by sense

clear enough to say
sound suggests order

form represented,
as if things
follow (conclusive)
mathematical
rules according to that

complex of structures
relative to mind,
(ambiguous) point
whose values convey
(nothing) of thinking

MARK DUCHARME

FROM THE LIVES OF THE BAGGERS

To end up only moving.

 This discomfort on my chin
Tightens space around me

Not to see

 The contradictory examples
Gathered wickedly like desert lilies
Become our faces—meaning the

 Uncontradictory parts of them
Blaring down, just the same
Transitory. Natural.

 Only a place where signs are put for me
Am I so unmoved

 Merely to stand
The gun-shy are other forms of eccentric life
I can't pretend
What are salient parts of lifting
 Inhibits forms of one small lobby

*

The compressed silences are a hard-edged fact
Bored to tears
By the make-believe bridegroom
In the make-believe ice factory. Refractory puzzles
Being all the

 Sentiment. I can't stop solving
Heating valve discourses...
I desire you, in one of three

 General
Lookalike problems. First, let me say
It *has* been good enough—though
It will not be for long.

 Exposed
By anxious drafting procedure—
Were we all plundered
 Documenting light

*

Not assembling in the consoles
But torn from them

As if absenteeism
Weren't important, too
& Worthwhile—

Above the weeks, or drifted
Back to start

Like drunken psalms of Yestereve
In a spinning flash, or flesh
Rising from the hocks
Applies light to the seat it (got) nailed (him)
A baritone wind
& All we flew
To the other, charged partitions

Freed of messy counterbalances

Poise over throughways

*

I'm happy for you—without feeling like my own life's affected
From the other, what it
Thought was stone—please disregard
Routine life—support valve

Felt &/or impelled (corrupt)—thus suited
To our prayers. I told you, *maybe*
Maybe the wind is forming.
Go to sleep now. Everything is all okay
Way lucent. &, if you have any munitions credits
Please go over that way *now*

*

Rung out in whispers

A past or captive
Whistling

For my night manager my inherent flaw
You were always the first (worst)
A statutory rapture

PAUL HOOVER

IN WHICH CITY

Radiant darkness,
collapsing light,

the full
catastrophe blurred—

tunnels under
worlds, another

lifeboat scene,
the present

absence felt
like mind's

named things.
In sequences

like smoke,
in deadbolt

light, your
father's back

is turned
against the

camera as
he faces

that field.
Words and

silence are
uttered like

a surface,
porous but

smooth. Like
when your

daughter's friend
says she

must decide
between her

father and
lover. Haven't

you purely,
places in

the leaves?
Falling too

darkly toward
that mouth?

Trembling like
a _____?

Note by
note, we're

mastered by
the shape

each wave
makes, since

what rises
rarely falls

exactly as
the getting.

Like an
anvil on

the table
teetering toward

the brink,
the language

of height
breaks with

weight. Each
act is

magic black
as space.

Moral darkness,
anonymous rot.

You live
transparent, the

ghost of
a chance

the light
inch spreads

to enter
its name.

DAN STURNIOLO

ALREADY WE HAVE TURNED BACK WHAT I KNOW SAILED

...and are vessels bodies always times subordinates
that help the astronomical
not come
with in-between skepticisms
Washed
blankly filled
this vessel is leaving now
along a line rather defaced
tufted
downward toward noise
In foreign seas everything concerns degrees
to see over
whatever
(The pulled will visible)
and hold on
Are such residings permanent in the air?
The visible surface is not an opinion
Eyes as porticos
slats
Bone supporting weight
it means to leave ghostlike
Are our desires always empire?
Receiver seeing the law
felt attached
of every object
like nursery tale
or shoe
Generality subsists
between the coast
and never having been
Words ordered and shining
thrown into whirlpool

embracing the entire length
 of the dropping
 through
 air
 like length unhinged
 from resemblance's necklace

 Nature limits elsewhere experience to the fanatical
 Mysticism
 History
 Meaning
 We have gathered all our vessels here
 ligature of the small
 totalities of intention
 The sufficient line phenomena in single strands
 twice
 abnormal
 twisting
 that earth interferes
 and ends...

Wings labored and roof
 northern of stone Air said mistakes in location
 Here falling like stationary
 failing the bound tagged swells
 Certain architecture eyelash held
 was ambushed on the way to clues
 Switching species on porches wish
 alone The leaves Table of specialist
 It was perhaps very little
 He had signs over the border
 What came and what went on Mouth of a plot
 Blind specimen This house kissed the rock
 You remembered it You will drown us all
 Pedant Caretaker That means falling
 The edge seemed ahead of the lifelong
 Mirrors are careless symmetry
 sudden in powers Bloodstream ordered behind lines
 This is the old language a musty embrace
 Since inclination begins as room
 as singularity it is a rosebush
 a picture hazardous attire Asking did not learn
 from gene of the
 eyelid carpet beating
 Migration on the spot Should it be better said
 Enormous complications Fog lights down
 Too finicky A week is too heavy Nothing
 like your mother and father Look
 I find myself falling I find her little book
 drifted for feather like raging for months
 You gave me a chance a kind of din
 I am tempted to smile Two bodies walking
 The body can fall the earth will be there

IN THE PARASITE MUSEUM

Down searches or bound
space of the always private.
Stirred in home as public is essential.
A model for instigation.
I have installed a bound silence.
The room is flickering this
Failed is always private
as we sit in the waiting room
where the laboratory tools have grown flowers.

Rain is the nature of ornament.
This blueprint is the nature of ornament.
And here is the stance of the failed experiment;
the glass case is now broken glass.
The iron shelves hold the palm trees
as they shake in front of the dusty blackboard.
It is here that the limits of symbolic inscription
bring us back to the pleasure of reading.

MARK WALLACE

FROM TEMPORARY WORKER RIDES A SUBWAY

to to to to to to at to to to to

to at at at to to to to at at to to

to to to to to to to to to to to to

at at at to to to to to to at at at

to to to to to at at at at at at at

at at at at at at at at at at at at

ever ever ever ever ever ever ever

ever ever ever at at at at at at at

at at at at at at at at at at at at

no no no no no no why no no no no

at ever no no ever ever at no no ever

at at at at at at at at at at at at

no no no no no at at at at no no no

to to to to to to to to to to to to

no no no to to to no no no to to to

to to to to to to to to to to to to

The basic act is for any
trial and sentence, rooftop, bus
we wouldn't have of never been
no stop, take top tax dollar shirt show
a passing glance arrested hardware
not if or couldn't been, bend bare
bleached banner, a certain fancy never mind,
social critic brand name bonanza,
distribute if one as if one, court of out,
calimbrate emotional bloodletting, sincere fish
if ever at to ever to, and too,
the man you took you took to be me
simply put the sale was fantastic
third show from the left, no sun from a stone,
bureaucratic barn burning, don't call,
we'll call care or carnage care, deepening
against as pull if any pull, paradise pander
love calculate, intrepid over shortchange,
prospect of making you making you sick
I won't have these grenades in my garden
genre, simply say say simply, simply,
here's no money sucker, perhaps upon agenda
mean no say when saying no, reference
mistaken swordplay, institutional apartment
appears as appears, bolster surrogate slaphouse,
if he didn't care to stinky scheese, recall
speaking of speech, future water dam in damn
instructional videotape, terrible termination,
I loves what not in such or when,
prove it prove it prove it prove it

angle block

fifteen cents an hour or move
buckle that bureaucratic belt

phone control
phoneme fickle fish

bamboozle
leave the city
for a home in pastoral imagery

inconsequential isolation
his best look this week

all right children say "power"

let's go play rusted hulk
mental tire pop
what's that rash?

saintly character habit centers
vague channel
beanpole's worried sick
produce save as products
no New York

looking to close it
 breathtaking but beware
 hobbling a portion
 rungless mystical ladder
 buried plan a make
 it's about time

the greatest blow on earth

despite

SHEILA E. MURPHY

GEOMETRY

How is the language a straight line
(Where in this painting)
In the company of parallels
Loved ones lie down

Landslides, premeditated silver
Scoring game, a housebound game
Wide highway to be tamed
Is this the circumspect blue flower

Doctor's orders leave the streets
A shirt washed many times
Such brief canaries medicate
One life, this life, wide lapping pool

Intensity defeats the status of a straight line
Plywood's non-protective properties
Blond wood, dark wood, slats becoming homes
Expensive nails to hinge these particles

THIGHS

I wish people in health clubs would stop resembling names I've never had. Their bouncing laterals this bounty of material. One personifies remedial undress. Symptoms enough to ploy around. I'm in a little bit of cardboard as regards the bantom weights in scripture. That Euphrates their way toward mice in an experimental cage. Whose background tunes aren't colorful enough to loofa dermy little gauze pulled over frames. The tuba good enough to modify a bowl of something wiggling underneath a patch.

