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Kilroy at the Zero Hour, Story Time

John Hennessy

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Two Poems

JOHN HENNESSY

Kilroy at the Zero Hour

by Tokyo Rose

Kilroy's a bonehead, a skull on a stick,
a somber emcee. He's sergeant, lieutenant,
he's just got his stripes, Grand Marshall
of the parade, the Fourth of July
on Guadalcanal. Come to my party,
come to Leyte in your little canoe, camp
with me at Cabanatuan, I said
when I saw him—it was love
at first sight— Kilroy, please meet me
in Port Moresby, I'll show you my duck
and cover, all covered in clover. Oh brother,
the brothels! Your honey's at home,
sad little sweetheart, jitterbug shuffling
with Kilroy's cousin, that flat-foot 4-F.
Here's some star-shine, a moonlight
serenade, listen while you can—
our suns rise tonight, unloading their light
over the 43rd then Kilroy will waltz
to an orchestra of angels, so here's
another record to remind you of home.

Story Time

i.m. Angela Carter

Cannibals skirt the forests we conjure
 with a few simple words: shadowy, pine needle
 paths, poisonous mushrooms and deadly berries,
 tree trunks strangled by vines. On our way
 to the witch's cottage we walk barefoot through burrs
 and brambles, pass thieves and murderers lurking
 behind darkened ferns, lured by the chimney
 chuffing wreaths of sugary smoke. My son's
 best friend from school will be cooked alive in a cast-
 iron pot—unless we're there to save him in time.

Or I'm the one in danger, transgendered to Red,
 my hapless grandma just meat-stripped hip and ribs
 beneath the bed. Buttercups tempt me off
 the sodden path, red poppies, primrose, moss—
 where am I? Now he tells me he's no pup
 but prince of the solstice, spittle in his jowls,
 lice moving in the fur between his shoulders.
 And what big eyes he has (his father's), what big
 teeth. All the better, all the better, he says, the hunter
 naps at the woodpile, the woodsman never arrives.