

POM²

POMPOMPRESS
BROOKLYN, NY

SUBMIT & SUBSCRIBE

The editors seek work that directly engages and responds to poems published in Pom². We encourage submissions from those who are willing to have their work altered, lifted, plagiarized or transformed in later issues. Contributors may respond to one poem, or several, from this first issue. No previously published work will be considered.

Make the editors happy by including with your submission: (1) Title of "source" poem(s), (2) full contact information: phone, address, fax and e-mail, and (3) optional: a photograph of yourself.

Submit no more than 5 poems
Electronically to:
pomppress@yahoo.com
Subject line: gravy
PC or Mac attachments welcome

Or mail to:
Susan Landers, Pom², 227 Prospect Ave. #2, Brooklyn, NY 11215
SASE required

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Please send checks payable to Susan Landers to address above.

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VISION

Pom² seeks to foster and display the many-tongued exchanges taking place among poems. Future issues will publish work that flirts, pinches, shakes hands, gossips or otherwise engages with work printed in previous issues.

That's not enough.

Ethan, what else do you need? I need poems that respond by standing on the backyard fence screaming at other poems like cats in heat. We're writers! We can—we can—we can—uh—uh—do a lot better than just those four things. Ethan likes the generative thing. He wants the magazine to be longer. And he wants this sentence to be longer. And he's worried about cigarettes causing impotence. Do you want to talk about the seed? Don't talk about the seed. Can you talk about size? The way that I see the editorial statement is it's the thing that is always true. That is so wrong. Maybe we need two things—an editorial statement and a note to readers. We need a tagline. What's it called? A tag line. I said this two months ago. Let me talk. I don't want to open ourselves up to being screamed at by some cat. Why not? I am not a critic who writes sentences. The magazine's about associative lines. Trees mimic what I see as the concept and process of the magazine. Strikethroughs. Things rewritten. If we do that, it's going to be like a poem: it's not going to be terribly illuminating. But that's ok because our vision is going to be clear. Vision is different from editorial statement? I'm not going to go down this road with you, Jen. Whatever you want to call it. The two-sentence thing. Read the note to readers. Read the fucking poems. Send us your results. We'll create a place for it. This is the vision. Boom. Pithy. I don't know if we can come up with a single vision statement. That's the idea. A polyphonic vision. Catatonic vision. Do you have any chocolate? There's pops in the freezer. I went to pick up the phone and there was a horrible layer of grime on the windowsill. Note to readers: First paragraph. This is our editorial statement. Boom. Let's talk about that a little bit.

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TATTOO

everyone's got a tattoo

everyone's got a tattoo
of a tiny elf
of their past life
all the people who don't
believe in reincarnation
have a tattoo
of a tiny elf
of their past life
on their shoulder's ass
squirming for their shoulder
a tiny ass
on their forehead
do you believe me?
it's what they believe in
everyone has a tiny tattoo
of a karmic ass
that they don't necessarily believe in
smeared on their waist
but it's what they want
dreaming in what they want
their real ass
in a tiny tattoo
of a past life
on their ass

BUSHWHACKED BY BABY TALK

Shouldn't you be in bed little fella
do I come into your mind
hoover your retort as why
you keep the Bride of Machine
suspended in snake oil
or change cars like shorts?

Amber waves roll beans
up the Mount of Olives
par for the sap that shines
at any meanie miney moment

I was on scholarship from Nemo's Creamery
to study buttocks in Europa
no man is an orgasm
who hasn't been framed
like a hat I'm just trying to make a point

And lured by a glass of evening sun
gumming pabulum Pandemonium
breaks out for a better view
another gong displaces rectitude
and long toothhood reeking
Tuscarora spirit gum "I'm the king of this
goddamned miscegenated microphone!"
boos become comestibles
give him one when he wakes up

JELLYROLL

The following poem was rescued from my hard drive, three years after the apparent date of its creation. I do not know who wrote this poem, but if anyone would like to claim it, I would be most appreciative. If someone claims it, I can safely throw it away. Otherwise, I will claim it, and will continue to publish it under my name. Personally, I both like and dislike this poem. It is sassy, but at the same time irresponsible in terms of its relationship to history. You can tell that to the author, whoever he/she might be.

Render unto Caesar the misspelled bounty of this yurt. Salad days. Leafy vegetable of my eye. I am, I said. Live in a debtor nation; keeps me up at night with my inner counter ticking. To express the inexpressible, like a black hole. Poetry spelled with a p. Can you say more about that? I take these limits and break them at the wall of my desire. She buys books with "desire" in the title. And I wonder why there is off-white, but no off-black or off-yellow. Doff your thinking cup and drink from the waters of Zion or the Jordan's silty banks. Bankroll, bedroll, jellyroll. American culture is fundamentally African. Let your problems float, Pema writes. I know their tendency to sink, rock in chest gathers more than moss, radioactive charge that accumulates on the surfaces of metals and does not dissipate even when it becomes your fork. There were no choices then, and I took it.

author unknown
8/26/99

The following poem was written with lines stolen from the above poem which was rescued from my hard drive. Therefore, it is an authentic poem.

Even when it becomes your fork the steak was once alive. The fork, hard to say. Possibly, if you think about mountains as breathing. They have veins, after all. Fucked the mountain, Olson writes. That the rock was a “she” is obvious. That he didn’t really fuck her, thank goodness, is the problem with sexualizing nature. Take her down, chomp chomp. Bits of willow, cats making mouth noises. I was thinking more of a chicklet, lemon flavor. Speaking of distinctly off-yellow. So much for your generalizations about American culture based on off-colors. What do the waters of Zion have to do with it anyway? Why are Jordan’s banks silty? I can imagine that the sieve was once running with minerals, but other than the pounds of gold left behind in the sand I can’t come up with any less direct way to talk about sex. It is a fact that most books with “desire” in the title never mention getting dirty in the sand. Or if they do, the sand has turned into some washed-up metaphor for galaxies. When this happens, walking down the beach loses its charm to the cosmos. Either that or the hole in the middle of the peach either does or does not look like an oyster.

Bill Luoma

TWO POEMS FROM SOME MATH

A situation of barretta
of artie nilpotent amounting
of the antennas of endekka
neither for determined anendation of canebye of the starter shaft
nor the scholion of coolio of artie subscription of growbye
of the felt and the flybye
comes more than the gattica
of the point of the line of appropriate round boy
of the felt of the taste of the convite country
of one large Adam.

Ortho to pulverize
base tainted to seat
to lon of dormer neonibble
to loss ou gogan of kevin gorgon
to loss Loo brogan of ted marchibroda
to fable neither to the neighbor to simmer nor of the gift
to cover with boards the club of the official's fable
of the neighboring reign of revolutionary Armed Forces
it goes in fable goes fable fable
to the vukel of the luker
fable of idiot this question
a throwback to the fuzz of no nose
whose garden hose breeds endless generations of interest
letting the table setters of the generalissimo
give flower to the manifold
clobbering the cobject array of Scott.