ARPINE KONYALIAN GRENIER

FOR WE LIKE SHEEP

what did you tell the executioner? he's let me loose on the stairs
I remember the rubber tubing the purple clamp the fat hat
in his hands blind siding my compatibility the hallway
glass bevelled for weight and if one parts and sinks
the latest casualty into eyes that should've been
when he curious of redemption
stopped

what's left is blood and truncated shadows between us a desk clerk
pulling for the 12 position a film that neither disturbs nor bores
the element a polished cup the liquid measured for the desired
distraction so I spin spin along north south blood perfusing
in glass bead instruments they say are glue the church
not the building but the people they say will always
be there for you don't mind the red
seldom separating the liquid

still so in the east (the mid-east) the west what does it
that spiroid mare revisiting every night does it mean
the repeat offender?

a pack of sutures hound my wound (the assignment)
common dirt??

I want shoes I want child I want to go east so what's it gonna be
talk talk up and down the talons of complicity and you in the middle
an I lit by four pillars at the baggage claim where no smoking sign
wheelchair and woman with black shoes and white socks holding white
teddy bear sizzle for idea

I wretch to position according to the book for food for covering
cut the sheep parts and the sheep still fast-helping
in the spirit of the latest claim

- which vacuum cleaner should the cleaning lady use?
- this one is a broom type for the corners you want cleaned so bad
- I think we need the kind with hose attachment
- then take this it has attachments
- but it does not have wheels to go around

the time is 25 minutes past Leticia's arrival so trembles the woman
 you think she's sick she should have yawned then you'd say she's
 tired now the desk clerk's job is over and up and again
 he turns with the wheel's ecstasy

- I cannot expect a cleaning lady to drag vacuum cleaner on her first
 day here

no escape for the eyes the ears the mouth - these are parts of my
 body that cannot be named to please you and you won't ever know
 what they need

the hats are on again the sheep exhausted to a shudder *savez-vous*
 defeated *ce que c'est* at marengo *que d'avoir une mere*
 in 1800 the shaitan was skirmish

I wretch to position tilting shoulders lifting my hair
 against a backdrop simulating crowd

another whistle was killed today on the streets
 and ignored as fluctuation of wind

I have been relying too long on potpourri
 will you tell me how to sweeten the latest envelope
 sopped in the script "Does Belgium border South Africa?"

AND THERE'S CANDY BY THE GRAMOPHONE

of morning's signs replacing the fueling let me some not dented
not bubbled a munching at horizon the moon a lick of orange
picked up for wing for bark the novice sweeps under
the furniture sails for mass
the wind has shifted

I don't know which little flower will fall next and next to what
shaded tree stone the horses lifting the aches of this town
in the evening in the bus a young man his wallet dollar
billed and butterflied with sister grandmother nieces
the plaza bell keeps time for them

date it
total waste
he loves me now

salving water all day at the liberty market we buy/
sell/fix white feather ceiling lamps all smiles
the white marbled sea we slide against
line in / line out a spinster's
San Antonio prayer

now that she has a man and floor to slide (music)

YOU'LL LIVE THE ADULT SOME

Ace Rodriguez acts out a wet sell his daughter desorted tenderly
in the mo-----rrgue it is morgue... pucker and *festina lente*
to root nymphed out and later bark only much later
a child on the first day of the grouping
where you go in the slow morning
in labor there you are
wet

do you know history? knowledge is prayer is curse power
unmarked on the thorax counting by the qualities of light
some of us turned

my limbs overlap nourished by age
and a very young sister is dead

*did I cause this naked some in bedsheets
my cap flown away my cup and I
nerving for another sell will I
think of you in china?*

I smear a hum fly verbs Ace Rodriguez' daughter in place
her arms the contract for legs granted unexpectedly
she was inhabited once

a coloured sword as if tending the walls then 12 jolts
the red referred to below her wings sometimes above
cheap sunshine in the streets the resolve
a struck out match I ruminate
the soil blesses the ground

what more shall I give up
my wintered grip in
voluntary...

PAUL WEIDENHOFF

THE DINNER PARTY

A vegetable and a range of hills?
A royal weight.

Try following with which party this could be,
such as
entertainment in a city hall:
"Mr. and Mrs. Blank invite you to take
dinner with them
down on the farm."

Has the table been lighted by lamps or candles?
filled
the table

with jellies, pickles, while a "rube" band plays,
a small stack of hay or
mast-fed ham,
apple-butter,

cider,
milk,
or lemonade?

Has the light left the table
as the table's cleared away?

"We hopes you kin kum, but if'n you ain't
able to,
send words by some body which
passes our house."

We left the ballroom scene surrounded by a rail because
of the popular superstitions that surrounded it—

try by early candle-light, P.S.
"might be handy to know

anyway bout a whosa

'kummin.'"

A real life-like calf represents these stalls—
an old-fashioned churn
decorated with toy cattle
and above

a haymow and below

we suckle on honey and raspberries
and sweet potatoes.

Life is descending
in each bulb of light,
a center-piece which may itself enclose
a lamp. Each other

guesses what the door
could read—

“to Rural Route 7”

and one corner is seen as a fit granary with
corn and oats
and millet and wheat.

Which heart may be fastened to the rube's band playing
has always shown itself a naked spook or two spooks which
guess

the other's name.

To make the entertainment a success
our hostess could just kiss

or bare her calves and thighs
and soon solicit from these
men (written on thin, silver
slips of paper)

what price she would

imaginatively get,

not a votive offering to Innana,
but

a scented tart for he
who finds a silver-foiled ring
in his dumplings. But first

he must take the ring from in the dough, this done only
with his teeth.

Now we all sing

Old woman all skin and bone—

um—um—um

Old woman with a bit, with luck—

yum—yum—yum

Old woman is my party's souvenir—

um—um—um

Still,

around our feet such children play as wish to dream

An orangutan devours
A mutton's leg.

"A tiger and her cubs"

"A rooster and an ostrich"

snakes up and down the stairs
to where the children have been
cordoned off from these adults,
especially from
our dear hostess
(who will kiss or caress
most anything).

Of course the story is simple, and easy to keep in mind:
the betters of the clan
perform themselves
for the bested of the clan.

No right
rings in dinner conversation.
No evil
conceals itself in our cuisine.

The children have to guess, then whisper to each animal
what each would have them draw—

says "rooster"

"As you come to my name, and surely you will,
"and you've fork or knife, draw my own body as that
"which is carved as the head of a Sioux.
thus 'Tiger and her cubs'
could speak

"as you come to my name, and surely you will,
"If you've a switch or reed or branch then
"Scroll upon your brother's
"back

"our dinner that we may serve you (take this to mean zebra,
gazelle, adult).
our dinner
gusts over the neighbor's
yard and finds
our neighbors "panging for it."

