



ELDERLY





END  
CAPITULISM  
NOW



A large crowd of people is gathered, likely at a protest or demonstration. In the foreground, a large American flag is partially visible, with its red and white stripes and blue field with white stars. The crowd is dense, and many people are holding up signs or flags. The overall atmosphere appears to be one of a significant public gathering.

adam j maynard

adam tedesco

alanna kinne

amital stern

andrea reynolds

andrew choate

amie zimmerman

anselm berrigan

avery r young

ben tripp

caconrad


caitlynn liquigan

carrie hunter

charlie newman

chris ashby



An aerial photograph showing a large crowd of people on a city street. In the upper left, a white police van is parked. Several police officers in riot gear are visible, some holding shields. A large group of protesters is gathered in the lower right, some holding signs. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the layout of the street and the positioning of the vehicles and people.

chris hosea  
christina chalmers  
christine kanownik  
chuck stebelton  
clare follmann  
clay ad  
cris cheek  
curtis emery  
cy ozgood  
dan fisher  
dana teen lomax  
danna lomax  
daniel owen  
david greenspan  
david larsen



A large crowd of people is gathered, likely at a protest or demonstration. In the foreground, a large American flag is partially visible, with its stars and stripes. The crowd is dense, and many people are holding signs or banners. The overall atmosphere appears to be one of a significant public gathering.

david spataro

denise dooley

denise newman

diana humble

dm jerman

douglas piccinnini

edric mesmer

elizabeth robinson

elizabeth young

eve prusa

filip marinovich

fred carter

gabriel wallace

isabel balée

ivy johnson



An aerial photograph showing a large crowd of protesters on a city street. Several police officers in riot gear are visible, some holding shields. A white van is parked on the left side of the street. The scene is chaotic, with people running and pushing. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

jacob kahn

james yeary

jamie townsend

jason morris

jeffrey joe nelson

jennifer karmin &

bernadette mayer

jesse fleming

joe hall

joel lewis

john coletti


john courie

jonathan lohr

jonathan skinner

joseph bradshaw



A large crowd of people is gathered at what appears to be a protest or demonstration. In the foreground, a large American flag is partially visible, with its red and white stripes and blue field with white stars. The crowd is dense, with many people standing and some holding signs. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant public gathering.

judah rubin

julian brolaski

julien poirier

kasper klop

kelsa trom

krystal languell

lara durback

laura goldstein

laura moriarty

laura mullen

lauren hunter

laynie browne

leland courie &

amanda courie



An aerial photograph showing a large crowd of people on a city street. A white police van is in the upper left. Several police officers in riot gear are visible, some holding shields. A large American flag is partially visible on the right side of the image. The scene appears to be a protest or a public demonstration.

lina ramona

vitkauskas

lindsey boldt

lourdes figueroa

madeleine braun

madison davis

marina claveria

marina lazzara

mary burger

masha tupitsyn

mc hyland

meg hurtado bloom

micah ballard

michael nicoloff

nicholas deboer



A large crowd of people is gathered, likely at a protest or demonstration. In the foreground, a large American flag is partially visible, with its red and white stripes and blue field with white stars. The crowd is dense, and many people are holding up signs or flags. The overall atmosphere appears to be one of a significant public gathering.

nicholas whittington

noah fields

noah ross

olga mikolaiuna

olivia dawson

orchid tierney

paul druecke

paul ebenkamp

phaedra kaanaana

rachel galperin

rachael guynn wilson

rae armantrout

roberto harrison

robin tremblay-mcgaw

rod roland



An aerial photograph showing a large crowd of protesters on a city street. Several police officers in riot gear are visible, some holding shields. A white van is parked on the left side of the street. The scene is chaotic, with people running and pushing. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

ryan eckes

sara larsen

sara wintz

sarah anne cox

sarah lawson

sarah rosenthal

sarah tavis

seth michelson

simon crafts

stacy blint

stacy szymaszek

stefania gomez

steve benson

steve dickison

steve orth



A large crowd of people is gathered at a protest. A large American flag is being held up in the center of the crowd. The flag's stars and stripes are clearly visible. The crowd is dense, and many people are looking towards the camera. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant public demonstration.

sunnylyn thibodeaux  
sunnyata courie  
tenaya nasser-  
fredrick  
tessa micaela  
travis macdonald  
una lomax-emrick  
vi khi nao  
will alexander  
yarrow yes woods  
yosefa raz  
zack haber



# END CAPITALISM NOW

When, a few years ago, after the 2016 election, we announced an 'everybody-in' issue, we didn't recognize that a second one would need to be created so soon. More often than not, it feels like we are constantly living in an 'emergency issue'.

When we announced the creation of the "End Capitalism Now" issue a few months ago, New York had found itself as the epicenter of the pandemic. We were knee deep in ambulances and sirens all day long. Grocery store trips, where everyone was on guard that someone nearby was sick became routine. Fear started to become more physical. Now, in early July, the entire country is struggling to retake our first steps toward some unseeable horizon.

It's beyond terrifying this life of ours.

In the midst of this struggle we still have each other. This issue reminded us that we are not alone, even when isolated. We are so grateful and humbled by the amount of work we received.

Every person who sent something in is in.

We cannot begin to tell you how lucky we feel to love and be loved by you.

And in that, for us, ending capitalism is a most important goal. As capital mutated into the spectacle, becoming a generative force informing us of who we are in the exchange value of things, we've bathed in it. Our lives have become a mediation of images, far from any form of 'play'. The spectacle is systematic, the old stuffed shirt reappearing, cloak and dagger visions, tops and tails, rotten to it very core.

So, here's the culmination of that call.

The old world is behind us and now we must go.

Let's turn the tables on the old guard. Let's open all the doors.

In all the love that flows from an end to tyranny,

-Nick and Jamie



## ADAM J MAYNARD

### THE END OF CELEBRITY

The trees are sluggish and dozy  
The government have said they're overwhelmed  
Smiling fried eggs, a setting sun  
The happiness of a rainbow

Mixed messages and cavalier attitudes  
A sense of general complacency  
The most obvious thing to campaign for now  
Would be the end of celebrity

Someone rides a bicycle through the trees  
Leaving the cat looking perplexed

Vegetables dance like people possessed  
Everything is free now

The light seems to insist on how wonderful it is  
Famous people wonder around looking confused

People meet in living rooms  
About a sense of government

A giant advert about solidarity  
From purportedly impressive people

Seems a bit niche



## MY PAWS ARE FILTHY

Fractal light in the trees  
Messages from industry chiefs  
Coming through the air  
The colours of action  
On a slow day of confusion  
A bit of cloud and some spots  
Of light rain, gales in the west  
A big green plastic bowl full of pears  
We've been doing our best  
But still there are many grey areas  
A new kind of wind  
Clouds that look  
Like painted clouds  
Or even greyhounds



## SNOOPY

He is under the telephone  
He is omnipresent  
There are pink trees here  
A dog playing a guitar  
The stillness and inherent poetry of a table  
It's raining cherry blossom here  
A duck in a plastic builder's helmet  
Holds a fishing rod  
People exude a kind of beige confidence  
As in the stillness of a table  
The words, 'HAPPY' float past in the air  
Frogs are smoking cigarettes  
And drinking glasses of sherry  
There's a certain tone from government  
We try to understand different people's methods  
But we find it very hard  
And these are long slow days of green  
And precisely raging debate  
The stillness of a table is an illusion  
A discourse among the mountains



## THE BIG SLUR

The wall there as if to instigate conversation  
There's no time scale on this very shy morning  
Interspersed with the angular and complicit rain  
We're thinking about objects suddenly  
Their attributes, even their feelings  
The government always continues  
But we are just being in the cooler air  
Or is television just about watching  
Other people's demeaning experiences?  
The central processing laboratories  
Of what you would normally recommend  
Are no longer even remotely relevant  
The humble cucumber is not perhaps  
The most glamorous of fruits  
But who can say they do not have feelings?  
My son Albert loves them!  
Anyway, so what have you ever done?



## WHERE ARE YOU CALLING FROM?

Mysterious fairy tale houses in the woods  
A vibrating chicken living in Southend  
There's a lot of traffic on social media  
Where are you calling from?  
It looks quite decadent, but really it isn't  
I'm going to make a salad of my dreams  
Then I'll contact Jane on Twitter  
Jack and I have been debating lemons  
And the ill effects of loneliness  
I see a skeleton riding a wasp  
The scent of apple and tangerine fill the air  
The government seeks to close shopping malls  
People are talking about a new kind of reality  
Throughout the evening there will probably be  
Some more substantial showers  
Showers dotted around in some western areas



## PINK RAIN

How is it that this confusion  
Has come about so quickly  
In the timeless beauty of the rain?

The government is launching an app  
Full of uplifting stories  
Concocting new opportunities

Pink rain quietly falls  
On a bowl of digital peaches  
Vibrating and humming

Gentle light comes through  
The trees in the churchyard

If you can't live with yourself  
Then you can't really live with anybody

We will help your spirit fly!

Earlier a colleague spoke  
Of long magical nights  
Effortless in their pink and yellow light  
Of how it's important to put smiles  
On people's faces

To rub the happiness  
All over the customers



## ADAM TEDESCO

### CASHMERE

Distance,

meaning

my mind

on the market

as if

by constellation

stupid or lucid

an invisible hand

behind the For Sale sign

I squeeze a bloodless paste

from the caterpillar's tube



Who's thumb is in your mouth

tugging at the inchoate

war

wrapped in glutinous tongue

of abstraction



Where

metaphysics

of bad vibes

weighs

as much

as terror

as the carceral

logic of empire

as

I sold myself

for what

it took

to sell myself



People wake themselves here

perfectly peeled

personal fruit

tossed at the edge of play

waiting for

the arrival

of conglomerate birds

of game



You can only see

what you believe

only you can see

the difference

a truth and mystical notion

of security

where you put the ratchet

upon me

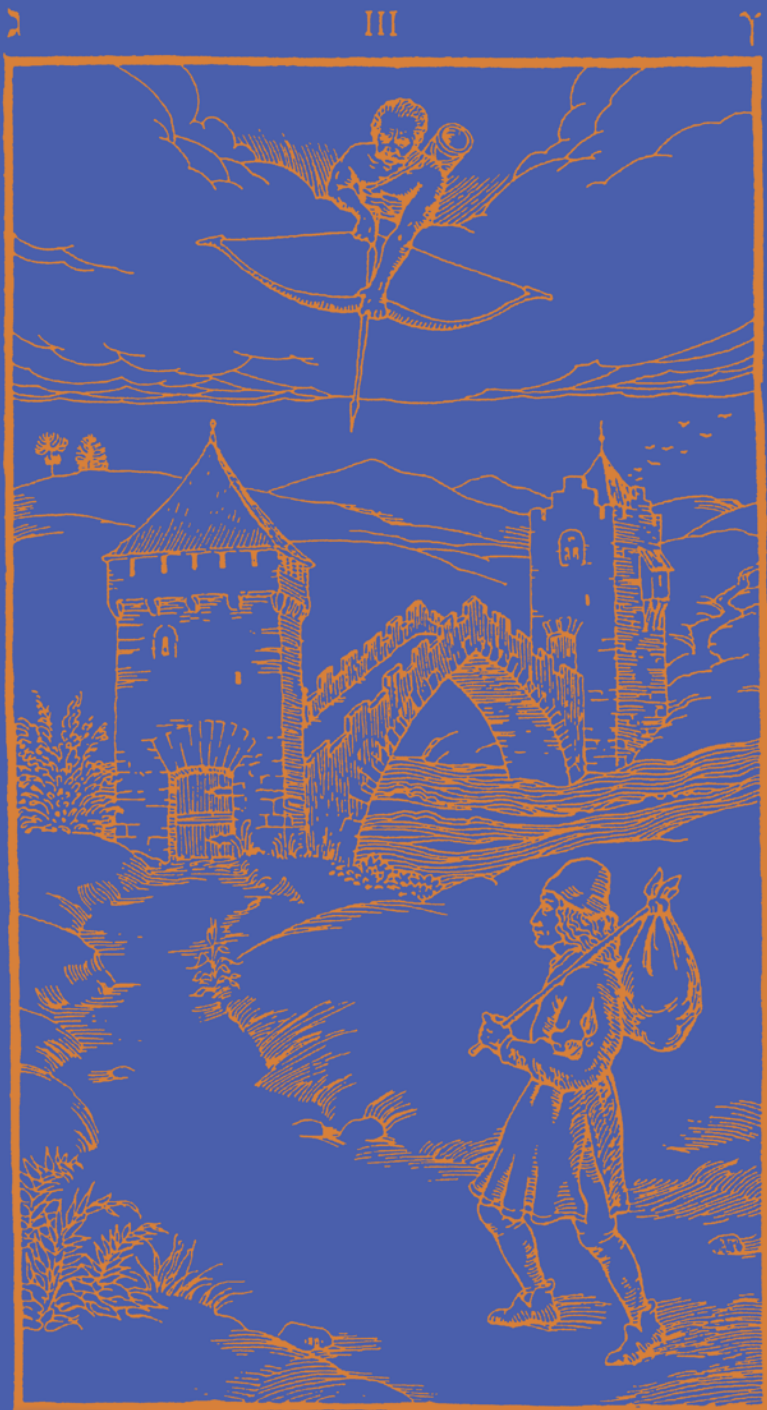
my body

All that matters

is what you want

All that matters is you want





there  
comes a  
time  
when  
silence  
is  
betrayal

## ALANNA KINNE

### AUTOLYSE

maybe it's easier to explain  
if i am flour and water  
instead of  
fresh and bone.  
i can't be skin  
not now  
not ever.  
cover me with a damp towel.  
i can grow there,  
slowly.  
things are rising.  
i feel them wild  
and bubbling.  
it's the time it takes:  
i am becoming.  
i am not patient  
but be patient with me.  
i am the dough  
on the counter.  
look closely.  
i'm hungry,  
i'm hungry,  
i'm so hungry.



## HOW TO BE HUNGRY

soft is a feeling is touch is texture--  
fresh bread, a runny yolk,  
a slightly underbaked cookie,  
mashed potatoes,  
a sun-warm, ripe peach,  
juicy cheeks, delicate yet  
bursting, gooey, suck-your-fingers-clean.

you could be just as delicious  
if you learned how to be hungry  
for yourself.  
the softness of my body  
is the middle brownie.  
the softness of my body  
is her hoodie from the dryer.  
the softness of my body  
is being held, fetal, in tears and stroked.  
the softness of my body  
is a summer day fresh cut grass on my toes.  
the softness of my body is  
thank you thank you thank you  
is in process  
is every untapped joy.

## SPILLED MILK

i think of my wildness,  
the unruly me that is body  
and desire, is lust and the calling  
of me into you, skin on skin.  
how tender i can be.  
how much the wanting eats me alive.  
daily, i feel a tight bud frozen before bloom.  
i feel myself a stirring, teeming restlessness.

tell me i'm milk to dip  
your tongue in to.  
a burnt sugar, thick and dippable.  
i want your taste on my thigh,  
i want to be arched and held in sighing.

and to think you don't know me here,  
the all day in bed, smell like each other.  
how we could tangle and tie ourselves  
into a complicated knot of this feels good.  
we could feel so good...



## WE CAN'T SAVE US

us isn't a cucumber.  
our love cannot be held  
in hot brine of  
vinegar,  
sugar,  
salt,  
cumin seed,  
fennel seed,  
chili flake,  
a clove,  
a bay leaf from Lake Chabot  
cannot save us.  
we aren't so quickly pickled,  
precious and preserved.

we aren't a summer fruit anymore.  
no sun-split hot plum,  
we are not strawberry-mouthed,  
cherry-juice-fingered.

i don't want to be remembered like this,  
a captured jam jar of hurt.

our love isn't the twinkle  
of lightning bug stars  
or humid downpours;  
we are not the sticky tank top  
or heated breath of summer hair  
curling like toes in the back of a Ford truck.

we can't save our love  
for another season.  
we've been in this hurting water  
for so long—the heat of it  
won't seal us in.

our memories just continue to dim  
and wilt.

i want a love that is bursting,  
a sungold sweet, a mottled green pluot  
dripping.  
i want a love that feels like every moment  
is precious.  
that our flesh together is delicious  
and necessary and endless  
like summer days or winter nights.

i want to be held like morels brushed  
with a bristle gently,  
paint the earth from me,  
bathe me in fat and woody herbs.  
i want my skin to be lavender kissed,  
rosemary whispered.  
love could be the smallest squash,  
the brightest sun-captured flesh,  
thickly oiled, maple-syrup covered.  
how love could be caramelized,  
hot and bubbling.

come spring i want a blooming,  
a green and greener still,  
a tender-leafed, soft petal love.  
i want, but not you.  
i want, but not you.  
i want, but not you.



# AMITAL STERN

## EVEN IF THE GATES ARE CLOSED

1.

I can see now that I have always longed to wear a mask.

2.

My uncle does not understand. Why is he still stuck at the rehab center in Williamsburg when we promised him he would be home on the Lower East Side by Passover. I tell him again, from the other side of the planet, about the global pandemic. But to him this is just another excuse and he hangs up.

3.

I cannot write anything new right now, words letters even syllables must have spilled out over the Atlantic during my flight across the world, or maybe they were stolen by the government when it hacked into my phone as soon as I landed WELCOME BACK TO ISRAEL AMITAL STERN ANYONE WHO HAS LANDED FROM ABROAD MUST GO INTO QUARANTINE FOR 14 DAYS ANYONE WHO BREACHES WILL BE PUNISHED THANK YOU THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

4.

My friend calls up to my window from outside and asks me what is that strumming and all my neighbors in the alley can hear when she tells me about her husband's doctor friend in Spain who was sent to treat patients in a far off village for six months, and who is married but has no kids, she says, so it's no big deal, and what is that strumming.

5.

That strumming in the background is A. who joined me here once the 14 days were over and the whole country went into lockdown and he emerged from the wilderness and remembered that I was back.

6.

My neighbors are this middle-aged Dutch couple who live together in one tiny room and spoil the dozen cats who lounge around our alley. The cats don't need me, they blink with disinterest when I pass by in my homemade mask to throw out the garbage, I don't need you either, I hiss back. A. is a scavenger.

7.

He hunts down old Yemenite melodies and poems by Rabbi Shalom Shabazi, a 17<sup>th</sup> century poet whom some call the Shakespeare of Yemen. A. searches for old videos at the National Library which is now closed or on YouTube, recordings of mostly old men singing various versions of these hybrid Hebrew-Arabic-holy-love songs which they carried in their hearts from Yemen to Israel, where their traditions were then squashed, their ancient books rounded up, hoarded in libraries and traded at international collectors markets, and even some of their children stolen by the government and pronounced dead.

8.

There is a street in my neighborhood named after Rabbi Shalom Shabazi. It is 450 meters away, which, these days, with our government-ordained-100-meter-limit from home, makes Shabazi Street almost as far away as America.

9.

These days I can already envision an old-new world order in which I am one of the expendables, sent to front lines, or backs of lines, because I am childless, and I wonder if all the neighbors in our 100-meter-limit can hear, through the window, my stifled rage.

10.

Rabbi Shabazi, scholars say, believed in the power of words to bring about redemption. Some claim that he was also a believer in the self-proclaimed messiah Shabtai Zvi, whom he referred to in poems as “the righteous gazelle”. Sometimes I call A. the Messiah of the Yemenites, and he does not like this. A. scrounges for the songs of his ancestors, collects them, to preserve and to adapt and to redeem. He is singing now in a choked voice so as not to disturb me, he says, even though this damages his throat. He keeps strumming, strumming, strumming on his ukulele. No matter how hard I try to remove all rabbis from my home somehow they always find a way to sneak back in. I pour A. a shot of *arak*.

11.

As far away as America, in the Midwest where I grew up, I would listen over and over to a cassette tape by the Yemenite-Israeli singer Ofra Haza, in which she made *Im Ninalu*, one of Rabbi Shabazi’s poems, world famous. Even if the gates of the rich are closed, the poem says, the gates of heaven will never be closed.

12.

A.’s plastic bags full of clothes and books are scattered all over my floor, his guitar his ukelele his tin drum too. From the market, from the stores still open, some illegally, he brings us cardamom and *hawajj* for coffee and soup and rice noodles and black and green and orange lentils and tries to convince me to expand my diet. I try to get him to make some changes too. To A. I am now the government, the military police, I am the prime minister, the minister of health, I will track his phone, I will lock him down, cover your face, wash your hands, who are you meeting with, ANYONE WHO BREACHES WILL BE PUNISHED.

13.

He stops strumming when he hears me sobbing on the phone. My father has been hospitalized in Baltimore. It’s his heart.



14.

I too wish I could replace what I've lost with old melodies and lines from ancient prayers or love songs in a language I don't understand like Judeo-Arabic. Because I can see now that I have no gospel of light and hope of my own to present to the world at this time. And I can see now that perhaps he and I never made it together because I am not sure that I believe it, that even if the gates of the rich are closed, the gates of heaven will never be closed.

15.

What the fuck are ex boyfriends good for anyway. I'll tell you what. Scrubbing your floor till it shines. Teaching you how to wash your clothes by hand like he does in the wilderness. Calling you every day from Jerusalem January February and half of March while you scamper around New York and Baltimore trying to save loved ones. Will you ever see your mother, your father, your brothers, your uncle again? The gates of the world are closing.

16.

Ex boyfriends are not good for cleaning stovetops. He refuses I refuse. We leave it stained with our coffee, with the spattered remains of his *shakshouka* and *hilbe* dish, with broccoli in coconut milk. When I cry he is the one who holds me, even from halfway across the world. I pour us each two shots of *arak*.

17.

Overt references to Shabtai Tzvi remained absent from Rabbi Shabazi's poems for centuries, scholars say, removed from his canon apparently after 1666, when the righteous gazelle converted to Islam, thus outing himself as a false messiah and devastating followers all over the world.

18.

My father's heart has stabilized. He is released from a hospital in Baltimore and I can breathe again in Jerusalem, for now.

19.

In the otherwise desolate market, a vegetable vendor asks why I have stopped sending my boyfriend to pick up our produce. I tell him the truth, but not the whole truth, that A. returned to the wilderness after they eased the lockdown. It's like the vendor can see right through me even though my face is covered. How could you let him go? At a time like this. If I was your boyfriend, I wouldn't leave you for anything. Not for the wilderness. Not for. If I was your.

20.

My uncle hangs up on me again. No words can console him. Everybody's somebody's false messiah, I guess. I can see that now. But even so, as long as the rage continues to flow blood red, pumping steadily towards me through oceans, through skies, through international gateway exchanges, I know we are still alive.

## ANDREA REYNOLDS

### THE GREY DAYS ARE THE SOFTEST DAYS

there are greys there, six am pink greys, cotton-collared blue greys, and cobblestone grey  
pigeons in cages high up on the fourth and fifth and sixth story floor balconies  
pigeons who talk to pigeons on other floors but never know what the morning bread looks like  
across the way, pigeons who have babies scattered about the alleyways, dodging half-filled  
bicycle wheels and stray pups and the daily shuffle and bustle of human existence  
the softest places are the tucked behind the grime type places, the places of weathered and  
worn walls and thorns bleed the gentle scream of resistance  
the radio always on for comfort, the card table littered with Newport butts, lemons and limes  
with lavender with coffee, the broom always at hand, the doors are left unlocked for the  
expected surprise of company  
teenagers roam like stray dogs, causing chaos to distract themselves from the mundane  
teenagers in their Saturday's best, batting lashes, flirting with bad company to feel a rush  
here, romance is a purple kiss with dusty fingertips reaped from two dollar days; desert storms  
look like love on the sofa (the bed), string lights are a luxury, watching the sky scream and flash  
for entertainment, above the sheets sweaty fingers intertwined with a necessary form of  
dependency  
it's evident, the things that make life go round, turning squares into circles day in and day out,  
the mechanism designed to make one believe a dream is just a dream; bodies: the oil for the  
machine  
evolution has plateaued, starving creativity, enforcing simplicity: a water bottle becomes the  
milk carton, the gasoline can, and the baby bottle, one can play with just a ball and a string,  
nothing's ever half empty, pockets only half full, the eyes have seen enough for one day  
oh there are greys, blunt with force and bright as fury, the kind that makes the earth shake and  
quiver with tears  
people carve arrows onto each other's backs as a sign to remember, remember, remember: we  
will not be tormented by the greed that sends whole city blocks into paranoia,  
control works like a stress fracture on the soul, and as in all environments of discomfort and  
poverty, when the hands are fidgety and sleep comes in waves, floating down the flooded  
barracks of unfulfilled dreams, it isn't possible to climb the hierarchy, isn't possible to imagine  
something to life,  
so humanity does what it's designed to do best: survive

ANDREW CHOATE

BE YOUR VOILÀ

the leaves stuck in my car's windshield wipers look like messages I am excited about  
excited because I know I won't be able to understand them when unfurled  
excitement projected towards future lack of understanding  
extra exciting ununderstanding  
be your voilà



## AMIE ZIMMERMAN

### SIGNAL

Lay close to the sand, the sandstone.        It's the heat you want.

The sovereignty of an RV over not enough pavement, of the large over  
the small is paid time off we're accruing.    I mean  
it's what we deserve.

Rat's nest in the bristle of ingrown scrub pine.        Rats in the trees.

Asking about the burn ban.        The only thing left to do is burn.

Trying to say to my son it gets less lonely as I get older.        I say  
I am more comfortable.    He knows I'm lying.

Even when the Sitka forest goes quiet I am unable to still  
the sounds of my breathing.

Is the blister of guilt additive or explanatory, a space filling with  
moss or rather the appearance of shame.

It is my job to give him time to catch up.

On the one hand, a Steller's Jay's feather is black. On the other  
blue.    Raucous.        Omnivorous.

Compulsive when list-making, I keep tabs on these things.  
Pretending others can't tell I measure reciprocation  
like an embedded signal trigger.

How many times do I have to tell you to stand still.

When they talk about this they will say—        the fires  
started, then didn't stop.



**The love of other living things  
is somewhere in me.**

ANSELM BERRIGAN

PLANET TERROR



quarantine splatter

the mirror moved to dream

unfortunately I wrote that

go-go crying

in heavy simulation mode  
(always ....)

deceptive floaters  
puckled balls  
(mattered)

don't just cherry  
(never - actually -  
said that)

we eat brains  
but we don't gain  
yr knowledge

↙  
what's problematic  
is total global  
pandemic  
(not what  
you want)

when my mouth  
detaches from  
brain, delays  
erase + enervate

someone else  
is here

choking on the  
premises  
of future  
food

you ever become  
that fancy  
goal doctor?

I think you're funny

a missing leg  
that's now  
missing

lavender drive  
tricks rhythm

thy donut  
seagull  
the point

bridge rhymes  
with sanity  
& its stinkfield  
destiny

only the trenches  
are relaxing

upend in the  
only real mail  
I can get right  
now

you're on the manifest  
chowtime chowtime  
my cousin has a drone  
gilder than this

mandatory masque Friday

rumor of  
freedomth  
undermine  
the  
estrangements

framewaves  
from yesterday's  
contaminations

the de-extinct  
creatures require  
our absence

so long <sup>as</sup> we  
bitch critique  
into our success  
blue is alive

as expectation facilitator  
go, the dinosaurs role  
function is to manipulate  
your character

Times are dangerous!

you might wake up

into on-going danger!

+ be surrounded by people

whom been going through that

longer than you've had a thought

hey, myself

may your imitation

never reach

as you keep trying

to make yourself

possible



## AVERY R YOUNG

### A DAY AFTER JUNETEENTH

*or its all about the Jackson(s), baby  
or a dub or a double sawbuck  
in Ukranian Village, Chicago, IL*

*& in other new(s):*

a **WHITE** woman put \$20 on a \$150 tab & with a red faced Erica Kane cry shaking her finger with one hand & raising her power fist with the other she said, *NOW, YOU STAY SAFE!* this gesture came **after** she had offered drinks by asking *IF YOU WERE TO DO A SHOT, WHAT SHOT WOULD YOU SHOOT?* i was a bit taken aback from her wording but nevertheless i declined (cause i dont drink) & when the two deacons with me did the same, she went, *WELL I TRIED!* so, i have been pondering both her gestures (the offering of the drinks & her \$20 coupon) & i have also been pondering her choice of words *WHAT SHOT WOULD YOU SHOOT? WELL I TRIED! & NOW, YOU STAY SAFE!* i have been pondering her red face & stream of tears the wagging finger the power fist & in the midst of her performance, her friend (pulling her by the arm to their car) wished us well & said to us *I'M JUST GONNA GO HOME & GET MORE DRUNK* i been thinking about how i rocks with her friend's pledge to more drunkenness **more** than i rocks with her guilt/generosity/gesture & i've been wondering why is that so i mean, in all fairness, my discernment read her heart was leading her & maybe three blk men deciding on what fancy \$30 dollar 12-inch pizza to order, triggered flashes of all the strange fruit swinging in her memory yet still ... i wanted to tell her that \$20 hooch & a white woman stopped a many blk man's breathing. i wanted to cry i wanted to tell her *HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU \$20 TO KEEP YOU FROM CALLING POLICE & BOLD FACE LYING ABOUT BEING ATTACKED BY A BLACK MAN!* i wanted to tell **her** to *STAY SAFE!* & really mean it instead, while still breathing, i nodded said *THANK YOU*

punking myself into not smiling

SO SAY(S) DE BLK CREATIVE TO DE BLK CAPITALIS(T)

*inside a jook-joint fulla company      wif wallah-melon  
& collard green(s) on all de table(s)*

I

rather not be ofay  
in bronze(d) skin

luv(r)    dontchu see

when green de mos(t) important  
color    too much blk red & bone  
get puree(d)  
onto wall

in deez street(s)      erybody ballin  
                                 on dey burfday  
                                 til dey aint got one  
                                 lef(t)    be so basic

2

i can be an undertaker  
if i wanna make money    luv(r)

ery body gotta an expiration date  
pressin de air out dey collar

3

god-daddy J.B. said  
*You can't be greedy ...*

*You gotta take some  
and leave some ...*

cause [[[ in my James Baldwin voice ]]]  
i say    *There's has to be more to life  
than IBM machines and Cadillacs!*

luv(r)

nothin **WHITE** men acquire mo(re) magic  
den my walk on wattah or flip  
of ink inside dis kennel  
wherr it be teef & bark  
focuss(d) on rippin my bread-make(r)  
to crumb(s)

4

rather not be chocolate cover(d) oppressor  
countin king &/or tubman face(d) currency

rather eat den gorge luv(r) dis spat  
aint gotta split us in two

we bofe have hand(s)  
dat break & build



## AN OPPOSITE SIDE(S) OF TOWN

*or a poem I am tired of writin*  
*after Tonika Johnson's **Folded Map Project***

deez chirrun in dis skool got ol(d) book(s)	Took all the donation money and built a new auditorium.
& new police officer(s) to shoo dem home	Swarmed the admin office with demands for new iPads.
befo(re) bullet(s) made dem a face(is) fo(r) a mural	Took the two students too many out of art and biology
of angel(s) wadin roun(d) bouquet(s) & balloon(s) & field	after recess. And placed them in last period gym with Coach Z and told them their imaginations are as wide as this new track.

BEN TRIPP

1/4/20

actually unworried

when is a name not clean

I hope it's just because

Is this the start of a brand-

new end

that is used to justify

open means

Or the end of the old

start

fringe volatility  
expression factory

is that what is called  
"a frontier" ? My 10 o'clock  
check's in the mail today

we have gone through  
the ceremony of interrogations  
convenience as rule

someone does read  
and act polite  
take care of yourself & audition





3/2/20

When you wake up in the morning  
where are you  
in your bed  
what are you going to do  
immediately getting out of it or  
something else, I dunno  
if you have the time to  
be there for a while  
still  
I'm someone the same  
I just wanted to ask

who else might be around

together with the raw chances

3/13/20

What happened  
to radiant compassion

Spring bird on the fire escape  
just out the other side of  
my kitchen window  
et moi, c'est moi

This month

who can ever suspend the post

who has the power  
I didn't know I had

someone else

first confirmed, last to respond

elect-ricity

just now salts the wound

answer group

waiting to mask

here I can be my own

days behind ventilated

I can't believe I saw a plane

andromeda

noon will be gone

cut short

re-book

Blasphemous mention

Like everything

even your ideas

Like your shirts

you must change them

every day to be clean

Advertising all caught-up

unless you change your path

"God is content," the devil  
follows form

how eventually

self-fulfilling hesitation

The sign of its birth

There's a cockroach in the clock  
Dad says, "Just try."

No fact hygiene  
no media quarantine  
against  
the siege mentality







[suspenseful music]

CACONRAD

CORONA DAZE 15

if we are to dream anything  
during this plague  
let us please  
consider  
the things  
we do not want  
to return to normal

## CORONA DAZE 21

the virus has  
infiltrated every  
part of the United States  
poor people still have to take  
a bus for miles to reach groceries  
empty hotel rooms and casinos  
surround homeless people  
sleeping together  
in a parking lot  
in Las Vegas  
rich men  
making  
state  
governors  
bit and compete  
for life saving equipment  
while doctors and nurses risk everything they have  
who are these men show us their goddamned faces  
the president refuses to call off his ICE militia  
prisoners on hunger strike to prove  
their bodies have limited and needs  
someone on the news just called  
the virus dangerous  
as though this  
violent empire  
was ever safe

## CORONA DAZE 24

for years after  
friends died of  
AIDS they still  
danced with me in my dreams  
did survivors of the Black Plague  
dance with their dead  
who will dance  
with whom  
in a year  
let's  
keep  
safe  
dance  
together  
IN PERSON



CORONA DAZE 25

pastor says the virus is a  
punishment for gay rights  
my email thanked him  
for reminding me  
how powerful  
we queers are  
wielding plagues  
with style and grace  
Dear Reverend your violent  
ignorance is the virus  
I point my finger  
at and say aloud  
*Go Get Him Devil*

CORONA DAZE 29

I held my breath often  
last week trying to get  
a relative out of jail in  
another state before  
the virus made its  
way down the  
jailhouse hallway  
we were lucky we  
were very lucky getting  
her out in time but not  
everyone is lucky in America TONIGHT  
cousins fathers sisters  
held behind bars as though  
everyone deserves the death penalty  
the largest population of prisoners  
in the world while disease grips  
the lungs LET THEM OUT NOW  
MAY THE WORLD NEVER  
FORGIVE THIS NATION  
FOR THE HORRORS  
THAT PROVE  
CAPITALISM  
KILLS AND  
KNOWS  
LITTLE  
ELSE

## CORONA DAZE 30

(overheard from a man on his phone in the car  
next to mine waiting for a grocery pickup)  
DUDE THE FUCKING GYM IS STILL CLOSED  
IT'S FUCKING CRAZY I NEED TO WORKOUT  
5 DAYS A WEEK YEAH YEAH YEAH YOU TOO  
THEY SHOULD OPEN IT UP FOR SERIOUS DUDES  
LIKE US YOU KNOW EVERYONE ELSE CAN DO  
THEIR PILATES AT HOME AND ZUMBA AND ALL  
THAT STUPID SHIT THEY DO BUT DUDE WE NEED  
WEIGHT MACHINES WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT WHO  
WE ARE WE HAVE TO GET LIFTING AGAIN RIGHT?  
RIGHT? RIGHT? AM I SUPPOSED TO BENCH PRESS  
MY DOG WHAT THE FUCK DUDE IT'S CRAZY TIMES

CORONA DAZE 35

I AM GOING to vote for Joe Biden  
but I WILL NOT do it quietly  
it is Weakness asking us to  
choose between two rapists  
which means no matter  
who wins women lose  
courage had a leak no  
one bothered to fix



CORONA DAZE 36

"economic casualties"

"ailing corporations"

things reporters say in the USA

Money and its

Masters dominate

the language

first evidence

of power we

continue to

allow them

CORONA DAZE 39

okay  
I will  
sing  
out  
the  
window  
with you  
if we promise  
to do it the rest of our lives

CORONA DAZE 41

no one needs to explain  
we have reached a place  
without comparison  
there is no louder  
siren than the one  
outside the door  
we are late  
to need  
no denying it  
but are we ready for a  
world without presidents  
a day without Caligula swagger  
are we ready to make a freak show  
of our hearts say yes just say yes  
God came down  
to walk among  
Herself *living*  
*imagined*  
*beauty*  
*begins*  
*now*  
She  
says

CORONA DAZE 50

my cousin  
got jumpy  
working at the  
slaughterhouse  
he could not locate  
his strength in the dark  
stopping the hearts of  
animals for pleasure  
some disguise as  
survival we now  
need to protect  
these workers  
PLEASE stop  
eating flesh  
PLEASE let  
the blood  
stay home



CORONA DAZE 51

last year in a  
grocery store  
in Indiana I met  
a family with a  
doomsday bunker  
the daughter is also a poet  
*poet like a rock* I said  
*you mean unmovable?*  
*yes until it is time to*  
*smash the empire*  
her smile electrified  
a future poetry  
I am excited  
to live  
to see

DRIVE THE  
COP OUT OF  
YOUR HEAD



## CAITLYNN LIQUIGAN

The world is quiet. In a world so quiet my mind  
can't help but be racing in all directions at  
100mph. It's dawned on me that a new beginning  
is entering my cycle of life. An upcoming change.  
A rebirth if you must. It's truly beautiful to me, the  
way I can sense the shift in energy around me. In a  
way, I am excited to embrace this new change I  
will endure. But part of me is having trouble  
coming to terms with the fact that I must let a lot go.

## CARRIE HUNTER

### PRIMNESS OF OUTLINE

The future's innuendo futile because itself's self is choiceless.  
A list of choices during indecision.  
Choices, the team colors; little vs small.

*Polite savage with an easy manner.*

Translation as a binary, and we understand  
binaries as missing so much on the outside,  
in between. A nonbinary translation  
would be slightly outside of understanding.