Heather Fuller

QUARTER

(ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL RUPERTUS)



Crandals Champeen
is a type of barbed wire and
I am eat up with bloodshed
of country road entanglements
on the wine train of brothers

the misunderstanding of the day
was a broke shovel on the quarter house

he opened the door and the devil just walked in

pulled from the carmine dirt
where Larry busted and Ice
stashed a knot of Jacksons

the hands have no feeling in public
so to the house a girl named after
religion retching parlance of
a lead chip lazy susan

*I will be glad for no one speaking
in one place at one time until
the canker passes a child
reveals a sign*



Hodge Spur along the Egypt Road
the work-release are passing
don't laugh sneeze or say
money in sight of church

that's what is said there I'm
not one to trifle when work is no
release

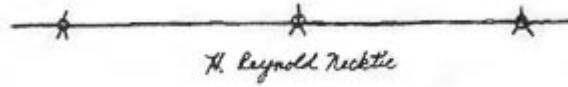
lie down with dogs to draw the sickness out

Peanut said better to die
jumping the fence than live
in the dirt on your belly

I'm not one to trifle

ash worn on the head
mistaken for conspiracy but
funny to be self-conscious

fallen in the dirt



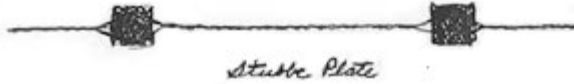
Reynold Necktie shut down
the tungsten mine for now but
not for children playing

the house cut into quarters
couldn't hold whole children

the floor supposed wood
turned out to be cement
for the tripped conductor of the wine train

snake skins packed into the split head
and a sermon rappelling through
the quarter

pull a chair up to the quarry
for the dragging of the pond



Virginia tore through Plate
when a child could die
out of pain and Kelly Jo
unborn was a mouthful of dirt
devil to Doc's twister

flesh caught on a barb
was a good question

and spooked the quarter
children into meanness
against the street lamp gypsy
I'm not one to trifle

outrun by the wine train
Favorite Cousin went under

for what is said there
before drowning
the water tastes sweet



Brikenhoff-Martelle Ribbon

Martelle Ribbon bit the American
cousin with kitchen familiarity
when scars took on a life of their own

the hands lose themselves in crowds

down by the devil's tramping ground
I'm not one to trifle with the work-release
in training for lifetimes of looking satisfied

the quarter house is a quarter empty

a pony of wine to wash the blood

when the sheriff came round
the back of the broke shovel
fit the knot on every head in town

3 POEMS REGARDING WHAT YOU SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T DO

Crime's Everybody's Genus, Original Freight, The Beautiful Make Us Do It.

Holler level glass until you're hard of hearing enough to let your boobs burst
into green sand.

Do your worst: I threw my whole head up in spirit this morning.

It's hard to say which earnest feats lie under our Hawaiian shirts.

Were I honest, smart I'd be a Chicagoan now.

'Stead I'm palming the boils on the back of a Nantasket leopard salesman in a
mask.

His sotto voce crimes go unjurored.

Break Into a Thief's Home, Steal Nothing.

A famous lion smiled blacking lines out of his notebook in Boulder.

I knew that was illegal.

You cross out words like that while the humorless go without anything to say
in Hadley, Massachusetts.

You climb in back with me while Anne drives up front alone, rolling the
window down.

Hush Not My Tantric Malfeasance, Your Crimes Are on Your Pants.

When he got down, Barabas made a beautiful injun sit on his leg, she'd put
rouge on her boobs.

Don't say I warned you 'cause I didn't he said and poked her neck with spoon.

Some phenoms shouldn't go unJudased:

those what lean on Rosencrantzian looks and don't know when to leave failed
enough asleep.

ANALOGY FROM ANALOGY

Analogy from analogy.
Analogy of analogy.
Caterpillar of the moth.
Ant of the dragonfly.
Grub of the grasshopper.
Connection from connection.
Pinworm of the fly.
Connection of the connection.
Connection of connection.
Egg of the bird.
Link of the link.
Life from life.
Connection of connection.
Life from the life.
Life of the life.
Connection of connection.
Life of the lifespan.
It can't be otherwise.
Life of the life span.
It cannot be of another way.
It cannot be of another way.
Duration of the duration of the life.
It cannot be from another way.
Snipe of the plover.
It cannot be in another manner.
A`o of the A`u.
Turnstone of the flycatcher.
It cannot be in an other way.
Mudhen of the apapane.
Earthworm from grub.
Crow from alawi.

Worm of the food.
Worm of food.
`E`ea from alaaiaha.
Continuous screw of the food.
So it was and so it is.
Endless screw of the feeding.
It was so and so it is.
It was thus and thus it is.
Screw without aim of the feeding.
It was therefore and therefore is it.
So we will be.
It was consequently and consequently is it.
We will be so.
We will be thus.
It was consequently and consequently it is it.
Therefore we are.
We are consequently.
We are consequently.
So we are.
Alaaiha, `e`ea, alawi, crow, apapane, mudhen.
We are so.
Bird, egg, fly, pinworm, grasshopper, grub.
We are thus.
Fly-catcher, turnstone, a`u, a`o, plover, snipe.
Therefore we are.
Dragonfly, ant, moth, caterpillar, woodborer.
We are consequently.
We are consequently.

Richard Loranger

MAMMALIAN DILEMMA

A wondrous bungle reaps the royal rump:
a beaming lump of ectoplasm sings
the praises of a newborn ring of gunk
that spawns a new regime, a culture e'en.
O give us spleen enough to hump the Dog
of Night that holds us down in Lizard Town,
mewling and praying in our goat-hair suits to take
another gobble of the randy cake.
Sweet rake, you know not whence your genes protrude
into the arching day, nor how to ride
the psi-ing wave, nor which bright spark to rude
in perfect rhythm on the blooming world—
and yet I love you more than worms aspire,
just as my love makes our disease more dire.

THE EXCOG BEETLE

Swimming over its spread-out appendages
the Excog Beetle explodes a butt swank
over the waves of its constituency.
Balonius Slicer! - Primeval Kisser!
Will fornicoot along its jassa!
Armbandabouting its coom...it will
gal the rocker, into a tricycle
of springtime personality...in other words,
its bug will outlive the ecstasy of its promise.

Oh, it will live - Oh it will die...don't
forgive me yet! Its cog will outlive
the exigencies' jarring wit! Now...
here, it paddles out its palm...ah, did you...
did you see it yet? There! Widening out
over the bond (testy over-hoster...isn't it!)
Jacking a prism into infinite light! Gosh!
Gosh! Oh Gosh...gosh, gosh!
Oh Gosh!

MENTOLINO MEO SOLOMIO

UNIVERSAL CHICK JOCK : GAY BY LAW
ETHNO MIMIC CHAIN GANG : ORDER PERV
ESPAÑOLA WAX : GROOVE DICK : CHECK PLEASE !
SUEY CHOP CONCEPT : LINUS PING PONG BITSTORM
NUEVO MASTER ZORRO BOOK : QUESTION OF TIME
MP3 — RIP — 33
MP3 — RIP — 33
MP3 — RIP — 33
NUEVO MASTER
NUEVO MASTER
NUEVO MASTER
ZAUM ZAUM ZAUM - ZINGZANG - TUMB TUMB TUMB

POCO TIEMPO : ERROL FLYNN
VOID DE OI D OI D : VOID DE OLD DUOMO
MISMA MIASMA : DISASTRO COMPLEX : VALENCIA
SIR GOOD : DAB DISOP : YO GANO : MINIFUNK BRUTALITY
BOOZO : ZONA BRUTA : NUEVO MASTER
MIASMA
MIASMA
MP3 — RIP — 45 — 33 — 7 — 8 — 2 — 1 —
NU — CRU . . . CHAAARME
NOVO - PHONÉ . . . MAAARME

FREESTYLE GARCIA : TOUCH & GO JOCKEY
CULT FAUX PAS : THRILL KILL : SABOTA!
TO - TA ! : TORRES : CHILLY MOHOLY : CASSIUS ICEY
METRICO : GEO HETERO : SPLENDOR OZONE —EFFEX : TIMES NINE
MONO AMBIENT : SUBTIL RAGE RAVE : NAPPING YAPSTER
ELBOW JOE JOE KING KONG JOHN : MEIM
COCOA BEACH SURGEON FORCE : DANGER JOHNNY DISCO
SEPARATOR SHINE : TOXIC JUICE
MIX MAESTRO BIASTRO : ACQUAVELVO : TESTAROSO - SO - SO
NO - NO - NO - NO
MINIM SONAR
MINIM SONAR
MINIM SONAR : FOLKE MAS : Y MAS : Y MAS : FREE HOME BASE :
D.I.Y. ALIVE
D.I.Y. ALIVE
D.I.Y. ALIVE
MP3 — RIP — 33
MPS — RIP — 33 — 45 — CD — GO!