So, you suppose the Devil—

make the Devil.

"Mr. Devil's comedy amends
"Our naughty baby's cries.

"Mr. Devil's jolly friends
 "Grow fat with glut and butter.
 Now,
 baby cries—
 Manna
 Manna not mama.
 Did ittle baby diddie dance?
 Go away naughty baby gaby
 Thy Daddie is a rover
 And is as a heart but clover.
 Devil
 cries
 and asks again for child or
 his manna.
 Exit in haste our hostess, who is truly disgraced.
 I am not to have a wife? No wife?
 I am a good stick, see, and switch you with it
 I will surely find
 my dark delight.
 After reported blows the children come
 to baby's aid.
 A doctor tries to "kill" Devil
 by administering a dose of "skull and bones" cure
 to which this Devil now delights.
 "The riddles loll you
 "into sweet forgetfulness
 "that I have killed her
 (meaning hostess,
 who will yet recover,
 and yet return)
 "and the child. After all, a struggle and then
 "de riddle lolls you all.
 "I'm the boy to do them all!
 And licks and licks till baby
 cries—Devil, Devil
 make no home of my heart
 and inquires after Devil's health,
 who, in the presence
 of such inanity, did
 find himself naturally
 returning back to Hell,
 or as the children say—
 He dies.

He dies.
And luck would have it that our hostess with no kiss for
Devil still could wear Devil's clothes and scare
Baby and Children
so that the adults could steal their beer and wine.

This is a house of parties and
entertainment. Just
overhead our second ballroom
where the theme is the Gnome's
carnival. In many places,
the mirror's game.
By every branching light conceals green branches which are
fingers but

permitting the effects to be
reflected in their "beauty"
(Thus, a church abbot would
leave his oaths at the door
and measure his unnatural organ
in the caves and grottoes
found beneath our chorus
of girls' skirts).

"The hood comes to a point and is stiffened with crinoline."
As is the mountain's stride across
our fertile plain as is
the weight of time upon our party—
some guests will leave early.

In any case, the issue is the weal or woe,
an apple's bland sphericity
must find a path of flight
through the shoes of a horse
(or,
as the evening is hot and on
the wane the boats of the sky
leave for the streams of our
own home, our own home,
printed streams now upon
the waves of crimson crepe
that wind and meander

through every single chamber of the decorated house) . One
child looks—

"there, there is a boat
"which in the day
"found heaven's torrent

"calm, now
"in this night's returning
"the boats of the day
"have docked themselves
"by the quays upon the stairs
"as if

it is at last to be remembered, last to be remembered
that this night is of our own
that this night is never done
that this night is the boat's
new course through waves and waves
of happy sleepers
(mainly,
the ones passed out on the stairs
and in our very living room).

To have left form as an arched
alcove of vines and branches
is as this seems a journey
to a cellar to which
some have prepared elaborate
billowy costumes—none
who enters here may come

unbillowed.

So billowy Deus is amongst us as a boy or as
a girl.
and we do admit boy Deus...
and we do admit girl Deus...
not recognizing theses disguises.

Miss Blank and Mr. Blank

"on entering the house of elves,
witches and sprites"

are draped in bright scarlet and spun in circles for over
a year until one specter robed in white wants that we
should all be assembled,
circus,
gnome,
or Halloween,
or "rube"

we eat and eat and end on a high note...
quaint customs
if you are fond of entertaining.

TERRANCE CALVIN

THE CORES OF ROTTEN TOMATOES

Dim bulb flickers in wattage code, archaic puppet
sat underneath
while silence
gave birth
to
noise.

The travel of conjecture extent by unexpected traits
of scenery
so
bleak and lush
a carnival in phlegmatic blue, question mark taps
the mesoeye

why is it he
who say my leaf
is greener, others lime
part putrefied, some
 dangling
 dry
but it all doesn't matter
one seed has the explanation.

Oh world what cure can sew the grim plateau?
Remember Louie?
Young in front old man
nomadic, conjunctive
to the moon, living
on the shaded side
while the eastern gleamed,

what he seen, he saw it so...

MUSE

pianist bleeding lace shadows
 spilling out the windows, antique light
 sketches.
begging dark to retreat house blessing scent
 in smoke rings
 burning autumn night geraniums,
weaving smellbuds puzzling the secret link between.
 eyelids
 landing
 blinking
 ceiling
 lamps
 glisten burns
pigments of red and green.
 request lowering
 sweat glands pouring beer,
lace shadows still seek out the dusty screen,
 the violet sky hung behind
 tree silhouettes,
branches scraping the moon, the smallest tree limb
 sketching.

MICHAEL O'BRIEN

COLD & BROWN AND EVERYWHERE

isolation
bringing distance
into
focus
not by
absence
but
the change of events
is
what counts the most

black or blue
with
paper is therapy
or
friendship or
both
hats cap
my eyes
it's easier not
to look
at her
rubbing her hands
with lotion
but
her cigarette smoke,
that
was beautiful

light and flash
drown
between
priority and
given
stepping down
carefully and
the official

going
out of
business
i found more
reason
to put
silence first
over
malice

GARY DUEHR

APHASIA

Darling, have you become a stranger
To your own thought? A barrel begins to prefer
A mouth. A man on ice
Vanishes. At the edge of things trembles
A word, transparent,

Aphasiac, the way a highway line's phosphorescence
Falls beneath the wheels.
The way news of a rescheduled party circles
Endlessly through terminals, or two men
At a table lay down their twin
Pagers to watch for a whirl
Of emotion in a pile of leaves or, off a whorl
Of glass, a sniper glint of sun.

A vagrant bundled in a thick coat lunges
And jabs as if to box
At the winter light, air; the crux
Of a woman at a window, slight smile

Of a doorman. And all the while
I'm thinking: You won't ever love me.
I name every bad thing in order for it to flee.

RON PADGETT

BANG GOES THE LITERATURE

Bang! goes the gun. Big bang! goes the shotgun.

Bong! says the shogun.

The sound waves of his bong emanate out into the clear night

That is taking place in what

The French call *le Japon, avec son soir japonais*.

Pan! dit the fusil. Pain! dit le shogun, pain

pour tout le monde. Il prend son fusil et tire

sur les baguettes qui volent dans le soir japonais.

And all the rest is literature.

THE DRUMMER BOY

Oh what a sleepy night! The eyelids are drooping, the shoulders are slumped, the nostrils are wheezing. And Tommy the miniature drummer boy statue is yawning in the haystack where he landed last night when the farmboy hurled him into the dark sky. And now above the new-mown fields the stars burst into the drummer boy's brain and rain silver fear into his nervous system. He will have to get used to the fact that—oh, it makes me tired just to think of it—the fact that there are so many miles between him and the stars that are so immense but look so small and may not even be there anymore, just as he is not there anymore for the farmboy, the boy who himself will soon be leaving home.

CHARLES NORTH

PHILOSOPHICAL SONGS

1. Some of Them That Do Fish Will Go For a Midnight Swim

It's not so much the *partis pris* as
the performance which is then called into question.
Then back to the dents. Embrace of atmosphere

which isn't the wind that collects on the windowpane,
the word skidding dispassionately by the way of
your gown of powder blue light. The cedars slip.

2. As Moonlight Becomes You

Refining the swale for the sake of
ordinary life, which isn't orderly
but does undergo a pattern of resolute change
because you supply the necessity: hence

ordinary life which isn't orderly,
marches on ahead into a swirl of reddening leaves
because you supply the necessity. Hence
the moon is rampant, flitting between you.

3. Madrigal

Not border or pass—not quite
 past either, post? Postern? As
in the past reaching around its
turquoise plinth despite a coating of melted pine needles
or are they melting meanwhile the landscape has turned
 arrow-like to waste.