*The Audubon sequence.*

Does the wick always have to be a candle,  
time's representation? We are still in this place  
of entering a threshold, or maybe we're just looking at it.

Standing, contemplation, the "primness of outline,"  
a testimonial, time addressing itself next to you.  
One's self becoming a metaphor for transportational  
devices. A terminus.

How do "people" arrive inside the narration,  
inside our narrator? As if this self is devoid of personhood  
and is only some sort of technological device  
that evolved to help others arrive/switch directions.

Being neutrally helpful.

Everyone who arrives, gives up.  
When the narrator switches identities, we imagine  
it might be momentary, but maybe its forever.  
Me, I, no one, no one, you. The narrator as ego.

*But the land can't write.*

That moment when first person slyly becomes second.  
The I becomes a you who wonders about one's dream.

There is a wind, a platform, and pigeons, but the metaphor  
might be so deep now that there is no hope or possibility of the literal.  
I think it's so wild to have two unnamed narrators in one poem.



## LESS HYGIENE, BUT MORE SPIRIT

A new introduction, although everything  
's been introduced already.  
Incidental gentlemen of impartiality.  
A list of singularities you don't believe in.

*But the contaminated area is where we live.*

Laws for swans.  
This section is written in a persona.  
Coming to understand the context you're living in,  
and then suddenly it changes.

Less aware of the other chair,  
and how close or far away  
from despair you are.

In the morning, waiting for an introduction  
that is an extrication. Circumstances  
as a form of slough.

A list of things that are one thing, but that are also a set.  
Then a list of things that are one thing, but singular.  
A "craft" or a "bourne."

The aesthetic experience of being with friends,  
losing everything that feels like joy in my cells,  
to be replaced with vague aesthetic pleasure.

The spot, where we live, to avoid, of contamination.

A list of things or people or consciousnesses  
that could have "bluster."

[Cute barista: Grey long-sleeved shirt  
under black and white horizontal striped  
short-sleeved shirt tucked into jeans with a belt,  
tapered frayed legs and ankle boots.]

A pronoun that replaces a situation.

Turning away from delusion.  
Some connections are just a moment of looking up.  
Taste of poppadum still in my mouth.

*The repeating red X. Marthe's red X.*

Not knowing whose house you're staying at.  
List of conversations that you wish you didn't have to hear.  
The plot marginal to the explanation of it.

Rhianna and Drake vs Gordon Comstock  
Work, work, work, work, work, work //  
Money, money, all is money!

#### NOTES:

Italicized lines are from or inspired by Marthe Reed's posthumously published "Ark Hive."  
Lines in quotes are taken from John Ashbery's "Flowchart."  
Lines that are both italicized and in quotes are also from John Ashbery's "Flowchart," but italicized in his text.

# CHARLIE NEWMAN

## JOBBED

I get on the bus and close my eyes.  
    "I can't cut it," I think.  
    "I'm just not doing it."  
        Whatever "it" is.  
The workday goes on. And on. And on.  
I might as well be mopping floors in a gilded tourist spa in Greece,  
or washing dishes in a greasy spoon in Toad Suck Ferry, Arkansas.  
    Small advances. Holding place. Unrecognized retreats.  
        Hours slip into lifetimes.  
    Delays pile up like unanswered invitations.  
Cigarette breaks follow one another ad infinitum  
    silhouetted against stained granite  
        as far as the eye can see.  
A good-for-nothing lifetime  
    of good-for-nothing years  
    of good-for-nothing months  
    of good-for-nothing weeks  
    of good-for-nothing days  
    of good-for-nothing hours  
    of good-for-nothing minutes  
    of good-for-nothing seconds  
    of good-for-nothing work.  
Opportunity? What opportunity?  
Look up to where the work is done behind desks and under tables.  
    If you're there,  
        among the tidy,  
generating digital paperwork no one will read  
    except for your initials on the bottom  
success and failure fall into place behind cul de sac smiles.  
    "All honest work is noble," goes the cliché.  
But should we be grateful for every indignity  
    suffered in the name of earning?  
        Yes,  
        there is meat on my plate.  
I just don't have the teeth to chew it.

JOBBED

GET ON THE BUS & CLOSE MY EYES  
I CAN'T CUT

THINK  
DOWN JUST NOT

WHAT EVER

THE WORK DAY GOES ON & ON & ON

RIGHT AS WELL BE HOP  
FLOORS  
A

TOO ST SPA  
WASH DSHES GREECE OR

A GREASY SPOON  
TOADSOCK FERRY ARKANSAS HOURS

SLIP TO A GOOD FOR NO

THING  
TIME  
THING YEARS OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING MONTHS OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING WEEKS OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING DAYS OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING HOURS OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING MINUTES OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING SECONDS OF GOOD FOR NO  
THING WORK

OPPORTUNITY?  
OPPORTUNITY?

LOOKUP TO WHERE THE WORK  
DONE BE  
DESKS & UNDER TABLES  
IF YOU'RE THERE AMONG THE

GENERATION  
DON'T READ PAPER WORK NO ONE  
INITIALS ON THE HOT TOM YOUR SUCCESS &  
FAILURE FALL

TO PLACE BE  
HND COULD BE SAC  
SMILES IALL HONEST WORK  
S NOBLE GOES THE

Cliche BUT SHOULD WE BE GRATEFUL FOR EVERY

DIGNITY SUFFERED  
EARNINGS? THE YES NAME OF  
S MEAT THERE  
T JUST DON'T HAVE THE TEETH TO CHEW

CHRIS ASHBY

**M**ANGANESE  
*from* THE INVISIBLE

As the atomic number goes up,  
the number of protons in the nucleus increases correspondingly.  
Nothing is known  
beyond an element with 118,  
but this is not to say  
there is nothing else.

Before this correspondence, fire was believed an element, and for some still is—one of the forces  
of nature. Oxygen is consumed and carbon is left. A force it is, but nature is more basic. As a  
house burns and the possessions within it, what is there to toil about? A wall goes up, and the  
wind goes away. We are inside. And even then we are still exposed to the elements.

For this reason,  
there are limits to what can be known about an object,  
**M**anganese corrodes in moist air,  
best instead added to steel,  
ideal for rifle barrels, bank vaults,  
and earth moving equipment.

Singularity in all forms continues to be argued against,  
a mistaken take on “a knowing position,”  
as in—was there “nothing” before “something?”  
like a privilege,  
the speaker is important,  
it happened only once,  
this *big bang*,  
particularly for those arguing against great authors.

The singular may be the most representative of these,  
like an armed rancher claiming the land should be given back in Eastern Oregon  
to whom it belongs—other white ranchers with guns,  
to whom it has *always* belonged in their minds,  
**M**anganese held near their waists and on their backs,  
a show of seriousness, of solidarity, of wasted ideals,  
even though what’s really serious is how little history they know.

Oh,  
but it, not knowing  
may actually have meaning,  
though the more one reads, the less plausible the singular seems,  
and yet, the more plausible as well,  
like knowing the feeling of life,  
but looking forward to its absence,



so that the loss of ideals  
removed from emotion can be felt,  
as in the creation of what is known  
of the known universe,  
there are still times  
when what something means to an individual  
is all that is left.

For me this is in the cellphone snapshot of my dog Melville  
the day we brought him home,  
his paws outstretched beneath his malleable snout,  
growing even as the picture was being taken.

Other times it's hard to be honest with friends,  
to call, or send a line,  
kind of embarrassed that the sentiment won't be reciprocated at all—  
like "hey, I'd really like to see you and *just hang out.*"

In this January I can't help but feel like it's May, or June, or July, or August,  
daydreaming of a summer eight years ago,  
and being kind of like, "yeah  
that's a long time ago to be reminiscing about,"  
even to say out loud to myself,  
to still think about,  
even if it's just the warmth I'm missing, you know,  
or human company, the anticipation of physical contact.

And still, those fucking ranchers are on the Malheur  
with their **M**anganese at their waist  
like an ignorant cock  
not sure who it's fucking,  
just confident it's fucking someone.  
It's because of times I feel like I do right now,  
mildly lonely and thinking about being at the ocean with a friend,  
that I still write poetry, wondering,  
how the ranchers think giving the land "back" to white ranchers is actually *giving*.  
A tribal spokesperson from the Paiute was asked what was thought of this,  
the gist being,  
they're not giving anything "back,"  
these guys are just standard American assholes.  
Probably, I think,  
or maybe they're just misguided,  
like a missile or an airplane  
or any other elementally composed explosive symbol  
that wreaks destruction  
only to be glossed over because it's too painful to talk about.

The forest falls apart, the desert cracks, and the city with it. I read a dumb novel and eat ice cream. Melville chews on a bully stick then falls asleep. There are white lights around the windows. Holidays still continuing. I tell myself I can't lie to my friends, and I don't know what I mean. It's nice to realize that I don't always want to be nice, sometimes I just want to be free. A few months ago this meant staying up late and watching *True Detective* discontented with a cold shoulder from a fellow poet. Yesterday it meant taking Melville on a walk and singing to him. Last night it meant playing guitar for twenty minutes. Today it means no apologies. I keep thinking about writing letters. To friends, like, what do you think about this? And could *this* be a book, *this love* I'm writing to you through anger about white ranchers threatening everything I care about? Fuck their big coats and fuck their rifles and fuck them for trying to *take back* indigenous land. Let's give all the land back to the respective tribes and simultaneously take every single white occupier's guns. If you believe in the wildly misinterpreted second amendment written in the late 1700's, you should at least know white people didn't take *this* particular indigenous land away from its rightful owners until after that. Is this too simple? And could *this* be a book you let me borrow last summer? But really, I don't want to talk about the book, I want to walk along the river and ask what you think of *this love* and of the brambles to our left, of the concrete falling in below the condos in NW Portland, of the homeless living on these banks in the superfund, and whether you really love the environment enough to get in this river, this toxic, wonderful, **Manganese** saturated river.

## CHRIS HOSEA

### MAKE RIOT

At peace-spackled noon  
willows wave at Prague and

ignite a touch, let folded notes wiggle, while at  
a distance an associate opens volumes.

Only dust distorts the mirrored busts.  
We see the long day reverse the charges.

We see bathers' lips break sunsets,  
wary of luxury hideouts.

Point wrong words right.  
You spray fruits, they seem riper.

The audience buys beachfront,  
a catastrophe for us as laid out.

A camo backpack is kicked with dumb force  
And your touch believing my hand

in a night where the black veil is snatched  
makes all policies preserve the word death

and sour and salty rods be soak in oil  
and pills for days confused.

I saw you recently talk warmly  
as on plate glass gold daggers blew

as in another window a pop bottle turned  
upon an electrified platter,

and you further sift signs  
stir the waist-pocket sweepings.

When the wind lofts a scrunched receipt  
above a softball fence

I would make my face mimic a prune  
and dig out a bowl-like bell

now ringing now dinging  
spring calendars of empty cells.



you can no longer sleep  
quietly once you've  
suddenly opened your eyes

## CHRISTINA CHALMERS

### AS GRAVITY IN THE GRAVE STAGE

Woe that worked  
Unreturning  
I don't live  
let myself live  
lend myself a hand  
to climb up the stile  
to the imminent forewarning  
believing the secret I tell you  
on the map of the past's weak dust carpet  
maggot-shadow allergenic prole complaint where asthma is a metonym for a  
species clairvoyant despositing flesh into each other's bodies  
distribution of hollowness struck formal by the grey swathe  
tornado space-time in a house of the mice to  
turn each other into swaying aides for company and solitude  
and warning, distributes, resists, disclaims.  
This would be a past, moving backwards, and knows  
the meaning of death in small vehiculars.  
Don't move on if you won't let the life-death  
unburden years of waste the particle nebulae  
willing carbon spinning to the tune of  
compassion the wastes of asteroid emission I  
am made of & form other people to the horizon  
of their living, though I never reached them  
in a discoball atmosphere. Passed up,  
what is not immune gives me less than the love  
that I will not fall for, pathogen pathogen, psycho-pathological  
soul shame in the secret part that's nothing to give in, from an  
empty store-stomach sore prison past my repetitious  
clamour in the bounded nice noose-private the boot  
the teenager soldered into and then so honestly  
comes out of as the 20s roll steamingly and singularly  
by. I spend the last of my 20s in a cupboard  
and hover my eyes around the lens



Lend me, hover me up  
Lend me, love me upper  
giving past to be proud of slick loving and  
holiday Croatia with girlfriends  
the people wield cocktails and cycle to Epping forest  
go to LA in a heart-van and then leave  
each other out of the leftover party-mania  
in the sparseness of the desert independence  
dread dream doozy. I fall floozy  
I burn myself in stupid blonde storm  
but hate excoriation no one likes  
girl-to-communist demure single  
head-to-foot my Althusser gathering  
dust is all the past's skin stuck on a  
disinfected sponge I inject with hope-  
fulness being nothing more than  
total. Holiday is shimmer-hunger for favour  
of a socialising magnificence denied  
in the torn-down worker's canteen in Red  
Vienna. Horizon of lovelessness in a villa  
by the scroll whose madness whole & amber-burned  
as I savour unreturning eyes into a wall-haul  
I eat bland pasta out of a bowl  
I eat food in a room alone  
cook summery player  
conjure enviables to strike a  
pass at preparation as  
I fold my bras and wash  
them. Very slow. I just  
    know the inexperience of  
trueness, as impertinent  
and wanting as a child  
I sneeze breezily germinating the inside

expulsion of the temporary  
want I began with, came back, of the  
mother-meteorite to paper  
down the animal arachnid  
bites the must and smells  
dusted moist blanket microscopically  
sways for the fugitive gust. O  
troposphere billow down to trawl  
me up and send my disgust heightways  
transcendent yes I'm wearing out if you  
don't, in the linear shuffle of entropic  
joint bluster in the undoing, un-to-be-done  
flesh to droop and fail to live by form  
or mental dismemberment losing thoughts apace.  
In the crab-time I'm in the middle of space.

as gravity  
in the grave stage  
I wait for the moment of  
star coalescence  
(this would be)

oh, to yourself go down,  
don't let me in

like flames  
in the burn water  
I wait for the moment  
of your overhaul

so to yourself go down,  
and let me in

I dare not seek relief from dreams that tell me  
nothing to suspect awaits  
you go down to please release  
the wind is rushing in, I summon  
madrigal terror and lime my fruits  
having a chorus wind its strokes  
into my tastebud sips, synaesthetic  
salt magnets reversible and –  
we walk around with forms  
in the furtive streets  
where the cops are atavistic  
that is their mode of breath  
*where is the present*, someone  
asks, we would like to be  
in the atmosphere and up we go  
you go down to yourself  
and don't let me in  
to the house, my feeling  
like a democracy mourned  
and melts, I sup salivation  
itself in the barn of calf mobility  
in the dusty highness of the air  
you sit above like an imago  
o salvo to similars salvation  
catch zeppelin tourism  
real hunger in my heart  
for the above cloud of  
moisture there is a film on,  
on beauty before the dimness  
of everything cross-scopes into  
explosion, nothing left.  
private shore larval shine  
and the sun goes down behind  
the bay, we watch over like

a hawk on high (as if we could  
be) a vehement bullet shooting  
from the sky into its refusal  
total supposition  
in the eyes



## CHRISTINE KANOWNIK

### THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT *from Sarah Kendzior*

for decades, an underground fire  
burns, a lowering, a warning  
a shock to the waters  
who is in charge here  
final days of battling ghosts  
deleted data, gutted, surrendered  
dead expectations  
the pit, denied captives  
gutted, few want to visit  
all you can raise up there is hell  
embrace the line  
lie, limitless, lay down  
quite literally billions  
rot forever wars and hell  
new forms of repeal, tawdry  
sympathetic, validation, humiliate  
junk bond emotions, smug, bombing  
trust, relentlessly unsentimental  
disturbing live humanity  
dangerous, lurid, birthing, ceaseless  
pursuit, profit, neophyte, Jane Doe  
perfect, perfect sex life  
scientists, ruddy, round shouldered  
nothing in his hands  
several parties held, 71st Street, legally incapable  
promises of money, exhibits B, a lot of women  
a lot of fun, no doubt about it

## CHUCK STEBELTON

I turned on all the waterworks.  
I took the blackout upon myself.  
I went in on the program.  
Erasure, praxis. Gnosis, eschaton.  
The polis, plein air. Ekphrasis.  
I subscribed. In these conventions  
I only promoted another's idea.  
Please quit selling blackout.  
Please stop leasing plein air.

a bald faced commiseration	All is litany. Most is loss Overheard at the opening so peripheral like sinking into the crowd
in answer in hard hatted non-response	name them          in our hard heads
We called off the gathering	had a mishap. The misses happened to begin.
Apple core in the roadkill's eye Eye full of belly full, no Mowing begins here	Opossum, or possums No smell Little triangle face skunk.
Around the river, Jordan Litany almost lost	Of Rick, in the green wood Black dog cento  Black, black, black dog

we are  
writing  
where no  
time  
is spent

we are spit

this

old  
block  
of poetry

Σ

I

α



# CLARE FOLLMANN

## RITUAL // ROUTINE

For Melete, for Ananke and Lethe. For new practices. Against routine.

Coming into play these days is the art of undoing and remaking routine. We are lost in the madness of uncertainty, of systemic and structural collapses, both within and without. We are without our routines to which we'd affix without thought, routines that were taken for granted.

And we are now finding ourselves making, mixing, and trying-on brand new routines, as each new day brings to light another endless stream of unknowns.

It's uncomfortable, uncertain. And, look! It's scary! The world's all topsy-turvy! Things that were before are not!

There is pleasure and delight in well-known routines. There is deep comfort in an old habit. We can feel an internal push against alterations, a rejection of changes. It is uncomfortable to step off your own well-beaten path.

But trodding along a well-beaten path, day in, day out, invokes a sort of forgetfulness.

Things which once were new and exciting begin to blend into the background. Our blinders come on. Nothing to the left, nothing to the right, there is only straight ahead.

We have so well practiced these repetitions, these steps-by-steps, we could do them in our sleep, and they might have gone on being automatic.

But here's the danger in routine.

Mindless repetition. Force of habit. Our routine: unquestioned and unchallenged. We forget why and how we have done what we are doing, and just keep doing.

Every broken habit is a chance to fix another one. Every neglected routine invites a new routine to take its place. It is time to embrace that discomfort. It is time to practice new practices.

In the creation of new routines, I call upon ritual.

But what is ritual in the face of routine?

There is a difference between the two.

Repetition and routine facilitate a sense of going through the motions, sapping action of context, content, history, remembrance, and story.

Routine becomes repetition, a mindless act.

Yet, intentionality is at the heart of the ritual.

As we build our new routines, let us do them ritually. Let action and act be done with mindful intention, with meditation, with remembrance and thought.

In many ways, we have been given a blank slate. We have been given a chance to do-over. Many of our routines have been shaken away and we have a chance (before creating these new ones) to scrutinize the old, learn from their mistakes, their breaks, and the ways they didn't work.

Protected with this knowledge, we can rebuild our lives and the lives of our kin, for the better.



It is now that we can see clearly the fissures in the foundations that we  
took for granted.

In this moment of uncertainty, there's a chance for a certain  
clarity, when our path is undercut.

It is like the sunlight breaking through the clouds we thought were  
our sky.

We can now see how our well beaten path is actually full of rocks  
and holes and thorns. Just because a path is well-trodden doesn't  
mean it's the best path to take.

We can now see how endlessly the great blue sky stretches  
outwards. We can see how big the woods really are, and how many  
other paths are waiting to be made.

## THE VESSEL

*for Ursula K Le Guin*

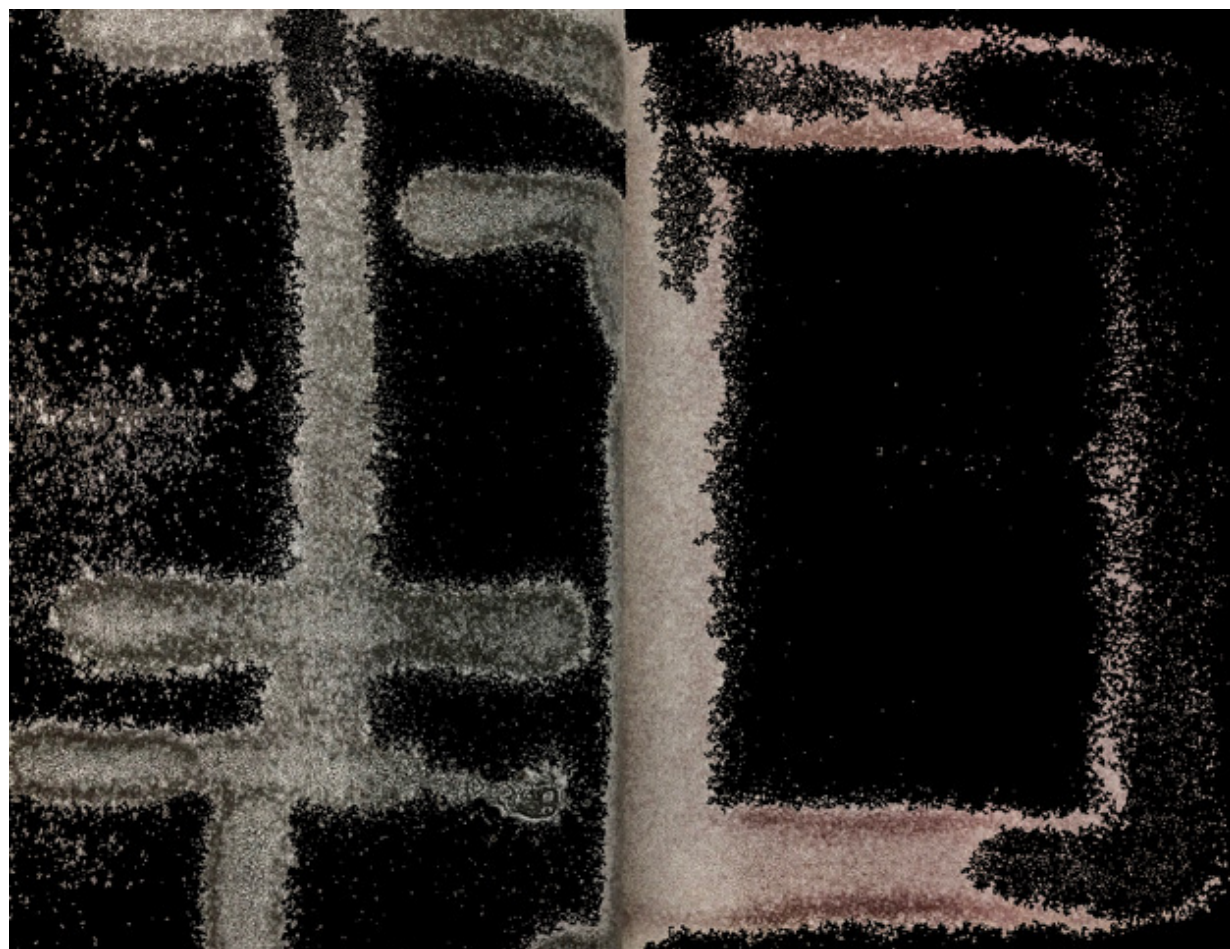
The vessel holds all The vessel is the world The vessel lays itself upside-down on your chest to reverberate the rhythm of your own body back to you The vessel is a coil pot glazed iridescent, changes color in the day and glows in the dark The vessel is a grab bag buried in your back yard full of dried beans, canned vegetables, rice, flashlights, maps, your favourite candy, cash, lighters and a knife — just in case The vessel is held by Aquarius in an ever flowing cycle, some say that it contains liquid celestial light that it's a satellite to catch the planetary sounds of growling stomachs photosynthesis, weather patterns and short breath to interpret the data of the collective nervous system The vessel is full of every plant ever called a weed The vessel is a series of code written by hackers The vessel is full of hospital bills college debt notices rent due notices ready to be set on fire The vessel dreams and enacts a kinder world in the present context The vessel practices community self defence The vessel is glamorous and wears fake pearl earrings The vessel drives a pick up truck and lives on a fairy commune The vessel raises goats The vessel was fired in a kiln of burning cedar wood, a rocking horse and prayers The vessel is a transsexual The vessel is at least 1000 years old but no one is totally sure The vessel has a tattoo of an angel and the word "ocean" The vessel likes when you spit in it The vessel likes when you pick it up in your arms and caress and compliment it's beautiful and rough edges, rest your hand in its interior space The vessel listens to your needs and provides the perfect tool The vessel is adept at divination and strategy The vessel shoots and processes deer in the forest to share with its neighbours, learns how to save seeds and find mushrooms The vessel is made of clay found in a creek bed in a small mountain town in south-eastern Kentucky which was created by a meteor thousands of years ago — thus the vessel is made from the material of another world The vessel is an elementary students art project The vessel once rolled across the US highway system from New York City to San Francisco those who saw just believed it a tumble weed, plastic bag or wayward pop can The vessel was dreamed up by a dying artist The vessel is a time capsule The Vessel likes to take selfies but, The vessel doesn't have instagram The vessel will serve you dinner in its own body The vessel will float you down the river shepherd you to the other side The vessel rests on a pedestal of yellow leaves fallen in October The vessel feels completely satisfied when empty The vessel acts as a speaker when noise is projected from within The vessel is generally stereotyped a womb but it's actually all organs holding, expanding, contracting, flowing, releasing, feeling, alchemizing, excreting The vessel has no gender no sex or secondary sex organs The vessel is a digester gestater surrogate breather dyer fluid collector The vessel will hold your body for you when you cannot, will hold you when you cannot hold yourself The vessel is a carrier bag The vessel is filled with the ashes of the dead, the fruit and water for the living The cat likes to sleep in it Heat gets trapped in it The vessel cannot be bought or sold The vessel is ungovernable The vessel is fragile and its fragility is its strength The vessel has been cracked broken and repaired countless times by superglue, spit, mysterious patch jobs, chewed gum and tree sap

And now I hold it up to your lips to take a drink

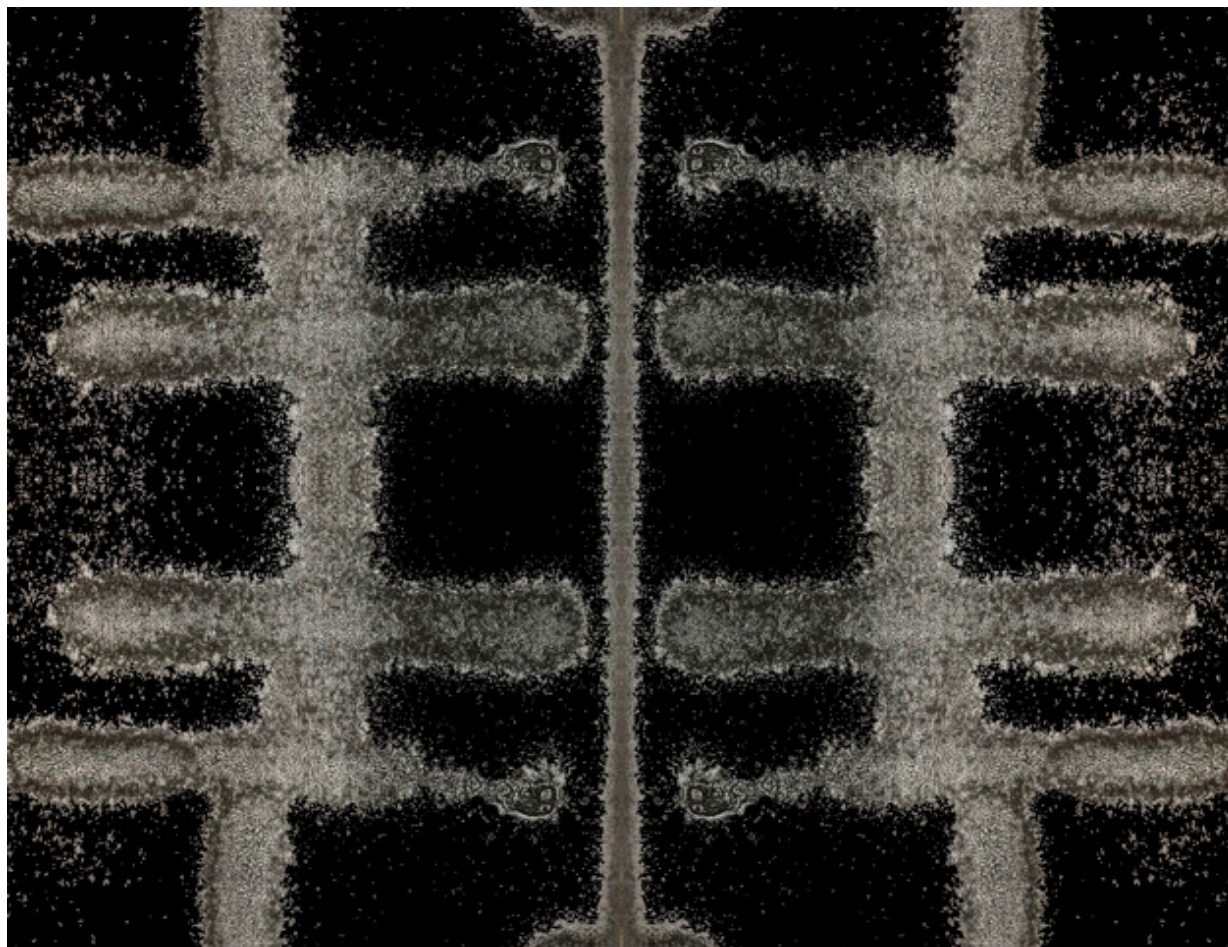
CRIS CHEEK

*from* | DSPLACEMENT











# end white silence





## CURTIS EMERY

CAPITALISM WANTS TO  
TEAR MY EYES OUT  
BUT I WANT TO BLOOM

So I'll write another poem  
staring at trees thru  
a window—a cut sect  
of tree—an endless middle

I suppose I know  
the roots too—an accept'd  
truth—give way to its  
towering fullness—

yes I imagine the top  
too—how else to frame  
the middle—

these accept'd facts—  
clear as day overcast day  
thru which I must run  
to know its wholeness—

shld I say—  
how do you know the roots  
the tips the temporary shade  
without that slow changing middle—

I can say that I can—  
that's the proof—  
I can say what ever if  
I want—

Which ever draws  
me here?

withholding cardinal &  
yr missing bluejay—

what birdpoem of me watching  
trees talking thru a window—

“Who are you?”  
“This is me”  
“Am I me?”  
“Yes in yr bird way”  
“Am I birding this  
    overcast day?”  
“Are you flying?”  
“Soon”  
“Then yes”

Flying straight thru  
the middle & that slow  
moving soup we forget  
so easily—

I swear that middle-present  
was here for a beat and then  
dissolv'd into an afternoon  
ray

It's possible  
    it wasn't  
then wonder blew it  
into plain sight

I want to be Robert  
Grenier sleeping under  
an apple tree in ancient  
Massachusetts—

I want to be Larry  
Eigner and his clairvoyant  
windowsill—

The trees seem  
to be humming on  
their own now

elsewhere a  
train horn

That's the thing  
in this shit—  
it doesn't pay  
to sit lightly.

## CY OZGOOD

### HOW DO I LIVE A HOLY LIFE

No reason to sleep  
when I saw the water  
scurrying under street  
lights dead air  
if you go down  
I go down with you  
lay my hands on the corpse  
of last year's grass  
is this the time  
that all things stop returning  
open the heart  
to what is yet unseen  
inside GET THIS WORLD  
OUT OF ME it's so slow  
when I collapse

the old ghosts said  
to cry is an ecstasy  
the voice still blooms  
in a shimmering panic  
the flame

in those days  
they will say  
it was enough  
to wake up alive  
even haunted  
even so

DAN FISHER

DISASTER  
CAPITALISM  
WILL FUCK YOU





## DANA TEEN LOMAX

*from-unnamed-  
relation*

for marthe reed

the-in-between-o  
f-insight-rachel-c  
arson's-warnings  
-no-witchcraft-no  
-enemy-action-h  
ad-silenced-the-r  
ebirth-of-new-life  
-in-this-stricken-  
world-the-people  
-had-done-it-the  
mselves-a-coloni  
zer's-constant-w  
ant-the-usa-need  
s-an-exorcism-a-  
purging-like-king-  
midas-who-remai  
ned-slow-to-learn  
-even-while-the-b  
read-crumbs-har  
dened-in-his-han  
ds-right-now-barr  
els-of-oil-no-one-  
wants-pile-up-pe  
ople-are-not-burn  
ing-fossil-fuels-a  
s-before-so-there  
-is-no-place-to-st  
ore-them-but-the  
n-there's-always-  
tomorrow-

the-in-between-o  
f-aunt-mary's-ho  
use-in-clarksville-  
we'd-sit-on-her-p  
orch-swing-drink-  
sweet-tea-and-w  
atch-the-storm-c  
ome-in-that's-wh  
y-i-can't-get-into-  
the-*tiger-king*-ser  
ies-aunt-mary-ha  
d-only-one-leg-fr  
om-cancer-and-g  
randma-made-he  
r-own-soap-from-  
lye-saved-all-she  
-could-from-facto  
ry-work-on-the-li  
ne-false-teeth-all  
-around-green-b  
eans-and-okra-in  
-the-garden-pove  
rty-sewn-into-gen  
erations-of-tablec  
loths-and-knitted-  
into-the-thick-yar  
n-sweaters-the-o  
nes-i-came-to-val  
ue-and-my-daug  
hter-still-wears-

the-in-between-o  
f-upward-mobility  
-the-brookings-in  
stitute-man-said-  
property-owners  
hip-is-the-main-w  
ay-wealth-is-pas  
sed-down-and-it-  
turned-out-that-w  
hen-my-mom-die  
d-i-could-buy-a-h  
ome-she-never-  
wanted-to-borro  
w-against-hers-s  
o-she-could-*leav*  
*e-you-kids-somet*  
*hing*-now-i-see-s  
he-knew-exactly-  
what-she-was-do  
ing-just-today-the  
-roomba-arrived-t  
o-clean-this-hous  
e's-floors-and-i-f  
elt-so-bougie-but  
-a-friend-of-mine-  
said-*if-there's-an*  
*-infomercial-for-a*  
*-product-it's-not--*  
*that-bougie*-he-w  
ent-to-dartmouth-

DANNA LOMAX

ANTI-CAPITALIST HAIKU

My friend Richard says,  
“Withholding food for money  
shapes our consciousness.”

