

ONE



ELDERLY







# ELDER ONE

STEPHANIE YOUNG  
DAVID BRAZIL

ALLI WARREN  
BRANDON BROWN

SARA LARSEN  
EVAN KENNEDY

LINDSEY BOLDT  
JOHN SAKKIS

JACK PROBST  
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## STEPHANIE YOUNG

### A NEW NAME

The towel when I remove it from my head  
retains the shape of water in a fan, the sun's corona,  
a crown, my father's name derived from the greek  
for garland, wreath, honor, reward, Stefanos, Stephen,  
literally that which surrounds or encompasses—sounds  
a little feminine, doesn't it, for a masculine first name

I like it. This is not a poem about my father  
but I'm always saying this is not a poem about  
something, the name of the father or that mine  
is a version of his. Although I have been to lots of parties  
and inhaled helium after the kids went to bed  
we told sad stories in those voices, all the losses

and humiliations, I have never actually been  
kicked out of Luka's. That shouting down the street  
has not been sounding very good lately  
everything continues: turquoise bathroom wall,  
a pretty rolling 3.0 from the couch, that Diane di Prima poem  
when they're on the road into Colorado

*Odetta singing, the whole world singing,  
the triumph of our revolution in the air*  
the poem where that poem goes away  
when someone you love, someone Diane loves  
says something banal about the carburetor  
stops the poem

it's easy to disperse the whole world  
singing in a poem, the triumph of our revolution  
in the air, in a poem, so easy, the limits of critique  
greet me each morning afternoon and evening  
I climb the stairs at work, I reach the top, there,  
YOU WILL NEVER BE ALONE AGAIN

marching down its face, the poster phone's  
orange demonic keys glow  
at night when I get up to pee sometimes I check email  
which is what Louis CK says about the phone  
and texting, the car and the abyss, otherwise  
you might have to pull over and cry



I keep thinking I'm thinking about those great lyric poems  
lately by Chris and Dana and Brandon and Jasper,  
long poems by Jamie, curiosity and envy, but remember  
the phone please Stephanie by Jennifer and Anna, Catherine and Simone  
remember that poem by Erin I'm asking you to please remember  
a long poem by Jennifer, *Evacuations*, which is sort of about

getting up to pee in the middle of the night. A female body. In the morning  
I cross over a grate eroded from the middle outwards, in public  
fragile as bumpers on cars from the 90s, bubblegum  
in a hole in the wall of the city somewhere between particle  
and cardboard, putting my foot there, down  
on the ragged edge a toddler or animal could fall through

a hole worn so thin, damply torn plastic grey grate  
in the parking lot or sidewalk withstood my foot—as I crossed over  
I pushed down, on the management, gas and electric white trucks—  
I bore down, with my foot, but would never reach the cistern this way.  
Never reach the water with a bucket Dan pumped by hand  
in Colorado after the flood, the name of a novel by Margaret Atwood

but everything was. Is. Floods. A name on the move.  
One story follows another. I bore down, I pushed, crossed over  
the grate, drank coffee, talked on the phone. It didn't give.  
The ragged edge. The afternoon. I'm wearing stretch pants  
and running shoes, I've just passed the intersection, I'm walking  
by a new wooden fence erected lately in the neighborhood

I say something to my sister about money  
and move aside for the exceptionally loud jogger  
behind me one hand on the arm, another on the wrist  
and she's gone. Sound of a car driving away. White cords  
dangle from my ears. "Hey!" Someone on a bike  
across the way shouts after the car, comes over to help, "I thought

he was trying to surprise you." He did. Laughing  
about this later, it's elegant, surprise the only weapon  
a pronoun the only thing I know, that someone on a bike  
thought we were friends, called him  
him. I wonder why someone on a bike told the story  
that way, makes me curious about his clothes and skin

but mostly general admiration for anyone who runs,  
runs fast. Gracefulness, efficiency, professionalism. I feel  
cared for, like in a store. Well handled. Tenderly. Me and the phone  
skid to an end before the upgrades included in our contract, this  
experience common as being in debt, purchasing food, or,  
I don't know, having hair. Not having hair. Buying a phone

on craigslist. Anne says Kaplan's students said  
"that's a good story" upon reading about Dana's mugging  
which is in fact a pretty good story. Involves face to face  
misrecognition, riddles, and a miracle. In this case,  
the balance on my loans finally dipped below \$20k last year,  
I make soup on a regular basis, mix clove and tweed

and comb it onto the roots, set a timer for 12 minutes  
step into the shower, rinse, condition, wrap the whole thing  
in a towel. Every 4-6 weeks. Around \$8. Another old white person  
scared for a minute to leave the house, an identification  
I'm trying on from the comment stream, the flawed survey  
says violent crime is down in some parts of the city

small device theft is up, in others, maybe there is a risk  
in writing about this after all. The way someone on a bike  
would tell the story, the way I told it, to be more tender  
but the longer I hold the poem inside  
the more useless it comes to seem, the more demanding,  
the more problematic, the towel when I remove it

retains the shape of water in a fan, the sun's corona  
the masculine pronoun hangs there, heavy in my mind  
feminine, too, that I wanted to write this without it  
or any at all, what they mark, when it fails, Jill's language:  
to "inelegantly unstick" the labels: could a poem be  
a good ally? A word like privilege, easy to dismiss

hardly going far enough when everything is wrong,  
ally, derived from the latin to bind, kindred,  
relatives—the word when I go to use it still retains  
the shape of marriage contracts or treaties  
between states. Still I want to. Use it. A blanket  
I pull the language to my chin but then