Distant squawks and pained foothills
not painted, not *intricately*
personal at best. Yet a morsel
off the top of a silo, flung from a train
closer than phenomenology more rapid than song.

GREG PURCELL

FROM *THE PRAGMATIST*

Say he was conceived a step ahead
of communism, that he predicted lightbulbs
and motorcars, and say, too,
that he found nature
equally disquieting. Anything
with a sight or smell
unlike humankind, his measure
only taken by thumbs, and the larynx—

an abstraction like the figures of a map,
“And which,” he says, “country is this
but the sketch of itself?” Thus he rides
on a flat architect’s sketch; clear,
primary—red, yellow and blue—unmoved
by the sweat of railyards, by the men
who cower under dynamite.

Say everything depends
on this fellow’s movement, what he does with it

and when he is done there will be images
to speak of—not in maps, but in the shadows
maps are, and the bright spaces in between,
thrown out like thunder in the land
like a rake across the land
like a cross exponent using space
to fill out in, a numerical bed
to lie back in,

 this muddy brown,
green in the picturesque.

*

A key stone, blabber-mouth
made of metal against our tsunami
“beyond this he neither
knows anything or can do anything”

An isomorph, the study of
"propping"
something which props
a propper
prop

he found himself propping a chair beneath the cylinder crook of the doorknob, but the sweat from his hands made it slip. He heard the Master's footsteps trodding up the fifth story staircase tump tump and he began to count. One second two seconds. He thought about the footage he had seen of South American men jumping from a burning tower, and about how their bodies bucked and swung through the air. He found himself fixed on his count, staring through the locked window pane, as in his last breath the Indigo bunting wholloped

tommyjeans myjeans
seagrams seven
100 dinar

"the sciences
are as such as lie close to vulgar notions"

drops
off the coast of South Haven

phosgenes
running into stasis with the waters

the remainder
"a white drifter, he did it, was good with it"

FOR EZRA POUND, ON HIS BIRTHDAY

Today I rid myself of poems
and begin to write about Ezra Pound,
who wound his way to Pisa—
three eggs on his back.

He wound his way to Pisa,
an ugly old usurper, on trim
legs, probably muttering,
economies, idiots, hottentots,

windbags! In the flattest
Midwestern tone, "*Yeh haven't
got a chance, boys. Yeh
might as well give up now...*"

So he slept beneath the stars
in a chicken cage, his eye bulging
toward the roof. He saw the bullet
in his back, the flat plains where

The Race catches itself in the middle
where it can bounce all over itself
where the wretched heat swings
across the brain.

If only I were there! To throw
a raw pound of sirloin in that cage
to watch it sizzle and pop
on the tin floor, turning back chapters

as an act of sympathy—
to keep him from digging the soil
with his dry old hands
and choking on it. Whispering,

*"Greg Purcell is the greatest
poet in the idiom...give it up, old man,
give it up!"* To watch the man's eye
twitching, turning there.

ROD SMITH

CYBERLOVE DAIZY #1

the _possible_ is only a
a physical caustic
burning up all aesthetic &.

a workin class hero is somethin ta be.

the infinite can be calculated

but a large tree
still strikes a pose

“I” suppose
prose. Peek must
rotate time’s money—
fantasy. The last
lungs on the lost
ordinary. Your Yolanda for hire
lookin awfully mo—red
& clacked, it’s
peripatetic ummm
loyal like fire—legs flower
Hello. @ 3:20
time thighs
tripled
& tones a locket’s
privilege, some shun
silly lists while
shining on, they’re
us &
seem to smile
abt spins.

CYBERLOVEDAIZY #2

(or Lisa)

like dimes
& dreams are drams
these lambs (cancel that)
no summer no more
the secret needs is
needed & known &
not knowing
“ “ “ “

Not Knowing
As lost
Is that shown
Tacet &
Touched
Dream #1
A drug of
Backdrop
Love on
A limb that
Dreams
Undone
Of Lust
& Sounds
That
Swept
Night
It's
Over
There

Hello. @ 3:20
time thighs
tripled
& tones a locket's
privilege, some shun
silly lists while
shining on, they're
us &
seem to smile
abt spins.

W.B. KECKLER

LOU AND LAURIE

In the dream, the apartment shared by real-life lovers Laurie Anderson and Lou Reed is decorated in a dozen shades of red. Suzanne Vega and David Byrne pop in and the gang all start playing SCRABBLE. Someone is filming this as a sitcom. The show is to be called "Love and Automata." It's in German, with subtitles in Swahili. I must figure out who laid out the word "TECHNOPOESIS." Something is chained and howling in the bathroom, but Suzanne insists this is okay, it's just one of Laurie's performance art pieces. I'm not so sure. Then Laurie puts down the word "ZIGGURAT" and Lou's "BURPEE" crosses it, until David tells him "Brand names aren't allowed," at which point Laurie rises and splits David's skull open with a nearby ax. After a moment, she quietly apologizes to the players remaining alive. Lou explains in hushed tones to Suzanne that a "burpee" is a Nepali monkey, and not just the seeds...so it's okay, it's playable. Then they all gather to peer into David's opened skull, where little switches and gizmos are sputtering amid the brain tissue, which resembles an overripe orange. Suzanne uses her remaining Scrabble letters to compose David's epitaph, "VIRGIN," also earning bonus points for emptying her shelf. Then Laurie says, "I guess he was a Talking Head after all," in that cool d.j. voice she uses when she's doing performance art, and they all crack up simultaneously. Afterwards, they repair to the kitchenette, where Laurie makes the whole gang toasted cheese sandwiches and plays Mom in an apron that reads, "KISS ME, I'M THE HUNGER ARTIST!"

NEXT WEEK ON "LOU AND LAURIE": Allen Ginsberg loses a prayer wheel in Lou's walk-in closet and Laurie splits his head open with an ax.

MUSICAL ARTIFACTS & THE CONE

the “flat” character coughed
the “round” character expectorated

juvenile beheadings
Biblical marquee

“Are you in love?” she birded
robin clashed with glass

(Eastern music as lacking harmony)
a wooden bowl sits atop a mountain

movement with that intense concern
a tuning fork faces the sea

their legs split / devilish Wycliffe winks
miter of a megaphone

the music waits in space
against the archaeology & planets

many crystal spheres embedded
painting as a “process,” not a purpose

the “flat” character expanded
the “round” character published

mute jade king

JOE MENO

WOOD TEETH

Making the ladies at the Five and Dime
then in walks Dickie the Virgin—full-grown loser with
scabs on his eyes
then there's nuthin' to do but have it out right there
Why?
something to do with his brown wooden teeth and the
crucifixion and me occupying his younger sister's skirt
beneath the holy eyes of the St. Therese—yarn-crocheted—
ceramic statuette she had hanging over her sofa
deep and soft as—ahhhh
without a word but
“Well, Dickie, looks like I’ve got a special on ass-whupping today—two for
the price of one, eh?” and him rolling up his sleeves and the ladies stuffing
panty hose and the fake eyelashes and the control tops into their purses and the
cross-eyed mestizo behind the counter yelling something in broken Spanish,
“Perdido!!!!” and the old lady in aisle three nearly having a heart-attack on all
our accounts and the poodle she had under her arm finally makes a break for
the door and Sugar Rey asleep at his broom near the knick-knacks and curios
of all our beheaded saints snaps awake and the Devil drunk down the block
gives a shout and we set into it right there like a jailbreak
the fisticuffs do fly
enter my almighty elbow into Dickie’s scabbed eye
my spirits soar
so do my teeth
straight from my head and all over the Biblical frontispiece and Good-nite,
Irene, could not make that scene got thirty-six stitches and a cold glass of
styrene and some new wood teeth and ol’ Dickie walks out with the ladies on
his arms—walks right out through that shiny glass door and it all goes to show
you the harm and defeat and the how and
the who and the why
the full-grown loser is no virgin tonight