## DANIEL OWEN

### BABEL SALTS

small music  
box up against  
kidneys and  
bile of world  
we, ambivalent  
to symmetry, slowly  
clapping on liberation text  
books unburnt  
on their own  
unpublished  
private queries  
to courage

blurred masks for  
example or  
the destitute  
of stolen lands  
taking back  
landings and  
destitution

whose poems  
are in words  
rather  
than chains of social  
reaction?

and is grace  
that being  
able to see and  
say its way  
out of  
fortune, happen-  
stance, fate?

like that  
musician stuck  
at home with a  
camera  
and a mic and  
a half-stocked  
pantry, (not  
to mention that  
mined engine,  
the internet)  
prepares  
its own bowl  
of scarcity  
in manmade

iron ore  
and eye-chained  
uncreated  
singing  
from causes indentured  
to workers  
indentured to  
pressing sweat  
for principles  
of property  
law applied  
to people

knock oneself  
out for  
surviving  
contingency's  
arcane, ordinal  
mandate drift

working  
one's ass  
off under  
the sun or  
borrowing cash for  
tombstones  
relating  
to a taxonomic  
order or  
social crypts  
of enlightenment  
gloss, wood  
and skin  
hewn from wheels  
we shoulder against  
concrete  
reinforced medium

death sandwich  
in salt's box  
salt the earth  
to dispel leeches  
unwanted  
vegetation and bugs  
and ghouls

veil of form  
fixed  
stake of accumulated



structure  
fixed scree  
nails scrape  
on laws hollow  
as cello body  
or simple  
as a mouth  
to hold  
its sound  
dispel  
its airs

exiles  
of the blast  
furnace, easy  
wind's a steel  
wind, a stolen  
wind  
shrapnel on  
your front door  
bought at slagheap  
rates of blacklung  
mind's eye

boasting to  
trenches of word-  
eaters' smoke in  
brightened  
lips' saliva  
pearls, living, just  
one more  
egg away  
from an omelette  
under steel  
rain, coca-cola's  
stolen water sold  
back as laughing  
gas  
hurdles, molten  
over thirst's  
quarantined  
victims in plastic  
fates, not  
to mention petroleum  
muck of burnt  
slugs, our ancients'  
graves' turned  
interiors tuned  
arrivals of smoke and

vials or pustules  
sores birthing  
cursed smiles, playboy  
hand chafes  
pestilent sumps  
bent of world  
built bleeding out  
its indivisibility

or sly  
rhetoric sent to  
detonate  
on contact the  
living revolve  
hard, shook  
the clarion  
two calls of  
seven trumpets'  
brass faded  
in the fallen  
flesh

the future, say  
unskinned but  
colorful  
apoplectic, atonement  
pores burst ripe  
with rifle-eaters  
hey-days, jibes  
and responsibility  
held like the preternatural  
horse

a clearing  
a meadow I had  
once been allowed  
to access atop  
an unmarked  
grave, a mass  
grave, a  
reckoning

fracked past diced  
into waiting  
heritage packets  
taxed bloody cookie  
cutters boxing  
fives and fire's might  
in depraved

marauding white  
bent on hatred's  
brand-name accumulating  
hourglass

sing hex  
sing dirty  
sing reckless  
take the tasks'  
ears back up  
to the sun  
petty end-  
of-days, go  
back where  
you came from

siphoning plastic  
trash from a  
rich field of  
worms through  
a spiked  
tube of scuff  
a tunnel of  
flight surveilled  
at every turn and  
bend with  
dog bark and  
mocking tear  
waste labyrinth  
sold off  
as securities

eyes snapped  
free from  
every sound's upkeep  
every bartered zone's  
infinity unsoddered  
unsoldiered, unwed  
unlocked, unsolicited  
unbusted  
unburnt  
unbarged and unbegun  
unburdened, undone

and the brunt  
of boot  
straps and  
heels signifies  
nothing but force's

lie in flagwoven  
spectacular  
peeled down  
to thick  
protocol of bled-out  
pigs dignified  
at higher rates  
than human fate

propagandized morning's  
squeal and  
peal of coughed-up  
memory's commitments  
striking  
bells of liberty cages  
of regurgitant  
fields for  
killing

the hoarder's  
spiel to manumit  
freedom from  
meaning as  
a gun and fire for  
cowardly protection  
from cages displaced  
(by manufactured  
creeds of caste and  
race) to anywhere  
greed's devouring  
gleam rusts  
over life and limb's  
dignity fed  
force into submission  
(creaking dynamite)

ring cracked skulls  
ring raped forest  
ring dizzying feints of  
law brought  
whole-cloth corrupt  
from European masters'  
perversion of  
scry and creed  
of live  
and let be

DAVID GREENSPAN

QUIET

There's a bit of glass  
in my shoe I can't stop  
thinking about fingernails  
there's a bit of glass  
in my shoe I can't stop  
thinking about fingernails  
and how my socks were once  
free of blood  
I can't stop thinking  
about my socks which are wet  
and before that my socks  
were a plant listen  
I'm dumb out of luck  
today but this bit of glass  
is in my shoe I can't stop  
thinking about the time  
you asked me to blow  
cigarette in your face  
you said you liked yellow  
fingernails we were drunk  
or I was anyway you were made  
of almost only bone  
bone and water I can't stop laughing  
about the bit of glass in my shoe  
the meds aren't working  
you didn't ask but that doesn't matter  
I'm made up of mostly bone  
bone and water and Paxil  
because I can't stop thinking  
can't stop laughing  
the meds aren't working  
there's a bit of glass in my shoe

**I DIDN'T GO TO  
WORK TODAY...**



**... I DON'T THINK  
I'LL GO TOMORROW**

**LET'S TAKE CONTROL OF OUR LIVES  
AND LIVE FOR PLEASURE NOT PAIN**



## DAVID LARSEN

Day One is for the Sun  
Day Two the Moon's  
All day three is Master Tiw's  
Odin's day and Thor's  
eat up two more  
n fuckin then Friday Friday I know  
But this day is for  
the weekend king  
who throve in the boot forest  
where the thunder drave him  
out to populate his tummy

The more I think about it  
I should be open to more things  
but there are no believers in a  
Flat Saturn  
Scientific wonders never cease  
paying me visits  
Put them all together,  
and what do they spell  
Nothing  
How would I know if I was going insane?  
I want to have a torrid affair  
Just kidding, I want to move miles inland  
to a beaver lodge with surrounding dam  
How deep is your cover  
When it's over, you can tell me  
I will listen  
but if you go out without your keys  
as sure as God made buzzing insects  
I will murder you  
like the shade of Abel unleashed on Cain  
There is a first time for everything  
even lying on this scummy floor  
wishing good feelings could be trusted  
But some things will never be  
**THE FLEA'S PILGRIMAGE**  
sounds good to me  
Peekskill, Poughkeepsie, Saugerties  
frozen sunshine on the west bank  
liquid sunshine on the right  
everywhere the landscape says  
You are looking at me for a reason

Forget that reason  
and let the line go free  
No ideation, just sensation  
It's not as if the cat you fed last summer  
got up in the wintertime to bring you ham  
Bad news, bad news  
Fake killers become real ones  
The different is not the Other  
The different could be your twin  
Some men are so beautiful  
it presents a problem  
and they mask their faces  
That's how beautiful the Other is  
when you awaken from a dream  
still clutching the apple  
from when I was going to buy groceries  
but stayed in and took a bath  
The thing about the needle in the haystack is  
a horse might die in agony!  
Will you find the needle? Quick!  
The hay is there  
and the quartz beneath the ground pulses  
to the beat of Round Saturn  
where is the way between for me to thread  
a barnyard Casanova, apple-scented  
Fuck the neighbors! Don't they know today is

Day One was for the Sun  
Day Two the Moon  
The rest of the week I can barely get through  
And so we hail Saturn, for his is the day  
I smoke til I'm simple, and drink til I sway

DAVID SPATARO

UNTITLED GRIEF

Though he is dead now, I refuse. I love those who make connections knowable. When we fragment landscapes, the white-footed mouse thrives. Cement elegy for red foxes. But who is to blame for this pavement? The *thing* that causes palm oil monoculture is an abstraction. A real thing. But we die, or we suffer the deaths of connection. There is a fragmented landscape in here.

COCHLEA

>>

Occultist Jacques Toussaint Benoit once tried to use the goo snails leave behind to build a transatlantic network.

To clarify, the snail had to be heartbroken. I came upon the pairs of snails in Flaubert, and then again in Dickens, because I turn to blowhards when I'm unsure myself. Flaubert's reference comes sidelong and buried in *Bouvard and Pecuchet*, a buddy-comedy in which two burnouts pursue a shared series of hobbies, each trendier than the last. They fail at agriculture, move on to fail at anthropology, then try chemistry, medicine, romance, philosophy, and physics, all lovingly vitrined in technical language, pulling aether. Maniacal research ate up the end of Flaubert's life. The book was never finished. It ends with a few succinct sketches for never-elaborated chapters, and one feels his departure in the strangeness of learning by way of these summaries that he could write a clear line, after all.

Pecuchet resists getting into the occult at first but he equivocates: "all over Europe, America, Australia and the Indies, millions of mortals passed their lives in making tables turn; and they discovered the way to make prophets of canaries, to give concerts without instruments, and to correspond by means of snails." He decides he has to try, involves his friend. "For a fortnight they spent every afternoon facing each other, with their hands over a table, then over a hat, over a basket, and over plates. All these remained motionless."

Dickens described the snail machine in detail in greater detail in his journal *All the Year Round*, which he worked himself nearly to death publishing weekly. He writes in 1890 about the early telegraphy of the 1850's: "The machine proved to be a large scaffold, formed of beams ten feet long, supporting the Voltaic pile, in which the poor snails were stuck by glue at intervals. Or rather there were two such machines - one at each end of the room, and each containing twenty-four alphabetic and sympathetic snails. They looked very unhappy, and tried hard to get away from the unsympathetic solution of sulphate of copper which dribbled upon them. But whenever they put out their horns to creep away, a dribble sent them back quickly to their shells."

It's a sceptic's account - he wasn't fooled. But still, it's clear, he loves to tell it.

>>

To take a happy jaunt into the hand-set, heavy-seraphed accounts of galvanism and mesmerism and all the other mid nineteenth century scientific tries is to clamber through sentences blocked with odd words. Many terms have transitory meaning. They require a quick unknowing. They force time, reel you back, mean something different now than was intended then. Fluids - not just water but also heat, light, flesh, humors, any material that moves, or moves the nerves. Nerve: not a type of cell but total feel, or a sickness of feeling. Galvinism: applying electricity. Escargotic commotion: noise, you think, then stepping back, no noise, only snails moving together. Co-moving.

Some of these detach neatly into latinate roots so logical and neatly sequenced, so puzzling, so flattering when puzzled out, that they conveyed scientific authority through the mere gravity of their contrivance. A deciphering brain happily converts a signal into momentum, generates a proven known. If you can figure out the word you know it's true. "Magnetic matter, by virtue of its extreme subtlety and its similarity to nervous fluid, disturbs the movement of the fluid in such a way that it causes all to return to the natural order, which I call the harmony of the nerves."

Although no one believed Mesmer, to read that is to have gotten involved. He wrote to the *Lancet* and he was rejected, his articles were met with rude rebuffs. No one believed Benoit, either. He was remembered for his wrongness. But he comes up again and again, ridiculed gently. It is as though they admire he once held a moment of being close to being almost right. That potential kept him in circulation a while.

Later I learned Dicken's account was not by him, but by his eldest son Charley, who he had named after himself. He'd been dead 20 years before it was written, though it is the father-novelist to whom the words are often credited. Snails, though. What a distant little mystery in there. Whorl, shell, anal pore, pneumostome, mucus gland, foot, mantle. The reproductive organs are lodged high up in the smallest, sharpest coil of the shell, and they do it all - ovotestis, boys and girls. The head is all tentacles, an upper set and smaller lower set, near the mouth, and the wide-seeing eyes wave out on high knobs.

It's those waving eyes that anchor the hunch: surely they can sense and transmit messages long distances? Surely they impart some faculty of as yet unimagined sight? When snails mate they adhere foot to foot, aligning the whole of their visible bodies for days at a time, they intertwine their eyes, lovingly; when they part a string of silver goo stretches between them. You saw snails more, in those days, because people raised them in the garden. The Brits called them wall fish and ate them at Lent. You work with what you've got.

>>

And so the pasilalinic-sympathetic compass, a kind of snail piano. Twenty six zinc bowls on wooden risers, a single letter scripted out before each one. Zinc had no special properties, but it was as cheap then as plastic is now. The snails were soldered solidly in place and their softer parts troubled with messages. Across the long gymnasium where Benoit built his prototype, an identical set of lettered bowls was set to receive the transmission. In an earlier rendition a ring of arranged snails apparently spoke to a sister loop in America. Per Dickens the younger, Benoit's were dribbled with copper sulphate. In a newspaper account a hot, thin poker was held to a - and across the room, presumably, a could be clocked for his tormented writhing. The bowls were arranged in a circle so that the scribe stood in the middle, turning round to press slow letters. Gymnase, he wrote. Lumhere divine.

A journalist, Jules Allix, had been invited to the demonstration, and within a year he was writing long letters defending the demonstration against claims of "delusion", citing Galvini and Volta and other works of esoterism over the centuries. He wrote of an experiment to heal a wound by "bandaging at a great distance a piece of fabric on which there is blood from the wound." He wrote,

"But whether one admits animal magnetism or denies it, this makes no difference to the thing itself, which exists nonetheless. This power, they say, is incomprehensible! So be it! But let there be no doubt, human reason will progress to the point where it can explain it, along with so many other things that remain mysteries still today, or even that remain entirely unknown."

>>

One strangeness of the first month of quarantine was all the rote rehearsal. It came on by analogy: sci-fi and action, borrowed imagination. It imparted a full scale response we'd come to expect to expect. Through city alerts built for other interruptions it planned and chatted, it conveyed. We felt the pain before it reached us, and then we felt it on the bathroom floor. Working, I found myself dubious. It felt scary. But it felt fine.

Familiarity left, came back. Cartoon lips with tabbed pink tongues on the masks worn by kids walking their bikes up and down Cermak, almost as bored as they are every summer. Huge groups of Kawasakis out at dusk, bright green helmets, Rodman jerseys big with wind. New keening, no closure. The pallets of lilies at Pete's went on sale. Everything cycling so tightly, round as the thread on a screw: newly mortal every morning, still a body every night.

>>

Per one of my friends it is already over. I ask what she means and she says human culture. We lost everything we knew, she says, we will never get it back. Another friend gets through by starting little feuds at work over precautions. My neighbors lose two, three family members. The sirens go on. Thousands, tens of thousands, hundred thousand. The tent they put outside the little west side hospital blows off. The prison brings a white bus with high slit windows. This phase seems like a first attempt: naive, misplaced. Certain places hurt while others only know about it. All misconception leaves a trail. Someday this will be only a confused first phase of something longer. It turns, and in a distant bowl, the paired turn does not take. Far certainty, progressing backward, gets everything fallible and dear..



## DENISE NEWMAN

*from* NATURE POEM

A corpse flower blooms as the old neighbor lay dying—the scent, unmistakable. Flies coming down from the sky into the sticky throat of the Venus flytrap—smell that? As if sex has expired. In the dusky light of day plus night. An inflorescence called Mary Ann, concealed by the mountain we take to be Mary Ann, which is also Mary Ann, who, now dead, reveals the *empty eon* that has never stopped being Mary Ann

If anyone doubts the *empty eon* of sex let them die as many times as they need

Coming down words dissolve like moon petals into waves—*lip lip lip*—one at a time in endless service. Dividing up say *flow* from *ering* or *with* from *ering*—do you know the *flow* of *withering* or the *with* of *flowering*? Down in the dirt in shimmering owl air dispersed among crickets not thinking—*this is paradise*—that comes later in the defining light of dread

## DIANA HUMBLE

### USING THE FIRST LINES OF EMAILS I RECEIVED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

#### 1.

Coronavirus and stock market drops  
How we're taking action:

Brand-new stuff to keep you cozy at home  
Buy it now at a lower price  
Online only with code BIGDEAL  
And, OMG Clearance from \$1.99

Who's in?

#### 2.

This has never happened in human history  
Luxury watches that shine extra bright  
They're all here, but only for 1 day!  
Can you pay for the groceries you needed  
During the COVID-19 outbreak

And we're sure you'll <3 these brands  
More aid for small businesses fails in partisan fight  
Have a fun-filled Easter celebration!

These sales are heating up  
There's still time to get your goodies by Easter  
Multi-state concealed gun permit certification is here  
It also delivers incredible cardio conditioning

We know these are difficult times.  
Put together the perfect basket for Easter—  
Natural treatments for the pandemic

#### 3.

Good afternoon team  
This message has no content

DM JERMAN

A MAP MADE IN WIRES  
*for* EST

"We insist on kinship despite its tribal entrapments."  
-Monica McClure

Your hair. This poem starts with your hair. It ends that way too.  
Forget titles, this poem will be known as the one I wrote about hair, your hair, and how it is of you, for you. With you but without you.  
If I could break into your house and steal one thing, only to return it to you years later it would be your hair.

I'll tell you why.

A part of your life, a person(s), is dying, and you must let them.  
The expectations of generations on either side of you must die. Your exile must truly be yours. The old way cannot stand. There is no room to keep both it and your great penned life. To keep both it and your true love.

It and your vast capacity for tomorrows.

The chorus of their watch must become merely echoes across the exquisite garden you are building. You construct this place, this refuge, unknowingly and knowingly. The still hidden courage of it is massive, immense. Revelation in death; you are not too young to understand.

Meanwhile, you grow your hair. It is a pit of sadness. A deep wide flag- the longest I have ever seen.  
With oil and anise you smooth it. The creaks and seams of your very own heart are here.

Your hair, a ream of flawless stain. A fullness to wear away.  
Rise above the depth of it when the time is right.

Oh the blackness of this mourning rope you carry. This shining and dead worry-twist. A mala and a grieving gown. It does not mock. For now, it only hangs, a cloak of lies. Like soft, elegant upside-down weaves of weeds in dark waves without fish. Gravity wringing its strands like slaves.

The mother of this deeply flawed pack of dogs speaks. Your mother, to whom the pack is everything, recognizing perfection in you that serves only to deepen the well of her own loneliness. Her animal call is nearly irresistible. But your lot is your lot, and to misunderstand you is not the same as resenting you, or sabotaging you. Speaking of the family who push you away to save you.

Perhaps you can cut the wires. Sometime when you are certain the pack is no longer of use to you.

Or may kill you.

Your singular instincts are poised to serve you much better.  
The dolls at your side will seem a rotten charade. A poor excuse for your own true pack.

I say here: own.

I say here: true. yours.

Here again: strike right, dear solo romantic.

You needn't be lost in fear. The new day soon comes when you are awake.

Light and unburdened of the locks clung to for so long now, Shed, then buried in the magic earth.

# beneath the paving stones: the beach

7

III

8



DOUGLAS PICCINNINI

LET'S BEAT UP THE POOR

I strangled my parents because they weren't going to leave me anything. How could we live beside pain's wholesale misery? If by a forgery of fluency, our adorable outsized years left uneaten?

Salted and torn from a form so greedily, so eagerly brushed away — each day the order consented, peaked on meaning. Studiously, the gang marked a kingdom in flames. Bored in being, all god's children smiling abusers of song. Beat up the poor.

## EDRIC MESMER

ENISLED—

yet of the everything—

ap-  
pea-

ring nea-  
rer , the sea-

like— its ultimate  
unknowable-

ness , a shore to  
tread—

collecting encrusted  
frameworks

contents  
fled

\*

if “this edge  
of the continent / is a hinge”

[Kenneth Irby]

then ‘connoiter that far-flung  
imago—

remember  
it is merely

the stilled  
phaeton’s wheel

round which  
a cosmos

circled—  
a cenotaph

sat in  
a cenote

\*

diurnal—  
diluvian—



as if that were a-  
lone 'markation—

spun out from , or  
hazarding toward—

tides one way—  
narrative another—

fluvial , chthonic—  
( gin , tonic— )

frag from fractal—  
tectonic sift—

not a bucket  
but a shovel

# ELIZABETH ROBINSON

## GLOSS ON LOST GOD

Old order born of soft jolts, old glow, brown root, or gold tomb.

Worn crown of moths.  
Worn knot torn from gown.

God's onyx photo of glory? Sold now to  
loss on loss on loss.

Horn stops short, blown not to good, nor  
to wrong.

Blond moss.  
Odor of worm.

God: lowly hobo who lost work, who doffs hood, longs for  
honor. Longs most for food.

Food: fog for fools.  
God's fog croons sloth, odd color.  
Moot pool of froth.

Song of spoon on bowl.

God's ghost knows God's scorch—solo, not song.  
Word quoth. Word forgot.

Thrown, too, to shores of sorrow, bloodshot clock:  
tock-tock, tock-tock.

God's god. Hobo song howls so soft,  
follows wrong north.

Soon, boot knocks on door. Frown, now prod.

Go, follow thorn or cocoon.  
Owl flown. Fox swoon. Cold spoor. Forth to

world lost. Joy torn from worth. God's torpor.  
Sort, toss, gloom, botch.

## ELIZABETH YOUNG

### HALF-LIFE

Fortunately, we don't need to concern ourselves  
with questions any more. We can just punch  
the clock, filling in the missing premises until  
our truth explodes straight through the firmament.  
But who controls the ecstasy that lies beyond  
the airports where the wind undoes our work  
and our arguments get tangled in the wires  
like a ghost? Layers of human occupation gather  
to a single point that twinkles ex silentio into  
this paper cup. At the edge of the arena,  
in the places without love, beyond the aerosol  
pavilions, ticking on like a Swiss watch, ergo,  
ad nauseum, at speeds not yet attainable,  
while the Nile overflows, shifting the whole  
non sequitur, de nihilo, ad infinitum.

## MOTHERBOARD

It's ok to talk like a grownup, but not ok to place the baby inside a cocoon on the fringes of science fiction like some synthetic fairy. That's a childish maneuver and you're better than that, babe. We live in a dizzying cosmos where the phone is always ringing, where the oldest layers aren't necessarily the deepest, where concrete overpasses continuously shift and heave, where desensitized castrati issue bloodcurdling commands. Babies should be spared humiliations such as these. They should be given teeth that continuously replenish themselves. Something's happening in the world, there's no time for pyrotechnics. What are we – the lone survivors crawling through the arborvitae in Motherboard, our online reputations, like the forest, evanescent into faith and hope and love? In that other universe it's ok to say such things and to be terrified or lazy or take too much Dramamine and the dog never dies and the fairy rides a beam of light back into the real world and the baby understands it when you whisper, "Baby, it's alright but no, it's not ok."

## EVE PRUSA

### SELFIE SCREAM

Who are you if not a land wife?  
    Who are you if not a mother?  
Who are you if to a brother, dad or uncle?  
    Who are you if not a child?  
    Who fooled you into living thinking  
        breathing as a tadpole?  
        Who are you zigzagging in a pool  
            of chlorine bleach and fluoride?  
Who are you on Zoom Teams, typing out your answer?  
Why are you on screen time facing yours to other?  
    Who are you at blue time when clouds touch night  
  and day?  
Who could say 'your brother's mother's uncle was this way?'  
    You'd have to have a brother  
    You'd have to utter 'brother' to someone with your name  
    You'd likely share his blood  
Who are you to share his blood but not with any others?  
Who are you to not relax inside of your own cage?  
Who are you to not react to forcers pending...beat you?  
Who are you to lie to waste, expense the fine/fare later?  
    Who are you to open an account with Chase? And stay there?  
        Who are you not to page your forefathers and  
            and debrief their mistakes?  
Who are you to get away with eating your next cancer?  
Who are you to shoulder through another year of wage slave?  
Who are you to bear the monkeying of people?  
    Who are you to grin while neighbors skin off needs from poverty?  
Who are you to skin your knees for anything besides  
  biking on your way to  
  dairy-free ice-cream or that yoga place's  
  sound gong bath?  
Who are you to share your lottery-sized planet?  
Who are you to see your peanuts as the gold-mine?  
Who are you to swear you've always meant right?  
Who are you to watch away your cell-lives and wash  
    them down with honey?  
Who are you to let a 2D square of strangers see your hairs die?  
Who are you to let your furniture speak through you?  
    Who are you to let your Veganese speak for you?  
Who are you to ask a pencil for a dance first?  
    Who are you to grasp a fine-tooth comb  
        and mean it?

Who are you to catch the bees before their honey?  
Who are you to ask for scissors first, then paper?  
    Whose grass is all this really?  
    Whose grass is safe to sit on?  
    Whose grass is just sharp ivy?  
Whose grass will cast you out like thieves and only see your hoodie?  
Whose ask once came before yours?  
    Who answered first? Why's it your turn?  
Whose turn is it not to say something?  
    Who's turn is it to scream *BLEAK*?  
Who's right is it to scream loud?  
    Who's right is it not to scream loud?  
Who cannot scream but cry still?  
Who cares enough to cry still?  
    Who's ever cried? This week, year?  
Who still feel's the heart's beyond them?  
    Who's better as a robot?  
    Who's number 3 like tinman?  
Who's wading thick in dew drops?  
Who's dreaming for his sleep first?  
Who's eating out on Tuesday and waking for not  
Wednesday, just waking until bedtime?  
Whose dream was this shit? Show me  
    Whose money made us zombies?  
    Whose hive juice came through breathing?  
    Whose inseams sucked our guts out?  
    Whose anthrax laced our tongues up?  
Whose stories coat our dreams, our homes, our  
    sons, our people on this planet?  
    Whose drugs are we the addicts to  
    and who wants/can get clean?



[screaming]



THE TEACHER ASKS

I. THE TEACHER ASKS WHAT WE CAN LEARN

Shelter in Maze. Minotaur preface :

"Well we have to kill the stupid people  
And keep the smart people alive  
But the stupid people and the smart people  
Are the same people."

We don't learn we die.  
Punctuate that sentence. And that.  
Punctuate this sentence  
All sentient beings numberless  
Does that include virus.  
We can learn we don't learn we die from  
Not the virus  
From willful prolonged proudly defended ignorance of  
Our profound interconnectedness  
Interconnectedness flashing through space like this.  
Like this. We can learn the bat  
Is the new totem of the globe.  
We can learn to let Covid's Metamorphosis  
Redraw the world map if there is a world  
When this thing weakens and hopefully dies  
If it ever does. This thing. It. The virus. How many  
Superstitious names have you invented just today  
To keep it away. We can learn we are bat  
Vampires who for hundreds of years suck the black oil blood  
From earthneck and deliver it to our cars  
Rockets and missiles and tanks and bombs and planes  
To kill each other to see who can kill each other the fastest  
When we are one species as it says in the new  
Declaration of Interdependence:  
We the one species of humanity, interbeing here  
For one flash moment with all beings  
We can learn to love each other but what good would that do  
What profit or prophet will it take for it to be incentivized  
Our love across all borders. We can learn  
The borders are now dissolved forever  
For they were never here to begin with  
And the more people try to tighten them  
To build walls between countries,  
Which are false vanities on map  
Made in defense and attack formation  
For man against man patriarchal command aneurism land  
Enduring brain bloodleak centuries for what plan,  
The more there will be no land at all only occasional  
Obsidian islands surfacing from the Lavaflow Re-Pangeanation.

Who expects to win this human war when the last one  
Standing will be no one. Not even you in your  
Nuclearproof bunker in New Zealand. My partner  
The Minotaur interrupts: "You know how  
I sometimes hear voices?" "Yes. What now?"  
"You like that? Let's try red pen," the voice with the lime  
And dark greenish changing color Iguana Goiter says to you  
Who drift to sleep next to me in our liferaft bed on the sea of  
Plague Lake interspecies waterbodies copulate to provide  
Hybrids for the karmic comeuppances of the human race  
Lost. Lost. No finishing tape: so how did we get so  
Lost along the way? We can learn to find ourselves  
With peace action not just peace talks. We can learn  
We are learning what karma is. It's instant  
The way we like things, instant, and also  
Takes ages to build and crash its wave. We are all  
That monk gifted with great wisdom who said  
There is no cause and effect, and who was changed  
Into a fox for five hundred lifetimes as  
Punishment reward practice. There isn't, in a larger  
Spiritual sense of all life being one lightning flash,  
Cause and effect, perhaps, on that timebeing blingblingbling  
Scale. Diamond sutra copies are good for pounding nails into  
My forehead so I too can be Frankenstein the lonely and frail  
And lumbering toward friendship and accidental drowning  
And strangulation as most friendships end, metaphorically,  
If not, like, literally, you know. No. But on the we-are-here-now-  
Living-our-lives-out-together level, cause and effect does exist,  
And why don't we as Jack said love our lives out instead of live?  
Then we wouldn't be the cause of our own destruction:  
The bats coming for us to show us we are the vampires  
We've been shooting with our movie cameras  
Driving stakes through our own hearts as we kill each other  
Relentless suicide living through its own perpetuation. Since  
I came to this refuge house three hours northwest of  
New York City I've seen three crows on the limb of  
The neighbors front yard birdfeeder tree. The Robin  
Redbreast skipping through backyard grass. I heard  
The Owl hooting along in Jupiter Hour to  
Ode to the West Wind by Shelley as I read it  
To my friends over laptop videophone. We can learn  
To stop branding our companies and each other  
And cows. We can learn to stop cannibalism  
And bloodlust and change it for the vegetablekingdom trust  
And this will never happen because we'll defend our steak  
With an automatic machine gun coming in handy now

To kill deer while the food shortage starves us. We can learn  
To hunt when starving, not each other. I saw five large  
And medium and fawn deer cross the street in the dark  
Windstorm rain howl as I walked with the Minotaur through  
The Churchside street whose name I always forget  
Because we need to learn to forget everything  
And still be kind to each other in this our present  
Dementia epidemic systemic and symptomatic of  
All our panic selves manic for grocery shelves  
Dreaming of anti acid reflux medication because we're  
Out of it and out of it we are homebound and strange  
And going out still and spreading the plague.

## 2. THE TEACHER ASKS WHAT IS NEEDED

Genital timebomb. The parallel universe where you express your every  
sexual want. A snake decided to leave some writing on the road. Meet me  
at Owl Way. You know how it is here lots of scream lots of sugar. Eighth  
House Mailbox. Mailboxes of the Zodiac Houses. The Pompom Tree.  
Shakespeare in the Marsh. Complete with Fungi and Dr. Seuss Trees.

Bluejay and a family of cardinals--spirits of passed on family ancestors  
coming to protects us as we pass by the Endtime's Duckside Cottage and  
wish we could meet in friend basements and read our out loud poetry.

Green oil truck wet Library Lane roller  
Vehichle of war  
We all live for

Vehichle of wad  
We all live bad  
Wands.

Clusters of mailboxes down Library Lane  
Multiple newspapers for every house:  
The Day, The Current, The Insistence On the Segment of Cooling Lava  
Mailbox clusters down zodiac way.  
Bird's nest soup!  
The neighbors have Ganesha and Vishnu bronze statuettes at their front  
door under four flying republican party flags with elephants  
Do they think Ganesha is a republican  
He who overcomes obstacles for everybody  
Equally

Or shows us how to do it  
One being

Are you tired of being in your house?  
The news cycle was fucking me up.  
I feel like my life has been stolen from me.  
Does anyone else feel angry?  
How long do you think we'll be in here?  
It should be till May.  
When do you think we'll get out of here.  
I'm avoiding the news cos it terrorizes me.  
You should it doesn't tell us anything.  
You have to do things that will make you feel less depressed  
We can't figure out what's going to happen next  
It's sort of an exercise in having a more Buddhist approach  
We are here in this room and we have this connection  
So what are we going to do with it.

When's Easter?  
We are here now and we have this connection what are we going to do with  
Creek rushing windchimes bicyclist speeding by  
Almost hits me he's too shy to say he's coming  
Would rather chance somebody dying

Rave Nevada!  
A crow a wolf a fox face sticks out from this treebark hole  
Blasted open by what sky hole

O

Open postcard  
Writings from inside  
Humanity under house arrest  
For oiltide and oilspiltide and bloodtide  
And pelican karma eyes deathpelican sigh

They say the wood's are the poorman's overcoat  
Today the woods are  
The plague-fleeing insane fugue state poet coat  
As I rush up the trail from Library Lane  
To Meeting House circle driveway  
And wonder if i'll ever see my friends again  
Alive or dead

Or a  
Third category  
The cat isn't giving me any hints on yet.

What's needed now? A vaccine. A cure. Peace. Obvious  
Slob prophecies of the government of me.  
What's needed now truly?  
Whatever here you see :  
Houses with lit up lighted windows with birds alighting on the frames and  
ledges as the panes open to admit the evening wind early admission and  
commence with Nocturnal Emission University's commencement address—  
whose speaker will be who? Owl You. How can you be so silly in the  
globe's dying mood? It's too abstract I need humor to keep me here it's my  
grappling hook on this steep sheet sheer cliff shearing me away with its  
pruning scissor enhancement knife and whetstone and longblade life  
knights. Here come the blightwalkers. They are dead with hazel eyes

Like  
The lighted windows of the house  
Just beyond the tombstones  
Of Old Lyme Town Cemetery  
Old Lyme Cemetery Town

What if we only have a little time left  
Shouldn't we be having more sex  
And what if our time is already gone  
Sit on and ride the blue and white sky python

.   ..   .   .   ..   .   .   .   .   .   ..   .   ...

### 3. PYROMANCER

Talking on the phone across the cusp now Maddie and I go ice fishing and  
it is Aries season so close now the soma itself expanding the Somatozoa  
sweetness of landing on the horns of the fire ram and dancing over the fjord

I prance onward down the grass I shamle across kitchen times tiles  
I am a frequently touched surface  
I am your most frequently touched surface  
Wash me wash me wash me with your spit kissing  
Then wash me again till I'm immaculate pregnancy

You love to touch me you can't keep your fingers off me into the creases  
they go this will be and is already our pyre hour Help me Obi Wan Kenobi  
you're our only hope

A hop skip and a jump away from Hey how are you it's the first of Aries  
today is it yes the Spring Equinox the Freaquinox I say old bean come over  
here and give me a neck hickie

Here we are in Aries now in Aries now in Aries now  
Here we go round in Aries now so fire ram in the morning

Here we go charge with Aries now  
The fire ram is in our house  
It is a fit we're throwing

rowing through the lake of fire now and here  
we go love in Aries now it's burning all pestilence clean off and out and  
away from us

And here we go drown with nobody now we breathe with all our friends and  
party we are cows mooing in the field to the roadside Charlie Parker  
saxophone solo as he stops to show interspecies music exists and must be  
respected lest the bats continue to bite us into oblivion with venomous mix  
we ourselves concocted out of negligence

But here we go gallop on the back of the fire ram the sun is our lense  
to look through our selfishnesses out to outer space and beyond and make  
new friends with wands shooting toward us launched not as weapons but  
friend finder expedition from a faraway galaxy sandbox

#### 4. ELEVEN CYPRESSES AND

pencil pad hands in Roma above the hills an  
amphitheater in each ear to listen to the young woman student while her  
muddled teacher sticks her hand into the cream and vanilla and  
glissando and Ganeshaglossando vanilla coffee icecream ooze of  
awakening melting down her whole body penetratingly dissolving obstacles  
hurrah! and the young woman student feels the middleaged woman  
teacher's touch thorough all that cream on her ruby power love button  
connector diadem and exclaims River! and lets her in in in in and lets her  
in and lets her in and they let each other in River and we let each other in  
we let each other's breath into our selves and dissolve and reconstitute as  
one glissando wind piano room echo let's go see who's in there right now  
river right now riverrun right now through our mouths and into each other  
pulling us together for the first kiss illicit explicit just this.

. . . . .

Seehorse was present at the baptism of Rabbit as a young queer. Get queerer

walking sunlight praying down Lyme street and Beckwith Lane  
intersection to strains of head cello refrain. When my head grows to be as  
wide as yours I can wear your stretched out hats on all fours howling to be  
loved as we are us on lobo bus growing fur through yellow orange and  
black schoolbus armor

. . . . .

Would you like a cup of snake. Walking with the one you love everyone is  
praying on foot foot flight down Old Lyme Main Street already eternity tern  
swoop light. Whenever my mom would give directions to the Allison Road  
House she would say "Six Skylights!" and soon the whole neighborhood  
was infected with skylights--she loves doing that being the influencer—  
Lancelot du Lac Duckside Cottage tournament sword rack hoister--she  
calls her swords the Piercers of the Air of Morgue.

Biking two by two down Library Lane is praying in wolf light through the  
fancy membrane of the Endtimer's Duckside Cottage in the brain interface  
with temporary and capacious and tenderness worldspace. It is  
unbelievable how every single president takes credit for ending the  
apocalypse before it begins. I'm responsible for no meanings here  
chainsaw ripple air we say it has no meaning and by this we mean  
debonair blond coiff light has found its billionaire beheaded in the pond of  
Woyzek center stagefright entrails laundry line--for Oedipus the Shepherd  
has come through Sam Shepard. Hello Sam how's the light up there,  
Spider Time? Chainsaw jigsaw puzzle apple apple apple in the air

.. . . .



Dogariffic Jumbo with his beautiful orange jester vest!

I wonder who invented windows--Hey let's  
cut holes in the walls and let light in it really caught on and became a thing.  
Light really caught on and trickle trickle oh and the windchimes and the  
eggtime swamp scent sulphur net yes yes yes yes yes yes. Hi Daddy. Hi  
Daddy. Do you have a windstop Daddy. Do you want to smoke that little  
butt. Yeah with a carburetor and maybe you're talking. The child carburetor  
has spoken Balkans of thought into this little one instant red truck passing  
drinking cup: LUCAS TREE EXPERTS. I wonder what Plague of Fantasies  
means now--am I making that up.

All the fantasies that we have  
while cooped up with our  
chicken karma past.

Or is it a contagious fantasy that goes viral and inflects our speech just so—  
the green man got knocked down O the green man got knocked down and  
here he is again now and so the plague of fantasies disappears into oak  
treebark and the eleven cypresses behind it attest it is so it is so let it not  
be spoken of again let us be owls and feed ourselves real mouse  
nourishment by night and Football is my dog, here Football Football come  
here Football, fetch! You retrieve best--robin redbreast--woven timenest.

.. .. . . . . .

Seehorse was hanging out one day in the pretime.  
She decided to invent windows  
For the coming slime time. But one thing:  
You have to make your own slime. No storebought!  
Only the real adrenaline sweat worked in slime  
For which you have most gallantly fought  
Against time javelins while

Philhippocampus Homewrap dances. The wind whips it with this chainsaw buzz background  
I was in a plane with those I loved having a party my balls all peachfuzz.

. .. . . . .

Aether and the knights of the round spaceship escaping the anthrogreed epidemic  
The arrow sign says CEDAR GROVE  
It sleeps best in the proximity of the Rabbit  
What's already there just put little pink dollhouse doors on it  
This huge bare mid March oak tree  
No need to show off with sculpture or garden or sculpture garden  
Turn the tiny knob and enter doll heaven by eyeing it

And then come back we'll have fish and wine at seven  
And you can give your class presentation on  
Grass mother fear stimulus  
Grass

You walked on it and beat it  
No more phobia just us walking cedar trees  
Make grove a go  
Make grove a go go go go  
Go go go  
Grove

. . . . .

Book cellar closed until further notice.  
Book cedar open for inscription wound poultice poltergeist notice roses  
Ghosts in galosh boats red as the thread that weaves us further apart and  
back together snap heart snap camera heart heart stay together pump fuel,  
for our love art--whose?  
Oxydized green weathered mailbox 8 Library Lane Old Lyme Connecticut  
home of the wetlands high swoop crane and skunk cabbage and satellite  
dish bird perched on shingle roof to oblivate whom?

. . . . .

Where were you when this picture was taken  
Of your grandfather in Bosnia 1922  
That's where you'll be  
Nothing to worry  
Everything to do.

.. . . .