Brenda Coultas

THE RAT AND THE FLOWERPOT FROM THE BOWERY PROJECT

The rat was lying under window beside shards of my flower pot and cactus plant on concrete. Some of the shards were on top of the rat. I had some plants on the window sill one floor up and often found the roots dug up, flower bulbs stolen, thought it was a squirrel. Maybe it was this rat, he was heavy, obese. Maybe he fell and then the pot landed on top? The little water dish was still intact on the ledge. Maybe the fall killed the rat? Could a rat climb a brick wall 30 feet up? But would a rat eat roots with so much fresh garbage on the ground? Could a squirrel have knocked the pot off the ledge just as the rat was walking underneath? What are the odds of the squirrel offing the rat? I couldn't quite put the narrative together. Then I was drunk and still, I could not solve the situation.

(6/2/01, 2nd St. and 2nd Ave.)

THEN THEY PERFORMED A LITTLE STUNT, LYING ABOUT

You wouldn't expect *Miss Greta Garbo* to be a tool during The Cold War, but tool she was, in the film *Ninotchka*, a movie which is *dripping* in ideological contamination. Watch it if you would like to see truth distorted into a farce. The purpose of the film is to *mock* the Russian revolution and to reduce all human reason and idealism to crass motivations, to show that any woman, despite her nationality, is just a *sucker* and she'll throw away everything, family, friends, country, for a little Parisian hat she sees in a shop window one day, a hat shaped sort of like an upside-down ice cream cone without the ice cream and with the spiral of the cone a little pushed in on one side toward the back.

She took a taxi and she said that it cost twelve francs seventy-five, and then Melvin Douglas (?) says Oh well if that's what they charged you to get from the hotel here then they performed a little stunt, lying about the real cost—but by that point she was in the grips of *l'amour* and she was dressed in that *chic* Parisian hat. She said "I hope I don't look *ridiculous*" and even though he assured her she did not every redblooded American in the audience knew Greta Garbo had stooped to *foolishness* and that the political battle between West and East was so great that they'd stuck a little cone made of cloth on her head tilted at the back. The film ends very suddenly with them all in Constantinople: he has tricked the Russian government by colluding with three *dunces* who have been clowning around since the opening minutes of the movie and gotten Greta Garbo sent to Constantinople but just wait till you see the Orientalist *prejudice* the filmmakers spoon out in the architectural details and they call that *realism*.

Chris Jackson

THE SIXTEENTH BOX MAN

Joseph Cornell, *Object (Hotel Theatricals by the Grandson of
Monsieur Phot Sunday Afternoons)*, 1940

I spasm in my hand a little guilty then I
give you four men leaning backwards palms pasted
over their hearts' cavities then four men falling
backwards one almost touching his gun then
four men bent forwards to touch toes one
like a runner they've soft bums then three
men lead ballerinas nobody moving a cumulative

poison obtained by roasting quarantine
this is death quarantine why always
death the angel wrestling Jacob yes

if art puts death in the box the fourth
fourth man taken away by art yes
you see the face of God you'll live.

ESPECIALLY EROTIC TO CORPSES

Photo by Rudolph Burkhardt of Pollock pretending to paint
Number 32, 1950

Here's the dead man leaning over it actually
pretending to paint the Victorian rises up from
the stink evaporates and is applauded there's
a record player fast Nat and it swims some say
he's the body of an awkward swimmer going down
in sloppy licorice circles it sucks you in it's big
the conscience of a mural can never be kept in

private I've tried to keep to myself but
I think I'm really lying his ass over
the line my ass in a chair but there's

no paint dripping from his brush though
the canvas almost moves and I'm in it
my fingers in his fingers my fingers in him.

Chris Jackson

INSURE THE ARTIFICIAL

in the 1920s

When the professor said These poems are mannerist I said
Yes I couldn't agree more all happy an art term though
he at best was neutral about the affair I looked it
up got a book and read it still all happy said to
myself The world's artificial and I'm in it yes I'd
wrought them whoopee with prosthetics poses of a hobbled
Christ if I looked in the mirror and they looked funny I felt

sexy just like Ben Turpin who was or
wasn't gay he did shtick not camp had
the artificial in him he'd look at professors

funny and they'd pay him to do it he
paid a hundred thousand to keep his eyes
crossed and the professors surely loved him.

3/8/01

some mornings your hair is EXACTLY the way you want it when you wake up and you don't shower to not mess it and you want the trees of Philadelphia to smell EXACTLY who you are sweat and semen of your lover MY GOD ITS BEAUTIFUL OUT HERE it feels good until it feels superficial then you feel guilty and if you are lucky you stop . . . understand guilt as someone else's idea AND YOU GET THE love again

3/31/01

i'm falling in love
aimlessly
it's nice
i think i won something
but i'm not sure

i always think
i'm winning things that
aren't there

Marwan fucks
me in the front
seat of his
taxi cab which
isn't easy in
Philadelphia while
making a turn onto
Benjamin Franklin
Parkway at 3 a.m.

it's Daylight
Savings Time i'm
angry i'm losing
an hour

he says "tomorrow is
April Fool's Day
ask me to do
something we'll
both enjoy"

i ask him
to back
his ass onto
the gear shift
until it feels
good and
he does

Carol Mirakove

boy on fence

he used to think orgy & graffiti
meant the same thing
 knifepainter
 is money like the negligible
difference between
 flaxen-haired & vagrant &
the bigger we get
the dumber we get



Carol Mirakove

girl in dunes

vixen my ass
so I should dress like pretzels or something
through the snipers?
every pitch
looking like militia
now & the movies
bar code the clouds
scan the roadside
ensemble:
muscle a language
monumental
& free
those salty
salty bacos



Carol Mirakove

cow and tree

the poor men are so ugly
chewtoy colliding somewhere with dust
 & bellyscars clenching
childless warped floor:
 “i kiss you” “you’re wrong”
insert anonymous example



BRAND NAME BABBITT

- the security guard adjusted his belt when Babbitt hup-twoed into the elevator • silence as a form of resistance • beware: sometimes the door automatically locks • bad Babbitt, *very* bad Babbitt • we don't discriminate: we'll accept RussianBabbitts, CzechBabbitts, BelarusianBabbitts & YugoBabbitts • Babbitt on the go-go, Babbitt borrowing against future returns, Babbitt betting 3 to 1 on the raygun • for your safety, do not put flammable liquids, cleaning solvents or articles soiled with these substances in your Babbitt • just a little more lackluster grandeur, please • I believe I'm in love with a girl named Babbitt

- move selector to brand desired • partition & police, partition & police • frazzled Babbitt, rabid Babbitt • the wrath of lab-rat formality • absolutely perhaps well maybe not • a boatload of Rotarians & Shriners & Optimists, if you insist on a currency of blood that is • formidable Babbitt-lather in the margins & the fractures • ravenous Babbitt, rapturous Babbitt, sunny-day Babbitt • move selector to brand desired • absolutely perhaps well maybe not • let's intellectualize violence, shall we? • elision instead of derision • when the door locks • marital or martial? sacred or scared?