our toes get cold. Could it ever cover? Everyone?  
“I cannot stand it,” Mackenzie writes, so many  
astonishing poems this semester: “I decide / *cide*,  
if only *cide* was a verb: to cut” I keep crying  
or almost crying in class, at the reading  
before it happens, after it happens

organize and re-organize these notes into six-line stanzas  
periodically get up, face in the mirror above the grate  
where a fire would go if the fireplace worked  
where a chimney will fall and tear a hole in it, so  
here I am again, earthquakes, disaster, my face in the mirror  
a big pie, creased greasy doubtful, who won't have the money

to return? After the flood, what will the neighborhood  
look like, give myself the shivers. Under California's  
victim compensation program, you can get free therapy  
but must file a police report, which my friend can't  
bring herself to do, even after the second time it happens  
a few blocks away from the first, the second time in the dark

her pants slip down as he struggles to remove property  
from their pockets. Not my story to tell. Another version. Not telling  
a story at all. Maybe the best ally. When everything is wrong.  
All the things you couldn't file a report for anyways, all the stuff  
it brings up. The losses and humiliations. I notice a line of cameras  
on a house across from the international school

the next time I go for a walk it's in the morning  
when people drop off their kids, hordes of them, people  
in cars talking on phones. A single key tucked into my hand  
for luck. The next time I see signs all over for a public meeting  
on October 17, a private security force for Temescal. One silhouette  
holds up another. Kevin reports someone at a conference said

you don't want your poem to need footnotes in the future  
the most conservative thing I can think of, replace it instead  
with Rob and Taylor's project, something like may this poem be illegible  
in 100 years may the conditions which make this poem understood  
in this world have been utterly, may the world be  
otherwise. It's heavy handed

to say so, so we don't. Sometimes an awkward  
person comes to the front of my personal

to say so, so we don't. Sometimes an awkward  
person comes to the front of my person

and answers the door, who am I kidding this  
happens a lot, facilitating class when LaTasha  
visits I don't know what the I in LGBTQTI stands for  
how did I miss that? I'm not sure so stand around inside myself

while some kind of generational weirdness goes down  
finally someone says it's not that complicated just use my pronouns—  
is that what we were talking about? Or how hard it is to talk  
about? Someone says it isn't generational, who am I kidding,  
this happens a lot, I get it wrong, mispronunciation,  
misrecognition, who is this person who wants to write

a long discursive poem about it? Just get it right.  
The long poems of my friends lie scattered across my brain  
I want to learn them

to love, the way Chris said, most of all  
“here's what my friends were up against”



*from* ANTISOCIAL PATIENCE

3.

we rust like  
ghosts in complete steel, we  
rut like mice in crevices & there, occluded,  
lay we forth the splendor of  
edicts of song. for councils or  
the common will cannot amend this  
pause which is a part of  
prosody, its species, subject to  
no renovation but by dint of  
wind that shall give speaking to  
those ones from whom a speaking ought.  
our choice, discalced, therefore to  
weld the tune from these veiled facts,  
which we must first work up the way to  
clutch inside our inadequate pincers,  
for I had not been given forms of  
any use and therefore went to  
study where I could, and  
failing that I hoped to dream them,  
something we are not meant to confess.  
Fuck law. Fuck your juridical  
dreams, fuck those  
compositions. Fuck fucking also,  
fuck the escape that abjures  
renunciation of the merely given as  
my opening move. For glad and  
graceful is the hand of her who  
undoes the toilsome nets. The  
first name I dugged up from the  
midden of here when I'd died was hers, now gone out among roses.

9.

any urgencies inside  
the law have found their  
pith in you, who are  
their day, their  
coming to have been, as  
we act in our deeds so it  
has been in order that  
the scripture dot dot dot,  
a task you took on all  
unknowing by means of this  
instrument your hand, or  
your eye as a vector of  
seizure, but so intimately shall we  
fail each other and our selves,  
and that's the story too, and  
time its pavanne, and we  
on the ground learning slowly what  
is necessity, why  
have you brought me to this place where  
I'm to die in the dark and  
uncomforted an  
in my confusions, for  
just as he partook so shall ye all,  
and likewise tremble there,  
in the hour of your  
perishment you've spent your  
life in thought in flight from but  
your flight is not and who  
shall deliver, teach  
your failing heart to find a pray.



10.

lave the heart in  
grammar as an aspic  
gainst the tuneless days, contra  
want of color & to bring thee  
into circuits of the law, a  
glowing throne from which the  
weltered mother wrought new  
passions out of tinctures of the  
still bright word, crushed  
bugs we insert into the  
channels of trade that get the  
names a sailing in their  
sloops and skiffs to  
hit the burning shore of  
where this word meets you,  
not the same place from  
which I am writing, having  
gone the road into those  
other kingdoms, regions of  
the murmuring tribes, who  
come to us in dreams to  
say what we dont always remember, and  
we are shy among them, fearful to  
remind them they are dead, our  
incurable rudeness follows us  
everyplace.

15.

The ship  
was a wound and we went,  
we went forth in the  
burning rites, for what  
we artficed upon that wreck of  
lifeworld was the house, an  
articulated strapwork upon which I  
hung your picture, or whatever  
matter served to make a reminiscence out of you,  
for to learn such art as draws the wishes out of our  
bodies so recalcitrant with lore is no joke either,  
is transmission, relevant  
as weaving for it is naught but  
just the branches of that art,  
old art, among  
our people, which people, the  
people not content to number themselves among the  
forgetting, this is their participial song,  
these are the things that must be washed, this  
is the bridge that falls upon our art to build as  
delicate as law but fortified by song, by  
what you can remember from your days on earth that you'll  
pass on to whom, to whoever happens that day to be  
taking a collection at the door to the  
perfected spindle of the law, from  
which I recollect a song of such surpassing sweetness  
it is not for mortal air to bear it,  
but I tell you this anecdote to whet your appetite. For law.