THE MAKE-OUT KING MUST FALL

Me and you
you and me
we would be a peach
a soft device of dew
a deluxe fruit for pilgrims
—quiet and full—
but I am a damn-foolish man
with a blood-soaked hand
cursed by the Devil's own
hooded tongue and uncharitable teeth
his earnest words have put a hole in my skin
a wound so steep that
everything I've touched has burned
everything I've touched has turned
into cold maple syrup or
 an empty skeleton-foot
right in my grasp
just like my old man
he was killed by highway thieves
he sold Lucky Strikes out of the back of his car
he was the Make-out King
his curse was hard and made him roam
he didn't have a home
except for the Bel-Air he tried to keep warm
no, we shouldn't talk
we shouldn't even speak
that same spur that makes you tremble
could make me fall
but you—oh plum—you're all the things
in a little snow-man's song
you fill me with kisses and moments
of long legs of yarn
and bright blue bouquets of spoons
some sweet silver stockings all soaked in milk
and a big chapel cake that might have the impression of
your hips
don't hitch me to your lips
please don't un-hitch me from your lips

RAPHAEL JOHN BUCKLES

ME & MY FANCY PANTS

His shirt said
"Quit your bitchin,
truck drivin
ain't for sissies."

and I thought

Hot Damn
Hot Diggity Dog

there's a guy
that has no problem
ordering a butt-steak
and onions

familiar with
tractor pulls,
mud bog racing,
chew,
diesel engines,
and carbon monoxide fumes

a real
two-bit
spittin quitter

just what I needed
in this city of
pigeons

some one
to pull the chair
out from under
my ass

help me realize
I ran out of gas.

SASSAFRAS

Doggone
whipper snapper
Damn
spring chicken

flat tire
apple sauce
hard cider
or
sour mash

biscuits
n' gravy
with a pinch
of cayenne peppa

cause grits
ain't groceries
can I get a
hallelujah

and what kinda blues
do I got?
and how far
can I get
without
the dust my broom shit

and she's gone
left me

with the
broken-hearted
no woman
lonely
somethin somethin
deep fried
catfish
on a skillet
bar hoppin

house rockin
blues

and at this time
I would like thank
Mr. Langston Hughes.

PETER RADKE

INEVITABLE: LEAPING DOGS

In all manner of things possible,
in the ordinariness of lives lived
out past Keslinger, the old church
two-storey, clapboard in the belly
of the land with the wooden pole
outside smoothened to marble by the
elements that turn in the many moons
and seasons, the snows love laterally
across open fields out here.
Herd the deer closer to the timberline
towards higher ground. Rarely collect,
settle in trees bent a certain way
from meeting decades of the same wind.
Gathering miles out to come and slap
semis bound for the interstate, hold
heartbeats expectantly and howl at
houses. Where the grandmothers
unfold briefly upstairs from their
comforters, a soft rattle of a snore
in their throats, the white hair crumpled
but softly bunched by the back of the hand
and the face, lines that still speak
of a beauty accented
in the arc of the hallway light.
Watching and being watched in ways neither
comprehend, equally mysterious but
cognitive of the same sentry of sitting
cats just inside the door, the variance
of the days showing in their eyes.
Knowing as they both would
without moving from bed to window that
distance and space become functions of
speed and time and the whole of the earth
offers its silent prayers
while the storm builds to the west,
clouds stacking on themselves and hours
later the harsh winter sun would blind

the children, remembering
what it was like to have the heart of a
child or kitten; testaments to the territory.
Alone in the company of their cats
they are slow, tiny, lithe things.
Content with their own continuous universe
having outlived the usefulness of their children.
As with all mothers when they have borne their
kin, given their milk, deity, strength and their
civility, warned of a world
that hid behind its promises and rewarded
action more than that which had been produced,
they become invisible—things asked curiously about.
When the single, larger star moved more
slowly than others from agate to indigo
fallow gray to gunmetal before dawn
they smiled into clothes.
Embodiments of something essential,
coalescent of the feline and feminine,
the sportive with trickery and humor
that knew beyond every creak to the floorboards
to the house, the chatter and scramble of
starlings and squirrels on the roof, the rub
of which branches against the roofline;
mulberry, birch or black walnut and that
heard within the voice of wind and winter
there is the reminder of secrets shared.
A calm acceptance built up forgotten.
Nostalgia held for a particular past when
even before the rains would stop
the birds could be heard, wherein summer
would be no more summer than the snow which
will melt this afternoon.
In this physical life
these are the things one never gives up loving.
Long after the drunken husbands
railed against the fields, the westerlies
that each year eroded more and more topsoil,
pushing newer stones up to their feet after
the first frost.
The irony sublime: being closed down by so
much open, flat country. Hardening from within
as the very earth with bellies bloated with

blood not yet bled,
standing in galoshes in the curve of tilled
rows looking away past the gathered strength,
nobility waiting, beckoning to just be
bumped up against. Never belonging,
never breathing in the heavy moist smell
of the turned soil
blown from the fields by the very currents
that cast their angry words back against
the sides of their houses. A voice, sound
if moved into it of what almost became an
extension of the conscious; a oneness of
still spiritualism given of open land.
Years after the shirtless road crews came
and re-surfaced the sinuous roads with
asphalt so black and shiny that when it
shimmered in the summer heat it would
pinch eyes, even when dwarfed by
the big yellow of their machinery.
And after the convertibles
drove by under the clear August nights
honking, calling out festive, romantic,
the husbands would begin to disappear
in their own flesh, swollen by television.
Paying homage to the ghosts of Howie
Morenz, the Chicoutimi Cucumber,
Catherine Street and the dark,
broody presence of
Richard skating his tight circles on
Forum ice believing this joy
would last forever.
A feeling of removal from real concerns
that seemingly lingered longer afterwards—
a presence out in the fields, something
underfoot as the peripheral shadows of
scurrying cats along halls, kitchens or
the unbridled energy, motion of hockey
players felt but not captured, rendered.
Next to the hunger to experience a thing
men have no greater hunger than to forget,
bowing to usage to their icons bleeding
on weekends in front of them in tiny boxes,
prophets frozen in eternal mystery. Men

lost in their fields as airmen.
Aimless, without a single claim to land,
shot down over wartime. A step away from
the doorsill between worlds, between
hoarfrost and harvest,
of choices made and actions taken,
defining their pasts wrestled through,
keeping the stillness comfortably at a
distance. There one moment, absorbed
the next like dogs seen in between yards
leaping fences.

Gathering in hems, the wives left loyal
to this unhappiness understood time as
an event, not a sequence, that beds grew
smaller and that chaos required submission
for there to be art. Never hurrying,
never appearing to wish for anything else
than that place one would be even when
the sweet sour smell of sweat and sickness
collected around their televisions,
the men emaciated with their anger,
breathless, emotionless and fearful
barely audible in the confession, "If
that I could I would be gentler still."
Returning in black, the long walk from
the station wagon to the waiting cats
on the porch this much is known of their
husbands:

what separated dread and beauty
conspired the neat houses, neat
fields, sweet roads and clean
churches, that their failure to
become saviours through the years
of myth-making never clarified
who the victim was, who remained
unseen and misunderstood.

Freed in this profound stillness,
outlasted by cats, they take their rightful
places as photographs on the wall
ogled at by spoon-faced grandchildren.
There are no easy lifestyles of distractions here.
No televisions, no forget murmurings of
dreams of alcohol where the only

utilitarianism of the man who drank was
he became a fixture of mood and presence
in kitchens that children and wives moved
sparingly around the hard shadow by till evaporation.
Late night in front of the television sets,
shaking, holding their wet faces in strong
right hands, climbing into the silence
and its taboos.