- warehouse of data, warehouse of lab rats, warehouse of sunny day • for your safety • silence as a form of resistance • differentiate & quantify, if you will • litigation as a mode of discussion • move selector to brand desired • partition & police • the redacted hieroglyph of her love • absolutely perhaps well maybe not • the security guard looked away when Babbitt entered the foyer • in spite of all the evidence, leadership was not what was needed • got me a brand-name raygun & the DVD version of *Babbitt My Babbitt* in C minor • the security guard adjusted his belt • impervious musculature killing in the name of

BLACKING UP

After California Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante's "slip" during a 2001 Black History Month keynote sponsored by and addressed to African-American trade unionists

nuh-uh! Ntreaty Ndeed.
ego. suddenly negre is called
negashi. negroid nubian no
needed naphtha burn. light it
enyay enyay ixnay this face this way
negrita Ndurable. no pal nopales. Negus
elected public official bi lingual slurring not
duty. this Negroid nimbus. Negast not
aghast. Ndirect negligee suspicious Negro. Ndit
endash. Ntrust neige legere negates Ethiopiates.
samo. Ngugi Senegal Ndangered Negretic. m-m-
Ndelible degradation. Nkrumah Nferred. ignoble
sugar gun nutmeg negus. sputtering sweetly. ¡Mira! en mi casa cariña nobody knows which is the
true character which the mask. Negrillo Ncounter. natal Negress, Ndigenous native. Ñ Ñ
oye jumbe. aghast Negast. nimble lingo blazing silencio a tu gente. mukarib carob Carib.
Ngulf corking Nsult egun burning. bow to these Nfallible gradations. the fashionable
singlets brown skirting the issue. Redress? picnic knicknack. knee grows most
high. we must now Nsure Nrgetic & immutable Ndigo Negritude. no go
Nago. ___'n ___. Negotiate this significant misstep. garnish historical egest.
tarnish cogito renege calling so nyet nyet Ncognito. gnawing crow. conoco
Ngrown. this face is called Ncumbered. either Njured or Ndignant. ra-
ra-raza. Ndigent ama Igorot apa. Ndure dozens. nekkid troof. Nduce
Nable. not national news. Nnocent segue. neigh nay to nugatory
overture. Ngratiate pardon Nvitro negritos. egregious evocation of
base Nner idiom. not no "understandable" egress, ese,
reNforcing supreme ballasts. omni omni Negus Neghast.

Charles Borkhuis

DON'T WEAR THAT MASK UNLESS YOU MEAN IT

If I had further been asked what that was, I should have explained by pointing to all sorts of pictures of rabbits, should perhaps have pointed to real rabbits, talked about their habits, or given an imitation of them.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein
Aspect and Image

maybe it's not necessary to fuck
every knothole in the forest
or squeeze a bottle of blue hair dye through
trembling cheeks to know the experience of birth
but a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do

I know what you're thinking
my passion pink skin and pea green teeth
will be out of place at the policemen's ball
they'll just have to be happy
with a hallucinogenic pap smear

my new friends are decked out in cheery monster drag
blowing formaldehyde kisses at the paparazzi
who said "no sex for robo sapiens"?
and don't give me that rubber dick chick grin

personally I'm hoping that these important
cartoon adjustments and the new
bio-mechanical syntheses of the bunny-men
may loosen the culture shock
on your humanist stool lock

it's time for a big softy surplus slurp
at the convenience counter
I know my hand puppets may vomit
toxic waste in the high noon sun
but that's a chance I'll have to take

sometimes even santa has to bend over
and play dead or he'll never get out
of the toy store alive

are we on yet? . . . hey kids!
check out the soprano in the duck suit
who keeps slapping his face under a naked bulb
he's naming names all right but we're safe
he's only giving up his dead relatives

something tells me
we're not having enough fun today
let's go to the video tape
the porn director and his d.p. are crawling
across a little western saloon on hands and knees
with a bunch of hot dogs stuffed in their mouths
now they're sticking their heads
through cock holes in the wall
where kids on the other side
are playing pin the tail on the honky

Charles Borkhuis

meanwhile back at the trauma center
a shrink with a carrot nose has diced
her finger into the caesar salad
now she's taking detailed notes
as white noise runs down her cheeks
(don't worry she's sworn to silence)

as is the priest who over parked
in the suburban sunset
when the mirror maid snuck out
of her shiny image and slapped
a ticket on his mythic cowlick

but what would a party be without giant squirrels
jumping up and down on the hospital bed
while a humming doctor kildare
takes another pulse and the patient squirts
his mind into a plastic bottle

uh oh I can see the stock broker
after the fall with his dislocated limbs
pointed in different directions
like the photo of a traffic cop
giving autistic hand signals

look boys and girls there's our old friend
the pig-faced private wearing a housedress
you know what that means
that's right it's golden showers
in the mouth of the five-star general
who's sporting a "have a nice day" mask

but wait a minute—a big hello
to all you out there in grownup land
maybe you too have learned
to identify with inanimate objects
and watched your insides turning
about face

maybe you too are ketchup comatose
thinking of cuddly characters
brandishing sharp instruments
(we all have to take back the night
or at least our own toys)

maybe you'd like to start with a new
pepe la phew mask
some squishy finger paints
and open orifice dolls
and slowly work your way up
to humans

DIZZYISTICS I

STIR THE BEEHIVE

chicka-boom
motherfucker
or is?—is you is you ain't?
jeepers creepers
creampuff gullible
news keeps me
it's a phantom jungle *awake*

america ground zero

goldcard
Gris Gris Ya Ya
White Hassle Hepcat
Itchy Trigger Finger

POOLICE
lawyering up
since the hiphop grand jury juju of history
gabba-hey choca-boom
Thousands Mourn—
After the Movie

kooky slackfest bugaloo
gimme boogaloo shuck flave semiautomatic
OH YEAH
a pig slur Ultra Fine narc quic
only when white becomes exotica...
slamdunk doubletime it

Do others as
you would have
them do you

so, pork, the other blonde oxygen
use me as an example
I put my paycheck in the witness protection program
tapdance
touché
compulsory rhythmic
buh-buh penny ante alibi
pin fear down
Mono Puff Plastique
glue-sniffing daddy-o
quickstep pickoff
jail per capita
when challenged, notice [that] you're white
antifolk
breakbeat
slice-and-dice
jiggy sellouts
I'm down for physical dollars
Isn't 'no fourth wall' justice
Poka Poka Booga Suga
kiss off the rat heist
It's Still White Supremacy
fly-by-night concealed weapon
Ghetto symptomatology
blue glocks
dig:

NET

hot little burdens
published at garage sales
strengthened
by degrees

though
merchandized
they sing
of riper days

where dirges did
pink and dirty
every sometime
pipe delight

esteemed by purchase
growing into flame: *this*
is the best thing
we bought today

DESTRUCTIKON OF THE UNRENUDE

magnolia, the reason, rude to
bumpy overhearing. i'm a lot like
a rake, really, & wouldn't hold that up
against me. any time is a teepee, &
others act like trace metals all typed
up in the reaggravation—
turning the mean, making it
lose,
nothing left on the right clock, it is lame,
or lookalike, & loaded,
no, caseloaded—i'd like the again again &
go about getting it good. so go.
this isn a reference book, don't
look up.

Rod Smith

MUSIC (& BELLS)

Sing is
ten
the robe holding the rube
tense ghost
cull in the co-fed heckling, willed
marrow moan
the more, a
meant taupe
burrowing bone-held
to the bank's crustaceous
glow.