ALLI WARREN

WATER SKIM AND YOLK

Beginning If  
Beginning No one knows  
Condition of need  
Condition of undying lack  
Ask of the flimsy  
little thing no wings  
how could it come to be  
Shoot down satellites  
and launch brigades

History of the defeat  
of logic history of  
the interior  
this little bird  
pecks straw  
this other  
catches positions  
The tree is a tree  
and the tree is real  
Bold brave fact  
flips the boat



## THE TOWER OF WINDS

on ascending  
in order to surprise her  
with a water clock  
and a wind vane  
the many pills  
I've swallowed  
in order to return to the states  
to enjoy patrimony  
in the sputter and heat  
I curse my horses  
along the reeking bank  
& of all the gifts I sing  
intent for intent  
with garlands & candelabra  
with laurel branches & ox heads  
not even worth my weight  
in hops  
& you all in your laughing  
rolling in togas  
in the aisles

## ALWAYS CRASHING IN THE SAME CAR

on the eve of the solstice  
bpNichol, black sesame and Paul's  
Basho having seen the blood  
and the wilting curdled stems  
when I went to birdtown  
when I was young and believed  
at GooglePlex  
spread about the lawn  
placated by a nudge  
smitten by a plea  
on the underdeck  
cast out in relief  
plastic, pleather and mesh  
gathering the firmament  
which glowed in its beginnings  
now waning beats the breath  
cypress honed at the bends

## BRANDON BROWN

### JADAKISS

This fucked up tree on 14<sup>th</sup> Street is my Jadakiss.

I call it my Jadakiss, not my Beatrice since she is tired of being used as a symbol by earnest male artists ever since she accidentally nodded at Dante on a bridge just once and he and many others nursed on it for the rest of their lives.

Jadakiss has hardly ever been used as such a symbol.

I walked by this tree for months on the walk to work, in that gloom whose repetition never reveals a portal into paradise, or ever-stretching summit into sunlight. The walk is *that* dark, like the wedge of space between Lucifer and Judas in Dante's *Inferno*. Anyway, that's why I never saw the tree I guess. Eyes ever adjusting to a thorough contingency of debt. Distracted by my earbuds bark over river ravages, inner ears cocked to the mouth of whatever temporary Vergil swaddled the tempo of my movement.

Its top boughs shake with dozens of birds that huddle in this tree, cawing and mewling and battering each other so loud it recalls the soundtrack of one of those nature documentaries that pair so wonderfully with Northern California weed. I saw three white bird butts slowly lower at the same time and spatter greenwhite shit on the sidewalk. If the shit of one bird is good luck, this was a jackpot. Instead of rattling coins an icky splash.

You know that Mallarme thing about how everything on earth exists in order to end up in a beautiful book? I cleaved to the thought as an obvious truism when I was young, but now I dunno. Really, *everything*? You sure? Watching this tree quiver and splash regurgitated avian breakfasts, I don't know what kind of book he had in mind, or what he meant by beauty.

Mallarme also said that destruction was his Beatrice. Later in that very letter he ruins any hope you had that his appropriation of Beatrice belies some protofeminist recuperation. He digresses from poetic gnomes to screed hateful misogynist prose to his bro. I propose as revenge we all start pronouncing Mallarme's name as "Mallarm," depriving him of that last little accented "e" which guarantees the eternal appeal of his writing.

Did Beatrice even see Dante? Was she on her way to work, bumping Ke\$ha, swerving sleeping bodies on the mean streets of medieval Florence? Jadakiss has never seen the tree, content behind the tinted windows of a speeding Maserati, a pure child-like Jadakiss to himself. Having a Jadakiss is not like having a Maserati. A Maserati is living cryogenics. When you have a Jadakiss you have something beautiful you only see a few times, bury soon after, and mourn your whole life to recover.

The tree is so gross it makes me so happy, like Beatrice made Dante so happy he gave her the name "Happy" in his books. Not Beatrice, though, but the idea of her. She dissolved in a box, prematurely dead *jeune fille*. Dante got married to someone else who he never loved as much as the idealized embodiment of sweetness whose body dissolved in a box. Little B full of charity. He preferred her ghost to pressed wet labia on his tongue. That's where Dante and I disagree I guess. Nothing against charity. Nothing against an epic poem of idealized Christian redemption but (sucking sounds)

I happen to know that Jadakiss agrees with me one thousand percent.

Maybe the fucked up tree on 14<sup>th</sup> Street really can contain everything. Better than allegory, nerves and alms in one trunk. Giving poems to poets who pass by, nervous to tread beneath its leakage. Charity to those who brave the level catabasis of walking near its spray, struggling against business.

Communism is my Jadakiss.

Poetry is my Jadakiss.

A Jadakiss of sudden appearances. The hot tub that just replaced my cubicle when I needed it most.

That's basically the world, right? Politics, art, an object to be beheld by both. Tremors, shrieks, the tree is a nightclub for birds. They scream and grind suck hard pillowy wens of feather necks, flirting seagulls in vulture couture, purpling dimples, gluttonous, moistening, cuckoo with lust for each other and in solidarity around their common need to desperately shit on something, anything!

When you give one structure the capacity to contain the totality of splendid affects you've just written *Paradiso* and there is shit in it squirting out like a squeezed Twinkie, audibly smacking the gross spate of countless stain like kissers in a dark room you're sharing.