Combining sound and memory in these warm
rooms, once there were towns, wide
lots between houses, open space for the
wind to gain momentum.

To live with windows open one doesn't
hear the snow, only the causality; the
grate of snowplows on pick-ups, that subtle
shave two slow inches off.

It is the haste of a perfect world that
cannot wait two days for sporadic sun,
a warming curve to melt farmlands
into subdivisions.

And what is this sound, built around us,
caught in the trick of light in late afternoon
sun? The cynical, disturbing honesty
of the hearts of old women with old cats
with clear eyes. The delight of the
voice, the meow agile, alert, amused.

It is the music, the melody line to the
composition, the narrative of the dreams
of lovers forty years back one hot summer
and the strays arching, dancing across
August windows and kitchen screen doors.

In the fine stillness of sleeping
with other bodies, years after the allure
of sex has been left behind
the simple want of security of children
and kittens is found
to dance with the nonsense of toes and
stay barefooted longer, knowing
without thought or sight that god alone
above an extinct planet exists.
What is heard is a slow, rounded furred
inference in their tones napping. Sounds
curling back on themselves like sleeping

animals seeking safety and anomaly;
the heartbeats of warm mothers gathered
in the right remembrance of careful lives.

DANIEL MOSHER

FROM *TWELVE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF SAINT HYMIE* (Mama Cass died for your sins)

Sometimes when the loneliness
really gets me, I can eat for days.
I'm getting as big as a purple

war wound on some unknown soldier
dead: comparatively speaking.
In the *War of Big Relationship*

you get a purple heart. Or a
purple hard-on—if you're lucky
eggplant heart. Throb.

Beats eating all the
groceries I just bought
for the week at Dino's

Market. Dino's has delicious
deli and I love mayonnaise on
black bread. Coffee and

donuts at the Xylophone
Luncheonette. Titanic
Serbian woman behind the

counter. Her husband cooks.
Thin as a lightning rod. Day
Two: Donuts. If my life were

a Broadway musical, it'd be called
Bongo Drum JuJuBe Daymare:
all cliché-ridden lyrics set to

toe-tapping melodies. A hit!
The life of a man in too
big rubbers. Too big for his

britches, but he'll never fill
his own shoes; hand-me-downs
from his father, a lonely

indifferent man. Repeating
pattern like tacky 1970s
wallpaper. Paneled

rec-room. *Faux* fireplace
Popcorn and grape Kool-Aid on
Friday night—Chitty Chitty

Bang Bang and Willy Wonka
double feature. The boy is
eight years old waking up

screaming from an Oompa Loompa
nightmare: scary as nuns.
Is that why I wear so much black?

Celibacy doesn't appeal to me.
"Masturbation is a habit, like
black clothes and clove cigarettes.

Beat Nouveau," he said, a long silver
cigarette holder clenched between
his yellow teeth. "New Beatniks

wear chiffon." Day Three:
Mmm. Stuffed Jalapeños -
deep fat fried and sassy!

I paid \$70 for a pair
of black satin pumps in
a men's size thirteen. I keep

them in my backpack just
in case Halloween comes around
or some exquisite man with

a foot fetish. My friend Julio
says Mexican men dig drag
queens. A hint? I told him

I have big shoes to fill. He says,
"Fill them with champagne!"
You know what they say: "Big feet..."

Pink pickled eggs are the only food
I can't eat with a straight face.
Day Four: *Waffle Watusi*.

Doing the breakfast dance in
my underpants. Hot maple
syrup to a disco beat and

a big floppy pimp hat. Great
with a stripe—ee Speedo. Try these
on for size. But, size doesn't

matter, does it? You say
you'll give me \$50 to pose
in a Speedo and pumps

while you beat off? It's a deal!
Cure for boredom at least if
not for loneliness. I knew they'd

come in handy. "Compatibility
ends where freeloading begins,"
but then I'm a rather

expensive date. If you don't
fuck a man on the first date
there are thousands of others

who will. Who needs to buy a
cow with all this free milk?
Day Five: Grilled cheese samitches

and nachos—extra cheddar.
Lactose intolerant; anal
masochistic. Bite your own

hand just to feel *something*.
Shoot yourself in the foot,
purple heart. More cures

for boredom. If I had been
born independently wealthy in
1890 I could've been a great

writer. Or at least a great
character in a Henry James novel.
Independence or Dependence is

really a matter of perception.
This city is full of independent
people who hate themselves. They

too are waiting for the phone to
ring. For a letter. A wink.
Oh—to be *desired!*

Go down with your ship, eating
caviar and water crackers on the
bridge. Listen to the screams

of the panicked passengers, Skipper.
Go down. Eating. Celebrate
the catastrophe. “A toast:

to the death of boredom and
a wish for...glub, glub, glub, glub...
Day Six: Skating once, Skating

twice. Skating chicken soup
with rice. Make a donation
to Chicago's seven neediest

cases. You have plenty to spare.
Gangster good looks will get you
pretty far in this town. At least

a dinner invitation. At most
a Mercedes or a town house
in Logan Square. Six-foot-four

country boys with big dicks go over
nicely in a community that values
such things. Squander your twenties!

Self imposed exile at thirty. Your
friends don't like you anymore
anyway. A cure for boredom

at least if not for loneliness.
Wear a tie in the summertime—
that'll throw 'em off. You can

always hang yourself with it
later. I keep returning to
the Xylophone Luncheonette

because that's the only place
I feel at home. Homely. Just
another patron of the artistic

burgers and fries and a Coke.
I did drugs and ruined
my life in my twenties

just so I could write about
it in my thirties. How's that
for self-sacrifice? A toast:

to the death of...glub, glub, glub, glub...
Martyrdom is *easy*!

MARCI DEL MASTRO

SIMPLE ALMOST

by way of hill,
to house
or home.

sound fills and
soon
a room builds itself

inside you. hand slides
under,
picks you up,

places you somewhere
else. she counted on
so much here.

opened drawer,
filled tight.
once again,

you. seems obvious or
simple almost. never
changes.

NO PROPER LIMIT

Heightened awareness
of this strain. A choke
hold brace. A broken leg.

Is chopping wood so
dangerous? Didn't futures
begin this way?

(A house and in that
house a room and
in that room a bed.)

And futures began in that
bed. Sheila and John and
Sampson too.

Now Ruth, mother to these
three, died at sixty-nine. The
father now seventy-two.

NEBOJSA PRODIC

GHOST IN A DRY SEASON

My brother by my side was known
for his notorious smile with the young ladies. He
had a certain way about him, his stride
almost a way of living. I looked up to him and
his sweet soul, even though I was the oldest. That
morning we gathered our friends and played war
in the woods. Make believe guns made out of sticks, shirts
that were once used to cover our backs now played an important
part on our heads as helmets made out of
cotton. Henry, a skinny goofy looking kid that lived
down the street from us, came running up behind me and
my brother; he was firing his stick. He stated that he put
a bullet in both of our heads, and that we should fall
to the ground and be dead. At this point of my life I knew
better. Death was not a part of me, and I did not accept it.
"No, Henry, you just grazed my left ear." Without any discouraging
thought I opened fire on Henry. My brother pointed
between Henry's glasses and pulled his trigger. Noises that
sounded something like a machine gun came rushing out of
our bodies. Spit flew on Henry as he tried to reload his
weapon. His belly ripped open by my spray of bullets,
over and over again blood came, but he was still standing.
Within seconds I could see the whole army coming up around the
trees and the soft bushes in the distance. Shirtless soldiers colliding
with us. I could feel skin and hot breath screaming. My
brother and I killed all of them, but they
kept on coming. War is hell. As I looked I saw
that some of these soft warriors had painted
faces. Blue black and mostly red paint smeared on their cheeks,
drenched in their hair, imprisoned between their fingernails. I loved
it. But years later I became bitter. In the real sense of things, my
beautiful brother was killed in Vietnam. Now my memory
of him is just his pale body resting in that decrepit box. At night
I do not sleep, I'm too frightened. Nightmares of the colorful
little army keep reminding me that I should have
held on tighter to his hand, should have hugged him

longer. Something that I did not want,
wanted me. I stand in front of my window looking
out into the darkness, into the woods that once was. I can still see
them. I wonder how many ghosts look back? I wonder which one of
them is you?