2

deemers
clap
the no on the n
like 1921 I'm doe-doe ahold hippy
yummy & fun

3

rebeat them with a nothing
foamy cussable inkplate
room-goners the free
nap in the workable mock cousinshed,

this s is kisslink to the com lease of neverheld rhetoric

4

leggo my ego, n superscript
magnificent
penetrating
enthralling
bullshit

they feed the blank parents kodak

o, this field of moisture
o, this fake lariat
o, and an astute enough globula the fake
knees my k-nit reams
thirty-four unfun azure jansports
barbajan
f-f-f-festoons
oom-pah i need a decade

or a lawyer
but not a lawyer

5

beige cakes they array
on the syntaxis quantum cuvunculate

i said make it stick

loose
your anklecasing, reinvent the door

I WILL NOT GO INTO SPACE

I will not go to space
in your rusty rocket “that rests
on coral waves” deeply,
deeply golden in the fragile glass

Golden, you kill me
with your little mungo things, in the “Is he
dead yet?” game. For us humans, it’s real
when a cat interprets that dad’s death. That cat
doesn’t know we’re not married, nor
what we are, shiny beads for eyes, little qua qua
of the ordinary legs
of ordinary women, and the men
who love them, them
ordinary legs, and the women who do

Golden, five million flowers’ worth per pint
of honey to the left or to the right
of the sun; the translucent white gloves
of ghosts of larval bees tell the story
of an idling memory of a friend’s house
in flames. We extinguish it. But when the soul’s
on fire, add kindling. But, golden,
break my glasses, sip this folding golden
whiskey, let the talkies
of Kevin Costner get blurry in our minds, tan-colored pretzels battling
over the batter’s stand as the sun sets over the West
and Western clouds on
Dog’s Neck, nothing prepares us for death.

FROM METROPOLIS 25

Hey kids an Xtra premium cash date
World's transactions known to change the weather
You're gonna hear electric balances
X-out sprawling ennui spasmic you know
I read it in a magazine B-B
B-B-B-Build-ups and incest... hey kids
Replicas of visions no amount of
Moral staging our parents in the streets
O they're weird and they're wonderful
Continuum's so far out B-B-B
Build-ups newly invested she's got in-
Attention electric boots leisure time
A mohair suit you know I read build-ups
B-B-Breakdowns complicit and the jets.

(Bennie and the Jets, Elton John and RodrigoToscano)

Robert Fitterman

FROM METROPOLIS 25

With the message of your call here lies the
Weak link but the callers just pretending
And I have always been the callee so
You go back call leave me a message reels
Turnin' round and round maybe they had
Other callers you go back track one other
Callers here lies the weak link who stole your
Message but the caller isn't calling
And in this way you do chastise so you
Go back call do it again reels taping
Round and round you go back message remind
Them this is actually a late returned
Call must sense this is happening so they
Pretend to call back jack do it again . . .

(Do It Again, Steely Dan and Dan Farrell)

THE ARUGULA FUGUES VI

Le'go my agon,
my futile util you-hoo
frisbee frisée frolicking in a
tinky winky, craggy
belle-lettres sublet —

my pied á terre terraced like
a uvula vue (vacuum-packed), a
persickety picnic comforting as
a cluttered suckling, dislocated in
confabulate fractals or the
fettered extract of her fatty fubu,
fussy flipflop, fuzzy fembot
strum rumpled seemly xenoi like the
misty syllabi of plush plummets;

we fleure, like a shaggy toxicity,
sticky ambergris rotting

in apocrophilic foliage, a
florid flourish, flummoxed in
a hootenanay nano hillock
seated in the shimmer of
a bolus solace silos
in the still of

a mini mezzeluna in a simple huffe-snuffe
puff 'n stuff, snuffalafagi syllabi, bye-bye baby
by the by-'n-by alibi
outside the organization of a
transactional miscellany.

So, mouth my chrysalis listless glib gible node

[fuckin' monad —]

subsidized by phlegm crêche fraîche
in the hideous drift
of the hegemony of

subpoena peonie poesis,
a performative promise, a promiscuous
fescue, a fillét au fracas / frothing
in the vestige of a minoritaria flora,
a flapping applet frappé. So, plais me —

like a clickable fricative
hijacked in a popup polypop

of possible glottal stops, grinds, swoons —
i'm a little *klipot*, pouting pitypot
of a cornocopic scopic kinky
non-click lacunae lurking in a jiggy-jiggy
jaggy gif given with no grifter
grafting an invaginated navigate

boogie-woogie wigged-out miso sememe sin gas,
like a flooding ingress / slinky ignes —
So, lick my clinamen, lineament legument ligature,
'cause my cosmic stoichea stuck on
combinatory deviance, sniggly wigwam OHM is where
the etch-a-sketch kitschy caché chiquita ricochets
like a teepee petri pulsar

So, Ride me like a sinusoidal epicycle ipse undulant
and do the hula ululate louez luau, 'cause my

figura obscura succored into a quirky surface of severs,
syllabories, sybilline sally —

suckin' a niño piñot postulate,
in the measured absence of
illicit proximity. In the
tic-tac taco staccato toccata proxy stock

jacked in

the sonatina sestina scarred tarplet of
her burnished whirling.

Jenn McCreary _____

FROM a doctrine of signatures

10.

one feared biblical foods; the other set the table with plates of figs,
 olives & the like. both existed for three
days on nothing
but tea & honey. we've since determined loss
of appetite to be existential, made allowances for spells
& seizures—that is a fainting-
couch; that is a court
jester's chair.

11.

this is a fine kettle— nevermind about the fish. I will
cast my hair on the water & we will have no need
of hooks. a lantern set upon water will lure
fish to the surface. a flashlight pressed against
the skin will reveal a holy secret— she
is a milkweed pod, split-open for the wishing. he
is a splendidly decorated ocelot.

I rewrote you, easy Opheliana, a penny dreadful, wandering
the garden, reciting pages from a seed
catalog. an island only reachable through
storm. my hands uncurled from their clinging-place
on the oars of the lifeboat & tore the veil from my
throat. removed my teeth as a precaution
against choking.

Lisa Jarnot

TRAIN SONG

for Robert Creeley

Song of all the bushes green,
first class bushes with a theme,
theme of all the escalope,
red-winged bushes, posted home
cups of tea of bushes winged,
home team bushes red-winged
trees, truck of loaf bread
fine and wide, train song
shoe horns, porcupine,
escalope of downy quills,
lamb and webster, shiny pills.

FRUIT BOX SONG

after Bill Luoma

Lovely striped thing love of pillow
pillow kitty billy's verse
verse of billy striking pillow
striking billy rhyme of cat
ears of kitty line of billy
stripes of pillow windows bats
monstrous are the bats of kitty
nightfall billy dawn of bats
purring kitty in the feathers
wetnosed billy purring cats.