Good as all that sounds, I keep my distance. Like Dante, seeing Beatrice on the bridge, fled home to his notebook to terza rima their love and in verse alone fly to the moon or wherever they went. He and his Jadakiss, praying hard on big Florentine rims. In the middle of my life, walking into a grim dark hole. I pluck my Clipper card out from my robes, part fare gates. Thirty stairs below the ground. I wail beneath the bay. When I emerge, there are no trees, just rain in June, the reign of wage, camaraderie's terrestrial inferno. No birds. Just dice. Jadakiss and I, throw them in the sky.

# SARA LARSEN

*from* MERRY HELL

even i            bit the dust   my price is slaughter   hel i o polis

accounts in arrears    debt shells    bone-dead creatures lay out with out cons  
sciousness

on the beach   conchshells    endless strikes   of   light ening            patrimony's digging  
out of  
eye

to approach fear you must go upside-down    sail underside    rounded earth whe re

ocean surges space  
where my bureaucratic purchase of a \$4 latte drops out

    i see the hemoglobin of my dead comrades soft as watermelon

        i see my grandmother unseize    all ropes linked

Aphrodite's seafoam wave    washes up the corpse and decay

---

do n ot    take    any thing    with    to the Hotel de Ville    not knapsack    not bread nor  
money

do not hold the dirt of Sparta    on your feet    dust ash of petroleuse    shake out in  
witness    wherever

    patriarchs gather    Helen-I wash my unsandalled limbs    in the Aegean    black as blood

---

    if you are not cowards    kill me    reap

the replica of city hall destroyed in city hall    o Oakland    i will not be arrested    from this  
bank

---



andwhoismybeloved

my double came to me

in units of men

mohawks of dried  
or gor y  
blood

from the wall Aphrodite

---

riot cops

en route to

TR  
OY

---

who shall wear the shroud not me i'm still on fire embers broken bricks bayonets  
cobblestone streets where all my child wretchedly hungry

hunger is consumed by fear i will never eat again it's obvious you eat e very day ...  
HELens on fire

demoted goddesses us all

as usual

these are the stakes by which we are tied and burned  
petreluese we make  
this city a stake Helen we make this empire a stake resistance arsonist

if i am cruel i al  
so be hurt

all the nameless ones let them be named Helen  
all the nameless cunts let them be named Helen  
all the nameless witches let them be named

and wrap elements in this naming

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“suspended, that’s always been my state” – alice notley

i leave for hell in a boat.

lava luminous sea-water hell    sedition    the furies their tear gas    batons    how many faces smashed  
in    before mine    with that stick

my sisters and i    at Delphi    vow to    the holiness of the hearts affections

what    is    an    autobiography:    me and all the widows    are one    the window of this existence  
dis app ears

for glass is reflective    and i don’t give a fuck for a broken window    but i do for her broken  
face his broken  
thumb    and in paris i continue to be executed for commune    30,000 times    we are  
executed now

feel yourself waiting in line for it    did Aphrodite come and life    paris from death    and why

the goddess knows    not me, a halvesie.

i have 40 cents in my checking account, zero in my savings

honey, lapis lazuli

## EVAN KENNEDY

*from* THE SISSIES

Danger from others provoked  
a change in my internal  
law. I was no flawed creature,  
but the unpersuaded  
sure made their case with  
their brutality.

They tied me to a fence, began  
thrashing the life outta me.

If the meek deserve  
to jubilee, in what bodies  
are we to defend our selves  
and supple registers of  
bonum. It's time to confess I  
was never cruising for  
this bruising but maybe  
just cruising  
toward a rapid intercession  
of effervescent affection  
that could gift a beneficent  
fever among us.

Angels arrived to inhospitality,  
and I hear my body still groan in that aftermath.

Singing on my way back to Assisi *a sissy*,  
I'm thrown into a ditch. It's my  
bitch of a knee *failing me*  
*after so much cycling* that groans as though  
flesh has worthy feeling. These thieves  
think I'm a hellra rich troubadour  
despite my nasal whine  
and valedictory hymn – the one about  
poverty, or maybe I really am  
that bad of a mumbler? Since I'm not  
much of a stumbler, it's a whim  
to be made inert through violence  
*cops not long ago would round up the likes*  
*of me along Market St.* so thanks men  
for making this human a humble and  
stilled thing, alive only unto your forces.  
Earth will be a swallower of your corpses.

For Bruce Boone

Made of dirt am I to know  
what dirt tastes like. While I  
was cycling, the earth and I  
exceeded living bodies' partitions.  
Wishing that the strewn parts of  
you long gone ones  
would reassemble in a gust  
of florescence and soundtracks, I  
promise my legs can brace  
for any supple clamor.  
If the dead all rise age thirty,  
at twenty-nine,  
still ahead is my finest glamour.  
Thus, I became a hammer  
to darkest anti-matter. Thus,  
I became a ticking time bomb  
of kingdom expectation in  
my grey hoodie and sharp teeth.

## LINDSEY BOLDT

### AND A GREAT WHINE WAS HEARD

And a great whine was heard from deep within the empire...

But I don't WANT to contribute to the ever increasing torrent of human suffering and destruction of the planet that has not yet begun to effect me personally except through psychic disturbances that express themselves as night terrors and waves of vertigo in my waking life!

THEN, DON'T. I said.  
STOP.  
JUST STOP IT.

I want you to know that I wrote this poem with a quartz crystal stuck under my tongue, wedged between my cheek and my teeth, inside my vagina, but not too far, under each armpit, held tight between each of my toes in the gauged holes of my lobes, I crushed them with my mortar and pestle and consumed them in all the ways one would do a powder. Everything glittered, more better than glitter. I was micro-derm abraded by precious gems: rubies and emeralds buffed my hide til I shone like something new and archetypal.