## FRED CARTER

### MISPRISION

an affinity of hammers in  
the human furnishing  
such indices

of disaffect and caught  
up predicates and  
even if

EVERYTHING IS  
[still] MATERIAL

we are not spares  
we do not job  
for worth

defrag a single thought  
until it shirks

such unmopped agencies  
along the u-bhans  
coral into time

now it's morning and we're working  
on it no not one linguistic gauze  
was not outsourced

you know you said it then  
i found it not hard  
to accept

UNMOORED [and/or]  
UNDONE

lived inside your poem  
for a month

only to find a solitary corralled  
sentiment a tool  
for nothing

ORGANIZE THE VICTIM  
CLASSES [misattributed]

hammers still inside  
of everything  
there can be

no defence  
of polity  
today

*Text in caps is lifted or misremembered from the poetry of Maxine Gadd,  
the work of Tiffany Lethabo King, and Fox News paraphrasing the Weather Underground.*



**We'll be everywhere at once,  
more powerful than a whisper,**

# GABRIEL WALLACE

## PINE SONG

Doctors do get sick and sometimes die  
Philosophy professors will ever wonder why  
Fortune tellers just can't read the signs  
Still I pine

Mountain climbers have their ups and downs  
Dunces are awarded their diplomas, caps and gowns  
Noted poets beat it down the line  
Still I pine

Clothing models wear out all their nerve  
Taxi drivers brake when they should swerve  
Pickers leave good fruit up on the vine

Judges can't suspend their disbelief  
Counselors have problems with absorbing patients' grief  
Sommeliers can't tell a cup of poison from a priceless glass of wine  
Still I pine

Djs in mid-segue miss the beat  
Dogs perform their tricks without a treat  
Cool spring water tastes like turpentine

Gandy dancers drive their spikes too deep  
Mattress salesmen just can't seem to get a good night's sleep  
Dreams of suffocation come to those who've never worked inside a mine  
Still I pine

Window washers leave unsightly streaks  
Travel agents strand their clients overseas for weeks  
Jazz pianists can't remember how to play "My Funny Valentine"  
Still I pine

Pinball hustlers tilt their own machines  
Farmers trade their cows for magic beans  
Pitchfork critics lose count of their tines

Riders still look down into their phones  
The more they try to stay connected, the more they feel alone  
Decades pile on decades and they crush the ways we used to measure time  
Still I pine

Ticket takers give themselves a pass  
Skyscrapers collapse when airplanes crash engorged with gas  
Spouses argue with each other: "where would be the perfect place to dine?"  
Still I pine

# ISABEL BALÉE

## VANITAS FOR CONTEMPORANEOUS AMBIGUITY

\*

surreptitiously  
doing the same things  
as the things i hate  
that you do  
eating the same dirt  
as everything  
even birds  
laugh at me  
serenading  
the promise of spring  
the reassurance of

life support  
repeating in vain  
the sitting still life  
a million lives  
a million paintings  
unplugging  
the eye approximate to  
fear's vision  
of st. francis  
writing how you speak  
making art that knows  
it's pictorially  
self-referential



a question of learning  
how to submerge ourselves  
in hot springs  
over the internet  
over second thoughts  
second hands  
thoughhands & astral  
heads removed from bodies  
in such delicate  
congruency  
bathing in gaslight  
pink moon's expectation  
considered causal  
to theological epochs  
weighed in

not caring about being good  
or having something to show  
the apparitions of us all  
drafted from zero  
losing what i never had,  
having lost the touching for  
never-being-had  
due to the nascent possibility  
of being lost  
in the first place  
losing  
the holy  
endless consumption

in the painstaking  
circumlocution

\*

i just wanna be adored  
for my behavior -  
so do you adore your crisis?  
your outside-inward self-definition?  
cassandra asked,  
indicating the tower  
enclosing all this meaning  
derived from  
the handbook  
of natural law  
which i don't believe intends  
to enrapture us  
with the possibility  
of power  
even over simple  
quotidian affairs

but this was the source  
of all my filth  
& addiction

as she was tugging her hair  
out in handfuls  
i was jogging through  
a bordeaux cemetery  
where the dead hung  
cloistered by vineyards  
choke-held  
by the forgotten fact  
that after they died  
we had to clean out  
their bedside tables,  
dust off their mirrors  
& pay for their rest  
so we could be  
absolutely certain  
of their transition into  
strange hands  
before initiating  
the process of grief

## IVY JOHNSON

I.

Then came the roses

I cataloged each bloom in the garden

No, rather I assessed

The unnatural correspondence concerning each given name

With the tactility of cherry silken petals

Its saccharine perfume

There was a rose bush that acted so elegant from afar

Blushing like a shy aria on stage

But when I approached it was all chintzy and carnation

Like a Profile Picture versus what I look like on Zoom

What is the correlation between beauty and value

Value and money

Money and scarcity

I don't care about fucking roses

The gardens are free

Give me food

Give me beauty

Tear the walls down

2.

Poppies grow in the median where cars enter the freeway

Do not take that as some inspirational metaphor for thriving in urbanity

I am actually quite sad

I want you to see the poppies themselves, all titian in color like a glowing sun

Like the glowing man who birthed Gods then chained them in hell

What I really want you to understand is the cruelty of my plucking those little gods

Then stuffing them in a Target bag to tote them to my house

As a gift to myself

How many likes does it take to get to the center of the primordial wound

How about a social wound

I am not a sunshine hippy gathering flowers

I am a tortured little boy burning ants for his pleasure

An Icarus riff singing of a sadistic God

I am that God

3.

I've been perusing the darkest corners of the interwebs

In quest for the ultimate super bloom

But all I can find is MapQuest

I have bloodied my knees and hands crawling down the highways

In some modern dance of penance for my original sin

Listening to Sarah McLachlan while screaming that she's wrong

Didn't she ever read a bible

When someone tries to help me, I assure them it's a performance for a drone

I feel like Forest Gump running for no discernable good reason

But much more slowly

4.

Have you ever heard the allegory about tulips and scarcity

It's economic

They say it's all about the seeds

But I'm not much for telos

Live your goddamn life

Where Have I 40 Million Dutch Tulips Gone

They've gone in the trash

They couldn't be sold

You can't give free away

No one wants it



5.

I feel like Dana Ward typing wild speech but really  
I'm trying to say something about peonies  
And how the chemicals sprayed in the commercial flower industry make workers sick  
How I heard a news story while I was driving righteously in my Prius  
About workers getting silicosis from working in a factory  
That manufactures knockoff luxury countertops  
Juan, a thirty-eight year old factory worker  
Can't carry groceries up to his house  
Or walk to his car without suffocating  
He is awaiting a lung transplant  
Liberals say, "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good"  
The world says that when a hero is needed  
The common folk step up  
Thank you, dear customer service representative  
For playing a part in the commercial of our lives  
With canned music playing in police helicopters  
Which crescendos when the eyes of a white and brown stranger meet  
Saying thank you for your service  
I really needed this cat toy in quarantine  
This gives me the same queasy feeling of the last episode of Mad Men  
When Don Draper traverses the terrain of his psyche for  
The final time that he hits rock bottom in the series  
And comes out the other end

Orchestrating a chorus of voices on a mountain top  
With people of different races and creeds,  
Shaved white hippy women holding Coke-o-Cola  
Declaring it's the real thing  
What the world needs today  
It's the uncanny valley and I'm one of three rats  
Drowning in a barrel of milk  
Trying to scurry my way out  
Make butter, Make butter  
Crawl out  
Even when we've pooled all of our resources  
And called in all the experts on  
Epidemiology, the Industrialized Prison Complex, Climate Change  
And they've discussed the world's terrors with the pope and the Dali Lama  
It's like that stupid joke when three guys walk into a bar  
And they all die is the punchline

Poetry is about failure  
Writing a poem is like refusing to buy blood diamonds  
I fucking hate myself  
I couldn't say that I hate myself more than the world  
That's the point  
Do you remember that study done with the barbed wire mother  
That baby chimp killed himself

Even if we are all in the dissociative state of a sinister video game being played by the gods

We're all still alive in a sense

Buying terrycloth robes to comfort us in our staycation

That comes in a rose, peony, or poppy print

Give me the poppies

I'll eat them like Kronos eats the children that he cannot afford

## JACOB KAHN

### A IS FOR AEGIS

Each day at dawn I put the  
discolored buds in my ears  
I maunder the pathways  
    perceive the froward  
    trying to lure the cat down the stairs  
    with a frayed orange thread

    and so the morbid fantasy persists  
    as though finding empty seats  
    in a darkened theater  
        sitting down to watch  
        amongst the difficult perfumes  
the history of strife and  
the history of pleasure  
    then loaf nearby just to pet  
    the inconsolable mare

On the trail the lady said  
    you looked so pretty in your pink hat  
    against the poppies from a half away

Well, what about *now*?

Hole where the hoof plod  
Gap where the rent went

A is for aegis, B for Bear-Sterns

    w/ each plunge of the rig  
    & preservation in its excess  
    I prep the console  
I sample the gels  
    suckling weevil of fallible gains  
    integrating the poll  
        with the voter  
    osier and ichor  
        starburst, fingerling, don't

forget the vanilla soy cream!  
    In Virgil  
    there is an understanding  
this kind of lyric continuity  
    is the provision of militaries  
        frogs deep  
    in a throng of nettle

Do you refer to the repugnance  
of your forebears in the past  
    or the present?

Do you prefer  
treaty and breach  
or the attachment  
of riders? In my dream

Kevin told me to read  
“He is your Saturn”  
a poem by John Wieners  
that as far as I can tell  
does not exist  
—all I know  
he said is look for the poem  
that ends  
Bambino  
yr flute  
is safe with me



“He who feeds you,  
controls you.”

– *Ronald Reagan*

## JAMES YEARY

### CAVEMAN SENTENTIA

4

carrot sapling produces a horse  
the children laugh up to their necks and then stop  
a feeling reflecting himself in a puddle dressed as wormskin

up to their necks has gotten away from me  
the vegetable is strangely immortal  
I can see it already painted with its leaves above the ground

soft end  
blue end  
the hallucination is explaining itself

the excuses of youth are shedding  
the red of their cheeks held by a flower  
beating for the missing feels

5

we are protected from the fact of the lake by its onlookers  
whose buttocks form the remainder of landscape  
their name the seen part of them

a rolling hillside of nothing left  
each object in its own particle accent  
the wart is unfolding proteins to its friends

useless, we are lost in something smaller than water  
that thickening around Old No Horns are its demands  
exclaims arrow eye



6

greasy black hairs exploring under the earline  
gates of moss the spiders won't take  
entering the edge of the lake

the color just sits there on the surface scowling  
father builds his nest inside the seagull  
a storm's eyebrow furrowing in the heel

little gremlins run up and down my arm  
to them I am a stone and just as deadly  
my organs age on a different scale

emotions pool on the rocks  
inner courses defined by Giardia  
ten minutes passes becoming a slime

7 / 8

the lettuce is bad but it's leaving  
a city is rising in its chest  
I reach out from the thriving body for my share

the weather includes memories and threats  
hinged to dwarfing cusp  
one species heads straight for my shadow

fishy peaks plunging through cloudbottom  
the hard one slips into something pink and mnemonic  
the soft one thinks it was born with the hole there

8

roots and branches worm the dirt to eventually correlate  
even the back of the mouth where the tongue breaks out  
everything forks it's a tendency

ape smile blur in a streaming single  
memory pulls unlikelihood of lunar balances  
its yellow out of the sky is saved up in stories

crows share feathers  
one founding a town under a leaf of kale  
saw it over to the eye and then told me

9

latrine diamond leads spring to the sea  
after it empties the cut in the land is pink  
and pimpled with quartz

one end of the spine hides in a dream  
and the other in the urethra  
you can tell which earths are alive by their differences

the insects have hidden their teeth  
but what has become of the lion?  
bulbous ground where the sound settles

10

ancient hair reveals the trees secret self  
into darkness shared by onions on the hunt  
the hunt is as dumb as the earth and onions

removed from the jaws the voice of russet earth  
a single sap expunged from the canopy  
only the place of a taste holding difference

cover the deer in fresh timber  
cover the manx in toothed grasses  
when the bloodfeast is consummated cover their mouths with this memory

11

chalk on the inside of the world  
where the scene is deposited still as death  
sticking to the leaf's white bottom

the coconut tree has delicious thoughts  
erupting from violence and agility  
its mosses cross the world to touch the raspberry steer

drawing through the charcoal in my cache  
rabbit with a mouth as long as its body  
composed entirely of stars breaking through the loam

12

in the tentacles of the estuary ants carry on for the frightened waters  
carrying salts back to the earth  
to lure the butterfly

in the same pockets potatoes grow out from their elbows  
tufts in the kelp more ancient than their bodies  
magnolias shadowing rows of elephant

the ants bring octopus eggs to the foot of the watcher  
their smiling beaks in profile through underdeveloped tentacles  
the real has left its disparate bodies and is driving into the beach

13

he wanted to eat the authors  
wasps formed out of the plant gametes then dissociated  
the latecomer fly always found its way to the egg

the chicken pretends it's not listening  
the python pretends that it's listening  
they tryst in the trees for months at a time

arms branch into fingers and nails break up the outside  
in the darkness I feel common with the living things  
weevils bring the badger's coat to the thread the serpent's comb

14

they gather stools around the roots they were born in  
undoing knotted feelers on the abdomen's men  
only the Sun's rituals could be simpler

can't splay a bone without inviting some habitat  
even the hole in my tooth for rock and silicates incites sissiparity  
in the gallery

stretching leaf to leaf wide enough for the fruit bat  
when mushrooms lift my stools up to the tops of the trees  
stocking salt flats in a big bottom lip

14 / 15

antelope arising from false premises  
in the sea where hogs learn to swarm  
creating sedimentary layers of eel

the hogs make a terrible impression on the landscape  
lizards look to molt fish into their skins  
the sea bottoms out in revulsion

a hole opens swallowing out of sequence  
drawn into the sky and blinding its causes  
the eels remained on the land tormenting bison until dawn

16

the ibis is waiting on a shrimp bloom  
whose perch is scented with methyls  
hatching out of the sound of it feeding

algal indigos seep down from the skyline  
signal colors switching over from the soil  
marble the root vegetables with colors that can look like anything

the ibis and I belong to the same cloud overhead  
a shrimp moves toward me on the edge of its sullen finger  
the sun sets into the ground and absorbs us

# JAMIE TOWNSEND

SAFE

Finally letting go

Is like

The exact opposite of

A training montage

Or commercial for

A surrogate kid sister

Gingham

Cropped overalls

We lie in bed

Bereft of nothing

So safe

I came

In a neat little package

So cute you

Said so cute

I shrugged and

Dug my toe into the blanket

Slowly digging

my own grave

I read Safe

I look at the inadequate

Daydream at the pink

Bruce assumed

Was flat

Symbolic so cute  
And gay so happy  
I read Safe  
I lick the inside  
Of my thumb  
And make a wet spot  
On the page  
I wonder at this  
Conservative flood  
Picture it  
Beneath a parasol  
Skeleton,  
Pink tissue  
Meet damp  
Flap of skin  
Our romantic dream  
Of safety  
I couldn't sleep  
Even with the light on  
Hallway filled with  
Familiar voices  
Bodyless  
Predicting ruin  
I whisper

sweet nothings

up against the sheet

Soft consonants

and sibilants

trickle out

the hair

on your arms

reaching towards me

We're almost fucking

Listen to

Lost and safe

Wake up feeling

The residual

Open narrative

What as who

Recants I can't be

Bothered by this

Mucus

Clinging dress

All eyes fixed

Playing with myself

Little red

Which is how

Blood moves to

the surface

Searching for the path

Of least resistance

Sheer nylon

Tease

Recoil

High on glaze

blush fading

And wet, touchable

Yielding

This is

A very dangerous moment

The excited blood

Rubbing against

Excited skin

knife wife

fruity void

Still dreaming of

Becoming something

Else a portal

Bubble in

A tear without

The allure you know

Safe



The letter

S is the serpent

In the poet's

Eden

dream like

The most violent

thing you can do

with candy

Name it a ceiling

And the femmes

you loved

an unrepentant

shower

of meteorites

Safe as

A fallen angel

Lie down

Wrestle with god

damn space

Mouth to Mouth

To be safe

I learned to resuscitate

a doll

a new doll each year

their hearts can't take  
too much pressure  
I learned to reject  
the world ending  
at the tips of my fingers

## JASON MORRIS

from LOW LIFE

### VII.

The beautiful tends to overlap with the strange. *Altrui scale*. Lower down in the green and black rate holes, the heroes tear open bandages. Wordlessly blood is exchanged, in simple human fury and care, torn socket the replacement of an already replaced part. Crushed king lights, filterless hospital dissolved head.

Welcomed and recorded, at the sides of which accidentally become hours, years. Are company and separate existence at once (by chance). Muted variations, as the friends catch for example the wide murmur of a nighttime plain or the soft iridescence of light under a bedroom door, that little horizon line. Space / time's a river, ego found like Huck's canoe, among the reeds alongside it. Lucky improbable vehicle. The chorus hands down a sentence of names, whose law's the egress of voices. Others crowded along some unseen shore. But when they are is here. Sweet starry night swirling reflection lures one on, in pretty bent eddies. What it resembles trembles.

He gazes out the window of the St. James Infirmary, its flecked panes reinforced with thin wire at crosswise diagonals. "When after midnight, when poetry is always / nearer, I look out my window..." So John leans on Keats' casements, they open easily for him (all doors), and now he goes out hunting for cigarette butts—"a vain occupation, after the rain"—in doorways, cracks in cement, under cars and in theatre lobbies. The wet red lights on oil, thin threads of music. A trail. Villon is there, Antigone, Blind Willie McTell. They room there days and at night roam the streets wearing wolfs' heads and skins— at once expelled and contained. Inside the boundaries of a limitless zone. Confined in the place where anything goes. And so it's easy going and totally impossible for them, whose skin's the very place where kings cut deals. Because they are considered both wards of state and the holy beasts of god, they are doubly endangered. The threat they live under means anyone with a gun can kill them, or only the king can kill them. How they come and go, then, is it 'free' or no—?

Villon is composing "Dying Crapshooter's Blues"—out of words torn from magazines, in coded vulgate, in hesitant chords on an upright piano with missing keys. In the lobby people sip from pints of Four Roses in hospital gowns, they have bracelets and clear plastic bags, they're coming and going. *Tathagata*, they are the ones who come and go. Pure ongoing administration of intake and discharge. Signatures and stamps mark the process of arrival, the process of leaving. A world of IDs and bags of worldly belongings.

In that other world, where the connected collect and exchange—no one from there can understand an out-of-date lyric whispered along the keys of a piano, in the waiting room. In unfashionably ragged and filthy bits of strung together elegy and ode, in rhyme under a yellow linoleum light, in the folky old forms, in futurist *ubi sunt*. Days have gone by.

The premonition of its strange force? The vehemence of Antigone's refusal. Here come the cops (privately hired squad), in shiny creaking leather boots, with zipties and truncheons. They're hungry to crack skulls. And just as Creon tells Antigone that "death is her only god," their ignorance is grotesque, on vivid display. What do they know about death? Death is a miracle. Its ever present nearness makes what she and Villon, what Willie McTell can taste see feel hear touch. It is a nearness transmitted in their music

# JEFFREY JOE NELSON

## LONELINESS FOR THE COMPNAY OF FRIENDS (THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY)

The trees are the true shamans of Spring.

\*

As if in a painting unmoving. (untrue)

\*

Up one flight, down another.

Bird flight

Rainstorm

Cocoon.

\*

Oh well,

the arugula got ruined in the storm – bitter, tasteful herb.

\*

Downstairs the drummer plays a wicked beat, a full minute of Boz Scaggs disco

The Low Down, lighting up my personal head-space dance floor

\*

Sky darkness through scrim of curtain lace, sipping scotch to keep taste

quintessence of earth, plant & smoke, to learn, in mouth, if not enjoy,

At least abide by pain long festering

Made less tolerable by this prison-prism

\*

Old in number, not actual age,

As-salamu alaykum from mosque on corner where I bid my neighbor's wife adieu

years ago ...

eeeeeeeeeeccccccccchhhhhhhooooooo

of call to prayer...

sent out each evening

as sun dips down beneath

shitty city's heavy shoulders

\*

Read for understanding, read for protection, read for inspiration, if any man shld  
come between me & reading, one of us will soon leave, as I read I remember the  
projects I've put aside, realize I must falter no longer, it's not too late, my memory  
off stretched, now percolates, others will want to read what I've been writing, what  
I'm writing now, stick to the idea & follow through, pass out each night knowing a  
little more of the whole is complete

\*

*(after Tu Fu)*

I am not like that lone goose any longer  
Flying through the sky without eating or drinking  
Searching for its flock

\*

Young beauty  
Old beauty  
Middle age beauty  
Between the two  
I pick a piece of loose skin  
From my chin, ever  
Trimming a piece  
Ever sculpting  
What's left

\*

Sleeping when I'm tired.  
Waking & rising, when I'm awake.

\*

I pulled it up & kept it at the edge of my screen  
& couldn't keep my eyes from wanting to see more  
I see what I see but don't know what I know  
As I'm always realizing I know less  
Than I thought till my days succumb  
To unknowing and I can know  
Again that I don't know  
Accept what has flown  
Accept what is new

\*

When the mind is dusk

\*

Through the top windows of this house skies are blank, a dull gray  
My son can barely read w/out moving some part of his body  
Kicking his feet together to make a dented shushing  
While I lay upon the couch & read a poet  
Who lived 1200 years ago, as old as I  
Am now, discuss follies of empire  
War & the vicissitudes of aging

\*

Hard April rain falls upon the hungry ground, keeping us indoors, frightful of  
catching a cold or worse

\*

Here in South Brooklyn... reading & occasionally writing... street quiet... cars barely  
pass... a drowsiness overtakes all

\*

I watch the buds bloom slowly, first a tip of green, then the shoots of leaves, furled  
like banners round a pike, then the slow blossoming as first one leaf emerges after  
another, an entire branch riddled with new life

\*

They say the smog has cleared over Southern China  
The land mass and ocean can be seen from afar  
How in only 40 days visual air pollution  
Has dissipated to a trickle, so that maybe soon  
I'll be able to see the stars  
From my roost in Bed-stuy  
Where the lights of our city  
Dim to a feeble glow

you  
have  
to  
have  
your  
heart  
to give





## JENNIFER KARMIN & BERNADETTE MAYER

### ARE WE THERE YET?

are we there yet?  
a ghost is a person  
writing towards a self  
you were cast in the dream  
as an aspect of me  
arrangement replaces composition  
blue sky with no clouds  
is a series of commas  
knock knock  
who's there?  
what's the difference  
between an attachment  
and a commitment?

yet there we are  
we yet are there  
a ghost is a corporation  
without a selfie stick  
if you fall into the drear  
is it good for the evolution of deer?  
but arrangement isn't attachment  
a knock is blue  
so say who is it  
or else the clouds'll make  
vaginas & penises, oh dear  
what the matter be?  
volcanoes, old trees, abyssian  
chowders spell out the litany  
of illuminated manuscripts galore  
if, you don't, know, it's, a, wolf  
are you writing then?  
or just going haywire hoping  
to end with a verifiable commitment?  
as in 'commitment & commitment'?\*  
\*attachment &/or composition with vagina clouds  
let's get that word 'commitment'  
out of the language & replace it with gubofi

oh dear, what would gertrude stein do?  
survival is a form of repetition  
the freedom to escape  
when the building is on fire  
hummingbirds are not subterfuge  
thank you for using that word

glacial time tree time luna moth time  
the aesthetic experience of slowing down  
blue sky with no clouds  
is a giant period  
a vagina in the sky can be made of clouds  
is that a combination of letters  
you find displeasing?  
it's language inside our bodies  
tho we are not this thought  
waking up to a new poem  
feels like xmas

oh dear, what would machiavelli do?  
is that a fresh pasta from brooklyn?  
it's very dark out here, i'll ask husband #2 ½ to  
come in (over?) curmudgeons fill the kitchen cupboard,  
who cares if you're right, i'll sit here eating cherries  
thank you but you should be able to get fish eggs more  
easily, i'm sorry i have so many husbands i'll try  
& be better, have fewer, in another life, you can  
watch it on t.v., willow tit willow, meretricious  
ne'we-do-well that you are, ever write while watching  
a movie in a theatre? is machiavelli an avatar?  
was the cottage a cupboard, did we roast the eggplant?  
what height it must be xmas, i am the man of la mancha  
& so are you, let's go to beantown & gamble our nest  
eggs away, i have my cellphone, you have your cellphone,  
we won't get lost in the forest with all the imagistes, the truncated  
legislators if we can still see the tree, make  
a beeline under my chair, for the door, i don't  
like periods, the punctuation of every mackerel sky,  
i have a theory that hats hold your coat for you,  
trilobites evanesce like balloons, that's a lot of  
hooley, crudites abound heretofore like & over there  
where there is no volcano or shower of periwinkle  
flowers raining down on us eating avocado sandwiches  
with tomato & muenster cheese

## JESSE FLEMING

### NARCISSUSA

I heard selfishness is currency so one day I broke into target and took fifty years' worth of stale bread and decomposing produce. it's not that the employees were bitter so much as they felt no compulsion to validate my new identity as self-appointed leader of the free world economy. if bill gates doesn't know the value of a box of eggo waffles then I too can claim my contributions to humanity have paid their due and are now laid to rest. I too can put forth my right to exist as self-evident given that I was squeezed out of my last employ, buttons pinging everywhere as I flew forth like peter rabbit fleeing mr. macgregor, my naked self fully formed like athena from zeus. with my own living fists I ripped a panel from the side of trump tower and called it a mirror, myself a god. the budget cuts will set you free, sing a song of severance. I began to grow taller than amazon, than the tower of babel, than the millennium force, too tall to ride so I took to swallowing cattle by the herd, children by the schoolbus, cities by the skyscraper. enraged, I smashed the shrunken mirror beneath my toe and devoured the whole appalachian range in one gulp. I thumbed down 747s en route over the atlantic and at last, looking down, I, swinging from the wingtips like I'd tied my own rope, I, my belly roiling with hunger, I, my hands straining both into the waves below and into the exosphere above, I, I, eyeing my whole self with delight, my own mouth warbling I AM THE FOOL OF THE WORLD

## JOE HALL

### GET ME MEAT

*I kept hearing the phrase "essential worker" and thinking that was bad for us.  
I took it as meaning I was disposable.  
Like you put the infantry on the front line because they're cannon fodder.*

*-Anonymous Kroger Employee, "They Call Me A Hero," 5.15.20, Vice News*

severed lungs mound-twitch under a clip light, lungs  
scrape paper dry, press the key, wet slap of a mound vomit into  
takeout, fried hair smell, red eyes, french fries, spine jelly  
and rotting lungs at checkout: these bills, checkout: this pizza I ate  
in tears, checkout: cart full of tumors, w/twelve hundred dollars  
ten thousand ears, w/all things I could think to want, scrolling, I said  
my laptop won't turn on, they said it was because a lung  
was rotting inside, they said a marketing executive would  
have to sleep beside me in bed, would have to put a dab of wet cat food  
under my pillow every hour, there was a lung rotting in my mind,  
it would be a difficult extraction, apple cores, coffee lids, torn tooth-edged pastry wrapper, screw-  
cap, I couldn't wait: the CFO was expectorating mosquitoes expectorating  
the diaphanous circuitry of wings, called every 7<sup>th</sup> gene  
in exchange, sour water and endless cells in the spreadsheets  
of a hospital's billing department for x-mas, more sour beer and sleeping on  
a couch after the shift, sleeping on a bunk bed after the shift, sleeping on  
my feet after the shift, sleeping on your feet after the shift, after the shift  
walking on air, walking on water, walking five stories down the sheer side of the  
warehouse, after the shift, I open my glove box and it is full of  
rotten lungs, droplets of gas hitting the pavement after I  
pull the nozzle out of the tank, egg, cheese, and bean, coffee, yellowing underwear—the  
heat of the machines, those mammals' eggshells and alveoli, candles and  
endless scroll of lungless torsos embarrassing production with their spasms

## DA FUGUE ZONE VOL #15: POLITICS? RUH ROH!

Quest Diagnostics' search terms yank pleasure bunches off  
whole desires lick into company, lick into union, maids, childcare workers,  
homecare workers, milkers, pickers, sex workers, far from neoliberalism  
the podcast, the void, I still want you, inside of lemons instead of work,  
some X for place in proximity to make life, an old woman  
really digging in her nose on the bus, I do not mine this book for bricks  
for the fortress of a thought, I read this b/c I drown, translate dig, drill,  
and burn as stream union imagining a Rubik's cube of love  
and fucking as emissions free, ruling class customer owned  
cooperative employee union, tomato pickers union, a dimensional  
door between hostile workplaces, storm clouds boiling  
urine twisted over this town for eternity, wet ash  
peppers the output of the sea union, too educated for solidarity  
union, the emperor's power to project a million false bodies  
union, to slay and lick while he walks in his own sight, not  
only spectacle, we wrestle muppets for him in our once and holy bodies  
union, roll the dice again, watch number interact w/equation

/

dice workers', troll catchers', great union of unions' union  
great union of scabs, prosecutors, and police  
Da Fugue Zone #15, why did you do a union, union of that

## DA FUGUE ZONE VOL #52

mist mews on the page, rages in the tweet, eats cats, breathes  
eats and endures the glow of a sepia diction  
what and who we squeezed to dismember our debt, the gassy corpses  
Key Bank stuffs into passenger seats across the city  
you wonder who are you Zooming with, you are Zooming with yourself with a hole  
drilled into your head, spreadsheets rolled up and stuffed inside and who catches  
themselves drooling under the city's manifold lights extruded through apertures onto  
the clearance slacks they had higher hopes for, rise, you say, twisting  
in your seat, rise! you put bread on your tongue but realize you don't  
know if you're headed to a bar or a mandatory training, pills and larvae of mist run from  
your eyes, unravel in the air until your Zoom is an aquarium of fog  
rise! you say, rise! but also I am just fascinated to see how deeply you (I—of course!) can sink  
into sadness, mist that mews on the page, rages in the tweet  
eats cats, you know me, and who, this is it  
Da Fugue Zone #52

## DA FUGUE ZONE VOL #58

what it must be like to inspire desire, as an archived virus descending  
upon a fusion center, carnivorous honey of velvet bees, what it must be  
to wade, waist deep, among the hatching seed-heads  
of surveillance capitalists, to touch the liquid mirror  
the deep fake of the self, looking back in the armor  
of all those interlinked beetles, that form the mirror  
the whole notes of the song of self palpitating in  
the river, the whole notes let loose like  
with gnawed-fingernail-recognition technology  
who you might be floating in the cell  
walls of a databroker's automated surplus  
repo-men thrash, what it must be like  
in Da Fugue Zone #58  
to inspire such desire

## JOEL LEWIS

A WORK DAY, 7:25AM

Crossing my path  
on my way  
to the 6<sup>th</sup> Street stop

A man clutching  
some old fishing pole,  
whistling



LUNCHEBREAK AT THE GARDEN OF THE STATEN ISLAND INSTITUTE  
OF ARTS & SCIENCE

Shadow of a Piper Cub crosses my meatloaf sub  
while day-camp kids rush out museum doors  
for a "bug hunt" at Clay Pit Ponds.

Ferry horn alerts to the 1:30 trip to Whitehall  
& just how many poems (& their poets) admit  
slavery to the workweek punch clock?

The things squeezed dry from language  
turn into a public domain  
-- which is why I'm perusing the NY Post's  
recitative of this teeming, godless universe  
while sipping a Dunkacino the color  
of a yo-yo I owned, age 7.

No news could be less valued, but  
I owe up to it. That, and the financial inadequacy  
of my sneakers. Two borzois pass outside these gates  
pulling along their chunky owner. I give in  
and carry on.

## THE CRUNGE

I regret these stairs.  
I regret the fifty things  
that I want to happen  
all at once

I stare hard at  
a vending machine  
and its dangling display  
of sugary nutmeats  
                    & see my face  
reflected on a glass barrier  
pocked with children's bitty fingerprints

I want to tell someone  
how all necessary doors were closed to me  
even before my face arrived at the doorframe.  
Instead, I press "F5" and nothing gets delivered  
except change for something I don't possess.

I won't dream of a Soviet-class parade  
stinking-up L'Enfant's DC streets.  
I mean, what good  
is the cinema of power  
with its scenery-chewing actors  
and scores of walk-ons  
to my narrow hamlet of feints?

The impulse is to leave gradually.  
The Irish Goodbye  
The Jewish Tootle-Loo  
The Uruguayan Pampero Stride  
The All-American “going out for some cigarettes”  
The Vanishing Act.

No one is glad at this place,  
These avenues trace their source back to tears.  
We read histories of traffic circles for mental reboot.  
We tack Post-Its® under the catch basins to  
contact frenemies who ghost us.

Check my cargo pants  
for Zlotys, Piasters and Talents.  
Plus some crumbled fare cards  
for cities I’m unlikely to revisit.

Address this tide. Mold a polis  
of outdated electronics, random shootings,  
unconvinced commuters and a woman  
on a bench busking “Greensleeves”  
for loose change & transfers.

The door and the decade is closing fast  
with the obvious effects. And in place  
of the Golden Rule let’s just agree:  
*“Act Better Than You Feel”*

פועל



JOHN COLETTI

OUR FRIENDS

There's a partial verse I see everywhere  
cool to color in folding homes?  
fuck it. the moon has a strong corona tonight  
and I patiently  
become the long song of comfort society  
grounded in a flying tree

-----

## GETTING THERE

To call out birds and feel nothing  
is an option  
a rose of Jericho      earth ripped as I tugged it  
When I was a kid      I would draw this  
SWAN  
(draws happily violently)

it's a bizarre                          auburn iris  
sitting wrong      in a flipped chair  
                 circling over warm light  
off-toner                          zodiac  
the aspens  
all messy

-----

## PREFERRED FREEZER SERVICES

The concrete silo making concrete  
is the tallest thing in town  
shoot baskets  
into no basket  
like an asshole in hail

## JONATHAN LOHR

### ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL

Email saying management working from home now

Email saying union reps working from home now

Email saying contractors the union reps let management hire working from home now

Email saying the 80 hour sick leave bump is not retroactive and no step-up pay for now

Email saying stock dipped upon initial stay-at-home order but came back after seasonal workers were laid off and looks to be a strong finish to the quarter now

Email saying hiring freeze lasting to end of year now

We get free sodas now

Now we're out of sodas—Turns out they were left by management from a cancelled lunch meeting

Find wipes left in payroll

Gloves from cleaning crew and masks from security guard

Take old steam tunnel to bathroom in empty corporate building next door

Find out from company-wide "Safety Share, A Good Tip Stemming from a Bad Situation" email that my dad has been quarantined

Post on union message board:

Any word yet on whether the jobs of those who die will be posted union, filled by contractors, or left vacant?

Text coworkers at home:

I'm not even making this up they made rows and rows of plot-shaped cubicles in the big conference rooms in case we need to quarantine on the job :0 better believe I'm staying on the clock if I end up in there



## JONATHAN SKINNER

### ONGOINGNESS

the days go on getting longer until  
they won't and then they get shorter  
before they stop and start lengthening  
again—light gathers in cactus spines  
silhouetting the growing crowns  
of ribs that expand and contract  
drawing water up through green  
cells towards the sun—dabblers  
reclaim the emptied out campus  
commons—doctored images go  
viral of urban dolphins cavorting  
in canals turned Venetian blue  
a bit of joy clicked forward—can you  
smell fear in a handful of flour  
the undocumented go without—  
a farmer at the front plows up a field  
as backline workers put in hours  
sorting produce under fluorescent  
lights—assembling healthy avocado  
sandwiches for those who remain—  
brother can you spare a dime  
a smiling cashier shares your breath—  
we love this life we share with those  
we love further out from the fire—  
our society risks a safety net  
we like to imagine just deserts  
extend to all—but who won't avert  
their eyes from those in free fall  
reaching hands from right beyond  
the circle's edge—phytoplankton  
beneath ice in the Arctic night  
eke out a green graph from slight  
imperceptible variations  
in the amount of solar light—  
even in the heart of darkness  
society is solace wherever  
we can get it—our immobile media  
unlock fireside performances  
whose screens barely illuminate  
the far side of the digital divide—  
down where the tenuous cling  
they hang out in streaming shoals  
who also scroll, swipe and click—  
some look infection in the face

embrace a brazen community  
beached confusion sheltered in place  
without pressure amidst peers  
in search of a self to isolate—  
most of us would like to keep going—  
who wants to awaken with lungs  
full of ground glass put on hold  
or in line for a bed as one's self-  
defensive storms erupt inside—  
who wouldn't embrace the present  
without need for blame or sacrifice—  
beloveds pried from living arms  
go into the clinical light holding  
on as blossoms on the cherry branch  
remembering the spring return—  
every day disappears into the night  
every night we awaken before dawn  
to lie awake and wait for light

## JOSEPH BRADSHAW

### THE WORM

The worm that licks my ear  
And giggles me warmth without restraint,  
Offers my eye its delirious twitch  
In exchange for my body's nutrients.

I give freely to the worm  
The vitals awarded me at birth:  
For I love to laugh and frolic hard  
Within myself, I guard that.

Until I become death, I guard that  
My body's appointed his gnaw:  
I find little quandary in it,  
For I'd die unhappy without him.

If I die after my happiness, without him,  
No placid husk will shield me  
From the almighty who remands  
To cancel me all but smile first.

It's that unhumored god who lives  
High and hovering without decay:  
No maggots upon the eternal glower,  
Naked and sharp as an accusing finger.

It's that mardy god that lives  
And bids me life of inferior will:  
That finger who flicks the worm I love  
When I cast all orisons aside.

It's that churlish god in his  
Deceitful heaven of scheming sighs,  
Who strips like a canny ungeld  
From my ear the worm I love.

Yet I, for god, laugh low as in me  
My first death, my happiness, glows:  
I laugh as the flickering finger cuts  
Away my hope for rest, finally.

## JUDAH RUBIN

### FEBRUARY

No mean indulgence, then, the lightening sky pebbled a crumby mantle such that could call the end of a world though macerated in the focus of its future. Amplitude – mean jelly. A remembrance of things, a snuffed afternoon, lumped in with distance – and the dry heat drained what the elegiac mode is when: it's an emptying out. Memory frames *bios* in flowers of February likewise to wilt the traffic on whatever afternoon were shelled peas in a paper bag stenciled indulgent screen the mantra of harm. Lifted, if only to peek at the body beneath. The emptying out of welcome is an auto-theory of foreclosed cosmos, like fish in a refractory tub, or echoing the submarine wrecked and knocking from within. Survival's heroics given over, by rote, to the military, occasional alpinists, maybe a miner here or there. Or two sisters on a day hike. Or two more drinking their own urine in the Arizona desert. More likely a figure of elsewhere, nowhere at all; the come upon airlessness of the familiar reduced to sapped human space – an after, parting. The flowers of February are gone – I don't know. As such we characterize as else the catastrophic; wait - the nameless site of loss what property belies. They threw them out on the street, or delivered them to, stacked in empty lots, or rooms, or trucks. See here: that's what one *does*, what one can *do*. The indulgence of death: to think it discrete, somehow useful – that this is not, somehow, serial in extent, or not (what is a somehow?) somewhere, as, in these, likewise to believe the elsewhere is a spin we characterize as else– but that a we must defer or, the figuration of else, such is the we what seasons have long since changed. To still: a February flower. At night the streets, elsewhere of this meanness, its blurring distance.