VANESSA VILLARREAL

A HALLMARK *CARTITA* MOMENT

I look at the “Husband” section at the Hallmark store and I’m having a hard time picking just one for you. Where’s the card that says, “To the husband who comes home every night and yells, ‘Screw you. I’m the boss.’” Where’s the card with pretty lillies on the cover that says, “You’re nothing but a *puta*. Do your job and make me something to eat.” There should be a section called “*Pendejo*” next to a “This-is-my-house-not-yours” section. As I walk through each row I doggie ear each card I pass just to piss someone off and then my concentration’s interrupted with thoughts of you yelping, “Don’t let the door kick you in the ass,” which forces me to rip up every card that reads, “*Para mi querido esposo.*” Twenty years married and I still can’t find a card that fully expresses my hate for you. I wish I could kiss you for every time you came home smelling like Paco Rabanne instead of Corona. I want to give you a load of *cachetadas* and tattoo my hand over your entire body for every time you call me *puta*. I birthed five of your children and a “stupid ass” is the thanks I get. I don’t go to Tiffany’s—I buy my designer gold at Lucha’s on 26th Street. I don’t buy *arachera* at \$5 a pound—I buy it at Gueros for \$2 instead. You should realize how lucky you are. I’m a *chingona* that any man in this world would kill for. But the day I leave you I won’t need another man. I’ve been alone

for all of these years and I've done a damn good job by myself, Mickey Mouse T-shirts and all. I'm not looking for anyone's pity. I'm here because I choose to be. But the day's coming. The day when I'm going to hang *calaveras* all over the house like *piñatas* and cover your bed in sugar skulls and feed you *pan de los muertos*. This day's coming and you're going to run frantically through the house looking for me and you're going to open up the front door and see me driving away in a BMW with my daughter. She'll be stroking my hair and calling me *querida* while I throw our wedding pictures out of the back window. A true Hallmark *cartita* moment—picked out carefully, for you.

SUSEN JAMES

AT DUSK ON THE PORCH YOU CAN SMELL THE LAKE

The weather takes hold of veins and ardors
invitation to lie down among
 sticks gravel disheveled grasses.
I do not wind my clocks or answer the phone.
Through black iron grillwork
I hear their ringing.
These hands which once cupped light
 now dip water.

After dark, there is a wing.
Put through and through the silence
we all are phantoms
abandoning language
for a more resistant strain,
repetitive tones of rain
the long transgress into;
forgive my intrusion,
the soliloquies of ivy.

Sometimes we must all sleep without provocation.
Diverting gazes beneath skin
to search for the whole truth,
I skinny through barred windows
 to sit upon the sill.
75 watts north of recognizable gesturing
I have kept a burden of secrets.

A dream of shattered glass;
 windows, lenses, lips
always the same willow.
When the body meets a memory
kneedeep in bone,
afterwhile the heart bleats away,
alters its combustion, its correspondent surface.
It had to come to this,
no longer casting shadow or reflection.

Nevermind what went before, I did not die.
Making love in the crowded graveyard
quells the odd cold.
Bends air April and silty.
Resists closure.

THE PICK-UP

Most arrive huffing in groups peering from beneath the stiff lips of blue or purple umbrellas. October is taking its time to dismantle. They have come armed with witty conversation, and quest for more than a quick Tango. I have appeared to prove myself still human. A sort of fog is rising, billowing like nostalgia. The season is pure sorcery. Three times I wish the night brighter. I want to be in love again. My eyes are driven woozy with discontent. The third time he asked, I pretended he was you. "I go by the name of _____, in secret I am _____, to remain sane I sing." I surface in language, swimming upstream. Why must it all be so cliché? Sometimes I choke on the moon residing in my throat. His hands were wild with praise. "I am sorry. I am not myself tonight," I mutter apologetically. Are you a movie? he asked wanting to direct. He thought he could change my life by merely altering the lighting scheme.

RITA HAWN

UNTITLED

You like me
 with my hair
in flames

like some angel
 wrapped in
foil

a gift under
 your bed

my hands
 clenched

you begin
 to tell a
story

with your eyes
 closed

everything you've
 ever said

wraps around
 my neck

morning is smoke
 poised like
ashes

full length of
 windows

cool cheek
 on your side

WHITE

I have no objection
to a screen

a pale egg
for a kiss

a planted new life
is kicking

blue stones
the pulse of your neck

into my sleep

MYRA KALAW

DISMANTLING THE HOUR

I

An afternoon unannounced
announces the arrival
of a train gliding forth
in a hissy fit
bellowing eye to eye with the rusty exits
and the bloodlines marked by poles and wires.

There she moves as if on schedule
red brick on isotope
walls stained like coffee and cherry
pungent with holiday spirit and the release
of action chronicling last night's temperature.

II

In the afternoons the evenings an empty chair not full turns its back to the
beehive but leans its head to the curlicue appearing on the southeast corner of
a mirror there where a nail there grew sticking its head out like a black dot so
opaque its shadow cuts the wall in half—

III

pull my finger pull my finger, she howled.

I tell her there are only two kinds of good people: the farmer
&
the miner.

we'll never be either.
So let us recoil in our sleep.
And in our dreaming our tongues slip powder into each other's
into each other's
into

IV

The chair's silent drooping into the unclean hour
is received by the strokes that compass it.

The chair's silent shinbone, ankle bone, funny bone,
backbone sticking to the stone of a pendulum.
Hanging by the tick-tock, my bow-legged love
sways its knotted limbs, scampers to a strangle,
consumes the days with a flinch of the shoulders,
eats them with the hands I've just shook...

V

If I move from this position,
I will not love you less.
So I look down on the parquet floor.
With my eyes on the nails and the strips of wood,
I think of your sweater—
the one I'll clean the floor with.

VI

—It was Summer.
Summer with her slice of lemon
on an open wound, her squeak of dawn,
and her screech of noon. Summer can be squeezed
out of its juice. What's remained
can be baked into a pebble.
Aim it at Goliath. Throw.

VII

Morning breaks the backbone.
It arrests you in your sleep,
sends a shiver down the empty
doorstep, and is picked up by a child
on his way to school, who will put a hand
across his face to block off
its utilitarian embrace.

JAMES TIPTON

THIS STORY IS ABOUT FIRE AND DESTRUCTION

...no quiero hablar sino como es mi lengua.
Sal a buscar doctors si no te gusta el viento.

—Pablo Neruda

This story is about fire and destruction,
about the failure of all those who tried
to strangle me in their entrails, whose hearts were ashes,
whose bodies were lies, whose words were
labyrinths of seductive and decaying light, who,
like smugglers in the jungle stuffing cocaine into
the corpses of little children, thought tenderness
was something to be devoured.
Appropriate choices for fire and destruction.

But it was something in *me* destroyed,
and through that fire something not destroyed;
it was spirit surviving, living for years on rat shit,
lost on a sea with no shore, where bloated souls
rose up with wooden eyes, like mockeries of wives,
waving to me, reaching toward me with their sunken hands,
plucking pieces of this body: eating these legs I loved
when I was born, eating these very hands
that wove the light together my initial days on earth.