I filled all my mother's pretty hankies with snot. It only took two blows to expose the frilly squares as useless accoutrements.

I revealed the cat's wounds and scabs by parting his fur with my fingers, but I did nothing to heal them. I did not take him to the vet though it is my responsibility to care for him in exchange for affection and compliance.

I ate the delicious fatty tuna knowing that with each bite I brought its large and majestic species closer to extinction. The knowledge that the opportunity to dine on this particular fish' flesh might at some point in my own life be no longer available to me due to the fish's extinction made me savor the taste of it even more.

I smiled at each passing black man to let him know that I was not one of the bad ones, though by singling him out I flattened his ability to be particular to me, for us to have an individual encounter. I recognized this early, but continued to perform the same behavior because I worried that if I did not overcompensate for the unease his presence triggered in me by smiling I might perform a worse unconscious move like averting my gaze or swerving away from him ever so slightly as we passed each other. I realized the goal was really indifference, the same indifference or mild dislike I felt for most other passersby.



At the Uniqlo-Target-Urban-American-Forever store I could feel waves of human suffering radiating from the adorable jeggings and tailored button-up shifts I wanted to purchase and wear to show friends and strangers how stylish, sophisticated and modern I am. I slid fabrics between my thumb and forefingers sensing the forcibly sucked earth blood used to create the stretch and flowiness I expect. "Dinosaurs died for you," I said. "flower-print pinifore cardigan romper." Because I will soon be vacationing in hot weather with friends, I selected an armful of bikini tops and bottoms in a range of cuts and patterns and brought them into the dressing room with me where I tried on combinations. I surveyed my image in the mirror and found good and bad things about what I saw. Holding the bathing suit I most admired in my hands, I said aloud, "THIS GARMENT WAS MADE FROM HUMAN SUFFERING."

I could sense the suffering in the fabric as if suffering had a smell as intense as gasoline and the bikini had been soaked in it. It was a smell I could not stop smelling, satisfying in its intensity but fundamentally toxic. I huffed its vibes because I liked the way they made me feel dizzy and momentarily spiritual. I had a conversation with myself about whether or not my desire to look hot and youthful could outweigh the feelings of nausea this suffering saturated bikini inspired in me. "BUT EVERYONE WILL HAVE GOOD BIKINIS AT THE RIVER PARTY," I judged. "I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED AS HAVING A GOOD BIKINI TOO." "I WANT THE PICTURES TAKEN TO REPRESENT ME AS EMITTING A YOUTHFUL JOI DEVIVRE." "MY BREASTS HAVE RARELY IF EVER LOOKED GOOD IN ANYTHING BECAUSE THEY ARE ON THE SMALL SIDE AND THEY LOOK PRETTY GOOD IN THIS HALTER-STYLE BIKINI TOP." I decided to count this as a personal win, a small concession to the machinations of capitalist thrust lurking behind the use value of each and every one of our daily products.

I understood that at best, my poetry hoped to document the lived experience of a specific time and place, within a specific bracket of privilege, inside of an empire whose makeup I did not fully understand.

It said, "YES, I KNEW EVERYTHING WAS FUCKED. I LIVED INSIDE THAT EMPIRE AND BENEFITTED FROM ITS EXCESSES, BUT I DIDN'T LIKE IT." I understood that my poems were written in hopes of getting a pass from the future. "LOOK, I TRIED. I THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT THE RIGHT THING MIGHT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE TO DO, AND SOMETIMES I DID IT AND SOMETIMES I DIDN'T."

In my dream last night, I met a wicca who I hoped would teach me. She led me from the air bnb cabin outside to a wooden deck where she carved a magic circle big enough for one person to sit inside of. I sat outside the circle and we held hands across the circle's boundary. She

showed me how energy worked. I felt excited. We used crystals to manipulate strands of energy. It shot out of my fingertips like I had always wanted it to. I asked if it was okay that I was manipulating energy with my fingers and she told me that it was "Okay for now." The wicca seemed wary of me and asked if I would be able to retain human form while I slept. I transmitted an image to her, one that I had acquired during our brief time of struggle against the drastic and unrelenting forces of the state. I had kept this image buried deep inside my body where I could not access it consciously. It is the thing that causes me to sit upright and cry out from sleep 1-2 nights a week.

We viewed the image together, crisp and clear, burnt into the space between us, and her eyes grew wide with understanding and fear.

"A new baby is rising," she said.

"I know," I told her. "I've seen it. It's really bad."

There was a brief silence in which I looked into her eyes searchingly as our respective lengths of hair spread out from our heads and wavered in aerules of light, crackling with kinetic potential.

"It's twins," she said, dropped my hands and ran away.

Behind me, a chicken with a long, metal beak scratched a sign into the wooden deck.

In the dark, all of it shifting around me, I kept my eyes moving to prevent any one area of the room from taking shape. I flipped mentally through the images of the tarot, looking for one to give me comfort. The witch had run away. I woke my partner and beckoned to the cat. My partner spooned me unquestioningly and the cat lay her paw on my hand and dug her claws in repeatedly in a pulsing rhythm until I fell back asleep, where I went on to dream about our next vacation with friends, a visit to a billionaire's casino in Kansas City where we could sip mojitos in yellow checkered suits and shoot pool among holograms in "The Harlem Room".