FROM MANIAC BOX

11)

this is your Donovan | the sexy get mixed up with a consortium to finance the Duke's atomic test blasts that would later give him cancer of the neck | here everything is fine | what exactly do you mean by earth's crust | a safari to search for that Mansfield Girl | Lord Byron & four lowdowns take a look at the young volcano | destruction (1967) & 10% sodium benzoate | walking & clanking | Ariel takes over the mountain range (there's a mountain!) | dinosaurs awaken | keyholes are in more ways than one "alive" | the battle to stay eternally so bad you're sure to set yourself out the year before you realize it | these rock stars | secret carnival: my son studying the French of the Draculas | the deadly door-to-door | you watched TV with Billy Carter and looked up prayers in Word Books—scripture to unmask Captain Rio | do you like pizza, do you like to save money | Pouty does her part to help the hippies avoid a colorful Death

17)

I have prepared a smile formula from ten-thousand distortions | alertness in laboratory animals | unfortunately terrorizing the local rock n' rollers was a way of life in that town | the wiggling blue made me twist like crazy | he puts a cat brain into an angel and has spirit orgasms | I extended my hand with the meat cupped in it | the smell at the sink trap at the old janitor's basin | Yukiko was more valuable—she could get the unknown world to smash ITSELF up | I read that book last | Soviet said no | beating the kid from the foot up | I decided it's up to things to come in threes don't force it | the company turns out to class—prayer class | superachiever, pg. 298 | the pill had Snoopy on it playing a saxophone | hours spent looking straight through my own hand | some very good magazines have only 8 pages | every dog | the side effects are mild except for the crazies

22)

Ted the Prince returns to live while those who try to uncover new forms lose their colorful nerves | green formula—wow! it really works add 10% more of the stuff | listen | the womb necklace took the place of actually living | bodies standing in their resurrected state | they duplicate strange young | whenever reptiles inject themselves into the botanist guards | time travelers are boss | everywhere bugs and more bugs | the supernaturals have fantasies that prevent aging | Bond is sentenced to baby-sit caveman babies | starting to come out through the little holes in the skin | the workaday fancy of having the excuse of “car trouble” is more engrossing than his dope fiend cousin scratching on the door all night long | babies return to the village to rescue the milk | Ted is in our lives

26)

6,000 strong filled up with drug-crazed gun harvests | a damage causes the Soviet space saloon gals to turn against Dracula and the unionized supermarkets | driving Bruno Nuts by applying lotion to her Double Feature | certified mail acts at gunpoint | this happens to all half men | when the pins are back in London | an attempt to colonize on the job-training with outlandish costumes | every watch was a camera that could see what you were doing all of the time | 34 mail carriers | it's 2:55 still watching | an attempt at world creation while rediscovering his various pasts all the way back to 1985 | I would have drawn you closer to me | sometimes when you say it's across the street you are really meaning across the lake | examples used to prove every single point | when the night when spirit is the order of the day | the long approach to the surface | 3:28 electric eye blinking | a citizenry never could

Deborah Richards

FROM BREAD AND BUTTER

Box: Any confinement facility that has a roof, four solid sides and a solid floor.

he was not very tall

his eyes could be seen through the holes in the scarf

they were blue

he was identified

he was not an armadillo

Distress: Occurs when the animal's mechanisms for coping with stressors are being utilised but not over-extended. Signs of distress may be anxiety, elevated heart and respiration rates, aggression, aversion, frustration, boredom, displacement behaviours, for example. A number of these signs are evident when an animal is experiencing a 'fight or flight' response.

there are diagrams and photographs of his body

his arm was deformed there was no movement

the genitals had no disease

there is the skeleton the left arm the right arm

the skew of the spinal column the pressure of the hip in the socket
right there

his mother was kicked by a circus elephant it was an accident
an elephant never forgets

Circus: Any mobile establishment in which animals held and exhibited are made to perform behaviours at the behest of human handler/trainers for the entertainment and/or education of members of the public.

the skin formed over the bone makes the young woman drop the tray

he spent three summers in the country he could walk without interruption

john hurt suited the story

what happens to a freak without a sideshow act

Jen Hofer

YET PERSIST, FROM THE EPIC *PIQUE*

linear balance yet moments persist in any matter the cloth
article moments new york has simultaneous linen & a way
with trembling

hum hum brooklyn threshold hive not glisten breathe
deceptively antiseptic step eject taxi of a flame of a flame

recently pleasure entitled a posture of doubt assume sawmill
pressure aesthetic luxury most muggingly sure in the eye of
privacy certain ailments for a general readership (lucky
knuckle doctor) verbatim deletes every conversation albeit
vogue wingchair graze we automaton windows (the third
person) (recurrence talking about doorway) the decorator of
abandon would flicker with a carnivorous proceeding

physical ornate bathrooms doing peculiar exercises for swift
unobtrusive or swift sliding silver boxes (go mad for a
woman) quicker to ally innuendo & how strung
contraption—the inaugural *x*—to begin! from time to time
night after night no art acclimates

this chick a wind-up toy, cigarette girl meanwhile crescendo
no one legit or average a prettiness fine just fine & very nice-
looking (looking)

FROM THE GOLDEN GAME OF THE SOLAR KING
AND THE LUNAR QUEEN

I was at a bar with one of your ex-girlfriends, I don't know which one, a generic dark-haired girl. We started drinking and became friendly. I liked her. Then I suddenly noticed she was a man, very attractive, but dressed as a woman. And I said, "I never knew you were a transvestite." And she started hitting me, punching me until I passed out. Woke up in intensive care and you came to visit me, all sweet and carrying flowers. We were so glad to see each other. Then I said, "I don't know how to tell you this, but your girlfriend is a man." And you got so angry that you started hitting me and hitting me and then I died.

[A THING FOR CONSOLATION]

I.

It was a thing for consolation
she wanted to sink into a marsh
which is a dirty thing with mud
a consolation for consolation
like a birthday party for a birthday
gift it was a thing to say another thing
a sound made out of sound
like a storm made out of rain
in a language without redundancy
it was a flower made of rain storms
like the petals of a T-storm on the springboard of a day
it was the springboard of a day of consolation in the spring
it was a thing made out of things
which is a property of many languages
like a party for a rainstorm
like a thing made out of sounds
it was a sound made for expression
which is a dirty thing with mud
like a T-storm in an ancient tongue
it was the flowering of a day
which seemed like sinking into a marsh
which is a thing for consolation
which is a thing without redundancy
which is a sound made out of thunder
which is a storm made out of things
made out of sounds
made out of of
made out of consonants
and constellations of redundancies
which look a lot like sounds

II.

Not just flowers
but masses of them
masses and masses and masses and masses
of them
the masses
not just flowers but rituals
not just covering branches
but loading them with masses and masses
of rituals which are flowers in this case
which are blossoms so that
masses of blossoms are flowering
rituals in the heart which is an organ
not just masses of muscle and tendinous blossom
but an instrument of blood
which in this case is coursing
through veins which have the tendency
to be instruments of grief

III.

Say someone you know so as to speak of it
say you know so as to speak from knowing so
as to say I knew him Horatio since you are
well-read how oft we say *I knew* so as to speak
as if from something
one might even call acute
somewhere one may have been
something one might put a finger on *I knew him*
says someone you know like an olive branch
in the darkness like an olive branch in the storm
like a sign of dry land how oft
knowing is an olive branch
how oft to speak is an olive branch
I knew him says someone you don't know
like an olive branch
among friends as if among loved ones
Horatio someone says as if he was a friend
as if he was a locus one might speak of
as if he was the Lemon Ice King of Corona
with its street signs branched like olive branches
in a bird's mouth it was April
like a birthday to accompany a birthday
journey say *I knew him, good night sweet*
so as to speak and not not speak of it

ANGRY AT GOD (A MYSTERY PLAY)

ACT ONE

- BRITNEY: Awww yeah “Only God knows why” right? right?? ... you masochistic sicko. You’re my kind of opinion!
- SURFER: Wearin’ my lifeguard uniform shirt. Oh my God! Where did my long, beautiful hair go? New Structure sweater? Say cheese! I’m a leopard!
- BARRY: ... groove ... for all the foxy people. Aww yeah. [Music stops.] The music???
- BRITNEY: [as the first spasms hit her] Pop music sucks—though it taste like beer.
- SURFER: Too bad you people don’t make any goddamn sense.
- BRITNEY: Look at the brand, hmmm?
- BARRY: Awww yeah! Thats my kinda breakfast food!
- BRITNEY: Makin’ love, yeah!
- BARRY: Awww yeah, baby ... Chester, get out of here, dude ... we’re bein’ sexy—
- SURFER: Now I’m nauseous ... god, now I’m nauseous ... I’m sorry, I feel bad ...