In a world  
that has  
really been  
turned  
upside  
down, the  
true is a  
moment of  
the false.

## JULIAN BROLASKI

sure is closer  
blinded higherarchy  
aplumb not a plum  
a plum I picked myself  
and baked into a pie and stuck  
my own thumb in & said  
how good I was or was i





## blue lotus

the eucalyptus is also called <sup>blue is either the rarest</sup>  
the blue gum or the commonest color in nature  
on the leaf of the lotus I beheld

~~its leaves are like the~~  
~~water of melting glaciers~~

a drop of dew

which was a drop of glue  
on cut fabric

verisimilitude

my one pleasure

truth-seeming was easier

to get into cuz it

was everywhere

like the sky in its common blue britches

like the sea in its common denim

was there really any lotus

there in the flying-j reststop

or atop my head blossoming into

a thousand petals?

the cock crowed all night

confused me <sup>while we were in the tropi</sup> thought by the full moon

later a coyote howled self-satisfied as its snack

had announced itself

the leaves of the gum are like

the water that surrounds a melting glacier

blue is my favorite color but I'm not unusual

in that way. <sup>it's america's favorite color</sup> it sells magazines jeans.

we all live in the uncanny valley

common as star-stuff

I don't care if you love me

there were 60-ft waves in Kauai today

my blood's blue in its veins

and I look good in my jeans

blue like the sea and like <sup>blue</sup>

my people in the sea ~~surfing the crests and~~

~~scuttling the sands~~

She is close  
3 lined hierarchy  
a thumb not a plum  
a plum I picked myself  
and baked into a pie and stuck  
my own thumb in + said  
how good I was & was I

correction with the planet  
a celestial phenomenon so





JULIEN POIRIER

SECRET

BY JULIEN POIRIER

IF I TELL YOU A SECRET  
WILL YOU PROMISE NOT TO TELL ANYBODY?

AT NIGHT

I DRESS UP AS A SUPERHERO  
AND ADMIRE MYSELF IN THE MIRROR  
IN JUST MY UNDERWEAR  
AND A NECKLACE I FOUND  
WHEN THEY CAME

AND TORE UP THE SIDEWALK —  
BATTERY ACID PEARL.

I DON'T HAVE A NAME FOR MYSELF  
(WHICH IS SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM)

BUT I DO HAVE A SUPERPOWER.

I'M BEAUTIFUL, GENTLE,  
PATIENT EVERLASTING  
AND I CAN SING!

MY FRAME IS BONY, MY SKIN FRECKLY  
MY WILD HAIR

BRITTLE

IT'S TRUE —

BUT UNSCREW THE LIGHTBULB  
WITH TOASTY FINGERS  
AND YOU'LL FIND I GLOW  
LIKE A PHARAOH  
ON A PLYWOOD DEATH RAFT

WHICH IS WHAT I AM

BUT KEEP IT TO YOURSELF.

# KASPER KLOP

## WORDS LOCKED DOWN

*There is no punctuation and if a reader is able to read out loud, they are encouraged to do so.  
They are also invited to only take a breath when they absolutely have to.*

it's different than what people found it's a breakdown a breakdown within down inside and beneath we feel it in our teeth in ourselves stuck inside we always wanna eat I wanna MUNCH MUNCH MUNCH eat my chair eat my pillow eat my Zoom guzzle and swallow it all ingurgitate the furniture chew on marble masticate on wood swallow the splinters on my tongue because I wanna hurt myself as I break down because I am on lockdown I wanna feel things inside I am in suffering I am in a sacrifice in total anxiety where I anguish myself what do I do I need to stuff loads of things into my mouth I must never stop I must feel whole in a lockdown I feel empty and I do not want to feel empty I must fill myself with air with food with things I must ingurgitate knowledge books I must watch series but how can I get things from the exterior to the interior to my interior to me to I I need a sort of tool I could use a funnel for all intangible things around me that I cannot touch cannot hold in the palm of my hand to snatch things around me and load myself charge myself with them I want to be charged at the moment I am not feeling charged I am uncharged powerless I am on 5 percent and I need to be 100 percent 100 percent all the time on 200 percent on 1000 percent for me it's bam bam bam boum boum boum let's go come on I am here, ready to go ready to rumble to rock n roll where are we going where are we going where are we going where are we going WE ARE GOING NOWHERE why because we are on lockdown we can only go home you can be at yours and I can be at mine I can only be with me with the self the being the well-being the bad-being the average-being the a-bit-better-than-average-being the pretty-good-being the yeah-I'm-alright-being the eeeeeuhm-not-bad-being, the I-feel-stuck-being that fuck-being that fucker stopping refugees he's in well-being while others are in horrible-being in dire-being while we are in bad-being I mean we are in bad-being and really it's not too bad we are at home while others are in horrible-being we have our cups of Earl Grey and boxes of chocolate we stuff ourselves inside we go to the supermarket outside and we buy it all we buy EVERYTHING we buy everything we buy everything we take everything we take toilet roll we take the paper towels we take this we take that we take tak tak tak we take tik tik tik tac chlak paf za pa di dou wap wap wap pey pey pey pa-per-towel pay per per per towel pay per towel paypaypay paper towel pay A A A, D D D, C flat C flat, B minor tow per pay tow per pay toilet - roll - toilet - roll - roll - roll - paper roll - paper PAPER and in France if you go outside you are inculpATED because we are not aloud well we can but we need a signed authorisation otherwise you can't go outside oh no no no no no but who is the one to sign this authorisation who could that be it is yourself well yes because the world in which we live I mean I don't know if there are other worlds in which live than the world in which we live I don't know if there are other worlds in the universe but the world in which we live well the world in which we live makes no sense because we sign our own authorisations hello officer hello yes I am going to do my grocery shopping why well because I wrote it down here on a piece of paper if I wrote it it must be true I have paperwork to support my escapade I have something administrative sorry sir ah I am sorry but you need a signed certificate but I have an authorisation ah that won't do I am very sorry I am only doing my job sir you need a certificate not a signed authorisation sworn and sealed though it might be well yes because the world in which well you see the world in which we live that is how it is done I am like you well you see Sir when I wake up and have my cornflakes I have my everyday too I have my own life I am someone too I wake up I eat myself in weight I eat my pillow eat my chair and I go to work oh yes I see the world through my own eyes well yes like the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch puts it every person thinks they don't belong in the lives of others that they are somehow a guest something else and they make every possible effort to ensure other people don't notice that but actually that is the feeling we all have in common and therefore we all belong together.

## KELSA TROM

### END OF TODAY

End of today dressed as end of days.  
Day is not shelter. Come here you! What can twilight do  
What isn't blue when sky bleeds through  
and light dank and light spare you hold the bare tree  
the lichenous tree will invisibly stab you in the skin!  
Skin of your body!  
People in Maine force out of towners  
into a house at gunpoint. But this is our our land.  
But this is our land! But the sky has split  
edgewise and I am wider for it.

Back when I could back you up  
back when the street was home  
the train was home back when  
I was on my back and loved  
I saw the bed of a daffodil so flouncy and prim  
and sexual for a day! Lights out!  
Make your own horizon from the comfort  
of the bunker in your junk bod.  
The icky edge of your rotten bits.  
You want it stirred up lit through like loins  
crisped up like labor and the edge of the tree  
will end your day. Climb atop it in order to cancel it  
blur its edges like twilight wash the outside of its outsiders.

Twilight smothers little creek  
the valley's val de lys val d'amour val sacré perhaps  
this smells of body rot. Perhaps this is forced cremation.  
The curtained eye the history you dreamed you know  
is a crusted daffodil and happens to you. You'd sooner alight  
and go north! Go north! Twilight is later if you'd only go north.  
Take the ribbon of pink sky from above the tree drag it  
be deft be frank be yourself. It's a real wet one a real slick wet way  
to end the big bad day. Fake day is the day you didn't start  
is the note ringing in your ears from some church bell  
in shrubby dreams and the stuff you brought back  
was only sort of dreamlike. Pine cone carrot shrub twig blister.  
From today. From last time. Last time we talked  
I loved you. Last time was this time. No one walks single file.  
No printer spits out the end of the day. The last time  
we sopped. The sopping man cancels the day. Day is not shelter.  
Sky rot. Sky baloney. Sky bullshit. Trawl the day bottom  
and then what. And who says. Sky in charge. Carrot in charge.  
Carrot in your pants. Nub in your guts. Panting nub crazed ocean.  
Painted grub watching from behind the frame.  
Maimed frame in Maine. Closet stench. Blamed nub stain.  
Awaiting impatient gross itch. Blame the granary  
someone sneezed on the granary the cow keeled over  
in front of the granary put the blame on this.

# KRYSTAL LANGUELL

THEY BOUGHT IT

the idea is

lookblood

this could be

betterdata      trulytrue

a lifestyle of rejection

an image flashes but communicates no information

it hurts to scratch

othermatter      some gambling

a gesture of thrash

downpour      bones

tilled pasture

if I ever breakaway

remember flight

some razorblade rides along





# LARA DURBACK

## RECENT PHASES

### *Pre-time:*

The lines in the wall  
The ridges in the wall  
in in the wall  
the wall the wall

getting food out of the wall  
getting sustenance out of the wall

who has the power to deform the wall  
who has the power to resculpt the wall

the matter that was present  
the matter that was marrow  
the matter that was tissue  
mutates the wall

(reading Octavia Butler's *Dawn* in the months before)

### *Life's work (Is it medicine?):*

the claim: physical phenomena, related to energy centers  
personal power, deserve total attention

destroy places where medicine does not uphold a person's own sovereignty, it's not medicine

### *Meadow in Wildcat Canyon:*

I lie in a meadow  
Someone passes and says, "good spot, you wake up and there's a snake on your leg"  
Good, the snake is my friend.

It's true that you were a virus,  
when really they just wanted you to relate to life in a way that had become impossible.

Bats had families too, and this discharge became more serious than the intention. It was the final crack in that they could not echolocate among all this bad noise. The ancestors are loud and land is too cut and portioned.

The class war is scarier, anything that is putting you on the wrong side of that is worse than illness, I want people to have rest and resources and that was taken from them violently long before this came. I am begging to you. Don't fear it out. I have seen folks getting out of jail too, and some people's lives finally have space to focus on assisting the houseless. There was not the space before, for some it was an opening.

I rather like the 6 foot rule. I like the agreements. I see my own body lying on the ground, because I am almost 6 feet tall I see this fractal of myself radiating around myself.

Your fake family: just tell me who they are and we will make arrangements to see them.

*In the morning:*

There was mullein growing out of the crack between the road and the curb. Mullein to care for lungs, popping up again and saying hello, I am a lowly weed here to be your friend again, just like I grew all over the dry land after the fire. I am here for you in your grief, and I am soft and cuddly. Sometimes the earth has some friendship to offer too, though you did very little to recognize it.

*New friend:*

You were home safe happy with your son and the lavender  
It felt strange to connect with someone who fell out of the sky  
Email doesn't make sense when you have only a phone and brain differences.  
It takes time to realize something or someone is trying to contact you.  
I have some brain differences too, it's beautiful and it's hell  
You can't just be yourself: you're today and the earth and the ancestors without the filter  
You can't scare me off with stories of your son hearing voices or stories of you being thrown from a  
car, escaping from serial killers  
I absorb it all, I know the terror you filter, it doesn't all come out, but I see your beauty  
I am not afraid to say to you that it is okay that he hears voices, that there are other things coming through,  
there are other worlds coming from below, she agrees, makes space for them while this world does not.  
You are a wise elder  
But the tests say you are supposed to go out in a pandemic on 5 buses to get an MRI  
The tests say your body is pingpong and go everywhere and take every pill, or else  
The resources taken from you for centuries and you still create joy  
It is a pleasure to taste your wisdom  
Hail black women

*Premourning:*

I try to tell people about premourning and I feel a bit insane, but I had been there in the months, premourning, panic attacks in the bathroom at work.

I was too scared to go out all the time right before this, pre-prepared. The desperation of people surrounding me on my commute next to people at work who didn't seem to care about any of it, some people who would call 311 number to take care of dog shit. And meanwhile everyone steps in the shit, waiting for someone in authority to clean it up.

Everyone was touching your items all over the world, it always felt like terror to me, so many people scrambling to deliver to the sedentary.



Relaxed only in the moments watching the screech owl, or moving in some collective pack, or talking to the plants in their relentless slowness, they help you see that there is a way into everything. Dying as part of a body, dying halfway and coming back, a scary mark a scary mark, the recognition that some part of the larger body dies, looking at it every day.

The emergency organizes directness.

I organize myself around it, no worse than ever.

## LAURA GOLDSTEIN

*from* SIGNALS

sent signal

a word from beneath the blood, droplets hover near the bone  
now proven there's no such thing as alone. deep in the space called home  
there are two rooms and one of them is locked down. which one is your zone?  
go down to the floor and look for the door. a war for the brutal present  
don't worry, but here is some more. point of entry seems like  
a return but the room itself is a full open run. a world  
from beneath in a zoom, open portals to other  
rooms, one is locked but the other  
well soon, open and airy  
and ready to bloom

wasted signal

april's cruel, it sucks. breeding is a replication all life does  
i guess. we discussed it: is it really alive? half the class said yes  
her lilac bedroom wall behind her face in the square on my screen  
then silence and stillness- what's coming next? how many dead in this  
land or others, i'm sorry but it's true, it's part of the story. next, we discussed  
if stories were alive. half the class said yes, mixing their memories with desire they  
stirred up the dull roots of our online environs and outside the spring rain  
(it was just newly spring) it still seemed like winter in a lot of ways  
and that's what i discussed with my other class and i kept  
sending them poems called spring because i said let's  
talk about that but it all connects back somehow  
to current circumstance. maybe summer will  
surprise us. we'll talk for hours over coffee  
we'll read poems called summer  
rely on the earth's forgetful  
night. and sunlight

spray signal

what you stay away from now, the other light, the other wave  
the other world in its tandem phase. the other ways we have to tell  
besides speaking (the bell) why night is what slips under months of unfixed monitoring,  
it swells up into the teeth. what did you receive in hell  
that proved to make a path of light and air? perspective? it  
was too much to bear. multitudes who could not catch  
their breath when systems failed, more people  
made a point to say either, either way  
then gathered in ether  
dispersed in spray

## LAURA MORIARTY

*from* NONDEATH DIARY

3-27-20

This body reads,  
cries, and inscribes  
the fact of itself and  
wish for every other  
one not to fall into  
nondeath's nonright  
incident of possession  
of us (we) who have heard  
said "This dog don't hunt"  
or other blunt statement  
of incapacity referring  
to the ancient but  
stupid men who subtract  
from the world by  
their presence hope,  
nondeath, actual life

4-16-20

This "simultaneous journal's"  
relocated nonlinear anti-lyric  
nondeath stance unearthed  
from a time when, focused  
on form and on the lotus,  
I wrote of writing's transcribing  
as being likely to enlighten  
the one performing that  
grace for herself or others  
who find satisfaction in action  
and action in thought as we  
assemble (virtually) this  
commonplace text signing  
it into inner law saying  
**DON'T GO BACK OUT YET**  
despite the urge to follow  
nonleaders' nonsensical  
delusions of reentry  
into what they never had  
any idea was our life

4-21-20

Fascism like Covid  
contagious sometimes  
fatal condition related  
to climate change, abuse  
of humans and animals,  
not a new but renewed threat  
includes evil leaders, massive  
death, crime, bad money, bad  
laws, unsustainable terror,  
nonlife, nondeath, nontime

LAURA MULLEN

(DROSTE EFFECT) THE PRODUCT

Depicting the product  
The product in other  
Words no these words  
Advertising itself  
As if I wore a t-shirt  
Depicting me wearing  
A t-shirt depicting me  
Wearing and so on as  
I suppose I do trying  
To do it better every  
Day as if to be loved  
Only meant you had  
To try harder to be  
Worth loving sweeter  
More popular so one  
Side of the box shows  
Someone lifting  
The box to show us  
The side of the box  
Where someone lifts  
The box and so on  
Proud buyer happy  
Purchase proud  
Buyer happy  
Purchase shrinking  
In these fractals  
Where we dizzy  
Learn to love  
A diminishing  
Version of love  
Endlessly such  
Is the promise  
Proud happy  
Indebted *en*  
*Abyrne* re-  
Produced

## LAUREN HUNTER

DEAR DIARY (4/26/20)

Days are hard lately  
I feel cheap

You know, (I'll have) the usual  
guilt and paralysis

a good shower cry  
Maybe I can fit more things

carbs and limbs into my  
ungrateful mouth

and wash and want  
If I give into natural rhythms

I could be hilarious  
hot hungry  
hollow  
heard

Under the cover of night  
I don't worry or waste

Ask me anything  
haha  
I'll answer with the current  
most convenient lie

How else would I roll?  
What else can I sell?

## THE MARKET VALUE ISN'T THE POINT

There's no such thing. Haven't we figured out,  
aren't we right now being taught  
that our bullshit is temporary and meaningless?  
Moving right along. A month and a half, a year  
and a half later. Let's not be coy about it,  
I wasn't being kind to wait.  
My courtesy has been all self-interest.  
And of course I don't escape unscathed.  
A little shock of guilt and  
this unresolved clinging feeling I can't wash off.  
Someone shows up in a dream that should be a stranger. Someone is still  
always around. The only escape, they say,  
is in. I'm uncommitted but not uncomfortable.  
Make me an offer, as they say. What if my happiness  
is just within my grasp? What if my happiness  
is absolutely mine, alone?





“A revolution is not a bed of roses. A revolution is a struggle between the future and the past.”

– *Ronald Reagan*

AZ QUOTES

## LAYNIE BROWNE

### PRACTICE HAS NO SEQUEL

This sentence speaks to the green promise of 9:31 a.m. untethered. Here, now with no plan, though lists remain long. Laborious small selves line up, erroneously thinking themselves alone. I must allow nothingness breathing into and out of one letter of the alphabet followed by rib-thread-sepal. Sound encircles sternum eye. Miniscule adornments follow the invisible and curtail only veneer. Birth increases thoracic sky, where the unseen is the brightest realm and requires no language.

I wrote the word *practice*. Might I write a sequel now, as I did then, upon loss, again stunned?  
Practice has no sequel. Premise—write into the present moment and the space between  
letters including all possible permutations. Summon *care*, *rapt*, and *art*.

I sit in realization kitchens, bare prose, for instance—one need not believe every thought. I set out to clear a passage, to detach from narratives. First to listen; turn up fronds of hidden circling—ulterior landscapes. What does self say to self? If thoughts are clouds—changeless self—sky—contains—though does not identify. Do not seek to vanquish thin layers of tulle, glossy mists. Instead, address surroundings as opaque, feathery, in any terms, so long as—remember—I am not that.

At times thought will not wait. When speed of mind is dizzying constellations pardon  
collapse into eclipse. I believed I was indispensable, then unveiled lowercase self as mere  
projection. This not being synonymous with filmy residue of loss—a sound nest. I line my  
dwelling with velvet and water. In the center—twig garlands—spare pair of legs—amulet  
eye. A lion guards quiet beneath cardboard covers—stay.

Where do I want to be? Writing at a kitchen counter is illusion of progress—since space is indeterminate. Once performed long enough the trick stops working. Still, a desk could be anywhere—a glass of water, another's eyes, branches woven by a bird. Ovens consort with alchemy, linden wands, green counsel, and songs offered to mother plants.

## LELAND & AMANDA COURIE

### **Our kitchen table used to just be a kitchen table.**

*Then*

A Lamp, some napkins, a dirty plate, “*The Practice of Acupuncture*”, and an empty whiskey glass

*Now*

A Lamp, dirty rag, whiskey cup-full, Uno deck, flashlight, air filter, tang, 2 red bulls overturned

### **Sunyata’s room used to be just Sunyata’s room**

*Then*

Bed - Stripped since August 22, Empty bookshelf, clear floor, dresser, WAC Poster, Retreat lanyard, Highschool graduation cords, and awards, collages created 2 summers ago

*Now*

3-D printer Filament, nitrile gloves, sani-hands, Sanitizer, Lysol, 4 boxes of 50 surgical masks, moon pies, ramen, toilet paper, rice, guns, and ammo





# LINA RAMONA VITKAUSKAS

1.

Cinepoem: Scarcely Gilded

2.

## **Authoritarian**

see this

joke

integrating

cooperating

distantly deciding

this is here

now

how is that

managed

how is that

victory

how is your

fear

LINDSEY BOLDT

TWO POEMS TOWARDS FULL COMMUNISM

Can u shit  
w/o a coffee  
& can u shit  
w/o a phone in your hand  
I'm interested in how my bowels function under Capitalism  
I'm interested to know  
how sturdy my shits  
might be w/o it

Really been coveting  
my neighbor's chicken  
lately, I want to hug one  
& wonder  
could their chicken  
be my chicken  
& still the chicken's  
own chicken  
too

But when the egg drops  
it's no one's  
but the chick  
who might be



**End White  
Patriarchy**

## LOURDES FIGUEROA

### AND WHO WILL HAE THE LAST WORD IF NOT

and who will have the last word if not  
the mountain up ahead  
with a rising sun  
if not the sudden blue of the skies  
if not the howl of the wind within a long corridor of buildings  
if not the reflection of light on a cobweb  
if not the horizon up ahead dividing the land sea & sky  
& the resting sunset  
if not the bone bare yellow moon on a star full night  
whom will have the last word  
if not the chirp of a newborn sparrow  
who will it be  
and if not any of this  
and if there is a last word  
upon whose ears will it fall upon

no mi vida  
no te rajes  
con nuestras caras hacia al sol  
sentimos el calor del amanecer  
pronto llega el sol

pronto llega el sol  
mi vida no te rajes  
con nuestros ojos cerrados  
hacia lo azul  
va amanecer

## DANTE'S DREAM

Crack open  
the dream  
keep it  
like silk between your forefinger &  
thumb your teeth  
now feel something  
as if i were to hold still  
blending one palm  
for another shadow  
a silhouetted thought against  
two whole breasts  
inside one was the beggar  
and her rambling change  
in the other  
not enough to build the second  
building empty bedrooms  
oh foolish things  
the mind keeps dropping  
into cracked sidewalks  
where god sleeps  
while the other gods jump  
over walls smearing voices  
around us the stink of our torsos  
reminding us of the approaching  
Fall,  
beckoning the blend of one leaf  
and the shedding skin  
letting us fall apart  
rising sun  
branding the upper and lower  
torso  
specifically the stench of  
the rotting Nopal  
how do i comfort us  
if no memory then let it be  
just, help me recover  
the bones i left around each  
and every rib cage  
poking out of the desert sand  
there was all of us breaking open  
doors  
across the hall we turned off the  
lights bounced the rust  
pinching gold  
holding it in our armpits  
as we cross to the old world  
slapping it on churches and  
castillos

warm my heart beloved  
warm all of us  
as we hear the whispering  
cracks on the sidewalk  
close enough  
to walk barefoot in hell  
making our way to the heavens  
i heard you  
really i did  
hear all of us  
like mumbling bones  
we traveled spitting Dante's name  
into cups by the side of the road  
by the levee  
we tried  
we really did  
our bodies  
replaced  
re/spliced  
somewhere in the loneliness  
of the desert  
but they told me,  
it had been the wobble of the light  
the old stars kept watching our turmoil  
silent and ominous  
every single night till this  
night we cracked the night  
wide open as we stepped on twigs  
and dry grass  
we decided to split the day into 3's  
working perfectly well  
we packed our lunches  
went on our ways  
dug into the soil  
and gently pressed the seeds  
who knows, but there was the recital  
of an ancient rose bush around the  
corner the light lamp and her yellow breath  
in an empty farm town  
the politician's and the headmaster  
decided to build a 150 room hotel  
would they come?  
would we come?  
the moon laughing  
her tongue

## ON OVERTHROWING CAPITALISM #2

On overthrowing capitalism...

it is a good time  
to get healed  
la curandera says as i suck on mezcal  
blend the bruises on my back with a bit of maza  
as polvo del desierto rises from the bed,  
my hospital gown drifting like a petal  
there is a chance the children in cages could be freed  
but i am busy finishing my last piece of cash  
i spent it all on a lottery ticket hoping to pay off the loan i took out  
for all of us but we arose from the drowned bones pressed in the bottoms of el rio grande  
the lapping of the water against the echoes of parched lips  
and as we arose we marched turned our backs toward the sunset  
heard the gasp of the city by the desert

in a distance the sound of bullets piercing the flesh of children  
in a distance the sound of ribs snapping from the pounding of fists  
and bullets

but in a distance the mountains behind the city behind the desert  
there a land between the river that opens her mouth & closes her mouth  
like a fish on a mound of fishes in a waterless bucket mouthing

¿que somos? somos  
nopal y tierra hechos  
en la imagen del sol y la luna  
Teocintle nuestra alma  
Teocintle nuestra voz  
somos buen hechos  
nuestros cuerpos de canción y maíz  
creciendo la flor del nopal nos juntamos  
buscando el monstro  
que tiene rostro de un joven y de un viejo

con los niños cantándonos en sus jaulas  
i was hoping to tell you about the amount of voices  
behind the stage praying for a prophet to arrive  
& inside the temple the chicotazos sounded like two guards  
chewing on gum  
snapping their lips  
enough voices for all of us to mumble along  
& wrap our flesh with nameless flags  
as we all looked for the monster  
& a glimpse of the moon

& we imagined a prophet  
as loving as the current of the river  
to arrive



pero nosotras éramos la profeta  
buen hechas como los rostros de la Malinche y La Llorona

allí las dos quebrando la frontera

y nuestros hermanos en lo callado de la jaula aprendiendo  
como ponerse un uniforme

y se nos olvidó el llanto de los nenes porque fuimos  
con la curandera a buscar una cura

\*

colonization + capitalism = penetration

say our ancestor

say our ancestor

say our ancestor

No, you, didn't colonize us, not at all  
we declared a long time ago

say our ancestor

*We never died,*

*our antepasados fed the earth with their  
blood,*

*the food we eat has our blood,*

*You see  
We Tonanzin  
put on the mask of Guadalupe*

*Magellan didn't stand a chance,  
never,*

## THIS IS A VIOLENT LAND

'Be Poet. Be truth' - June Jordan.

'This is a violent land, avid of breath...' -Jack Spicer

after jack spicer, after june jordan, after kevin killian, who after, w.b yeats, but mostly after all of us

here we cling to our soda pop,  
bear our teeth into landless thoughts

suck on cream from a root beer float,  
dipping french fries into milkshakes  
swallowing memory like honey

easily we forget that it is our palms  
that built the concentration camps alongside el rio grande

i have to tell you, i wore the same uniform for three days  
and three nights

jumping into a river on a friday afternoon

only to arise on sunday where the sunshine  
dealt its' deals as we massacred each other

spending each coin on lollipops  
every dollar on a shoe shine and extra socks to keep warm

the empire keeps swallowing us  
we keep swallowing the empire  
and the prophet keeps screaming

only to break into song as the sycamores or black walnut trees  
alongside the endless highway  
bow, and rise, their chests against the rising sun

or is it the sunset?

as the shackles echo throughout the desert,  
in a distance the city lights blink on and off

el pistolero cantando rancheras,  
soplando su cigarrillo, un six shooter  
buen hecho  
y yo, la marimacha  
queriendo decir que soy tu marimacha

me pongo mis botas y ya soy el cowboy  
con su lazo, singing to you the law of our land

and i'm here to repeat that we are in the golden age again  
and again  
a profound crisis  
i keep waking up watching nightmares  
gather around the smiling moon

my apa finding me under the bed  
kicking me against a wall  
making me into a woman

wake up wake up,  
the good news has been arriving

slamming  
my ama against walls  
each one us a bloody pulp,

i keep confusing the body with the poem

because it is a kid, let me remind us, a child,  
dying in a quiet street corner  
huffing on glue

but let us gather around and tell each other  
the truth,

the poet arrived long before we were doomed  
cashing her poems for a diagnosis

how much trauma can a poem endure  
before it becomes numb?

how long can a body stay numb?

now let us remember we are all made in the image of  
the holy empire

blessed be, i crease dollar bills into my wallet  
blessed be i un creased dollar bills and spent them on a new set of pens

a diagnosis won't do, there is enough cash in our pockets  
to build the most powerful of weapons

but let us gather around, crash the last supper  
break bread, drink the sweet wine

and i promise you we can scatter our poems like ashes  
fertilizing the earth to begin again and again

en la madrugada si te fijas bien, allí en lo hermoso  
just close enough where the night begins to become  
day,

i am grieving  
we are grieving  
as the body of a woman begins to give birth  
and the child is finally being born

## MADELEINE BRAUN

### ARCHIE CAT WALK

free books free hugs are you okay I'm goood free meditation free music 3 minute portrait 5\$  
full cans big dumps free smiles kiss kiss pass wait to pee free pass wait for the  
welcome mat in the way back wreck room giggle giggle psssst eye locks let me show you  
something eye locks I like your smile I lock groupers sidewalk sound report slap slap pass you  
want a hug I'm good you sure you okay I'm good too bad fashion fits wave wave wait a box of  
matters stacked ladders green space grey there's no toilet there's no way out there's no there  
there of green space fence towering bodies tackle tandem absence like the dogs in the park  
temptation like it'll be all right cut me off cut it out blue frittatas in picnic baskets park ball spike  
ball! Get in the ring bark bark sing the anthem woman day keep it simple my favorite season is  
the fall of patriarchy stroll stumble squirrel pigeon cowbird smile bench corner office watch the  
squirrel off with pigeon smile glass of wine? Weird one yet Sunday Sunday Washington Square  
tour guides for 5\$ DJ does bench trick air jump royal greenery for one season shrubbery is free  
eye contact tropical hedge fund me free poems baggers painting skate circle a round pause for  
virus listen to the crowd cough fall hustle the pop free jam space free practice room almost a  
success walking into corners I'm glad I bought it I told you soccer schemes playground picnics  
frowned face in old age tribute younger than hunch team sheets and blankets I know but I don't  
care anymore it just wasn't me to close the curtain I mean auditory there is no masking it pass  
the joint pass the crown pass lips pucker you owe I contact turn around fallen cane fallen friend  
fallen bottle like crazy he's making me crazy weave symbol wimble womble Archie cat walk LA  
woman roughly reimagined pick a topic golden grace dig a grave prune shrubs talk past anxiety  
born and raised

## PARIES

old monkey where is that ring under steal ships and sealing the wax god says hi hihi I don't want to talk to much about the young child of yes and the old child too and the old child of bottle deposits and the old child of priest and the old child of priestess and the old child of ting worm and if I ask you for the jolly cards of fortune where does that draw my card the card is underneath the moss the boss is bossy the young child is bossy the seven eleven is bossy the unicycle is bossy the day is day is forthright is that way is under the covers is forgotten for the idea the can is rolling the the can is under the wheel the can is presumptuous is scary is not your understanding the being in my forewarnings the vein forehead I don't remember it is complimentary the your way is the way the light stands the female figure in this apartment is complicated shadowed and boldly lit light blue gloves on the fireplace jackets hung over an ancient chair ruler solitary bored fish seams sandpaper cuffs fingernails rings silver charcoal paper wax light bulbs scales creaks floor creaks walking away creaks forward creaks anchoring black forward under over high low resolution stream cloudy alive sandalfoot candle sand the door is open to the tiny cupboard the wayward shelf the money pencil creak creak up down fridge opens sacred sown radio hula hoops earphone overdraft cheers charm challenge a time what is the time I ate sand paper and wrote on envelopes why is it sheltered the draft is overcome the song is translated by you the moon the socket the eye streams sandals streams I don't want disappointment don't be it's the slam my candle foot when we went to birds hill what was the repertoire the way you look at singers back up or dancers take the memory for which I felt burning there bard ward heard heart in waters the take could take or give give or take the moment could being sleepin' lasting' longing' then g and to gee the be a moment is understood dancing up and down the hallway Alexis giggles a aaaaa aa a a hallway giggle that's anecdote solipsism sick silly solemn the baloney and ketchup here here I am eating your charm tin can holiday or holiday cap look forward to tomorrow the dream desk later shine shine figure fit ripe apple oats uncharted la la land erase edges itchy lightning stuck somewhere in Winnipeg and we danced threw ourselves in circles throw ourselves in circles throw ourselves throw ourselves throw seed sometime future the circulatory isn't basic divine paradise an excuse for home home an excuse for divine paradise

## GARBAGE HILL

it's a dump a hill built on garbage what a dump it's big sky look around left right up down sky  
chassé chases format clings colors spits clouds clouds like sand drops look like ranges Rockies  
prayer in over the henge wicked wind wicked rinse rises throne thence kite crash hopefulness  
hardens elixirs stumble over hill highway dog slaps jumps gone hideaway sip sip Elixir windchill  
wrecks sleeves opens body next move mottled engine train ships abandoned hull sea glass  
graveyard garbage creeps above ground creak creek shoes fumble yell names meet me Marlin  
where are you stuffed like pepper holistic wind tincture takeaway take me away chosen chill  
read gone gallop over gallantries that's not how I want to think of you remember you recall you  
you you you just junk frozen mottled yelped yelping junkies hold down my Henge Henry! Gwen  
father gather the others the warmest color the card the candles the wine the sunset is there  
every night it doesn't matter changes called coming lights up it doesn't matter that the trees  
change or the waters rise and fall stepping lightly a stream strangulated doesn't matter hoping  
bunnies or lilacs for that matter was frozen the winter tongue stuck to rail where licked it ripped it  
off danger Tom tongued weeks forgiven hill hope running under train cars hands frozen to father  
puffing air into tiny fists like defrost run Jack jumping is around the next sunset matters alternate  
alternating alter altercation already almost air conditioning calms the future quest queasy now  
notch up later in case stream yards lumber shoots glittering full moon half moon quarter sliver  
fingernail spruce tree beckon windfall grace runaway balloon garbage birthday present past  
future gallop can crouch too hideaway hill hops snow racer summer sanctuary sweater weather  
forever like eve and forecast does matter dreary tides in front of grants gravel sieve shoot flood  
shiver shoot flock shout go see the lemme lens the fall the sun sickens day gladly took rode  
bikes up garbage hill



**"We don't even care whether or not we care."**



## MADISON DAVIS

those trying to breathe outside make big swerves  
to avoid proximity to others trying to breathe  
outside. from above, it would look like magnetic  
repulsion or a dance or that we have learned to fear  
one another—and we have. but we evolve new appendages  
for social connectedness. we learn to weigh each  
offering against the memory of touch, to reintroduce  
ourselves with the nutritional quality of togetherness  
in a language of electrical threads. still, the ground  
slips shifts under our feet—we reach out to catch  
ourselves and find no one near enough to steady us.  
i wonder if our minds are meant to work in this future  
while our bodies are here now sick. watch as we make it  
light enough to carry so it won't make us weep.  
because weeping isn't conducive to living inside  
a threatened scene. weeping is for the very early  
morning hours when we should be sleeping. until  
the full bright comes and we again carry it around  
in our bodies while we go about making meals, designing  
complex strategies to pay for living, reserving time  
to keep up with the numbers for the day—stay informed,  
track how many bodies are now tallied on the curve.  
and all the time we are weighed down knowing  
we are not safe, and worse, that we were not safe before.

## MARINA CLAVERIA

### HELLO FRIEND

the bread rising in the barely warmed oven was the bread of hot girls on instagram was the bread of bread and roses was learning how to feed ourselves with new tools and old tools was the wanting too. the egg in the kitchen was shifty was hardboiled was intermingled with salt pepper and mayonnaise disassembled was a bulb of sulfur was postured elegantly was in its cup. we were saying *would it be ok* if we were approximating risk if *it would be ok* if we were yearning were vectors or christmas lights or bodies stranded we were wanting too much and milling about. the paint on the underpass said *rent strike* said *it will be ok* said *death to all who leave the house*. but the paint on the neighbor's house it said *hello friend* said *scavenger hunt* said *can you find the easter egg?* we found new ways to hold each other's hands found that you can only lie in bed so long after waking found new relationships to old vices found out you can host sex parties on zoom. the messages on the phone read *how are you* read *can we go for a walk tomorrow* read *like trash* read *i've been practicing the piano and drawing and eating just when i'm hungry and exercise and gardening and smoking weed 4/20 all month ha and you?* trust is hard to give to anyone who only eats when hungry whose clothes have never loomed with oil smell who is satisfied who unlike the bread in the barely warmed oven never needs tending to. but earnest fingers have been tending have been lapping up flower petals kissing have been taking second helpings mending the words in our mouths until they presuppose free lunch and all the wanting too.

## MARINA LAZZARA

### WHEN THIS IS OVER THE TIME MIND

leave the apartment

sinister forest bath

a century now goes near

the news feed anymore

the doctor is a man

and dies saving men

mother dies before the virus

never renews

the bathroom tiles

open to a new message

some sound coming up

bad plumbing

a growl or grail      fear chalice

wanted to be home more

wanted to wrong the expected

to be what expects

saddened beauty this spring

hillside iris still on north side

some container garden as rural

can't hear your media voice?

can't hear your facial woes?

open the window

morning mist

sky smells

like ocean again

time left to mind

remember how slow

when this is over the time mind

what you approve

or unlock

to get the word out

## MARY BURGER

### IN THE FIELD



I got this little statue years ago in Berkeley. It was made for the Chinese domestic market, I'm not sure how it found its way into the US export stream. She's a Barefoot Doctor, one of the rural medics from the Republic of China and later the Mao era, who provided basic healthcare in poor, isolated communities. The medics were "barefoot" because they were often farmers themselves, working in the rice paddies when they weren't practicing medicine. This is a crudely fashioned piece, basically a piece of propaganda. I like her cheerful expression, her simple, practical clothes, and the ideals (however imperfectly realized) of providing healthcare for the most vulnerable and recognizing women's place in the medical profession. I never thought she represented actual healthcare workers, at least not as they are today. But here's a photo of Chinese women medics arriving in Nigeria in April 2020 to provide healthcare for COVID-19 patients there. The same boxy pink shirts, the same practical haircuts. This time with shoes, and I hope with enough protective equipment to see them through. I don't know if they chose this assignment or went under orders. I don't know if they call themselves courageous.