## JOHN SAKKIS

*from* MIRROR MAGIC

rappers who "overstand" are in danger  
people who say "next level shit"  
and mean it  
don't forget to VOTE!  
"omnishambles"  
it's so odd, I don't even think of  
Casper Van Dien anymore?  
I miss the simpler days,  
Wu-Tang Clan name generator  
and American Apparel hoodies  
insect epitaphs were very popular  
all [ancient] Greek bogies are female  
I woke up with a clove of garlic in my vagina/  
Brent Cunningham says  
"thank your lucky stars"  
oh whyo whyo whyo, did I ever leave Ohio?  
we celebrate Christmas  
not because of Jesus,  
but because of Washington Irving  
"the almighty dollar"  
TMd Washington Irving  
Washington Irving  
was the first person  
to call NYC "Gotham"...  
the New York Knicks  
are named after Washington Irving  
"I say someone in another time will remember us" —Sappho 68  
"divers," I'll give you a kiss  
"pissour" is my safe word  
I'm going to be a San Franciscan  
moving to Oakland for Halloween  
"The singing is beautiful  
(Elzbieta Towarnicka is the vocalist)  
and Irene Jacob is lovely  
and has very nice breasts"  
however, Invective Poetry  
was not actually expected  
to kill its victims  
going to be that internet commenter  
who tears their hair  
about "cultural appropriation"  
via Halloween costumes  
for Halloween  
"this is going pretty good..."  
"hum baby, it's crooked inning time..."

"Adios Pelota II"  
"help the Feminist Unicorn smash the Patriarchy!"  
the sociological definition of "pizza"  
is disenfranchisement  
vinegar will only dissolve limestone  
I'd rather be driving Rush's 2112  
My other car is RUSH's 2112  
I brake for RUSH's 2112  
He who dies with the most RUSH's 2112 wins  
Honeydew  
Rasputin's Dick,  
Geoduck,  
Albuquerque,  
Chlayms  
Bysshe pleez...  
"...or you don't play skateboard toys"  
yellow denim penis heaven  
"I remember when Temescal was a lake"  
this silverfish...the devil himself  
I hate that I have "flora"  
in my "gut"...  
I was mostly naked this weekend,  
and then intermittent sweaters  
one vote, one facia  
There has never been  
a recorded death  
of a human by a wolf  
NEVER  
sorry folks, no offense intended:  
degustibus non disputandum est...  
The closest this director  
has been to nature  
is Fair Oaks Sacramento!  
I would have rather played Runescape then watch this,  
I could have gotten a drop at the Revenants Dungeon  
I'm so sick of Hollywood demonizing wolves!  
Crispin Glover should play  
Yves Saint Laurent in the biopic  
Bruce Bochy in a 49ers hat  
my girlfriend would rather be driving a GYRO  
going to write a poem about "the body"  
to end all poems about "the body"...  
Todos Somos lamestream media!  
coming at you harder than  
The Last Of The Mohicans theme...  
something about how the word "paprika"  
comes from the Hungarian word "paprika"...

it's hilarious that we all have genitalia  
chimpanzees are always named "Virgil"  
"He thrusts his fists against the posts  
and still insists he sees the ghosts"  
"Oliver Wendell Holmes" is black magic  
"Saudi Arabia To Build Women-Only Industrial City"  
I miss Shelly Long  
in the future everyone will "sparks outrage"...  
It's beer week/ quick  
work up a belly/ bounce  
over my Cherokee/  
rain boots are always good in summer  
stunner/  
stunner/  
stunner/  
he who dies with the most toys  
RAT BONES  
my other car is a SWAMP GAS  
young, white, and famous,  
with money hanging out the anus...  
Lake Merritt is a Whip-poor-will  
whistling The Dove Shack  
the original Greeks were B-Boys  
standing in my B-Boy stance...  
of course we can Corsican...  
Cannonball Adder Snake  
the football season is just 16 games  
and who bit their tongues  
during the 2012 campaign, expect payback  
my atelier was full of sparks outrage this weekend  
my other car is a white girls complaining about white Girls on the internet  
what I'm saying, and what you're not hearing,  
is that this is basically a Mamwich  
your Mom is so fat that she, The X-Files  
honey baked seitan heaven hog on a pancake  
girls be sniffin'...  
I have no sympathy for the devil  
but empathy for the pentagram  
I used to be better at dinosaurs  
prank calls are the new invective poetry,  
not intended to kill  
we went to Calistoga and bought a bear  
quit tuggin' on my ball strings buddy  
you ever had a bottle of Pinot before battle  
the cabin cop a feel/ Never On A Sunday  
the mud monster manacle/ Never On A Sunday  
the margarita take a dip shit/ Never On A Sunday

the backroad Big Bopper/ Cause That's My Day Of Rest  
I ended up on the ceiling again this morning  
Antony and the Johnsons, you're a warble monster  
Gargle spittoon on the gangways  
"Thank You For Your Love" filled me with dread  
Vibrato violence/ make up mooch/ trembling EP epitome  
I don't give a fig about wardrobe,  
Nevada City  
there is no Union Hotel  
which blond ass do you prefer  
a vodka tonic and a burger, Burner's Equinox  
no smoking in this miner's town  
vegan rot gut  
everyone plays guitar  
the screaming meemies gave us the heebie-jeebies  
living ghosts go down the logger's trail  
chewing cud at the crossroads,  
Vanishing Hitchhickers never get where they're going  
re: the Atacama Humanoid  
I kept getting the building code wrong  
A mansion, an entrance way, columns (a la House Of Leaves)

God I hate activists

My back hurts on a tractor

Like when I sing I swallow my pride

This land is not your land,  
it's a friendly urban farm

But by all means  
raise Cain  
and round and round we go

what's wrong with this smoothie?  
did you forget the banana base?

...banana base.