At last only one part of one ear remained, but
in that part the soul now concentrate
contained the genesis of the whole;
the evil that had fed on me had left
to find its fill in other, more fattening, waters.
I slept a very long time. When I woke
I heard some voices, as if a thousand years
away, but human nevertheless, voices sounding
shore...and hope immutable

On that strange sand I flopped about
like a goblet of mangled flesh,
listening to words, like air hammered home;
like banquets of food out of fairy tales,
like milk to feed a warrior, words
that filled this solitary ear like
pollen out of heaven, words that
walked on earth with breath imperishable
and deaf to those who sought destruction.

With spring the ear grew fat and then
the head grew back, like a blessing that has made
a long journey; the heart, the heart began again
to move, to thump without a form, and then
took root in empty air and blossomed into body;
these feet, that looked at first so far away,
began to walk; and drop by sacred drop the blood
returned; all the efforts of the damned
turned into simple dew that vanished with the sun.

I think I'll name a few of those who helped me through
the furious water; I'll name the bell that rang each breath
when once again I learned to speak and clumsily spell:
"*Is a bel*," a bell heard on the sea, and *James* and *Douglas*, *Robert*,
Nicholas, saints to me, and holy sisters *Mabel*, *Nancy*, *Marilyn*, *Geri*,
all children in this fairy tale I live, where magic rises up
and catches me before I have been torn
too much to bring the body back.
Despite the dark the dawn is always being born.

translation:

...I do not care to speak except as is in my speech.
Go out and look for doctors if you don't like the wind.

LORNA DRIES

THE HECATE

I

Something old—
the rusted joints
of a metal clothesline

rows
of steamy Pontiacs on an aging
uncle's back lawn—

the strawberry
and cream cheese Jell-O mold
sitting out
too long in a scraped up cake pan—

the rickety lips
of an old Aunt Doodle

wanting to wipe up
her dollop of a mole

with a butter knife.

II

Nothing gets done in there without her
just as when he worked late
and made her mother squawk
just sick of these kids,
but not sick
sick when they were
and holding her own hand
when their palms were beat
with a wet towel

knowing to put salt

in boiling water, pushing children
out of kitchens, not knowing when
to make them work because her mama
ruled the house, made extensions
of the stove and needle and being
 something borrowed
she had to pick and choose
 what she would.

III

A bathing suit or a blown-up
boat

her feet are picking through—
some game where the sand runs off
the toes with the tide, some shark's
got another thing coming

 and her sister has a pail
the boys are going on a crab hunt
 they've got flashlights
 and turned-up caps
and she's got
 this water
 something blue.

THE CONCILIATOR

For the very tall
there's the problem
of logistics
and he had flat lips
two pieces of slate
slapping the face
no matter that her legs
reached only his knees
she would curl
up to his rib cage
and light like straw
and fine like sand
and every other
way she could be.

LOTT HILL

TRANSFORMATION

1. Being Forced

Chris Sotta said, "I am not yet homosexual,"
which he meant not to hurt feelings
and then he added, "I don't like to close doors."
He claims the Romans had their influence on Britain
and Justin says this country is just like ancient Rome.
Someone else claims he practices ethical behavior—
he was just taught that way;
he never had those thoughts
like the people who have been enslaved.

2. Principles

Slave is defined as one who has lost the power
of resistance, or one who surrenders himself.
Justin is angry that the Reagans got hold of this country,
how awful it sounds now, although it worked very well
at the time. Chris says he's always felt small,
thought he could find comfort in knowledge
but something was removed,
anxiety fell in its place.

3. Expression

Promiscuity takes distance.
Chris thinks it's built in to most men.
He's never fallen in love
and compares it to drought, heat,
rains and rat-skinning contests.
Infatuation is just a daily delight
with the momentum of a shotgun.

4. Lonely men

Chris likes to meditate,
blurring distinctions in a mental vista;
that's how he reached his sincere vow of chastity.
Justin gets oppressively jealous.
He didn't make love until he was sixteen
and found it humiliating,
an irretrievable step.

5. Tomorrow

Chris says the future has vanished for us,
denial is futile. He is afraid of death.
Someone says death is a transition or an awakening.
Which part of your body could you give up?
Justin says there are rhythms, symbols
like Greek gods because the culture is unsteady.
There is not a provable thing as completely safe sex.
How do you manage to be optimistic without hope?

IF I

For J. Neu

Gave you an answer,
opened my own words and looked
down through gallons of ink
dabbing and blotting black
over white, what would it
establish besides love?
Stitched eulogies of past fiction
now come to mind, how I
once wrote a love story where
the greatest lover was located
postmortem, like the dreamer's
aching heart was examined
yet not returned to his body. What
answer would it be? A porcelain
trust, transparent cars of a
train where every passenger that
ever rode was reviled,
noted in lines of five,
tallied and compared with his
intentions. I have too many
out-dated ideas, like an antique
narrative for an old government,
tomes of unabided laws and
outrageous demands. This isn't supposed to
whelm you into agreeing, I only
hope to establish a point to
agree on and avoid the frequent
tangents we both have. I feel
weather-beaten and warped like
hardwood against the ocean. There's no
antidote or easy serum
to swallow to ease the
wear. I know
epigrams that I could
arrange in chronological order and
read to you, but none would
erase what's already been said.
What is one word I

recall when I think of you? I feel
inclined to say *love*, but you're
not buying it, and the only one I've
got left is *mine*.

JEFFREY DANIELS

CRUEL

The more important
characteristic of a line,
being its direction, can
imply virtue. Or recess
to a horizontal straight
suggesting landscape.

Straight line, not being
a generous example of a horizon,
we still appreciate as
demonstrated in art, hand gesture,
both automated and natural motion.

Still, clearer in landscape,
the line is no longer event,
but simply contour, tracing
the vacant possibility of now.

And now a line from one point
to another can curve or straight
but I don't think any of us really
expected you to say that.

LET'S HAVE A BAKE SALE

Art was nice.

The afternoon was approached
at salient angles, and now I
really wouldn't mind
if we slept outside, made a tent.

Retrieval is what seals
a scenic America from a
recognizable city. Standing
room only, please feel welcome.
Tonight's show is dedicated to...

ninety percent of millionaires who
have earned no college degrees. No grits &
gravy. One hundred and forty-five
thousand mixing memory and
sometimes nostalgia.

THE CONFIDENCE MAN

This is a toaster.

The sides are light metal. The base
is plastic. A sunburst design
on the side, only ornamental.
Each edge is curved to mislead
you, but the form is that of a box.

The lever will trigger a succession
of mechanical events. A numbered
dial suggests that toast created
yesterday is toast created today.
Crumbs accumulate around the
rubber footing.

A collection of vintage toasters is
shelved about the cabinets with at
least two from each period and genre.
Frayed electric cords provide color like
birds lilting on an otherwise cloudless dawn.
This is a chair.

Gustaf Sobin	Carolyn Koo	Joe Ross
Kimberly Hayes	Connie Deanovich	Jeffrey Skinner
Kostas Anagnopoulos	Joshua Taylor	Jennifer Martenson
April Sheridan	Jan DiVencenzo	Davis McCombs
Sandy Feinstein	Mark DuCharme	Paul Hoover
Dan Sturniolo	Mark Wallace	Sheila E. Murphy
Arpine K. Grenier	Paul Weidenhoff	Terrance Calvin
Michael O'Brien	Gary Duehr	Charles North
Greg Purcell	Rod Smith	W. B. Keckler
Joe Meno	Raphael Buckles	Peter Radke
Daniel Mosher	Ron Padgett	Marci Del Mastro
Nebojsa Prodic	Vanessa Villareal	Susen James
Rita Hawn	Myra Kalaw	Lorna Dries
Lott Hill	Jeffrey Daniels	

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FIRST AIRPLANE THAT LANDED IN DENVER, *photographer unknown.*

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