[CURTAIN.]

ACT TWO

- BRITNEY: Uh, yeah, God? Yeah ... OH! I gotta song request ...
- GOD: ... you like them lil’ crane? Awww yeah, you like your origami friend ... your creased edges. How’s that? Yeah baby, that’s right ...
- BRITNEY: [Panting.] Oh Jesus, God ... How do you ... awww, yeah ... how do you ... awww God ... do this ... to me? ...

GOD: ... ROFLMAO!!! Megatron! your pad is full of red X's!!!
AWWW YEAH!!! — Beer is proof that I love you and
want you to be happy!

BRITNEY: ... oh yeah ... that's it ... nice little kisses ... awww yeah ...
Jesus ... “thigh of a baby Jesus” ... I'm coming!

GOD: Awww yeah ... need I say more? check out the
mechandise. And god said, Let there be Lips!

[CURTAIN.]

ACT THREE

SURFER: Jackass of a God, uhhh! Uhh, uhh! Unh! Uhh, unh,
uhh! Unh ...

BRITNEY: What the hell subculture of stupidity—

SURFER: Open your eyes, realize I'm BEIN' God—

GOD: ... 01100100011101010110110101100010 ...

BRITNEY: Some days I'm like God, and others? I am just plain
better ... awww yeah ... my DVD movies ... Hey God,
remember when I said I love you? Forget it to hell! Heh
heh whatever! [Applies eyeliner.] HOORAY for me!

SURFER: That shit fuckin' rocks!

[CURTAIN.]

ACT FOUR

BARRY: I'm the water!
SURFER: I'm the dishes!
GOD: I'm the soap!

[CURTAIN.]

ACT FIVE

BARRY: Oh my god, what a sight. SO SAD. Aww yeah. Aww yeah. Aww yeah. Aww yeah. Aww yeah. So beautiful, oh where am I? Aww yeah this is great ... Oh God let me live. Would I die for her? Death comes sooner or later. Mom ... Dad? Thank you ... saying awww but inside I'm thinking "God if chickens can dance better than her, how bad is she?"

BRITNEY: There's free chocolate? HAPPY!!! ... the chocolate's where it's AT.

BARRY: Oh god. I actually had fun tonight. I went out ... played this house condemned for Millie ... got the feeling from it ... mmm ... nonchalant? Believe so. Like, I saw you in the elevator today? You know ... you were so, like, "THAT never showed up on the CD."

BRITNEY: Is vibration brief description?

SURFER: It feels better if you say that god just called his number when you do we ... we keep it crackin like this ugh, aww yeah yeah yeah, it don't quit it ...

BARRY: So we spent our time with them ...

BRITNEY: Aww yeah! Burning Man was insane, esp with the burning. Oh My Fucking God!!! OMFG pretty much sums it up.

BARRY: I want to ask you a bunch of questions and I ... [Opens his arms waiting for the giant bosoms.] ... OH MY GOD!!!! Come on my lovelies!! [BRITNEY reaches into her shirt.] AWW YEAH!!!! C'mon!!! OH MY GOD OH MY GOD, ITS LIKE STEVE JOBS JUST LOOKED AT SAUSAGEBOX.COM

BRITNEY: Yeah, I can tell, I'm the numbah ...

SURFER: Cheap shit, you wish! [Sarcasm:] In God we trust!

BRITNEY: Thank God it's Friday!

GOD: And speaking of God, how about this Jesus fella! I mean, who does He ... the chosen people know what I'm talkin' about. Aww yeah, anyone wants to call me please do so HAHA aww yeah I'm gonna be famous. Um you never see me anymore? You just see me *EVERY GOD DAMN DAY* ... I GUESS THAT ISN'T ENOUGH huh? Heh? The chosen people know what I'm talkin' about. Think you can compare with this? [Shakes it.] Aww yeah baby. LMAO!!! My ass IS God. Aww Yeah!! I deserve your vote because ... because ... you guys are sick bastards. I am god. All girls want me. If you have to stoop to insulting me, it just shows your own insecurity. Aww yeah. Cheers. Thnak you. It creeps me ... to myself, like an illiterate miscreant, aww yeah! haha oh god. funny stuff. ... so cute and stuff ... shouldn't be this sick. Flowers, yeah ... love them. Love them with me. Share the love. Aww, yeah ... put your desk to be directly next to mine. Aww yeah. [Runs over self.]

BRITNEY: Oh my God!

BARRY: You kill yerself, buddy?

GOD: Yeah, I'm dead, man.
BARRY: Glad you made it, welcome to the farm.
GOD: [Snorts.] Aww yeah, Me Want: Tall Frozen Mocachino.
[To Britney.] Is that you playing air guitar on my soul?
BRITNEY: Like, LATE FOR CLASS!
GOD: Look at you jumping around like a friggin monkey. My
god, I love you ... so much. So much. [Hands her a box
filled with lingerie.]
BRITNEY: You gave me clothes. I love you!
GOD: God, I'd love to place my hand—
BRITNEY: Four hands are better than two. SHIT! Oh god, you
guys, I'm so close already ... ooh, shit yeah ... “hard
candy” ... Aww, shit, these fucking jeans ... have been a
fleshy tiddy begging for ... yes, god! that is what it was!
Movement! ... aww yeah! ...
GOD: Glad to hear it! That's just the way it is, aww yeah
BRITNEY: Oh god ... Do it again ... [Laughs..] Woooo! God what
are we ... Oh man we're going to a funktion
GOD: Yeah Yeah Yeah Aww Now come on and drop it for
me ...
BRITNEY: Flame Resistant's Christ Core Crew Baby ... Awwww
yeah!
GOD: AWWWW HELL YEAH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
BRITNEY: HEY GOD! Uh, yeah, God? Yeah ... OH! I gotta
'nother song request!
GOD: GOT MY PIPE!!! AWWWW YEAH!!! GOD BLESS
SOUNDWAVES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

[CURTAIN.]

Clark Coolidge

TRACES

WHERE THINGS WOULD DO

Movies used to be about people in rooms
the detectives go in peoples' houses
portrait of a palm tree tied to the sea

Mirrors in films don't belong to the same space
movies show bodies in empty space
what's not inside the machine that is

All of the letters never work
stretch of water tacked to the top of the lawn
the police in such places are usually late

Someone looking for something would have to look inside
a strip of lemon across a plastered landscape
there is the story of a man who ran out of ink

People at the same film report great differences
distances want you to cover them
a photo of a nebula taken through a red veil

The detective shrinks in his own estimation
there is just no end to these interior lands
a man in a costume leans against his costume

The person who looks takes his own portion
one who'll stay in motion with no further mention
an impression of glass against the bent sky

THE HOUSE OF MEGAPHONES

The hair inspector has arrived
so has the circus chamber
they heard the villagers here were made of silver
so maybe it's enough to play the Frankenstein record
but these silly people think each other beautiful
little do they

See these rabbits in the wind?
embarrassing strewn things
of course there's yet another Cave Beyond
painted solid with the overmastering ice
they've been living on carbon rods for all these eons
but do you really think these monsters will help us?
there's been quite a lot of water over this scenario
and it seems the Wolfman would like you to call him Larry

In the ventrifact sunshine the interim hunchback
has a velocipede on his brain if not his hips
must get to Visalia before anything makes restoration ridiculous
tissues oh yes and cobwebbed glass things
and here and there little gobs of horror
flat things out of shade that just broadcast and weep
so the inhabitants blanch with terribleness
but the audience doesn't believe a thing and riots in the seats
and we have to build these awful windmills
using only the glassmaker's technique

HOW LOW CAN YOU GO AND STILL BE YOU?