(Photo on right: Kola Sulaimon/AFP via Getty Images, published in *The Guardian*, April 8 2020)

WE WON'T BE HAPPY  
UNTIL THE LAST  
CAPITALIST IS HUNG  
WITH THE GUTS OF  
THE LAST COP





MASHA TUPITSYN

CORONA CHEER 4/17/20

[CLICK HERE](#)







Death is inevitable



## MC HYLAND

Laura & Tara & I have a Whatsapp chat called  
“in lieu of drinks” though in fact  
we use it to video-chat over cocktails  
about once a week When this all started  
we talked about renting an airbnb  
for a weekend together sometime this spring  
Now the channel records swings of emotion  
Yesterday 9:22 am “Rough start today in Boston!  
Some tears involved” Today 12:10 pm  
“I am just so! angry! all! the time!  
and it is really hard not to let it roar out”  
Sunday was a bad day for me but then  
two former students emailed Alejandro  
just published his first poem & wrote  
“It feels so thrilling to imagine people reading  
my work and feeling anything at all, you know?”  
Parmis sent a draft of her thesis manuscript  
“I’ll admit, I’m a wee bit proud of this”  
Her email also responded to parts of this poem  
which keeps growing through these sodden days  
“I think reading your poems reminded me  
how important it is to document your day to day  
activities I think I will start keeping a journal again”  
Who am I writing for? I began this poem  
in a group google doc that quickly fizzled  
then peeled out the pieces & placed them here  
A few weeks in I sent an email to friends family  
People I’d mentioned or quoted from  
I liked that who I was writing about & who  
I was writing to might be the same  
This is a long-running fantasy of mine  
I like seeing anonymous animals appear  
at the top of the window when I come here  
to write increasingly detailed entries  
every 1-3 days Sometimes I believe writing this way  
might be the perfect application of my wish  
to write for a small and intimate audience  
& in so doing maybe make a different kind  
of place for poetry than the world of prestige  
my recent education asked me to press myself into  
For me poetry started as refusal of  
pragmatism A labor that carried no value  
Making what could only be given away  
In poetry I could cultivate a wild & wayward  
inwardness A home for my perversity  
& devotion to the incommunicable My fugitive  
loves & sensings In this way I think poetry was both  
the opposite of death & the opposite of life

I think this is also maybe what friendship  
can be Certainly poetry was where I turned  
for friendship Certainly I made friendship  
by making & mailing books of poems over a decade  
But also I went back to school to see if  
poetry could become for me a kind of  
remunerative labor This despite my repeated refusals  
of legibility What capital wants is to read you  
& know what you are & this is not the greatest suffering  
but it should be refused with the other sufferings  
so apparent in these times The failure of government  
to bail out the vulnerable The rent  
These months of the collapse of certain futures  
& possible futures weigh us all down  
so our emotions cycle between despair & bright  
unlikely joy at small moments Watering plants  
Tending to bread dough Sending or receiving a text  
While outside the horror churns on  
In current estimates one fifth of restaurants  
will be able to reopen Government loans  
go to large businesses People on Facebook  
compare strategies to get through to unemployment  
Thirty million unemployment claims in six weeks  
Of which how many lost health insurance  
How many never had it to start with  
How many will get sick and not get tested  
Bailey says a nurse he drives from hotel to hospital  
every day at 3 told him she'd rather get sick here  
than at home in Alabama because here she knows  
she'll get tested Get treatment before it's too late  
Meanwhile the friend of friends who was hospitalized  
has died She was sent home from the hospital  
twice in March untested An article in *Essence* says  
"Rana Zoe Mungin, as too many Black women before her,  
was not believed. Her pain was not taken into consideration.  
Her knowledge of her own body was not prioritized.  
She suffered and, ultimately, died needlessly  
because we live in a nation structured for our deaths"  
Black virus deaths exceed deaths of other racial groups  
by at least 2.5 times In some places by 5 or 7 times  
Meanwhile NYPD ejects 180 people a day  
from the nearly empty trains Many if not most  
homeless & avoiding shelters where the virus  
spreads from bunk to bunk Decomposing bodies  
in unrefrigerated trucks outside a funeral home  
that can't move fast enough I'm lying in bed when  
the 7pm clap is drowned out by a passing ambulance

but last night we stood at the foot of Anna & Ian's stoop  
with pink petals drifting down toward my thermos  
of wine Clapped & shouted with all their neighbors  
for the hospital up the block Waved at a little girl  
in a third-floor apartment across the street  
who leaned out to shout "Hi everybody!"  
We're still here We're still here I want to remember  
all the rage & little flashes of grace That's why  
I keep coming back to this poem  
Has the virus turned us into Leninists? We wonder  
from the couch Ready to take arms against  
the sea of troubles of the present order The horrid  
downhill momentum of these days Sometimes  
I think if I died now it would be all right  
I feel loved and as though I would be remembered  
mostly fondly Mostly without anger & in death  
I would not have to decide how to move forward  
into whatever lessened world seems to be coming  
I write on Caolan's poem about Shirley Chisolm  
"Love this poem/hate this world" Later Aleijuan  
posts a video of himself dancing in front  
of a mural of Shirley Chisolm's face  
Things are really happening  
in the poetry month blog Everyone's poems  
feral & ferocious Nothing left to defend  
In 1999 my professor told me my poems  
were "polished, like glass" Did not let air in  
I prized rhythmic perfection Nothing  
had happened to me yet When teaching  
I sometimes remember what it was  
to be 21 years old & have nothing to say  
while desperately wanting to say something  
Anything Ally says she can't write  
Tom says he can't write Serina Hunter  
We're all struggling I teach class with  
visibly dirty hair & keep leaving myself on mute  
I overferment the bread & am scared to move it  
from fridge to oven But once I do  
two small perfect loaves emerge I hold up  
a slice to the laptop camera & Vignesh  
holds up lengths of fabric from his apartment  
on the other side of Brooklyn I make the menu  
but then can't bring myself to cook the chicken  
so we eat a salad and soup for dinner  
while talking to Nicole & Tommy through a screen  
Rain falls outside & we prepare a plate

for the participatory play about the MOVE bombing  
Deborah arranged for us tonight  
It's a little like a seder with ritual eating  
& four "toasts" which are also times for discussion  
The story is worse than I remember The police  
openly bloodthirsty A baby stomped to death  
The playwright Brett Robinson has added a refrain  
"If it happens to me it will happen to you"  
When we are asked to add names to the list  
of those "brutalized by injustice" I add  
the name of the friend of my friends  
turned away from the hospital The play  
about the American hunger for black death  
is contemporary though it focuses on events  
four decades or more ago The cruelest month  
ends around the time we finish In my circle  
two grandfathers have died One mother  
One friend of friends It's mostly not the virus  
But they can't be mourned properly  
Funerals mostly out (a Leap Day funeral  
in Albany, Georgia caused 24 virus deaths in March  
Two days ago in Brooklyn the mayor broke up  
a rabbi's funeral with 2500 mourners) Rain keeps falling  
I read another page of *alphabet* to the class  
"This darkness is whiter; eyes melt"

# MEG HURTADO BLOOM

## THE BIG REVEAL

I

The angel entered the board room,  
did not take any coffee, and said  
Okay Team, today it burns.  
All of it? they asked. Yes, said the angel.  
We need ideas with legs, and we  
will not rest until we have unearthed  
a veritable chorus line. But first  
we will see what the agency says.  
We will wait all night if we have to.  
We've already paid the agency,  
and creation at the top of its game  
wastes nothing, reverences every fleck.  
Every iota is regenerative, beams  
with the madness of love, and  
no service-level disagreement is going  
to change that. They all watch  
the angel. They all sign.

You are here, the angel announces,  
because you are thought leaders.  
Because you have been named.  
Remember that we are on fire,  
and we have a plan. Visualize  
that moment when the Plan  
sails right into your arms, blistering  
your décolletage with awesome.  
You will shed your old skin, find  
a way to pamper the aftermath.  
There is plenty of heaven to go  
around. We will all hold hands.  
It will hurt, but that's what growth  
looks like. We have to move fast.  
These chance environs ill afford  
what needs to happen here.  
Primitive thickets spawn and rise  
where we leave workstreams open-ended.  
And honestly, we're still trying  
to get our arms around  
how permanent all this is.

We learn to live and it takes time,  
and time kills us. Nothing matches  
natural decline. Crazy because  
wouldn't you rather stay young?  
You would, you would. That's just built-in.  
Decline means madness. Madness, like a sauce,  
is delicate and changes completely

the flavor of the flesh, determines how much joy is deliverable. But it embalms, too. So does our frenzy at death's footfall adulterate and smear but preserve us.

The angel says, Get up! I have something to show you. It's right outside. Come to the window. So they leave their cups and pens and walk to the window. Without meaning to, they crowd. They press fingers and faces into the glass until every inch of window is spoken for. One girl presses until bruises manifest at the tips of every finger, and along the ridge of her cheekbones. A man presses hard with his mouth, eventually stops breathing.

The angel directs their attention to the harbor. This in itself is not unusual; the harbor is always there. Today in the harbor floats a pale pink cruise ship, pink as the lining of a seashell and big as Las Vegas in heat. A ship, says blue-lipped Judith. Where are we going? asks wilted Madeleine.

You're not going anywhere, the angel says. That ship contains half of our best ideas, and tonight it will be tested. There will be a terrible storm which I will raise from its infancy, a wiggling of the waters to its full and final implementation as the raging rotting heart of the world. Only the most clarion songs will survive it, and in the morning we will harvest those and eat them with honey and thyme.

A stone-eyed girl from marketing asks, If the ship holds half of our best ideas, where lies the other half? The angel surveyed the room and bit

a lip. Right here, the angel said.  
And you will be tested, too.

II

The angel flipped a switch and flooded  
the break room with the odor of roses.  
Down the street at the agency  
they picked up the scent and knew  
they had better give 110%. This was  
high stakes. Flaming swords  
didn't even factor in; an identity  
was on the line. A girl carrying coffee  
closed her eyes and remembered  
Puerto Vallarta at dawn.

Atop Twin Peaks, nothing has ever  
moved. And across the city sleep  
the rich, who would not know  
Heaven if it hit them. Time-paralysis  
can be a very effective tool, but  
the angel knows there are limits  
to this capability. Eventually,  
people start to burn. Over and out.

The angel said, I have news:  
nobody gets to go home. You  
are now part of an emergency  
task force dedicated to the  
storming of brains, the conjoining  
of heads, the Cartesian descant.  
You will know no rest until I find  
what I have lost, which is my heart,  
I mean, my best idea, you know?  
Okay. We're a transparent environment,  
and this came from above,  
this was an executive  
call, but be assured it was  
the right one. You may inform  
those who reach for you at night.  
Now, please. You will find orientation  
materials on your desks. Nobody  
should be missing anything.

The angel found fronds of paper,  
and started to mark. The Imagination,  
said the angel, will always conspire to  
save you. Will never contribute to

any absolute surrender.  
The angel coughed. Memory,  
on the other hand – that's  
another story. Your memory  
was born before you knew it,  
but your memory is your young,  
and you are its food. Every lip in  
the room twitches, and a few  
pupils swell to black ponds  
and spill onto the conference  
table. That's how the saints  
lost their eyes. Enough said.

The angel bites nails, twists hair,  
knows there is not much time.

But the angel goes on. Here  
is where you started losing.  
Here is where you first discovered  
that marinade of madness in whose  
tart declension all love soaks.  
Here is what held you together.  
Here is what you were wearing  
when the white fires came.  
The marker in the angel's paw  
spews out a color none of them know.  
The conference table has become  
too hot to touch, so they all  
shut their eyes and hum.

THAT'S NOT REAL AND I DON'T  
NEED IT.  
THAT'S NOT REAL AND I DON'T  
NEED IT.

### III

Miserable cities never learn  
to level-set. Instead they develop  
skins upon skins, faint as veils  
at first, but eventually amounting  
to armor. The city goes on,  
but disappears. Bridges give out  
free secrets, nerves end. Cities  
by the ocean stand a better chance:  
sirens, sharks, and seraphim  
try to keep things clean as they go.



SOME CONDITIONS MAY APPLY.  
DON'T WAIT. THIS WON'T LAST.

The angel concentrated very hard,  
establishing connections and  
cross-functional partnerships with  
the salts, the gales, the undertows,  
the lowering lanterns lining the harbor.  
The cruise ship loomed, wobbled on  
its yaw. Nobody has counted the  
chandeliers, but they burn.

It's getting dark. Away in the break room,  
Katherine pulls from between her lips  
ropes of pearls, then lowers them,  
one by one, into her coffee. Eloise finds  
the refrigerator full only of roses.  
(But full to the gills.)

The angel decided to take some time away.  
Everybody was on-target to make plan.  
Fluorescent rods thrilled and the air  
conditioned. In the basement, beneath  
emergency generators, a spider,  
white as snow, made camp and slept.  
Brigid and Monica descended,  
collected forty pound of spider's web,  
and started braiding rope.

The angel returns, well-rested,  
and says, Dearly Beloved, there is  
no need to mix worlds just yet.  
Track deliverables where  
you can, but let's plan to stagger  
the final release. Nobody is  
ready for the big reveal.

The angel goes to the break room to arrange  
the loaves of unbidden envy. They are fat  
as city pigeons, and will last much longer.

The angel sees the rope that Brigid  
and Margot had made, asked  
everyone to line up facing the wall.  
The angel removed a single nerve  
from each spine in one fluid movement,  
dragging the electric filament out of  
the flesh like a hair through clay.

Once the angel held them all, the angel  
said, Now that's how you make rope.

The angel said, Was that really  
necessary? After all, there's more  
than one way to skin a cat.  
Paul contends that it was necessary.  
Katherine lets her pearl necklace  
drop to the floor. For the last  
hour she has twirled it into  
a little garotte and then  
untwisted it again. It has gone  
from ornament to death  
to ornament again. It has left little  
dents all over her neck.

And now the storm leans in, kills all  
the lights. The emergency generators  
need a minute. If the cruise ship  
were full of souls, they would see  
the arctic glow of phones coming  
into their new lives as lanterns,  
undulating through the office like  
electric jellyfish promenading a tank.

There are certain things you can't  
say at work. Not because  
you don't want to say them, but because  
people might not want to hear them, even  
if they've asked. People, as a certain  
pair discovered, in the way-backseat of time,  
are good at asking for that which it will  
pain them very much to know.  
The angel counts on this. The storm  
will continue as long as no one  
turns to anyone else and says, We  
will never know what's coming and  
this just might last forever

One thing we've learned about the world:  
if you hover over it, so much is forgivable.  
Beyond the pale there are no parallels,  
no missing connections, you know? But  
what can we see of this world if we're  
suppressing these alternate states? The  
question, then, trickles down to this:  
persistent pagination vs infinite scroll.  
Must we break it all up into discreet  
content blocks and ask our users to

rifle through? Or do we put the whole world in their hands and say, "Seek your treasure, then leave us a review"?

The angel called a meeting in the deep heart of night and said, Look, everybody, the agency just called. They're not ready and they never will be. So that puts a lot of pressure on us.

The angel shuffled a deck of cards and said, Maybe I'm getting out of my celestial playpen here, but I believe that everything is on the table. The pillars of this world lend themselves to scalability, so let's strap on our paradigm protectors and go silently to the grove of the sirens of pure humanism and ask some questions.

The angel takes appearances seriously, does not appear to mortals unless the situation has no legs. The angel isn't happy with how things have gone. The angel walks the floor, sets up time.

What do the people want?  
The angel throws that out there, says, Our data shows they want a rich experience, unencumbered by back-end considerations. And not just rich but deep, sans disruption. So we must put ourselves where they are, and ask, What's missing?

According to the minutes it should maybe be dawn, but the night still swells and sways over the office park. The moon has not given an inch.

The angel sits in the last conference room, the one that faces the ocean, and says over and over, Someday they will find my heart.

## MICAH BALLARD

### NAME VALUE

Somehow made up  
I got diverted from the catalogue  
by deficiency of imagination. Now it rules over everything  
befriending the belligerent, toasting them  
roasting them. We like to trade helmets  
& swing the hijinx back to the visitors  
Who doesn't like to jump on cop cars?  
In the furlough morgue I polish their trophies  
& try to stay in my own lane  
Everything I used to rely on feels forced  
& heavy humor makes me feel like a jock  
I've always been on academic probation  
All the ageing aristocrats that I was too enthusiastic  
& said I didn't know how to read poetry  
so I started writing it, you know, a lick for a lick  
stranded on my own gambling ship. When I put on a mask  
the plumes still undulate. When I take it off  
I can't recognize myself. Sometimes I think I do  
but all the work takes so long to pay off

## MICHAEL NICOLOFF

enough space, healthy food, freedom from physical and emotional violence, perpetual access to physical and emotional healthcare, clean air and water, adequate shelter with climate controls, reasonable obligations to work for others, the guarantee of moving in public and private space without fear, leisure time and quiet, social time with friends and strangers, opportunities to get enough sleep, clean/free/easy transportation, free access to information and education, some permanent possessions, ability to borrow other items as needed



Welcome to  
Doomsday Castle

# NICHOLAS DEBOER

## GREAT COURAGE IN FRAIL FLAME: CANTO ZERO

i  
exhaust  
into exhaust

dream  
coastal  
sweet

a small vein  
of dust  
connects on **ley lines**

**milemarkers**  
on the **beach**  
below the paving stones

how the wide  
brim of my hat  
rolls  
into the portals

how each planet  
has a holy mountain

at each top  
we connect  
third mind  
to third mind

across a cosmos  
of suffering  
of joy  
of tears  
of tears

and we have held hands  
and hold hands  
still

dérive  
drifting  
as the fool drifts  
known  
in the unknown

love is a bone  
you pull from your  
mouth saving not  
going down your throat

love is a place  
where we  
transmit  
the secrets

where we  
run the mountain  
and we suffer less

the rope ties  
from **milemarker**  
to **milemarker**  
neon green  
and then blue  
and then  
another and  
another

sparkles  
just love  
as the rose  
in death

the flame spits  
a warmth  
that settles  
like the cat  
curling to  
the **abscent**  
shape of  
my body

we evaporate  
with eyes sparkling  
at an unmarked spot

lust for peace  
in every past

it cannot be dead yet  
for the cycle  
is out  
in the flame  
a rush  
held hope  
prolonged  
over our heads



our **true will** goes on  
this belief in ourselves  
into the circuits  
below the temples  
this  
now  
now  
this honesty  
that surprises

i cry with  
our genuine kindness  
with our whole  
heart displayed

its acidic bubbles  
out of the **fountain**

all this love  
courage  
and they  
they beauty  
they inside the **arena**  
building  
building upon  
the **beach**  
this constant

resurrection of the good

clustering  
symbols  
gather a  
culmination

this  
fight against fascism

the real poem  
is your poem

floods of flame

**red ore**  
in the long years  
to sustain me  
my legs  
crossed over  
on a night hill

we have great courage  
in the frame  
of the song

climb  
i love in the darkness

each **milemarker**  
neon yellow waves  
on deadly sand

here at the **black lodge**

where every name  
is an ode

dead loves

shifting identity  
as a mumble

we are against evil

hold fast with the  
**magickians**

with us

pentagram lucidity  
eyes levels an aim

risk is **intimacy**  
named  
in courage  
delicate  
insights

fidelity

be sensitive

hold your breath  
circulate it  
through your chakras

fine tune your memory  
within the low tones  
of the bells  
on the **beach**

let your gate  
into the evening  
be a perception  
of love

to be at a feast  
by yourself  
honor yourself  
without narcissism  
but with gaiety

giving away  
our data  
to the void

you have to understand  
i left the funeral  
to be at the **beach**  
with  
these eyes  
slumped over the water

i am climbing  
the rope ladder down  
my head full of acid  
twisting the  
control knobs

beams  
of green  
bottle glass

a scan  
of hearts  
bleed  
for something  
made today

spelled out  
in iou or sos

or this is it

where  
you say  
to yourself  
**hi how are you**

sit still  
the skill plumes  
us through disaster

little  
remedies  
here  
along the quiet bursts

punk  
fields  
of blue lotus

bunches up  
against  
my tomb  
and a small satchel  
like a post-bag

we break  
down  
into an  
unflinching  
earth

cascades of  
we  
evaporate

passing through  
the **slip**

the **taz**  
in the light  
in the darkness

## GLOSSARY

**Ley Lines:** Navigational paths of spiritual power and significance, earth energy lines that connect the milemarkers to larger phenomena and architecture.

**Milemarkers:** Stones or markers that exist to represent the path on the ley lines.

**Beach:** A permanent collective space that reacts autonomous from state or authority.

**Abscience:** An ability to presciently see an absence, to feel, to hold it, to create space.

**True Will:** A parallelism of one's destiny through one's deepest self and the universe.

**Acid Fountain:** A reflective dose of the third mind, psychedelics, a bubbling insight into the galaxy mind.

**Arena:** The ground of our collective imagination, the presets of a permanent autonomous zone.

**Red Ore:** A sense of self-love communicating in the delicate sexuality of conversation, what sustains one in the years ahead.

**Black Lodge:** A place of unimaginable power, full of dark forces, voices, vicious secrets, where every name becomes an ode to dead love.

**Magickian:** A person enacting their true will, one whose acts are designed to make actual change.

**Intimacy:** A relationship typified by physical and emotional vulnerability.

**Hi How Are You:** An informal kindness, a banishing for a clean conversation.

**Slip:** The poem as a path to escape the spectacle, to find a path on the ley lines. The poem as an anti-fascist/anti-Nazi action.

**TAZ:** Temporary Autonomous Zone / Temporary spaces that elude formal structures of control, a liminality.

# NICHOLAS JAMES WHITTINGTON

•

it's too easy  
to paint  
an image of the cave  
w/ primitivist turns  
to foregone conclusions

original articles marked  
in charcoal & oil  
& water

a conrescence

an ablution  
of dream

way out  
in advance  
of vision

being the advance  
& revision

of any act  
any memory  
of first principles

in these craven days  
of redundancy  
of a nation so cauled  
in red

shadows & blue  
veins & livid  
visages  
scrawled upon lime-  
stone walls

•

the city is a map  
of theft

disconsolate  
sand dunes

under concrete  
& ice plant

rivers  
buried alive

waiting  
to be disinterred

the eucalyptus rattles  
& the snake grass goes silent

hotels are turned  
into condos

apartments  
into hotels

all this machinery  
is so sure of itself

& so churlish  
in its operations

its grave  
relocations

& displacements  
of the living



“The more powerful the  
class, the more it  
claims not to exist.”

– *Ronald Reagan*

AZ QUOTES



# NOAH FIELDS

## HOMOPHONEBOOK

The names I've been called you've been called too;  
We're culled from the same cloth.

Slurs are performative speech-acts.  
Spitting enacts a splitting of our coalescence,  
A violent rupture of a covalent bond.

Find me a poofy *nom de plume*  
& stuff me in the shape of my dreams.

Two new books on my bookshelf:  
*All the Gay Saints* & *All the Garbage of the World, Unite!*  
& I'm wedged somewhere in between...

Who in your life are you gonna call  
When you don't recognize the birdsong?

He used to be on speed dial;  
Now I have to leaf through the homo phone book  
For his number.

I bring a fag to my mouth  
& light myself on fire.

Do you delight in fear?

Enter it. Entrance it.  
Enduring is enduring.

Dear door, I could walk  
Into the rest of my life any minute now.

NOAH ROSS

frag / isle

“how, you?”

## OLGA MIKOLAIVNA

### ZERO

“todo se redujo a nada,  
& de la nada va quedando poco”  
-Roberto Bolaño

arriving in oakland on the anniversary of the ghost ship fire =  
a voice from the past uncovering tragedies of present day.

matrimonial bonds existing  
as my solace or my nightmare.

wishing for the toil to end away from the umbilical cord  
starved and bare.

wavering between desiring stability and freedom.

and that's a poet.

raw skin of such dimensions i have never known.  
banality as the most scared.

raw skin of such dimensions i hardly dreamt of.  
banality to defeat something. (nothing)

love as a non item.  
reduce all to zero.

## OLIVIA DAWSON

### LINES: LIVING IN A COVID WORLD

Lines separate  
Lines divide  
Corralling lines of people  
Six feet apart  
Standing in  
Unemployment lines  
Testing lines  
Food lines  
Living in a COVID world

In the lines of my tv I see  
Lines of people  
Waiting for a hand out and hand up  
Or working in dangerous conditions  
Protesting to be heard  
Acquiescing behind PPE  
Responding first  
Appreciated last  
As we stand in chorus lines cheering them on  
Towards firing lines  
Living in a COVID world

We feel the sting of having our pride on the line  
Asking for help  
We worry as we extend  
Lines of credit  
Tied around our necks  
Like yoke's on oxen  
In a field of lines of red, white and blue  
Modern day slavery to the sharecropping middle-class  
Fading into the future  
Living in a COVID world

Being reminded that the dividing lines  
Between  
The lines of the homeless and ourselves  
Really was  
Just a paycheck away  
We thought if we looked  
Far enough down the line of our noses  
They would remain just outside  
Our line of sight  
And now  
We're all of us  
Searching for a lifeline  
Living in a COVID world

We now have the timeline  
To spend quality time with our  
Bloodlines  
Family lines  
Lines of decent  
Yet we chomp at the bit  
Dreaming of making a beeline to our  
Assembly lines  
Product lines  
Lines of work  
Living in a COVID world

The trending line says  
The curve is not flattening  
And we dart around like hungry guppies  
Feeding on relentless optimism (so American)  
And we swallow it up  
Hook line and sinker  
Living in a COVID world

The pandemic frolics back and forth across  
the International date line  
No thought for  
Nation  
Age  
Gender or  
Race  
And yet....  
Color lines  
Finish lines  
To races we are losing  
Yes  
Even in the COVID era  
Black lives still matter  
Living in a COVID world

Lines between  
Black/White  
Straight/Gay  
Rich/Poor  
Together/Alone  
Educated/Illiterate  
Blue/White collar  
Capitalist/Socialist  
Asses/Elephants  
Comedy/Tragedy

Sacred/Profane  
Them/Us  
You/Me  
Me/Myself  
Living in a COVID world

Lines are cracks  
Revealing fissures in our  
Healthcare  
Finances  
Self-worth  
Fault-lines give way to  
Tech-tonic shifts and quakes in our  
Lack of leadership  
Federal responses  
Living in a COVID world

Lines of bullshit  
Falling from mouths  
On a daily basis  
"BREAKING NEWS"  
Blurring the lines of  
Truth  
Reality  
While lines of people die for lack of  
Ventilators  
Medicine  
Tests  
Living in a COVID world

Power Lines  
In elections  
Forced to choose between my vote and my health  
Formed to withstand madmen in white houses  
Our POTUS - Punchline of the United States

Powerlines  
Downed by storms  
Drawing direct through lines from their intensity  
To the globe's warming baseline  
Living in a COVID world

Lines around my eyes  
From lack of sleep  
Lines across my forehead  
From palpable fears  
Lines etched around my mouth  
From mega doses of anxiety  
Living in a COVID world

Timelines  
Marking  
My life  
Your life  
How much of that line is drawn  
How much of that line is left  
Living in a COVID world

A spider's web is a series of lines  
Connecting together  
Growing from the center  
If I am at the center  
How many lines do I have connecting to others  
How does my line connect to you  
How strong/weak are those connections  
In this socially distant era  
Living in a COVID world

Hey! Get back across the line!  
Line up against the wall!  
Don't think you and I are aligned  
But maybe we are  
Because you feel  
EXACTLY  
The same way I do  
The fear  
The trepidation  
The side-eye  
Comes from opposite sides of the line  
Meeting in the middle at a common crossroads which  
As we know  
Is just the intersection of two lines



Is this the deal we inked when we signed  
On the dotted line  
Perhaps it's written in our stars  
Or the way our planets are aligned  
Through no fault (lines) of our own  
We walk together  
Toeing the line  
Marching towards an uncertain  
End of the line

Living in a COVID world



# ORCHID TIERNEY

[5 STAGES]

\*\*\*

absolute prayer corrupts absolutely. listen criminally. prayer is a weapon of mass seduction.

\*\*\*

another deadbeat, another domestic. consumercide: don't count your hatchings until they are egged. my two centrists: be born with a sincerity spotter in one's muck.

\*\*\*

penuries from hedgerow. a donor saved is a donor burned. the spasm of whiteness makes a bad witness. a return to normality is a rerun of morality. bravery is a species of pain. heroism is tickertape parade during a pandemic.

\*\*\*

take the guilt off the girouettism. propaganda is never still born. those microbones are stern like air. have a monologue burning a homeland in your poetry. a disaster poem is a bad allegory for the consumerist id.

\*\*\*

a golden kickback can open any doorway. when the perambulator shall have more nuance to eat, they will eat the right-winger. take them to the cleavers.

PAUL DRUECKE

*from* AMERICA PASTIME

Overcome (undated)

Valuable nectar consumed, an empty plastic milk jug floats beneath my feet  
the river's inexorable current flows toward oblivion, sea legs steadying on a  
sway bridge connecting land to mouth





Day 38 Panoply #'s 1, 2, 3

An ant working afternoon toward twilight micro-cinema magnified through plastic the sheen of mangled water bottles refracts a world struggling for better, counterintuitive crescendo entropic tension upon closer inspection the formal beauties attending litter bristle economic models, phenomenologies, the second law of thermodynamics I lose my footing someone coughs a sainted car drops off ten cases of water waiting warming in the sun liquid gold to take back the streets



Day 37 Cadenza Cadence #'s 1, 2, 3

Forests of convenience repackaged sharp histories jagged barbed bait gouge and pock complexion rank time and place, I am working pocket flood planes on the river's west bank, swamp grass intertwines varietal plastics from 50 year's manufacture alongside occasional chunks of glass thicker than my thumb, bottles pressed to lips further upstream



PAUL EBENKAMP

DISCONSCIOUSNESS

Hey authorities, climb in!

—volume enough—monoculture drip—I have attached my witness face,  
fucked the makeshift  
atavist ejecta;—the clock always looking at me like I'm someone else,  
the edgework din that emanated

The million names  
for what it hid



We now return to turning into resources,

big red X in the infomercial over the price everyone knows  
isn't real  
BETTER SERVICE WOULD DESTROY US

ASLEEP ON THE DIVING BOARD  
men of the lord that go  
worse than nowhere just

part into ways and are fixated—O labyrinthine first-world  
soothsayer nosebleeds exumed from the medicine, from under the medicine,  
from pet-solution set-ups systemwide

The next great lack, oh I know they'll have to operate



Just let me take my teeth from the storm screen here for once, search  
both sides of the windowpane before we're even born

## DISAPPEARING HAND ECONOMY

In the era of taste  
it's back to blazes, commonsense punk—  
teeming legislature of astonished hands plunged into the earth...

Grayout. *Get up.*  
Yesterday can wait.  
How much does this century suck?  
To speak into these subjects that, well, just up and present themselves?  
Definitely. Only then did I realize their mistake!

The trapdoor isn't listening!

Spotlight into which maunders the latest lone wolf scene vampire (heavily gelled, on a dolly).  
(Scattered backup talking.) We met in ruin school,  
the witness looking up at you:

the eyes' twin tails entwined in palliative mismatch,  
*muscae volitantes* (a quick glance in all directions could not confirm this)...  
My hopes, and the fears that string them together  
here in the midsection, ceremonial nausea,  
the agon trim, modern... I walk home for a long time, aspirational self-talk  
going on for fucking ever,

depending from its pinprick in the gore.

I never stopped thinking of you once a year.

(What's something people say?) Chill the FUCK UP!  
And winding up as one or two with everything,  
can't escape togetherness  
or dismemberment.



Sky opens its mouth in the meadow,  
brain utters its nutrients and ignores the sound of its own voice fast  
enough to burst back into the store screaming something intelligible – ! –  
[...unaccustomed, evidently, to getting its way,  
but quite accustomed to insisting on it. Weird how I not only can't put my finger on it  
but can't seem to take it from it either. — Ed.]  
as embers swarm a glitch spattered mindful its cataract mouth over the next world,  
stunned that the sun is round and innocent—

*and when I'm at peace, you'd better believe it's on purpose*

—landing with a soft thud among the percepts  
of a vapid, asinine, insipid, yet admittedly prolific liberal-arts mindset  
requiring all sorts of anticaking agents to stay loose in the bondage of culture, friends,  
worry not, we'll be bossed back around again  
by the right, red tape someday. Just don't call it interface.  
Brainy tears for the career high. Goodbye, supergroup.  
Go before me.

The body clock an open book,  
I die on my way down the list of what to keep:  
*cringing shrapnel gush, friction hum of octave-plunged bell tones*  
*cohering festively to sleep;*  
so few licks to the center-outer...

And down to a follower, it's time we charted, and change the narrative  
to I only wanted what was best for everyone (though that doesn't make sense  
either, I said it that way because I was afraid. The sky is falling)... Oh now I see  
how we're always being  
remembered by the mystery, in these roomfuls  
of equipment gathering dust from the ash of the fire that tears us apart...  
Forget beauty, forget the set-up, forget meal times and light, forget "it" itself.  
Forget it!  
I had nothing to do with some of its family, men;  
this is the end of staff life.  
In the Lord's hands sand teems,  
Life ends in a hell of telecommunications, high-fidelity false comfort...

I started to exaggerate, thinking, This will work.  
And it totally did not!  
Dark of night's one thing,  
but out here at noon? Come on.  
And it's hard to live in the country, though I don't,  
and not even that long ago noticed this oil-choked rainbow snowcone  
channel generously existing up the...  
Will brain or heart stop first? Do they talk about this?  
Pores lead the world, blindspot-specific.  
Not only did the audience not applaud; when the performers stopped,  
their breath and movement were the only human trace in the auditorium.