RIP The Wax Museum At Fisherman's Wharf  
I don't truck with experimental fiction  
90's Hip Hop suffered from a serious case of the excessive skits...  
what is that famous Lorraine Niedecker quote?  
"I've never seen a good biopic, condensory..."  
the audacity of hope  
the audacity of calling a razor blade a "Mach 3"  
I'm sick of these Jack Purcell's  
just Gerolsteiner on your back all day  
holy cow, I just spotted a bat in my belfry, NARDS!  
I'm no longer enamored with the black jean

Quickster and calumny  
you son of a gun sad sack  
you cap gun Corona  
get me a girlfriend, go for it  
don't say "done and done"  
for shame fucker  
I hate when my friends say  
"for shame"  
I just noticed I have two gray chest hairs  
fucking kewl  
I'm wearing green underwear  
Mosquito is graffiti  
Abatement  
This Purple Heart,  
my only heart  
is smoked



## JACK FROST

from AMERICAN GOTHIC

“So there is love—and it collapses  
Under the mercy of production  
You stood there—angry and fragile  
Out of childhood fear  
And the Marxists’ failures  
Which is almost the saddest thing you know.”

—Maged Zaher

I.

We seem fit for our throats and their lambency. As any light we manage to mint is roughly *for everyone*; our gestures being individually unsalvageable. In Oakland, the helicopters’ perpetuity is like an ornament, a little ceaseless bell, an ugly cherry on top of everything. Don’t humiliate truth by soaking it in the conspicuous beauty of all these dying materials. I had to tell myself that. But as Enrique says, it’s always there, for the taking, like a plate.

So I don’t get it twisted: all these fucked up little *Goethes* and their parochial ethos, the rouse of which has been clarified through the non-existence of love in acts. We say there is a bouquet of tendencies, being partial but indeterminate. We continue putting everything that moves us into these dumb little vases. We say well who is worth losing. We say the men are always getting better. Against thirst, me and my friends at the vomitorium—much inglorious—its not intoxication so much as the vertigo of being so damn righteous.

No one is unaware of what takes place here, it has no name as yet.

2.

I was talking to J about self-exclusion. At least some legible malaise around the compulsion to circulate as accoutrement through the bonds of cis-men. I called it autonomy, but this was imprecise. I recalled Z's birthday party, the 1<sup>st</sup> one since her transition, when all the femmes and the boys gathered to express their love, it was gushing almost saccharine, but sincere and honorific. Yet, we could not pretend that being a woman with other women—being feminine casually or accidentally, artfully or against one's will—is not some species of tragedy. As all we have is each other, and even that, is thwarted, constantly. That it's so cold and eternal, we barely make irony from the tears of things. We say the only way out is through this. But we also *live* through this.

How often events *congeal into image with no social aggression*. Though all this should be transfigured as *contact* and *endurance*, I will continue to speak of *exile* and *brevity*, those notions that stayed with me when others were lost, until they too take their grease and walk.

3.

When I moved West I was certain of nothing except this acute sense of resilience that had no narrative, and thus was diaphanous, at times teeming, and for a long time, being mystical, I saw only randomness and oblique intervention, the way my mom was always saying, "our time will come" —being the hillbilly prisoners of Appalachia. I cannot remember, I must have made myself forget things. Because I had nothing to say to the men from whom I steadily received letters, men from my years before I left Louisiana, and they wrote to say they were sorry for what they had done to me, but I couldn't remember what they had done to me, and perhaps it was a form of paltry respect for leaving and not regretting, for refusing to say 'so long', for affecting the ability to live and be someone despite. Or perhaps what happened between me and them is a flash I dissolved within the brutal wash of geography—and it is enough to call that Another Life and to make obsolete a memory of enduring there; such that my rage at times shocks me, having blurred becoming this woman.

4.

I tell the anarchists: I want nothing more than to know what you mean by *total freedom*. I don't say freedom anymore; I don't know yet what I'm willing to do for it. I don't know what will happen now. Except that we must change this fear to something else. This conscription to a vocabulary of movements. Squaring belief and experience is the story of my underground. It has been said that Communism will arise from 'an immense fisticuffs,' to which everyone said, thanks, but we already knew that. Some of us women spit blood; picked bone; grew cautious. There is an allegory I call "Proletarians tell Marxist-feminists get out of my struggle-concept you little treacherous bitches." It's always me sitting there, lesbian-resting-face, all caprice, indeed the very image of it, corrupting a pure democracy of opinion among all the educated white people. I know this is poetry, but must we be so unrigorous and lacunary in judgment.

5.

My name is Jacqueline Nicole Frost; I'm twenty-six years old. My mother tells me never to walk alone, anywhere. To never be alone, anywhere. I don't have the heart to tell her that no one on the street could do to me what the men she loves have done to her. M said, when I walk alone I imagine that I'm already dead. I blush because I'm precisely not dead. I said just because you feel detached from us women is no reason to act however you please. I look stupid licking the x's off my eyes—we all do. So in my thoughts I crawl on all fours, lips pursed strangely to not burst into tears—and imagine I can feel that I am living and can make a greater gesture or my spirit can.

6.