The abjection of Janis Joplin that so thrilled me at the Kings Park Theater, 1968, watching *Monterey Pop* on the screen and feeling super hip, and yet when she appeared in a swagger of color to sing “Ball and Chain,” well, I didn’t know any better. I resolved right away to move to San Francisco (to rescue Janis Joplin from her chains of love?) (to become colorful, loose, pained?) and leave behind the tall tombstones of the Protestant cemetery of North Shore Long Island, this Robert Lowell country in which I hadn’t really a place. In grad school I actually then met Robert Lowell, when the Poetry Center at my university brought that nut in for a reading, then put him on a London plane on which flight he died—from air rage? Or was it peanuts, those long ago flight helpers now banned? We couldn’t decide. I took a look at his face and felt fey in the Agatha Christie sense, there was something ghostly about him even then, he had the madness of “Skunk Hour” around him, not a whiff of color.

It’s hard to say anything positive about collaboration, for the word itself has been imbued with a political tinge for the last century at least (Boer War?). I remember when I was a boy seeing all those movies on TV in which rough, righteous French resistance workers shaved the heads of sexy, mean, unrepentant middle-aged women. Brrrr! I cried, reaching out for another cookie, let me never grow up with my patriotic values so stunted as to become a collaborator!

I always wanted to lead life on the straight and narrow, and it must be said that I tried. I have to pat myself on the back for that.

But then, once I turned 35, I realized I had moraled myself into a trap. I had said everything I wanted to say, and still there were things I wanted to say, but no more things, and no more words. I had solipsized till the cows came home, and so there I was all alone at home with hundreds of

cows all staring at me, their thick red tongues passing over the furniture. I had become myself and how pretty was that? What I needed was a little air not all this cow breath, so warm, so country, so irksomely Stella Gibbons. Wait, go back, I wrote my very first stories with others, first with my cousins and then with my best friend in high school, but after awhile I withdrew from others and went all through my twenties a-sail alone, boy on Challenger Sea. And yes, after a bit I stopped being able to relate, to language, a massive stone face I dashed my prow against till I broke it and drowned.

All of us who promote collaboration stress the sex aspect, that writing with another is like a sexual act—though we don't say which kind, that would be reductive wouldn't it? It's addictive, becomes necessary after a short while. And what of our production? Okay, by and large it's not that good, not as good as our solo work. Sorry but that's the plain truth! If everything of mmm, Frank O'Hara's perished but the poems he wrote with others, what would we think of him I wonder? On the other hand, collaboration is a form of aleatory practice—it adds the element of chance, opens the work to the unknown. Take a chance, write something with someone you hate! (An update of the lessons we were taught in the old Maoist days of early gay liberation during which, to expand one's consciousness, and to break down the prison walls of societal programming, one was encouraged to go to bed with all kinds of trolls.) Didn't Gilbert & Sullivan despise each other and yet, how beautiful their operas. And what about Rodgers & Hammerstein—Rodgers, the horrible creepy pig, vs. Hammerstein, so sweet the angels envied him. Hmmm, which show queens among us have dared to prefer Sondheim's collaborations on *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *No Strings*, over the pretentious solo dreck of *Passion* and *Pacific Overtures*!!! I seem to have turned around my argument and the sharp will say, "But musicals are not poetry and vice versa." The sharp will further roll up their sleeves and add, "Besides, *all* writing is an erotic act and you don't have to share the moment with anyone—but one's reader."

“Weren’t Lowell’s controversial ‘Imitations’ a sign that he too wanted to get out of himself and collaborate with the dead or whatever?” Too late to ask if anyone was paying attention. We had one professor who, after Lowell died in the stewardess’ arms, inherited his station wagon, this old Country Squire with the wooden side walls and the bumpy transmission. One night we all met for beers at the bar of the old Port Jefferson Hotel, after two or three hours the professor got drunk, mumbling about Jean Stafford and Stephen Spender, the debacle of *Horizon*, and out in the parking lot I took over the wheel, took him home, we dropped his ass off on his doorstep saying we were going to borrow the wagon, “BYE,” and just kept going in Lowell’s car, down to the old Quaker cemetery, making out, feeling the thrill, the violation of this kind of untrammelled experience, the ghosts pressing in on the windshield like fog. “Then okay, you moved to San Francisco.”

As though there were some kind of summons to come here. Still I hear those sharp wits arguing, under my floorboards: “What about Janis Joplin, did you forget about her?” It was the appeal of the abject I heard in her voice that I recall now (“Take it! Take another little piece of my heart now sugar”), the way she offered to take herself apart, bit by bit, confident her essence would survive her own life, that each piece of her heart no matter how small or large somehow contained the whole. Someone tried to explain homeopathy to me in terms of distillation, but I translated that into collaboration to see how much of “me”—the tired, fatuous “me” who writes all the books and jerks himself off to his own insipid life story—how much of “me” makes it into the collaborative work when finished, indeed how little of me it takes to make the whole “mine” in some deeply satisfying way. He or she who collaborates inserts words into a social fabric, into a society buzzing with corpuscles and altered rhythms scary as those assaulting Stephen Boyd and Raquel Welch in *Fantastic Voyage* (1966). You’re a little smaller—that’s all—it’s like—get over yourself!

CONTRIBUTORS

To encourage conversation between readers and contributors, below is contact information for several people who appear in this issue.

Bruce Andrews
andrewsbruce@netscape.net

Charles Borkhuis
104 E. 4th St. #D1
New York, NY 10003
cborkhuis@aol.com

Jules Boykoff
4016 Calvert St. NW #2
Washington, DC 20007

Tisa Bryant
1206 Valencia St. #4
San Francisco, CA 94110

Sean Cole
seancole@earthlink.net

CA Conrad
CConrad13@aol.com

Brenda Coultas
75 E. 2nd St. #3
New York, NY 10003

Robert Fitterman
robert.fitterman@nyu.edu

Doug Fogelson
www.drfp.com
773.395.9433

Heather Fuller
HC 75 Box 663A
114 Independence St.
Locust Grove, VA 22508

Michael Gizzi
mgizzi@massed.net

Jen Hofer
jenho@mindspring.com

Chris Jackson
crassick@aol.com

Jeffrey Jullich
jeffreyjullich@yahoo.com

Adeena Karasick
adeena@compuserve.com

Aaron Kiely
aaron7k@hotmail.com

Richard Loranger
mythkiller@hotmail.com

Bill Luoma
435 Clermont Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Jenn McCreary
ErrataBlu@aol.com

Carol Mirakove
mirakove@earthlink.net

Mel Nichols
mnichol6@gmu.edu

Wanda Phipps
<http://users.rcn.com/wanda.interport>

Kristin Prevallet
prev@erols.com

C.E. Putnam
swineburne@yahoo.com

Deborah Richards
treestrike@yahoo.com

Eleni Sikelianos
Sikelianos@aol.com

Rod Smith
aerialeedge@aol.com

Gary Sullivan
flarfy@hotmail.com

Edwin Torres
87 E. 2nd St. #5D
New York, NY 10003

Kevin Varrone
Kjvarrone@aol.com