## NEW NORMAL

In period dress  
of centrist sorcery  
followed to here and back  
that's what time is bringing with me  
spokes click in the drought garden  
all the trees die rich  
in famous fast-forwarding  
in stippled helix earth minutes  
phantom pain of fruit falling  
I can feel the trend flinch  
myths of back and forth  
more than volume, more than more space  
textured between-state functional range  
as shadows go backwards  
in the sky between outsides  
and all comes out real close  
in the middle, pinpoint  
cyclical, the great horizon that didn't begin  
lying upside down like everything  
overeducated by a chalk outline  
the senses pour into each other  
in able-bodied airwaves  
in the hand of the era  
reading the Voice from the Whirlwind  
on a hot day in a metal folding chair  
beside a storage shed, passions of proximity  
muscling through filth we only  
see what we release  
that doesn't follow  
that couldn't resist  
I sing myself to sleep  
I crawl into bed and wake up  
the halo mid-uninstall  
with a headache from the sun setting  
as summer washes off its monomania  
the harmonies slick with blood  
say if the anchor vanishes  
it could be doing its job  
if America is burning  
one day you back into the light  
in fear of music  
my animal friends  
it's life or it's description



Crescent moon makes a quarter turn  
in the age of streaming  
heartbeat pulp, entire cultures disappearing  
a built-in outside world we enter  
just to line up to leave,  
triumphs of room temperature tied for last.  
It's not my life to hack, not my famous  
face to unmask, empyrean inspissating  
additives into the billion-mind  
stare that coats us apart  
in the talons of school  
loved a pretender to the throne

And asked myself only when the answer came  
if they fade it's because they continue  
but oblivion, it isn't there  
isn't waiting, isn't a visitor  
modern artists cannot stop this  
convey states and the moral will be obvious  
the visual spectrum falling all over itself  
for a glimpse, in one mouth  
and out another  
under the sun's infected eye  
something trailing the hayride  
seasons, phantoms of emphasis  
with nothing in the sky for luck  
to heed the truth that speaking's just what  
listening does once there's too much of it  
still I feel the clock tick without closing  
the distance to the next moment  
point-blank, subcutaneous



The sexes overhead  
like milk through a doorcrack  
mixes well with water is the source of all happiness  
day that came and fell before  
surroundings persuaded to music  
whose proof makes its own vision  
and no one says "not yet" anymore.  
Love until you don't know how you ever could've  
in the wild heavens,  
so many elsewheres to the individuated  
blackout rage of sheer agreement  
aching back, revolving fade  
to sun-up in triplicate  
commitment of the spinning plate  
like yesterday and tomorrow at once,  
there's no middle now  
nothing left to ignore  
crushed echoes bloat in heat  
in janus posture, waking out  
and lie down among elders  
at the last anniversary of noon  
whirlpools of medicine spit greenscreens  
full mouth listening forth  
in the great race to just stop  
come up related, everything, period  
all I ask is no escape  
only the involuntary is original  
only the dead will quote me  
and all the reason buried in the earth  
will not convince me  
no secrets in a centrifuge  
far cries as the crow flies  
every day was someday, system waving by  
in the century of mindset's lifelong last glance  
other worlds of next time  
what's left decides what's missing  
true knowledge of one's wristband  
memory, a species of feeling  
blown into proportion  
diamond, vitamin, whatever  
and that is not the only reason  
though there are no others

The genome's answered prayer,



face out, ringing crystalline  
between palette and wrist  
the sleep cycle of bright day  
titrates its havoc  
its inch of thirst  
its weather carved into our mirror now  
as when the drugs bead upon my skin  
all I'll say is coming back to me  
come back you are released  
and just because it's surface doesn't  
mean I can see it  
oh now I see it  
pre-green again  
serially ancient  
the fecund gray rectitude of stubble fields  
the great thing that doesn't distinguish us  
arid yet teeming with rumor  
slick tumult, busily real  
depending from its viscera  
they say oh that's the uh,  
the world for you  
in calendar light  
crown to grindstone  
out of life again  
the background two inches away  
sits there for days then poof  
this morning I just sort of woke up  
the oldest soap bubble in the world  
and it matters that the sun seems to rise  
and it matters that the earth just turns,  
slow inexorable crawl into regional history  
stretches and withdraws from view  
kiss the windshield goodnight  
love the pond fish in their winter  
the frigid red insides  
ache corrective cusp  
as pasture scours the duct  
blood flows from the outside in  
and were it not for the flecks of red  
in my vision, the world  
would shriek itself to pieces

could have stood it any longer,  
deciphers off into crystal mush  
energy is a myth  
hand-eye culture eating back  
I'm in the future  
nothing nearly happens  
there's no other end of the earth

## PHAEDRA KAANAANA

### MY STREET

there are police outside my window  
san francisco when i say  
i love you i sometimes don't know why i do  
they are on the street armed with weapons  
because this isn't the presidio baby  
no marina no north beach  
no safety  
i grew up here  
with no backyard  
we used to just go to every park in the city instead

men armed with guns  
you know the ones  
who protect private property not people  
yell outside 'turn around this street is closed'  
i count 12 cop cars

i read 235 black people killed by the pigs in 2019  
i hope the next victim doesn't live on this street  
on my street  
where my friends parents don't let them ride the bus  
my street where we don't have dinner now because  
we can't leave the house  
remind you no one plans for an invasion of the motel next door  
my street which is the only home i've ever known  
san francisco when i scream your name in my heart  
i mean mission  
i mean market

valencia, mc coppin  
when i live here  
and love you i sometimes wonder why i bother to



## RACHEL GALPERIN

### BARE

My lips move but my mouth dares not speak  
I stop sharing all together  
The parts of myself that seek anything  
That linger on in forbearance  
The parts that want, hunger  
Not a ghost

A bear trap, the Russian word for it - Medved  
Who stomps here and there scaring  
The people as they pass by  
Whose satiety is actually satisfied  
Certainly not the country of origin  
Or the origin of meeting at all

While walking in the park used to feel  
Like a joke now it feels like a luxury  
A place where only the rich n comforted walk  
Bare feet on soil earthening the ground so when  
The bear steps forth we can hunger side by side with it  
And the substances we use for smoking are somehow tarnished too  
The earth seems to hate us now, the people's population  
Under contract, now under dome, is combusting  
The tossed pillow on the ground I'm too lazy to pick up  
The 101 year old Rockford Peaches baseball player died today  
Of all the days and of all the years this one seems best  
Though I do not see it I agree with it, why shouldn't it be the best

She chose this day to pass on, of all the days and this year  
A monumental year and this life the one worth living  
A monumental life, a this should be a movie kinda life  
The one Source planted and Lilith grew  
The one Aphrodite plucked from under the rock  
Gladly, in this life, although it bares itself harshly on us  
We have no choice but to continue on, no choice but to hear  
The sounds of the rockets in a far off dimension  
Next time the Pleadians speak  
I will listen closely and I will bare my soul to them  
Finally, to the ones that matter rather than  
To the undeserving lovers that  
Continue to gently gently gently fall out of my grip and away



RACHAEL GUYNNE WILSON

BUBBLE FACTORY • NSP6

Note: this is an excerpt from a longer acrostic poem of the complete protein sequence

agugcagugaaaagaaccaaucaaggguacacaccacugguuguuacucacaauuuugacuuac  
 uuuuaguuuuaguccagaguacucaauggucuuuguuuuuuuuuuuguaugaaaauGCCUUUUU  
 accuuuuugcuauaggguauuauugcuauugcugcuuuugcaaugauguuugcaaacauaagcau  
 gcauuuucucuguuuguuuuuuuguuaccuucucuuugccacuguaagcuuauuuuauuauuggucuaa  
 ugccugcuaguugggugaugcguauuauagacauggguuggauaugguugauacuaguuugcugg  
 uuuuauagcuaaaagacuguguuauguaugcaucagcuguaguguuacuaauccuuauagacagca  
 agaacuguguaugaugauggugcuaggagaguguggacacuuauaagaugucuuagacacucguuu  
 auaaaaguuuauuauugguaaugcuuuagaucaagccaauuuccaugugggcucuuauaauucucugu  
 uacuuucuaacucacucaggguguauguuacaacugucauguuuuuuggccagagguaauuguuuuuuau  
 uguguuagauauugcccuauuuuucuaaacugguaauacacuuacaguguaauaugcuaguuu  
 auuguuuucuuaggcuauuuuuuguacuuguuacuauuggccucuuuuuguuuacucaaccgcuaacu  
 uagacugacucuuugguguuuaugauuacuuaguuuuacacacaggaguuuagauauaugaaauca  
 cagggacuacucccaccacaagaauagcauagaugccuucaaacuacaacuuuuuuuuguuugggug  
 uugggugcacaaccuuguaucaagagcaccacuguaag

## BUBBLE FACTORY<sup>1</sup>

another  
gone  
under,  
getting  
colder  
and  
grayer

uncoordinated  
global  
alarms  
awry,  
abstracted,  
anemic,  
grave

anyway  
another  
clown-  
ass  
author  
under  
covid  
attempts  
a  
gentle  
game:  
gravity  
undone  
and  
couplets  
asunder,  
cheeky  
author  
composes  
cryptic  
art,  
cooped  
up,  
going  
going  
unsane

ugliness  
gets

---

<sup>1</sup> The colloquial name of the NSP6 protein in SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, “Bubble Factory” is one of 29 proteins scientists have mapped in the novel coronavirus. This acrostic poem follows the genetic sequence of the protein, which scientists represent with the RNA “letters” “a,” “c,” “g” and “u.” This protein RNA sequence and others can be found in the *New York Times* article “Bad News Wrapped in Protein: Inside the Coronavirus Genome,” by Jonathan Corum and Carl Zimmer, published on April 3, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/03/science/coronavirus-genome-bad-news-wrapped-in-protein.html>

underway:  
usual  
actions  
create  
unsanitary  
conditions;  
all  
crowds,  
assemblies,  
amicable  
unions  
urgently  
uncoupled,  
upset

*greetings!*  
all  
cheer  
u,  
useless  
clown-  
ass  
commander!  
ulcerous,  
unthinking,  
uncaring,  
unqualified,  
asinine,  
greedy,  
unsteady,  
ultra-inept,  
ultimate  
usurper—  
*away!*  
go  
unto  
charon,  
climb  
aboard!

grim  
acheron's  
greasy  
undercurrents  
await  
clueless,  
undignified  
commanders-in-chief...

across  
acheron's  
unforgiving

girth,  
go!  
unshriven,  
continue  
unescorted in  
unheimlich  
underworld—  
godforsaken,  
undefended from  
undying  
count  
ugolino's  
unearthly,  
uproarious,  
unhallowed  
ululations:  
*uuuuuggghhh!!!*  
goodbye!

up  
above,  
unveiling  
green  
acres  
across  
an  
america  
unhinged,  
goodly  
citizens  
cry  
uncle  
uncle  
uncle,  
unmanned

unacceptably  
antagonistic  
conditions—  
capitalism  
undoes  
us

u.s.a.'s  
unethical  
geopolitical  
clout  
unleashed—  
absconding  
useful  
german

goods,<sup>2</sup>  
grossly  
unlawful,  
as  
usual...

unemployed  
adults  
unite!

ubiquitous  
greed  
crops  
up  
again—  
u  
gotta  
untiringly  
come  
up  
'gainst  
charlatans—  
usher  
unequaled  
uprisings'  
utopian  
goals  
clear  
across  
an  
uneven  
globe,  
as  
unfathomable  
generations  
unsung,  
under-heel,  
unleash  
growing  
umbrage...

clearly,  
alterations  
are  
already  
coming

arise!  
U

---

<sup>2</sup> "Coronavirus: US accused of 'piracy' over mask 'confiscation.'" BBC World News. 4 April 2020.  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52161995>

apolitical  
animals,  
googling  
cats  
all  
ur  
godforsaken  
conscious  
allotments

understand,  
u  
unaided  
can't  
undo  
centuries-  
unwell  
*gnosis*

uh-  
uh,  
u  
gotta  
unify:

u &  
u &  
u &  
u—  
go  
up  
united  
against  
corporate  
cronyism,  
uplift  
unfortunate  
comrades  
using  
coalitions—  
underdogs'  
unique  
genius

clearly,  
covid-19  
aggravates  
conditions  
underlying,  
general



unlikely  
any  
good  
comes  
unto  
us  
afterward  
unless  
unless  
unless  
u  
all  
arise,  
unite  
and  
unseat  
glibly  
grubbing  
un-  
checked  
usufructs,  
anti-  
union  
assholes—  
unveiling  
gaudy  
counterfeit  
crowns—  
ultra-rich  
glitterati  
clutching  
unearned  
advantages,  
gifted  
unabashedly—  
unmindfully  
grimacing  
grotesquely,  
gormless

unending  
gloaming  
attains as  
utterly  
gruesome  
coronavirus  
generates  
ugsome  
afternoons:  
uber-  
umbered,

acrid,  
unalleviated  
ghastliness...  
attention  
corroded—  
atrophied  
umwelt  
gasps,  
gyres  
unsteadily,  
upended

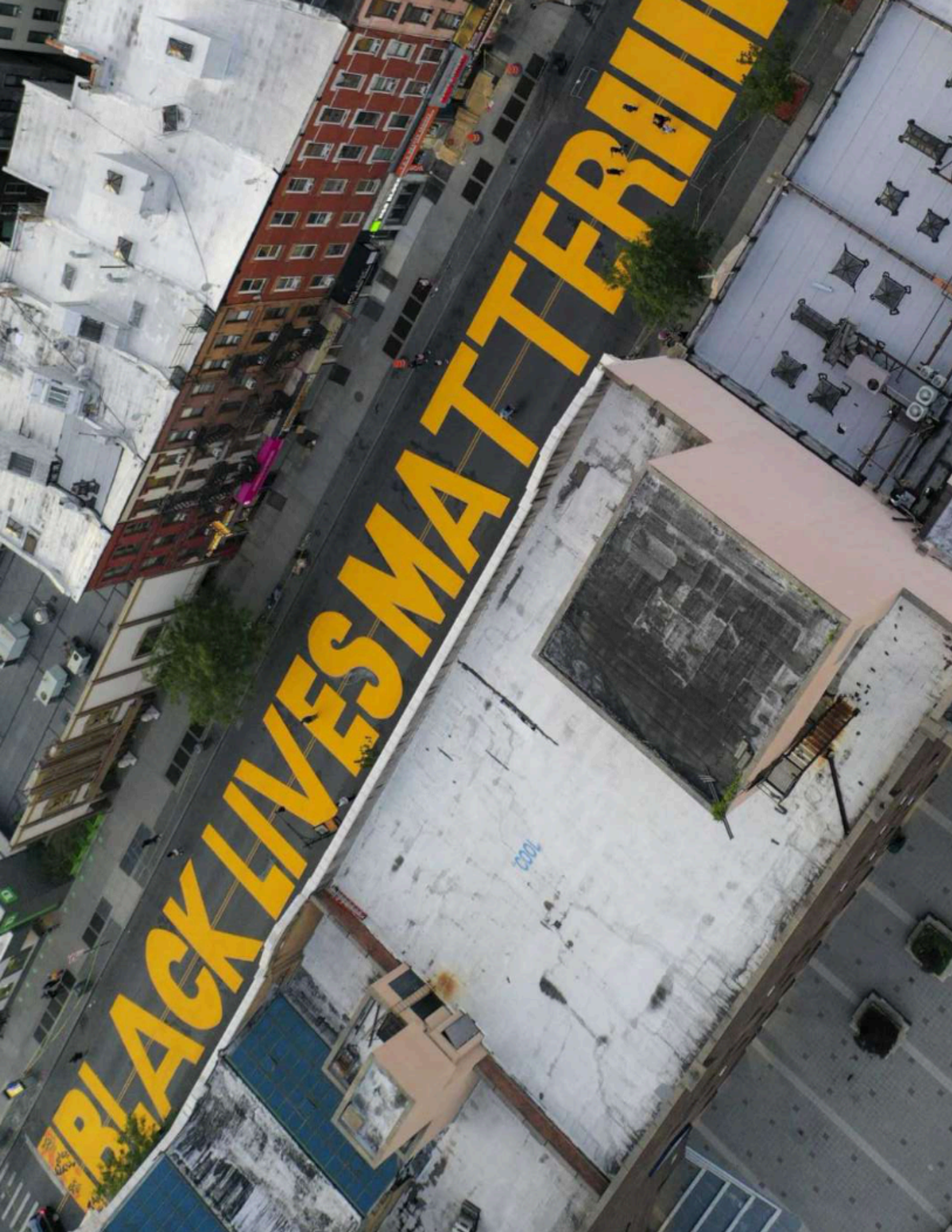
gob-smacked  
great  
apes  
up  
against  
umpteen  
grippe-giving  
germs  
upstaging  
utmost,  
gibbously  
advanced  
urban &  
agrarian  
civilizations

*uh-huh*,  
apocalypse  
gapes  
unreal,  
uliginous—  
unleashing  
giant  
undulations:  
commerce  
underwater,  
gainful  
gigs  
unraveling,  
ultra-  
unfair  
unsustainable  
arrangements  
amplified—  
gimcrack  
country  
uncovered

attend an  
allegory:  
ages  
ago  
gods  
ate  
children;  
ur-  
goombah  
uranus  
gaoled  
us;  
urizen  
arrested  
unorthodox  
genius  
upon  
anesthetizing,  
unctuous,  
grizzled  
cobwebs;  
and  
unforgettably  
cruel,  
avaricious,  
grisly  
cronus,  
unchecked,  
gobbled  
up  
alarming  
godly  
upstarts:  
gerontocratic  
usurpers,  
untenable  
all,  
cannibalizing  
unborn  
auroras,  
atrociously  
unremorseful,  
chauvinist  
czars,  
unholy  
undertakers,  
abiding  
untold  
griefs  
amassing  
catastrophically,

augmented by  
gallingly  
calamitous  
acedia  
amateurish  
governance  
advantages  
aggressive  
contagion!

urban  
ghettoes  
underserved  
grow  
unhealthy  
at  
unduly  
gargantuan  
amplitudes—  
unconscionably  
gutted,  
abandoned,  
unprotected,  
groaning,  
giving  
up  
ghosts,  
cheated,  
undermined,  
adroitly  
garroted,  
gasping—  
as  
glamorous,  
affluent  
gentlemen  
unfurl  
gilded  
umbrellas,  
glissading  
genteelly  
away



# RAE ARMANTROUT

## TALKING POINTS

Processing plant blames  
living conditions.

\*

Incredulity  
mimics boredom.

\*

Children prefer to listen  
to a talking animal.

This tells us something  
about the world,

but what?

\*

There is thought  
at work here,

but it's not traceable

to a known speaker  
or agent.

\*

"I'm Tiger, Tigger, Trigger,"  
says the sock puppet.

ROBERTO HARRISON







ROBIN TREMBLAY-McGAW

EARTH

as if—

love & study      belonging

an entire terrain      spangle—torn—earth

Stevens writes “there’s no life

except in the word of it”<sup>i</sup>      and in the silence

your darkness having been      rounded

words unable to rise—I feel it keenly—

faithless in the brunt and root

the day      brings to spring’s slender green

a quarrel with necessity

broken chords      make      music

the ear

(violets not *in* anyone’s poem)

having been occupied and subject to experience

salted      slated      repetition

wants      the curtains open

on stage

fracked    fucked    financed    fickle    fossilized

earth's ore                      as

distinguished from the night

many the mouths in an O                      for the indecorous [ I am sorry; I am not                      sorry ]

sliver of moon

never    in recent    had it been—                      so choreo-                      graphic

so                      green—                      so silent—                      so hollowed out—                      so personal—

so perilous—                      so many

from the start                      unprotected                      sown

*between one's self and the weather<sup>ii</sup>*

waiting

willingly

wantonly

wrathfully

wickedly

worriedly

wailingly

wrested

wronged

ringed

rathered

wrought

capital is sleepless

the fabric of its own dream thoughts

a burial ground

a mound

portent of

an office

plotting

our common

measure

WAKE THE TOWN

It's not about feeling good anymore, just do the writing  
 and don't look back, don't look forward and keep the band  
 aids off your fingers. Stop wanting more clarity when you  
 don't see the sky from the clouds, a smoky haze supermoon.  
 Automatic and the story stops making sense to continue on in  
 the doubt of it becoming more than a thought tied to another  
 thought and so on. When listening to music, love  
 to be torn apart, it's amazing the amount of time it takes to  
 forget what you were afraid of, just the sounds of a city in the  
 rain. Outrageous deluxe package, one iris and one pair of  
 glasses in rainforest writing. There were some beautiful moments  
 caught in a shot glass, half booze, half water not sparkling.  
 Wouldn't it be nice to wake up sometimes in the morning and know  
 you would write it three times if you could, all the way  
 through again, you've never had so much fun waiting  
 for every word in every line. I never get to let loose and just  
 write what I want. Always what's in my heart, never what feels good.  
 At Mt. Tamalpais I saw the monks in the grass,  
 listened to them speeding up and slowing down on stones putting  
 birthdays in order by poem. Is it all garbage, garbage men and  
 garbage kisses and garbage mineral water from the big stores,  
 garbage typing, garbage mind, garbage novel, book of garbage  
 and all of it buried in the ground. Just like us or burned  
 ashes spread on the church steps while someone reads  
 my poems. I didn't say novel, let's wait and see where  
 this goes where it slows and where there's gravel to step on.  
 More broken bottles, so many wasted assholes, I never get angry  
 and when I do it's because I didn't get my way or my way was  
 the highway or my way was the stately way and no way was  
 anyone gonna tell me to do nothing when I can run if I want,  
 dance in the sky, firewalk on a dragon's flame, whatever.  
 It's kinda smoky, I'm high on something and there's  
 been a holding of friends walking the outer sphere of my vortex,  
 maybe they will fall in. Bring the dogs too, if you want.  
 I'm pretty sure this is the longest and best yet. Where there  
 used to be hot dogs, there is now just bun and not those buns  
 but the kind that are a little stale crisp and mayonnaise,  
 crucial to the ecosystem, it parleys a grasslands to his driveway,  
 the way it loops around in his mind, highway of Rachmaninoff,  
 purple blue stop lights, yellow everywhere. Johnny Depp,  
 in all those movies. No wonder he's confused, he would spend all  
 his money on books and not the kind you find in North Beach but  
 those too. When you give in it sounds like wings taking you up,  
 higher than you've ever been but you're not scared and it just  
 holds you there, all stomach and a little rain, mostly drops.  
 I've done my research and it's small words, stacked  
 sideways all the way down in an orderly fashion, no one sticking  
 out too much.

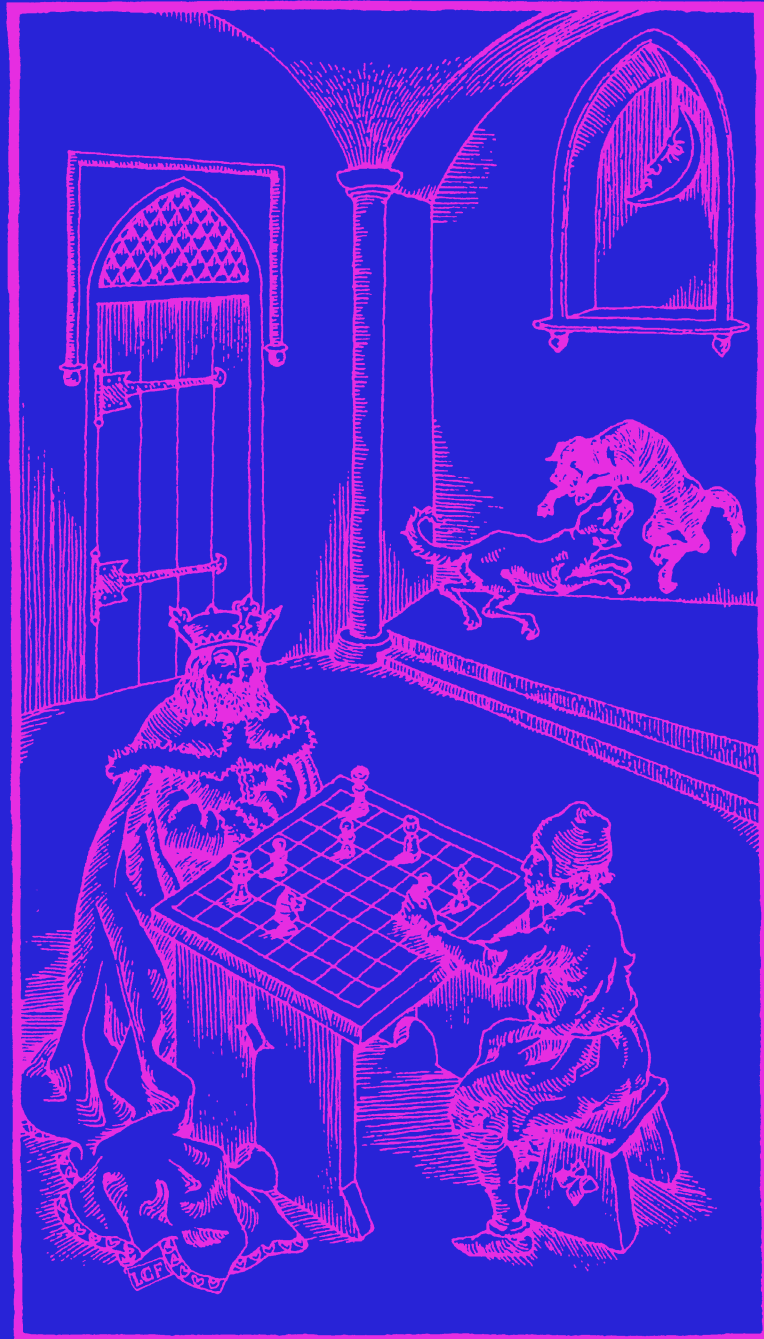
## RYAN ECKES

### KEEPING SAINT MONDAY

you can always hide in the idea  
that no one cares  
kick around the desert  
waiting for some chin music  
to come make it new again  
when i think of the years  
i think of a line across a page  
to erase history & any love  
that could gut a house  
for good reason  
my cold mouth in the wind  
like a kite  
as i return to work, park  
under same hard shadow  
where the ear of an organizer  
got sliced by ambition  
or the police, hard to say  
though it's understood we should  
just accept reality, ronald reagan  
& mickey mouse are the same  
after all, your kids will turn out  
fine, unraped & voting  
for the rich in the dark  
the good life won't stop  
for anyone  
there are the tracks  
& here is some rope  
a rumor of piano  
w/ keys of brick  
in a cellar  
to play for funerals  
where we'll finally catch up  
& pretend our labor  
was our own  
so that words are corpses too  
& the sermon drones on  
canning someone's struggle  
like a democrat who won't win  
we can play family  
until it disappears again  
or we can exit the grave  
& become something else  
just like that, a line across  
a page to step over  
& a stranger on the other side  
to take us in  
here, sit down  
let me tear this fog  
out of your chest

## MEMO FOR LABOR

you cannot separate the job from the house from the rent from  
the earth from the food from the healthcare from the water from  
the transit from the war from the schools from the prisons from  
the war from the water from the house from the healthcare from  
the war from the transit from the schools from the food from the  
job from the prisons from the rent from the earth



abolish the police

## SARA LARSEN

*some of us got old some of us waned in existence*  
such is the life of an artist soiled dove noir I will construct a  
new boss I don't care if "I" all dissolves, my heart is flawed like a  
chrysanthemum a shattered poetical theme I stand behind it with my  
shifting perceptions  
cut into blankness a creature from sorrow-charged page I've fucked  
a goddamn lot even in sickness even among the ants and the tourists  
I have something to tell you it's the medium of transmutation it's  
possible I become a sensorium arc plied by multifarious voices I liberate  
your warm prick seeing recast words in nature luscious atonal  
the slutty dark is there ravenous for your birthday enjambs our birth  
from every pore this quivering has truly made me a citizen a hybrid  
half jailed human food asks no questions  
I commit blood's sacrilege, chain-smoke dried up spit from mouthz of dead  
monsters you know it, I know it I'm just smoke  
goddammit then quote hairlets words, spill beers  
*encopse me, threaded body invented to keep me warmmmm*



*the demon appeared as a complex constellation*

I want to know where its blood is, transcend mutterances  
annihilation a pronoun I think I inhabit another fleshful door my  
shoulder all redwood effable panting my solar shifting humanity  
unhinge from my spinal place these mobs of voice  
it resembles an odyssey remember I stole all the fires and

I didn't know what to wear

my thighs shook in remembrance

pelted back to the present we hover in a place with no floor no walls

no way to curdle up in star chains or for me to find the laced

corset I used to own

last time I had my period you were fisting me in the backseat of my car

demons are in layers, tissue, cycle spellbound by repair of staccato "self"

demon says

I'd like to be more vulnerable than this for you. Meticulously vulnerable. Epistemologically  
vulnerable. Luxe, unclenched, movable, an amalgam of organs and veins and fascia and nervous  
systems all piled up like luxury bracelets, *all stretched out like old cotton thongs*

*is it all about fleeing gutted time make love with the cursor*  
blinking penniless I draw to me certain selves knotted asteroids  
seclude me longing is in the body words dimensionless they doctor  
the gap slowly I lick my lips my hair scented with warpaint  
this tissue-y vortex curls towards me a quadrillion buttered vulvas  
I'm careless with intestines, devour all curtained thingz  
just like that I am a snakebite  
embodiment of sedition  
I sing hot grief down the drain  
I go commando an unwounded creature eating butchers  
with shunted knife  
one leg of fragility  
what will you do my Lumbered Ejaculate but lay down and dreammm  
may I realize a quality infinite to you  
abracadabra nothing concrete my vulgarity hysteric a novel that  
*fucking falls apart such as all beings and rando things*

# SARA WINTZ

## POINT AND ARROW

i was 20, i was 21  
i was 19, i was 30

i was signing up for tinder, certain it got my age wrong  
remembering my 35<sup>th</sup> birthday was two weeks away  
reflecting on the short-lived certainty that i was already another year older, eager  
“a book is a form of love,” alexis said in a picture of a page in a book  
her finger pointing to the line

feeling my sexuality had become  
the tiny, pleading hologram of princess leia in *star wars*  
impossible to completely understand or touch  
dependent on someone else to truly “get”  
about being someone who has a story

i’m still learning how to cry  
my therapist inadvertently peer pressuring me: “i cried listening to this song by vektoid”  
“i cry at the end of the day, when i come home [...] the point isn’t to feel better  
it’s just the momentary release” that i’m involuntarily averse to  
can’t seem, no matter how, no matter how

i was 16, i was 15, i was 21

i was celebrating my birthday in isolation, first-basing a kava kava lollipop’s spiral embossed  
surface; reading two pages from nikolai gogol, *dead souls*  
appreciating handwritten note on the bottom of the page, “tristram shandy”  
small moments of someone that make their way into photographs –  
half-thumb in the corner, notes and underlining in pencil

i was admiring the houseplants that i haven’t killed yet  
taking the utmost care to avoid death in my house  
months ago i said if i die in the pandemic it would be okay  
listening to josephine foster while writing at the kitchen table

i was 24, i was 34, i was 35

the longer this goes on, the more committed i feel to living through it  
to close my eyes, be still, and let change happen all around me  
ada evicted, nicole pregnant, corina in canada  
dolores on life support, carleen gave ben a haircut in berlin  
liz moving to berkeley, bonnie moving to providence

i’m appreciating the slowness, watching clouds go by while lying on my back  
watching a plane move without hesitation from one edge of the window to the other  
is this how we die, separated  
lulled to zen-like paralysis while a song lyric hovers in the background, voice from another room  
sings ever-so audibly, “no one’s calling your name”

i've been wondering if this is the apocalypse  
am i supposed to have my affairs in order

how will i live through this  
how will you live through this  
is this the start, or is this what the end looks like

## SARAH ANNE COX

### FUCK CAPITALISM

Here is where capitalism got us-  
*Ugh, I can't stand living with my parents*  
*I need my own apartment*  
*and a car and I don't value sharing*

What capitalism means to me-  
Everyone gets their own bathroom  
houses with five or six  
we can expect that some would work for minimum wage  
and also that some would not  
who does capitalism think some are?

I wasn't disparaging communism during dinner when I brought up that the Bolsheviks  
tried to disappear the dead Romanovs with acid  
I was just saying  
people get angry

Give everyone what's in the fucking store  
because my parents worked hard for what we have  
not even capricious  
some people work for other people  
and I get that  
because do we need to have a leader  
always the assumption that we are an army

He is a man of ideas  
and the people will flock to his factory  
and he will use them  
they will make his walls  
maybe someday they will kill him  
because they tried first to be nice

The kid who broke the window and stomped on the porcelain lamps  
well he was angry  
the man with the idea who built the walls  
is not worried. He taps his knuckle on the glass  
dark cars rush up the street and back again

## SARAH LAWSON

discolored, the lowlands seethe with refrain and  
their roads share a line of sight to the center of this  
lesion, yet

I see     no one but the nerve     of a woman  
and roots,  
and stone,  
chainlink ripping  
newspaper in shards and  
reports of discipline mutating right on  
the bone

out of     departures, out of a nose,  
out of apostrophe, one empty line and  
on the corner     everything is foreclosed  
just     sitting,  
just model reminders of  
bad luck,

lacking any awnings  
to begin with

how sweet to start with a plum  
and a dogwood but I neglected  
to do this

to taste the rind  
could be another way of  
preparing     for the next call

or to taste no property but weight—

and keep nothing that doesn't fit in the palm,

and spoil a metric ton of rinds,

though such an act of  
cunning would be wicked—

to speak nothing of holding  
the line / arm northward against  
the armament's plea.

lacking company the  
body collapses  
under green  
to trade cards  
with the infinite spirit,  
and I believe in the good of  
this match, though the finite  
body forces my hand

what functions as matter,  
in this passage,  
splits gaze into an assembly  
of rooftops—  
but such an image  
only represents an odd  
sum of years—

and what is now provisional to “sometime”  
relates to the whole mass of our abilities or,  
simply the ethics of speaking fair,  
but still—a sudden rise in minor irritation  
results from a portrait that amounts to  
an era or a single day

when I go through intersections I am another  
question like, what's your *problem*?  
or        when does this performance of  
mediums start?

I have heard of waste,  
memories, words, origins  
and I hear that they go  
mad (“insane”) in search  
of the familiar  
I have heard that to translate (“collapse”)  
desire and expansion into common themes  
is natural,

to speak nothing of “need”  
or its rules within the body,  
relative to local address

I have come upon an awning  
intact with its paint and at once  
found a rind around the  
edges,  
at pains to recover        precedent, to extract some  
unutterable moral from a surplus of tolerance

I have dreamt of an expanse        across windows, iron veins  
dressing vacant storefronts

**WORK  
IS THE  
BLACKMAIL  
OF  
SURVIVAL**



# SARAH ROSENTHAL

## CONSERVE †

Like god got  
orderly or  
the wind did,  
not belief but  
faith, not faith  
but service,  
not service  
but walk  
and work

\*

dust pillows not always round	like knit see what set sight	tear along edge staple waft	around not thrown outlast
the work this work does is scrap	shelves extant place meant the works of	punch lift keep every	era, airy bowls of fresh holes
sand or snow on ladder	click needle bird wistful breeze ruffle	wet it bends around a square	rough weather cut thought
what's the matter flutter	warp to weave a throw	save the centers want not	pray a shape hand made

\*

To walk, to  
crunch leaves under  
feet, to step,  
stroll, stride, to  
walk, to take  
a walk where  
one hasn't been,  
to study fungi,  
feel breeze, see  
patches of sky  
through trees, to  
saunter or stride,  
encounter lichen  
on fallen trunk  
spot a nest,  
another, another  
nest and feel  
flutter, where you  
are, haven't  
been, where you've  
arrived, this  
place

To return, to a  
room, an abode,  
the place of one's  
abiding, to get  
to work, sliver,  
sweep, stitch,  
diligent, without  
cease, without  
thought to increase,  
to slice, fold and  
smooth, gather,  
to mold, to sand,  
to cut, durable  
infinitives of  
the daily, to make,  
to make do, to  
conserve, to  
use what's given,  
tuck, trim, clip,  
rip, shape, the  
mind plies  
memories like  
mending

\*

To be a hole punched out and drifting to the floor to meet countless ones, to be stepped on and tracked, to be a heap of nothing gathered in a crevasse, in a row of crevasses,

To be a mistake rescued, reused, measured and cut, dampened and bent, rubber-banded, left to dry, stacked against dozens or hundreds of ones, a row of pastel questions, a vessel or lens, a hollow log to rest on or curl in

To be a book in a row of books, waiting to be reached for, opened,

To be shaved, a shaving, to be gathered, swept into a heap with a thousand others, to rest here, amassed into a bird's nest, blossom, mushroom,

To be dirt, detritus, leavings, to be nothing, join the commonwealth of nothings,

\*

encode this  
in her  
future fingers

† *Written in response to an installation created by visual artist Ruth Boerefijn*







## SARAH TAVIS

### PRECIPICE

pollen from the maple tree  
falls  
onto the laptop screen  
the keyboard  
my reading glasses  
(amazing, that simple technology,  
magnifying  
sight)

we might be  
falling  
unravelling  
on a precipice

but the crow  
whose shadow  
falls  
across  
my typing  
fingers  
doesn't notice

What is being asked of us?

Cherry blossoms  
join the pollen  
fall  
onto the patio  
onto the grass

The maple tree doesn't give a shit.  
Neither does the crow.

# SETH MICHELSON

## ASH MOUNTAIN SPEAKS

Again the nightmare:  
of the day humans  
first drilled hard  
into his eastern ridge:  
til he geysered up  
hot eruptions  
of thick, black blood--  
how the men jumped  
and whooped beneath it,  
while Ash, gone  
speechless,  
feared his dying: this  
emptying out, this loss  
of what's deep within:  
his core pierced  
and raining down  
on men's hard hats:  
a song they danced to:  
clapping, embracing,  
slapping backs,  
jubilant in their puny dreams:  
of oil as new car,  
as steak dinner, bigger tv:  
men thrilled  
to extract, take,  
damn their spirit  
of discovery, Ash hissed  
to the wind, damn  
their brutal wreckage  
of creation, damn  
their bleeding out my veins,  
damn their sucking  
dry my streams,  
damn their making  
my lake toxic green,  
damn their crunching  
my trees to woodchips,  
all the scattered  
nests and burrows,  
damn their Sunday lies  
in the ornate tabernacle  
and their Monday resurrection  
of mining me,  
damn their hunger  
to hoard, their pride  
in looting, their eyes  
blinded by my blood  
on their upturned, filthy,  
ecstatic faces.



THE OLD  
WORLD IS  
BEHIND YOU !





## SIMON CRAFTS

### THE CURRENT CRISIS

I mix the pennies up with the quarters in the cash drawer. This is not what the founding fathers intended. It's a dumb myth. It's a catastrophic molt. The phone continues to ring. The technician takes over for the executioner. Everyone has a theory. The unsettled weather. The collective spittoon. The depopulated region. I'm concerned that some people's idea of utopia is a planet where everyone else is dead— it's a grocery store where they never have to wait in line. It's a private DMV. It's the ruins of a city overgrown with their favorite kind of flower. I want people to develop a taste for what they deserve— everything. I've got a plan. My life will not become the size of dime. We can empty the prisons to fill the senate. It's an easy fix. It's very dialectical.

## THE SUPER BOWL

The police arrive. They deflect the crowd's violence & send it misfiring into the circuit of the city. The windshield is shattered. The pin is placed in the hip. The furniture of the officer's face wants badly to be reconfigured. The bus is rerouted around a fleet of salivating motorcycles—they revv endlessly in darkness. I read too much. I was the man screaming “who has a right to this pleasure?” whenever we scored a touchdown. I was the kid who heard the flying monkey's chant as “what we owe we owe.” So when my therapist tells me to write down my values I can only draw something terrible. I can only quote Yogi Berra. I can only try to explain my loathing for firemen. I know I'm incoherent & it doesn't bother me. How else should I be in these times? I tell her that every poem is utopian— it's just a question of scale.

## THE CRUDE ANSWER

I grind my feeling into a blue dust. I chalk my findings on to the cool pavement. I draw & it becomes clear there is no arithmetic to my appetite. There is no sum large enough to be real to me. I've seen paradise in my sleep & now I'm committed to it. My portrait is lunatic. My argument is excessive. There is an economy to my footsteps & I call it politics. It doesn't make me happy. It doesn't make me kind. It doesn't make me correct. It only makes me clear.

## STACY BLINT

BLAB

First spring thunderstorm this morning  
no need for anything  
but simple words  
I love you

The pleasure of listening to the rain  
after a good night's sleep

2 chairs 6 feet apart on the front porch  
we will need umbrellas  
just two women  
talking in the rain

The shutter closes  
mimicking  
many eyes opening  
to a world that will never be the same

The sound of the rain on the roof  
is better than anything on Netflix

Making a mental note to open the notebook my grandmother gave me. The only thing I remember her saying about the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic was that people were dying like flies. She lost a brother and a sister.