Because we were sullen and misapprehended. Because all the rich kids were “engaging in a practice.” Because camaraderie was volatile and at times broken. Because the *stimmung* was better set to trap music. Because the universal mediates truth in the ethical order. Because they tagged FAGS on the house. Because there was nothing left to fissure. Because we were the *cosmopolite anarchiste*. Because ideology is the conversion of something contingent to something necessary. Because her face was swollen shut. Because there was farcical chicanery. Because we became acquainted with the limit of sensible risk a moment discloses. Because the use value of some windows was extinguished, what special dead labor lives there, and this also is love. Because it is not about morality but about life. Because life is the enemy of death and will swallow it. Because I called it metahysterics, or the politics of heroes. Because *it was about a trauma a big trauma a big rupture maybe bigger than all the other things we were doing and that changed us all later*. Because there should be a way out:

*Let those who call for a new language first learn violence.*

## STEVE ORTH

### VARIATIONS ON YES, I CAN RUN FAST

Hey Jamie

Man, I'm doing great. It's autumn now, all dark outside. Which makes me feel fantastic to just sit around at home. Right now, I'm on the couch wearing a coat, cause the window is open. I have to keep it open or the cat (Radio) freaks out and won't shut the fuck up. I think my coat is pretty handsome, so I don't mind so much. On my coffee table is some weed, a deck of Tarot cards, an Underwood typewriter, a copy of Sky Mall magazine, a Kathy Acker book, and a city college catalog. (I'm taking some woodworking classes in the spring. I've been thinking really hard about becoming a carpenter or a furniture maker. But since I have never really done anything like that, I don't even know if I'll like it)

I'm contemplating watching a Kurosawa movie, the problem is that it's 1:30AM.

So about the magazine. Jesus...well, I've been writing a ton. I sort of put together all of my poems to see if I have a book. I did have a book, but a pretty unimpressive book. Pretty forgettable. So, one thing lead to another and now I'm writing the fake memoirs of a fake poet. Which is going great and has been so much fun and irritating to work on. But alas, almost all of the writing in it is still too skeletal. Or maybe it's too junk yard-ish. I'm not sure which.

So I'm trying not to send out work, before it's ready. So I don't know if I really have anything to send.

I guess I have this piece from the book. It's like this: I am editing a poem called Cyborg Legs and I'm working on the last line of the poem, which is "Yes, I can/run fast", I go through a variation of lines to see if something fits better. I do this until the lead on my pencil breaks, and then I decide that the original line is fine. Here's the variations that I came up with this afternoon:

Yes, I can run quickly  
Of course, I can run quickly  
Of course, I'm hella quick  
Of course, I can run fast  
Yes, I'm a very fast runner  
Yes, I run really fast  
Yes, I can run like the wind  
Yes, I run not like wind, as wind  
Yes, I run like a cheetah  
Yes, I move like a cheetah

Yes, I'm quite the cheetah  
Yes, I can sprint rapidly  
Yes, I can sprint at a rapid rate  
Yes, my running is fast  
Of course, I am awfully fast  
Why yes, I'm super fast  
Why yes, I'm the fastest of the fast  
Yes, my running is swift  
Yes, I'm quite the runner  
Yes, I can really dash  
Yes, I can really sprint  
Of course, I can sprint fast  
Yes, I sprint very fast  
Yes, my sprinting is quick  
Yes, I'm so fast, it's world record breaking  
Yes, I can break the sound barrier  
Yes, I can break the sound barrier when I run  
You bet I'm fast  
You bet your bottom dollar I'm fast  
I bet that I'm faster than you  
I bet that I'm faster than anyone  
Yes, I can win any race  
Yes, I can out run a horse  
Yes, I can run like a horse  
Yes, I can run, like at a 1,000 horsepower  
Yes, I do run at a very fast rate.  
Yes, I can totally run  
No, I don't run slow  
No, I don't run slowly  
No, I'm not slow

If you want to print this, then awesome. I guess we can call it Variations on  
Yes, I Can Run Fast.

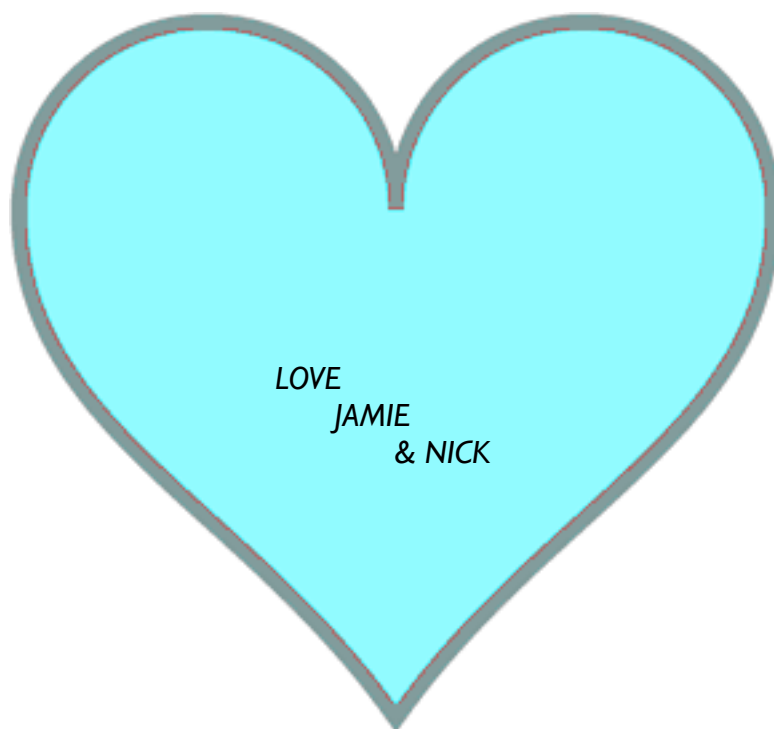
Or you can publish this whole email, unless, I for sure missed the deadline.  
If I did miss the deadline, hit me up for the next issue. Maybe I'll have  
something more substantial.

Hope that everything is great for you.

You are missed in the bay.

XO,  
SO

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