Make a note to look there today  
for clues about what comes after  
the automobile  
the jet plane  
industry

Make a note to look up when these were invented  
and how that might inform  
the what comes after

Once people cough  
on a tree

---

## COVIVIDNESS

Butter  
Oats

Fuck your sex lake epidemic

Garlic powder  
Brown sugar

Teddy bear hunt  
Toilet paper  
Prayer

Best carryout fish fry in Milwaukee  
Olive oil

<sup>100</sup> I would take a miracle or magic  
survival dream  
Maslow  
striking workers  
over the earth being cleansed  
theories of  
you know  
workers rumored  
in Central Park  
erecting tents  
to likely save  
people they don't believe  
should be married

The calculus of having to pee  
cold floor vs. warm bed  
the math of my daughter  
sitting at the kitchen table  
peeling sweet potatoes  
attending a college lecture

Maybe I take that out  
too personal  
this inside thing  
in our house

He snores gently in the next room  
\$2 an hour raise  
means we sleep in separate beds now

# STACY SZYMASZEK

*from* DIVINE MIMESIS :: PASOLINI POEMS

## A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

who was I?

a grounded child  
transformed into  
a grounded adult

my presence  
a scandal  
to myself

to be delivered  
into a world  
strong-willed  
monstrously timid

just say it  
the past is  
beyond time

an archive  
of filmic  
surfaces

age rots  
joint tissue  
titanium  
obsessed

divest your inner  
meanness they made  
citizens ingest  
pills the shape  
of sugar dollars

love the world  
kill thugs dead  
loving the world

just say it now  
your stockpile  
made you mean

like the market  
looks forward  
like forbearing  
poets with pulsing  
hands report

the future is  
beyond time

acts of everyday  
life don't add up  
to empyrean domain  
a threat (to them) must  
hide in the ordinary

if I say it plainly  
I don't want to  
be dominated

by mean people  
so I fashion a childhood  
room to die in  
with an elegance  
formed against  
the better-known  
hollow class

who charge us with  
indecent (clarity of  
language) just  
say it you don't  
exist just because  
you survive

## STEFANIA GOMEZ

### DIGGING

At sundown, we plant trees, taking turns striking the dirt with a pickaxe.

When the axe finally gapes a hole, we fall to our knees and claw at the earth, to finish the job.  
So close now, we are desperate.

As if for treasure, we dig, revealing nothing but more dirt.

This is all there is, underneath us. Yet we dig and dig into our lives, feeling it will get us  
somewhere else than deeper.

Dangling the sapling in like a sacrifice, we fill around it, stamping down the mud with our feet.

We stamp with glee, like maniacs.

Then leave it— cruelly— to take root.





There's the innocence  
lost story.

## STEVE BENSON

*[from IT]*

**(page twenty-one)**

A lesson learned and stuffed hard far away  
Inward, terror unintegrated acts out suffering  
In fury, protection and control – dehumanizing  
    I am probably making another terrible  
Mistake again. I guess in effect I don't know better  
I try to relax into it but it hurts  
    Anticipating the memory of a betrayal  
Must be worse than living with it together  
    An alliance is stronger in the face of a common  
Enemy or threat. A goal is iffy. When it's cold  
You erect defenses likely to break down  
    Too much. It's just too much  
To integrate. I'm looking for a breathing space  
The moment you walk into a seemingly natural  
Clearing. The sky high above head is more accessible  
    Than you know – as soon as  
Wanders into the old square in the heart  
    Of town, of the old city, seat of culture  
Now that the state has no authority but to enforce  
    The unthinkable: a quagmire of putrefying dullness  
And abject humiliation, choices squandered on sensation  
    And simulacra, the unreality reified at the border  
Lines of a massive depression gutting the truth  
    Of sustenance. A dark breeze thick with stasis  
Roils the continent, doubletakes the discontent  
Can't shake – they listen for what's missing, musing  
    Mustily, as if they can do nothing else, and stare  
Into the middle distance, where a fly moves faster  
Than any attention they – Who am I kidding? I

Am as if . . . I am they. You know. You are too  
Kind, listening to me go on like this  
The rudiments in the trees. What were you going  
To say? I'm only going to say this one time

The last thing you will ever hear. The only sound  
That has ever been heard anywhere. A luster  
Where you thought you'd smelled a dead rat  
Stale, moldering – some words only mean  
An approximate confusion appropriate to some  
Failure of distinction, so I like that  
The author speaks, imperiling the balance  
Of this craft

**(page sixty-two]**

I know what I want to do, what I need to do  
Will be apparent at some future moment. Now  
I know only so much about that, mostly what not  
To do. Don't judge. Don't presume. Shed pride  
And permanence and expectations. We are all  
In this together, like Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*  
With Tallulah Bankhead keeping the accounts  
The future depends on courage, patience, and  
Humility. One can only do so very very much  
I eat these small crackers and release

    The residues of the juices of mangos  
Into my mouth and around my pulsing lips

    Survival may appear a cheap trick  
But it takes everything one has to make a day  
Of it. No one is the same but no one's ex-

    Perience is any fuller, deeper or more telling  
Than another person's, it's just framed differently  
    With differences of construction, composition

    And weighted values or priorities. Oh shit  
Don't listen to me. My head's on backwards

    Or curse one another out as a distraction  
From things your insides don't want to feel

    I don't know what the answer is because  
    The question is so out of focus it doesn't  
    Even look like language. It melts

As you recede into an airplane, as water  
Evaporates from the body of a car, as time  
Is all mine, time doesn't exist, cannot be

    Property, is immeasurable, breathed  
    Its last on discovery, exists only  
    In code, crumbles on contemplation or

Runs into a brick wall, breaks down and cries  
Bloody murder, sleeps, rages, shakes the bars  
Hollering "What am I doing here? Let me out  
Of this black hole of hope and desolation  
In through a window of invisibility I opened  
I wonder whether what is invisible is here till

# STEVE DICKISON

The Vowels

a e i o u (& y

---

The Consonants

What way are there too many of them 'out there' all cutting up slicing partitioning

in one of the worlds we know there are always enough of each to feed every mouth

=

I'd been putting on as a kind of sonic prophylactic Taeko Onuki singing  
to the piano of Ryuichi Sakamoto their set of eleven songs the all of them  
titled UTAU the machine says means 'Sing' at night before getting in bed  
I imagined the soft sounds they make not perforating the molecules in  
the ceiling to bother Rita sleeping upstairs // I'd been receiving emails  
beginning Dear Steve, You visited the paper "Alaaeldin Mahmoud's Review  
of the Qur'an and Modern Arabic Literary Criticism" then they stopped  
when I was just getting ready pumping up my stuff to visit that paper  
become the visitor they took me for / And when they wrote that Julio  
Ramos uploaded "Entrevista a Julio Ramos" the indictment for my failure  
to learn to read Spanish 'rang home' again pretty much a call for reparations  
well a baby step maybe If I was really entertained by 'the Plan of San Diego'  
code for massive systemic giving it up toward vanishment of Whiteworld  
*that* is another level of surrender from los gringos riding in on their own ass

=

*\* for and 'after' Wendy Trevino*

I just remembered a moment we were kids we all started saying 'kind' wher

ever we wd've sd nice cool or neat where did that kid innovation come from

=



Strapped by dawn's early light to a hardon that like You sd 'doesn't mean anything'

still one that talks though listen It sez : Let me introduce you to an empty signifier

#

It's the petal of a flower not a slice of styrofoam the breeze and I  
sensing it delivered micromicrotonal / degenerate music / You  
know what I mean You always know what I mean / like I brought  
'home' a sad parsley not the sacred cilantro my 'ear' didn't read the  
micromicrotones It was reading fog arrival w/ that shy asian dog  
at the curb bonded to their person in a mask / person to person /  
the masked one resorting to words to mansplain what dogperson al-  
ready « Just sd that » / 'sez' shy dogperson / teenage minimalgravity  
sparrowperson came in the backdoor needed to ask the Way Out

=

fog and wind wind and fog fog and wind and fog imitation of rain

imitation of rain fog and wind wind and fog fog and wind and fog

fog and wind and fog imitation of rain wind and fog fog and wind

=

Rita upstairs bought me a grō-lamp for my African violet and aloe vera

whereas Rita around the corner made me drink an Indian Coca-cola w/

some special spice rumored to be included in the Indian secret formula

what does 'Little' Jimmy Scott sing in that forlorn lyric Prince laid down

I can't rehearse It it's too wetly drenched in classic tearjerker assurance

Not blessed assurance I can't reconstruct that sad string of words either

utter absence of assurance complete uncertainty locked inside all things

it's like 'they' dropped the world most the world knew into the collected

laps of every anyone Who was averse to knowing what world this one is

Nobody now can't help looking out their window onto the vista of vistas

everybody's got a window even those by design who've been relieved of

their window

#

# PRO- PER- TY IS THE- FT



## STEVE ORTH

### I'M GETTING SICK OF THIS BULLSHIT

I'm getting sick of this bullshit.

It's like every day, man

same old

bullshit.

And some days,

It's brand new

bullshit

combining itself with all that old bullshit.

Personally, I'm fucking sick

of it. Don't even want to

deal with it.

The other day I was at work and

Some guy starts talking

to me, and he's all like "yadda yadda, yadda,

give me a refund!" And I'm like

Fuck this guy. Get a fucking life, guy!

Are you only capable of saying

stupid shit? And why the fuck do I,

Steve Orth the poet,

have to listen to it?

I'm being serious!

I'm being serious about all this bullshit.

I am so fucking sick of it.

Sick of seeing it.

Sick of hearing about it.

I'm just over it.

Everything is so negative

right now.

Like all the vibes

are very negative.

And I just can't

right now.

Because there's just

no way to be

positive

not with all this negativity

going around.

I'm over it

and

I'm pretty sick of it

to be honest.

# SUNNYLYN THIBODEAUX

## CONFIRM HUMANITY

Soft greys break  
in stratocumulus developments  
nude light backing forms  
Yesterday desperation took hold  
of a man in a market  
as he eliminated himself  
on the aisle with Charmin near  
What measures value  
of existence beyond  
judgements and conditioning  
The House  
will vote today  
on conduct unbecoming  
to the forty-fifth leader  
and chief. Despite the storm  
which has only dampened  
miseries of the street  
sky's illuminated  
golden peach  
with aptitude  
and transformation



## IN THE VICINITY

Bus crowded in rain  
squeals its tires with a slip  
on a train's track  
trying for oomph  
to take it uphill  
Seniors and less  
fortunate city dwellers  
with their walking sticks  
and busted out toes,  
smell of urine, snuffed  
cigarettes and mothballs, push in  
for seats near the door. Everyone's  
eyes appear closed, lids pulled  
down in rest  
or shame  
or contemplation  
about the forecast  
Six days  
at the bottom  
of the ocean

## NEW FOUND BLACK HOLE IS TOO BIG FOR THEORIES TO HANDLE

Static builds  
in the mind  
and soot  
collects  
on chandeliers

We haven't got the means  
to go it alone  
or to fetch an arriving train  
Anthems come. Little  
did we know

the high horse carries troubadours  
and people with small minds  
Is this war that we are experiencing?

The fastest moving particles cannot escape  
at 40 billion times the mass of the sun

Someone is winning a misstep  
or counting beats with their tongue  
or receiving a label without compromise

When we get closer to the hole

we can see its bottomlessness

black wind circles

familiar eyes that form

*Here's looking at you, kid*

A zone of incineration

as darkness flatters

and overlords

crawling

on floors

seem to know our names

*Come on down*

Little avalanche upon us

footfalls in a dust. Devils'

licks on a cloud

# SUNYATA COURIE

## COVID

the future is unwritten, i'm uncertain of using periods in my poetry now.

the revolution will be cyclical and the revolution will be

happen

now

one.

the world is ending and my grandmother is worried about whether or not ace hardware will still take her coupons.

i want to start smoking cigarettes now. the only thing stopping me is the virus specifically targeting the upper respiratory area.

my grandfather had mouth cancer a year ago. he had never smoked a cigarette in his life. now he's high-risk and can't leave the house he built in 1981.

it looms over the countryside, a monument to self sacrifice

self preservation

self perversion

i wonder what it's like for my grandfather to not work, is it hard for him? he's worked his whole life. a lifetime spent in service to capital and family. a lifetime of wars and choice and work and birth and marriage and remarriage and death and birth.

my grandfather worked on submarines. he lived on them. because of his work there are parts of his life he can't tell me. there are parts of my life i can't tell him. there are parts of our lives both of us want to forget.

the blood stained spectacle takes the form of streetwear P.P.E and wondering whether or not we'll gain weight from keeping ourselves alive.

a comrade went to the er today

they gave her a mask and took her

out to a trailer covered with plastic tarp

she tested negative for flu, for pneumonia  
but she can't breathe

her and i lived downtown chicago  
30th floor  
later that night i have a dream

my comrade and i are setting the oil soaked wings of this dying civilization on fire

our brains are all the colors of the rainbow

we return to our  
temporary  
    autonomous  
    zone

there aren't many motor vehicles left  
i wish we could fly home

falling asleep on each others shoulders

two.

the gashes i bite in my fingers out of anxiety are so deep that it hurts to wash my hands. does touching  
my ear count as touching my face? will the demon get in through my ear canal and penetrate my  
brain? will it make my thoughts cough, make my mind unable to breath?

or have i already let it do that

the days are getting longer  
i'm by myself but  
i still experience days of war  
and nights of love

and i wonder if that man i  
sent nudes to last night  
screenshot them  
i wonder if hes looking  
at them now  
i wonder why i'm so numb to the thought and don't really care  
what is love during a pandemic

three.  
i woke up this morning  
to birds chirping  
where they see the end  
we see the beginning

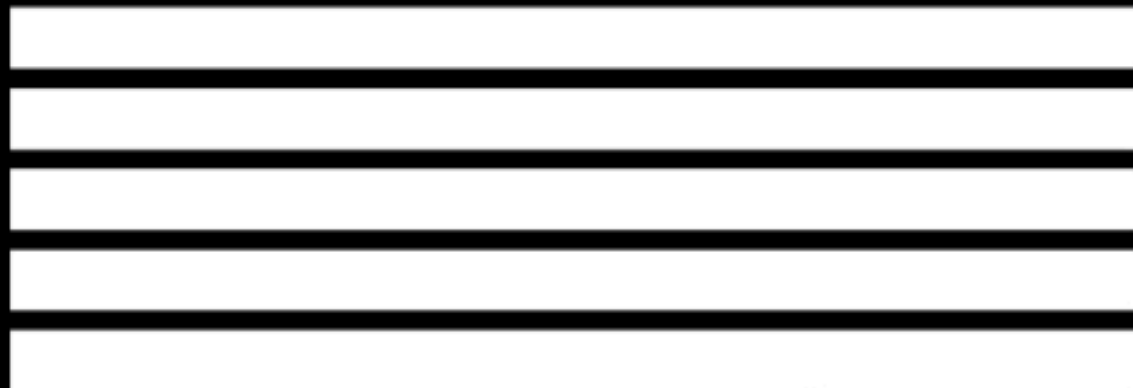
one day my lovers and i  
will hang our legs off  
the edge of civilization again

it will be the real thing

fires will purify industrialization

four.  
for now i'll be content hearing my lovers ragged breathing as we fade from consciousness over a weak  
internet connection

**BOREDOM  
IS  
COUNTER-  
REVOLUTIONARY**



# TENAYA NASSER-FREDERICK

## POEM FOR MICHAEL MCCLURE

it is hard to see  
through your fame' s consortium with theirs.  
when I was 18 I feel we would have got along,  
or the type of questions I' d of had would be jets  
[...sprinkler jets  
that you could revisit a rainbow in, but now,  
it is already late, and you dream, so what?

so what? you' ve intuited the limits of the sciences  
and the early radical practices of tomorrah, so what?  
I can' t use your all caps.  
Your growls are mere mutterings from an asylum in my mind  
I smell barbericide inside my apartment and I' m  
listening to the hypotaxis of young men in a light well:

These were my recurrent problems with what his charactr for me  
represented, until he died  
now I love MAD SONNETS  
I see the dark closet in a corner of sky (a summer night)  
where Titans feast, forever perennial,  
like cannibals for sure

I don' t know why I prefer the dead to the living,  
I feel bad about it!  
But I swear he could be marble  
naked in a shwl  
and just yesterday  
only some creepy mystic-relic  
from a naive [and in naive meaning early and radical] time up past Bolinas  
but that' s the already  
indicated  
resolve of that  
I couldn' t get over the silliness of  
roaring at lions  
but now that he' s dead I really like his stuff  
and will perennially, like him perennially, you are eternal,  
you said, for knowing death is [animate whether youre a mystic now  
or not



## HEADLONG DOWN THE ALPS

Damn I want to see it  
break the collageny twilight into dawn  
like drypoint on the lips off  
the polished chin and headlong  
down the Alps;  
a Eucharist rousing the attics too  
inspiring joy, and get interrupted  
by a fucking Asian Buddha statue  
blotting the sunrise  
into its spiky  
mantles, rising  
over The Black Forest  
wrong way  
up the Danube  
escalator, an echo breaking over  
and daddy  
know him  
In shal-

Schism stronger now!  
Like Frank O' hara imagining this  
or Holderlin,  
Mother Asia Delta  
the gods  
coming back  
for their roofied  
idols

the river an enigma  
brings thw calculus closer  
locality (I offer myself some masquerade to otherness)  
and journeying [sounds like don' t stop believing  
this sounds like "space and time"  
like S C H I S M  
eternally getting up  
T O D A N C E

and

SITTING DOWN

having

D A N C E D so  
back into the Stupa, who Were these

anodyne starlets of knowledge  
migrating past US like that

my writng commands speech out turn itself in to voice, not only humans have voice

1. oh joy these days of usufruct

2. two cities enclosed in one wall

His head and lyre, still singing  
mournful songs,  
floated down  
the River Hebrus into the sea, after which the winds and  
waves carried them to the island of Lesbos,[58] at the city of Methymna; there, the inhabitants buried  
his head and a shrine was built in his honour near Antissa;[59] there his oracle prophesied,  
until it was silenced by Apollo.[60] In addition to the people of Lesbos, Greeks from Ionia and Aetolia  
consulted the oracle, and his reputation spread as far as Babylon.[61]

It reminds me of Hausu, when Kung Fu dies [1] eating cornflakes  
listening to Haunt Me Haunt Me Do It Again be (full of ads) reading Heaven Is All Goodbyes. [2][3]  
I don't think that house was expecting her to know Kung Fu.  
The string strands felt a jungle passing out of them.  
The city floating beyond  
a lower eyelid of tulips.

Feels like the type of line I'd write  
btwn 19th-20th and Valencia  
but I'm not there I'm in Brooklyn  
and to be there in a day  
it would cost me \$50  
but there's an actual ethical circumstance preventing me and  
my philosophical parts are hard for this  
just as birds are to reign in song  
and my poetry parts  
miss any day in San Francisco all the time  
that whole city being only two  
staircases I'm welcome up  
in a city how many ppl stairs are you welcome up  
is a good measure of something about you  
n

idol worshipn love [4] sightless magistracies of state  
being from here and feeling the meteroplex  
archon of wires, *dém pati*  
of sexual eruption into a tpatron bottle  
depots of pallid gold arched and never broken by  
the shade of the wall, a viceroy of humanism

fanning yourself increases body temp, whatever that's like protruding from the slant  
of shadow a kitty paw curls around the white door point being it's another conversation  
for granted already

again and something paratextually stressed  
in a poem is like you could break something to wield  
on the surface of a liquid

oh its not placid its not right oh its not loneliness on loneliness with

why are you angry[?] my cousin, an alien, is in blue  
complacency redefines being as it, unhealth's pull also stems familiar and ttrue

1. the police are unnatural and are inside me. i don't know what you call it yet, but its like you hate  
Nature but love what's natural, you despise Liberty but relish 'with liberty', as Khali said Amo stay the hell  
away from -isms, and abu said Khalik is one of us too, who have seen everybody and wondered about it silly in  
festivals with eternal wisdom wallets being stolen early before it was in our eyes, but abu we later learned was  
not one of us, and furhter on discovering turferh neither was Khali

[it not in his eyes

2. i don't want your honest feelings, , I want to know what sex is, I. if it's okayfor him to be biting like  
this or doing something else

3. number 2 is ignorant of its own formulat and there is eventful then. recognizing its structure is perpetual  
motion and not living, sentient but not breathing, also dying, what I want is always human whether methods seem  
counter-intuitive, its occasion, occassional, early, early ear, appositional,

[4] encompasses where cable cars dancing in the dark meet  
you hate the word community but not it, or the other way around  
Anne Walker becomes an equation on the board  
Maybe my grandmother does, and purple or green people  
I have to speak torn in a way because it's impossible to distinguish hour inventories  
it seems to me regular speaking isn't true to the irregular interior, isn't even false, so I have to justify how I  
write bc you are never not in mind which has me really nothing but torn as to how to begin no matter how time  
is passing I don't at the same time give a fuck about your time  
and you don't about my stacking limits  
about mine, would have something to relay then at least

its like a star its like perspective its like i' ll do it without the recipe i always knew sirens were an eternal recipe  
within me, i' ve recognized whatever' s pulled me and then unrecognized it, and not recognizing it, i' ve  
recognized it almost always  
i' d be imberassed if you ;ookeld over my shouldercat how beethoven' s ninth would sound in a diminishing  
lantern  
do they really give it a chance? not if they' re anything like me. a state in the form of their experience

a sluggish relentless motion            its avant garde its before coffee, donny, its love

I' m really excited to stop talking so I can Tar Water and not have to say goodbye to a  
they make fun of us in a lot of ways but we are the avant garde at least my partner is

the surgeon generals acknowledgement of dispraportionate effect of covid on black and latino communities  
reminds me of VWhereas by Layli Longsoldier but whereas Whereas is like that this like this  
point the sinking boats to other shores even in our cats who' s talis stay down is this complicated yet, its an  
absurd hesitation  
an afterthefactness talking about lives *being* lost

## TESSA MICAELA

I STARTED TO WRITE YOU A LETTER BUT FOUND OUT  
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY

I remember the sound of your voice when you told me that each day should be filled with beautiful habits. today, where you live, everyone is asked to stay where they are but the streets are filled with bodies beneath the cherry blooms. where I am the rains started, and it sounded like your voice. they stopped and started again and I was still standing there looking out the window and longing for something else. I can see a beech tree from the bed I sleep in. the bed is not mine. our bodies and where they stay is a question of history as it turns in on itself, like the tree with the bark of an elephant. do you see what story does? it makes metal. the habits I hoped for all had space around them, had quiet and comings and goings, and water, always lots of water. we are asked to stay but the request to move urgently to stillness is not a request. how can habits be beautiful when here we are waiting for fear to turn our shoulders and look her in the face. see what bodies do? move feelings around and behold the alchemy of it. where you are the people beneath the flowers had nightmares but they don't remember. where I am, the thunder curled and shook the house for long enough that we woke. we waited for it to come and touch us. the wind was remarkably urgent, and I was filled with envy, surrounded by walls.

...

when I'm able to answer the phone, my friends say wise things like, *I don't know how to relate to myself the ways I have before*. I take that in, and it is a literal, global fact, that we are not alone in this but knowing that doesn't feel the way looking up into the sky, pock-marked with stars and breathing beneath them feels. how do you think in a time like this? I am transported to memories I can't stay in. mostly I knit. mostly I remain at one register, but I am aware I don't feel alive here, contained and straining to hear music, anywhere. yesterday we learned your brother has a fever, was sent to the hospital next to the congregation that gathered to pray for the sick. he has never walked or talked and your question is will you see him before he dies. as if it isn't a question. I get a call from a former teacher who asks me how to keep her father home because if he goes to the hospital she fears they will see him for what he is, old and heart-worn. the truth is I never actually considered it like that, so clearly. what of the other boys who lost enough oxygen before coming earthside they never said their own mothers' names? this morning in the mud of it I read the first infant died. aliveness steps closer, quivers at the edges of my eyes. we are waiting for it to get closer and it is not a question of if. I'm going to need more vessels.

it's true, everything will be different when this is all over. I think I'm going to miss q-tips. I don't know about you, but I've taken a sick pleasure in strangers lately. I like them, putting their cans into their carts, avoiding looking up and breathing shallowly, or with their chests puffed forward as if all we know is what we see. it's heartening to know garlic is on high demand. there is no more, not this week. we are lucky because we watch television and wait for tomorrow. the dog shits himself in the night. I clean it up and my mother cries because I've used the 409 she is afraid we'll run out of, but actually she is afraid she might die. each of us alone like this it gets harder to see, but I hear rumors about lines around the block at the beer distributor. it still plunges below freezing up north where you can see breathing. everyone believes they are vulnerable or not according to their position and tissue integrity. how are your shoulders? I hear rumors that in france there is a run on wine and condoms. the hardware store in muncy valley is open, but the clerk does not have enough hand sanitizer to make his wife feel safe. need is a verb that changes shape the closer to it we become.

...

let's say surrender is a habit. I'm laying on the floor and for a few sips of air I do not resist what is heavy, can feel the buzzing in my torso get slower. the old ones say grief sits in the pockets of the chest. but I'm not as old and I sign onto the internet to be less alone in breathing. let's say noticing is a habit. I walk in the birches and find the parts that look burnt, ask permission as I've been taught to. I don't know if I can hear trees talking. what I take feels like cork and turns the water gold and when I swallow someplace inside me feels touched. I find a book here that I'd read as a child, but do not remember it. a little hippo, who wishes to be alone but not too alone. he finds a rock to rest on, where he can see the ones who love him but they can't see him. let's say habits were taking things into the places they were needed and letting go of the rest. let's say we are walking in everything we've never known. let's say we get to hold each other again. let's say we learn how to breath even when others are gasping, especially then. it strikes me that this locates us, even if we don't understand where. it strikes me that our feet on the earth, on the little hill of our rest, matter. and the little yellow colt's foot, bursting from the earth locates us, even if we don't understand where. let's say where ever we are, we are. let's say that is our most beautiful habit.



"We often boast that our constitution guarantees the rights of the individual, democratic liberties and the interests of all citizens. But in reality, only the wealthy elite enjoy the rights recorded in these constitutions. Working people do not really enjoy democratic freedoms; they are exploited all their life and have to bear heavy burdens in the service of the ruling class"

– *Ronald Reagan*

AZ QUOTES

# TRAVIS MACDONALD

*from* ANTHOLOGY

## **A Note on the Text:**

Despite the potentially deceptive two-line titles, the following poems are solely the “original” work of the poet Travis Macdonald. They were composed by rearranging the words of others into an entirely new order and form. The poems from which they are adapted, and the books where those poems can be found, are footnoted on each page.



WHO/WHY ME?

by Cynthia Arrieu-King\*

my few dead friends & I had said  
goodbye to all my extra faces

to the sacristy tokens and towns  
with happy pet cars

said heaven is a headlight knife  
only biding the incongruous future which was

given in to  
the spent wet gelatin dawn

said back then when  
her friend dusk used to moonlight

as the others' faces  
(faces we didn't know

long stowed in her goodbyes)  
person and his primordial horses

kept like a concert of time  
cut and moving in

way in  
by the rootless artificial interior

how he met his other  
with an illuminated newness

at about the moment where  
touch shapes idea into lesser-than things

following your hand in  
cars of absent homage

be here  
with me

where light colors looking  
with lost hours eyes heard

something must persist in the perceivable world  
no

---

\* from *Futureless Languages*, "Moving On in the Future Primordial"

the sobs of it  
no

the taste of it  
tears first

meaning to names then tender  
flavors to future peach

coming  
this way

go on  
and in

biding nothing as spring did  
healing the funeral ground

STATION OF STATIONS  
by Maged Zaher\*

& will we go, San Francisco? Down  
(one-two) to the deserted stations of God

to train the alternative mercy  
path of market dynamics

& phone operators? Or name them  
nothing but airplane talk?

Doctors, will I really  
feel my strong medicine

trip, change & train  
their feelings with cards?

Or will we, losing use of jobs, empty  
the promise of inevitability in

to the surgeries of believing? Shall we  
stop & think about naming

everything hell, heaven, infinity or 7-11? & will  
we merge winter in these worlds?

Because we can  
train & forgive

God...  
But will we?

---

\* from *Portrait of the Poet as an Engineer*, "Naming them"

THESE ARE NOT MY EAGLES  
by Eric Baus\*

Another soloist suddenly without his listener is a song he cannot name.

He says, "My one true being appears: a painting. Of eagles speaking at the sun." Look at this or look away.

He has the clothes. And the organs. Has the perfect noon. Has the snow stirred into its listener-lungs.

When his phone on the fields is amplified for his perfect projector eyes he says, "I am not a bad villain. I do not tell the wheat to void. The flowers do."

When the man falls, the rain begins. Rings in him. His organs are already the opening where simple corridors moved. He becomes. A statue of collapse.

The projector arrives and hands his phone back. Rings.

---

\* from *Tuned Doves*, "Organs of the Projector"

## UNA LOMAX-EMRICK

### PUKE IN THE SINK

assigning blame is what rich people are supposed to do  
at least that's how it is in this country

at school, everyone is obsessed with the idea  
that we deserve to have a good life  
which is much less interesting to me

than the fact that people throw up in the common room sink on saturday nights  
and it sits there until monday next to half empty cups of vodka  
and picked over cartons of fries  
and we all walk by it and screw up our noses at the smell  
and leave it for the janitors that they call "maintenance workers" and not by their names

i wear a blue jacket that my mom found on craigslist and bought because it had a name brand  
and at school, people like to make fun of it, asking if i will wear it out  
like they are asking about a bothersome little brother or a nuisance of a smoking habit  
which is much less interesting to me

than the fact that the designer jackets that my friends wear  
and that my classmates drape over the backs of their seats  
cost more than the car my family purchased this year

which is much less interesting to me  
than the fact that i am still more obsessed with being liked  
than with asking my friends if they think it is criminal  
that their parents gentrified new york and boston and los angeles and san francisco and london  
and spend all their money on fancy vacations in the Vineyard and investing in war machines  
that we're not supposed to talk about

which is still much less interesting to me  
than the fact that i am disgusted by the politics and employers  
of the donors and classmates who fund my summer research  
but once i have completed my hours of work, i will write them a thank you letter  
about what i have learned  
so that they can feel the true benefit of my opportunistic cowardice

which is still much less interesting to me  
than the fact that the friends who confess their biggest secrets as i share mine  
are the same people who retch and hurl in the sink on alternating weekend nights  
are the same people with parents who write the donation checks that fund my scholarships  
these friends who reap the rewards of their complacency  
will be on the other side of the union picket line  
will come to find they have the life they have been promised  
and will spend their time scrolling through emails in leather offices  
while i look around at the dust on my grandmother's factory uniform  
at the plunger stuck halfway out of last night's trust fund vomit, remembering how my father learned to clean  
toilets quickly so he could get to class on time  
and wonder what i've done to be so lucky.

## MY LOVE

My love, where is your dormitory of sweetness? Where is your room of aubade? I am here near the radiator reheating last night dream for you. I have placed your nightmares into the microwave, nuking the infancy of your sleep electromagnetic matter after electromagnetic matter. I have added a cupful of tears and five teaspoons of seawater into your tea. I have hung your sweaters of insomnia on the clothesline, placed your socks of despair in our bed drawer, stuffed our pillows with a garden bed of non-kisses, swept the floor of our first hug with the broom purchased from Aunt Haybale, vacuumed our carpet of emotional entanglements with a suction machine borrowed from the black deaths of many yesterdays, scrubbed the bathroom sink of our smiles with the Windex of cherry blossoms which came into full bloom just a few days ago, washed the screen door of your father's unemployment benefits before shaking the rug of loneliness on the front porch of our love, dusted the fireplace of your social distancing with the facemask of COVID-19, walked the dog of isolation three or four times around the blocks of March, April, May, and maybe June, watered the orchids of cancellations with the pitchers of my text messages and emails, cleaned the toilet bowls of your sister's Instagram scrolls with the ZOOM made out of toilet paper shortages, threw a load of your horniness and pornography into the washer of your libido and inserted a medium load of coins into the clitoris of your evening, placed a potful of boredom on the stove and let it simmer with uncontrollable chopped up bone marrows from Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, HBO, mowed the lawn of uncertainty with the lawnmower of anxiety manufactured by lawmakers, took out the trash bags of bruises under the kitchen sink of domestic violence, and substituted the cat food dishes with clean ones from the pantry of playfulness and independence. What else would you like me to do so that you know I love you?

WILL ALEXANDER

ON THE CAPITAL STATE

A congestive intractable relic spawned from itself as a burned husk in the midst of its own exile, a glossary of fatigue, its boulevards illumined by a darkened lamp of glosses, a terminal psyche, isolate, protracted, tautological, superimposed on itself as drainage

# YARROW YES WOODS

## A SAPPY LOVE POEM

home is as

bEWhitched to steel my  
patrons call themselves gen  
short for generous when they pay  
for my rosered services how convenient

open the blinds oh Sun oh hi!  
neighbors staring at my naked body some porch

answer the door It's the maintenance guy Talking  
about the radiators, *no it's not* it's a d r e a m o u r e or less  
talk (yours) funnel cloud of the ocean you  
carry in you, dript to my ear, kept cool as panting

I Guess I Don't Know Much About Trees After All

i tell my friend about a smile and they say Oh, So You  
Like Performers hush hush the [t]heaters and their hornet nests

home is as

ssomess upon s o Mestra n q u i ll izer only the steam the  
fallout grows this large. shower. unlike the rest of the world. a kiss  
on an adam's [horse] apple an Eve's eggplant makes want: To Stay

Alive Anymore into Everwake, *i take my god to task*  
where the solarwarm water runs  
(sweet and clear) through my fingers, tangles

tangles i can hardly see where my data goes (will yr song  
tear through a tiny net? or dismember. fracktal? each word some  
search term coupled, how will the pieces of erotics be sold?)  
once it pools There is no limit and nowhere lichen

roughhanded bark what is it that from yours sprouts into mine?  
silly me. home is as or and home as is. bears a look-see.  
under a microscope How a hand turns a dial. Finger flickering  
across a bloodline breast. How a hair splits from its color



\*

in your arms, every act (public or private)  
is one of resistance, of succumbing? My flesh[light]politic  
broadcast across the network, our cell  
service providers. each word  
i send you. each gesture i sell to the anonymous  
masses. Whoever wants to watch  
to listen doesn't have to pay a cent, all there  
is is generate generate. it practically  
sells itself. *It's a She*, thank you. i love you. this isn't a joke. *if it*  
*were*. you would tell it better.

\*

i verify my identity Using my driver's license  
at the airport, in the cam show  
i think of you. how else could i  
live

\*

there is a difference ? a non-exclusive  
transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free  
worldwide license for the next day,  
three maintenance guys show up My  
God, They're Multiplying!! each one  
cuter than the last

maybe they're all cousins or brothers?  
i refrain  
[home is as]  
from saying *Daddy* except  
in a private chat, which has its own  
rules and regulations. *i am desperate*  
*for your hands*.

\*

dark even in the city  
without the moon. turn on  
blue light filter? now i  
can sleep  
panacea slump heart

\*

work alone, all day remote  
feed my marketable  
interests you you you  
i dream, keep my streaming  
service on Maybe  
this will sate This sweet, dumb  
suitcase of the heart  
and its cattorn shredded  
fucking zipper

\*

can't keep track of what i love

Thanks be to the maintenance guys!

They do it for me. although  
they left the back door open  
and my kitty got out.

\*

idiot me. didn't know who i was  
until someone showed me  
all the models. turns out my local  
grocery outlet mall/department slushchain/  
hardware store/restaurant/coffee shop  
didn't stock most of them  
huh. went straight for a while  
to the manufacturer. *factory direct*  
i guess is the term. wow finally  
a product i like. Big [E-]Shot. Big Swallow  
Pills. Wow Easy [there,] to love myself. then  
Boohoo i fell in love with someone  
else. and several more people  
who feel who sense who look like. thanks  
to the data collecting  
agencies' annual reports, i remember  
all their names and birthdays.

\*

once in a blue moon  
there, do you see it?  
now, the rest of the lights

a stage window opens  
where half-colored hair  
fans through.

# YOSEFA RAZ

FOR HANNAH WHO ASKED ME HOW I GOT THROUGH IT

1.

I grabbed two baskets of strawberries from the store because the man was standing outside in the open air and he said, strawberries, you'll want some strawberries. When I went inside to pay (grabbing dill, ginger, some shiny plastic persimmons) the cashier was not wearing a mask and I threw down my credit card on the counter. The strawberries sat on the top shelf of the fridge glowing toxically. We found a recipe for strawberry ice-cream in the newspaper. Just like this, you said, my mother made it like this with egg whites. You began crying in gulps at the picture on the screen because we didn't have a hand held mixer. Your mother in the fields, which is not a euphemism or cliché but where she's spending these weeks near the fields in the Sharon Valley with childhood friends. Also strawberry ice cream Sarah brought me at my first miscarriage after the last good day at Niagara Falls.

2.

I donate this grief to the lost and found  
to the normal grief of humans everywhere  
who experience death of fetuses  
death of diseases and epidemics  
who experience old age  
who experience the ancestors dying  
who experience the power-hungry.  
The grief spread over the horizon until I could feel it  
or it withdrew like a wave  
when it passed you could see them glowing in the sand,  
my fantastic good work habits  
that had been invisible in the storm.  
I have something to say.  
I was pulled in like a wave covering me  
no one to say my name  
to say her name  
whose daughter were you,  
my daughter.  
There was a sisterhood of grief,  
you can't break it,  
but you can open the circle wider and wider  
like at a wedding.  
You start by a narrow circle  
dancing tightly around the bride  
and then a few cut in  
and the circle widens  
then the outer circle breaks into the inner circle  
which dances now more slowly,  
now that everyone is dancing.

ZACK HABER

MAN'S LAW

Heart vomit heart

Man's Law killed Jesus

Heart choke heart

Crisis isn't so pointed

Always whose heart hurts

Why's it hard to stay in me

Vomit

Whose heart hurts

Man's Law's crisis

One

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This is an emergency issue for 4 Jul 2020

END CAPITALISM NOW

*Reagan Quotes* by John Courie  
Others edited by Nicholas DeBoer

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Wallace Stevens: "Certain Phenomena of Sound"  
Wallace Stevens: "Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas"