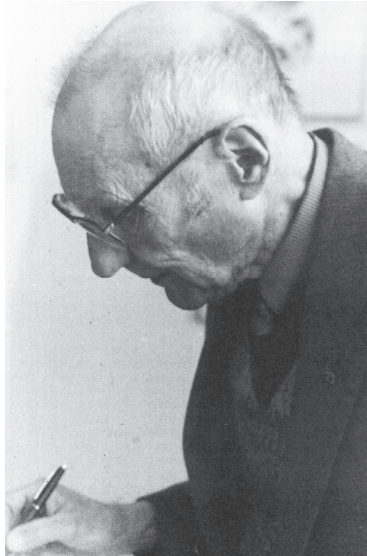

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Back Cover Art: Steven DaGama

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS CENTENARY (b. FEB. 5, 1914)

IN RECOGNITION:



William S. Burroughs (Photo: K. Jirgens)



**Detail of Burroughs' Shotgun Painting
Rampike Cover, Vol. 7, #1 (1990)**

QUOTES FROM WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS:

"Hustlers of the world, there is one mark you cannot beat: the mark inside."

"The junk merchant doesn't sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client."

"I don't care if people hate my guts; I assume most of them do. The important question is whether they are in a position to do anything about it."

"A paranoid is someone who knows a little of what's going on. A psychotic is a guy who's just found out what's going on."

"Desperation is the raw material of drastic change. Only those who can leave behind everything they have ever believed in can hope to escape. "

"Language is a virus from outer space."

"After one look at this planet any visitor from outer space would say I want to see the manager."

"Your mind will answer most questions if you learn to relax and wait for the answer."

"*Nothing* happens by coincidence."

"Artists to my mind are the real architects of change, and not the political legislators who implement change after the fact."

"As soon as you know you are in prison, you have a possibility to escape."

"I am forced to the appalling conclusion that I would never have become a writer but for Joan's death. I had no choice but to write my way out." [Burroughs accidentally shot his lover, the mother of his child].

"There is no intensity of love or feeling that does not involve the risk of crippling hurt. It is a duty to take this risk, to love and feel without defense or reserve."

Editorial

This issue of *Rampike* focuses on expressions exploring conflict and/or concord. It remains unclear how much of the choice between discord and harmony is truly ours. One-half of the planet's wealth in the hands of 75 people speaks for itself. Global allegiances abound, including the empire of oil, oligarchies of mass media, international banking cartels, giant pharmaceuticals, food oligopolies, and military industrial complexes of different nations. International organizations, anonymous groups, and bands such as Pussy Riot, cite virtues of alternate paths. Artists/writers remain the antennae of the world. Adorno observed that writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. Sartre emphasized the moral obligations of artists and writers. Yevtushenko wrote on the atrocity of "Babi Yar." Picasso's "Guernica" still resonates. Anne Waldman's *Iovis Trilogy* (see, *Rampike* 21.1), issues a potent anti-war statement. Solzhenitsyn declared that "Literature that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers... does not deserve the name of literature." (Open letter to 4th Soviet Writers' Congress, 1967). Many atrocities remain obscured. Morality prevails as the sister of conscience. How many indigenous peoples were wiped out in North America? Scholars estimate a pre-Columbian population of 30 million reduced by 90% in one century. 1.5 million annihilated in Armenia. An estimated 4 million dead in Cambodia. 1 million in Rwanda. Estimated dead in the Soviet Gulag: 30 million. Some events demand silence. Holocaust, Nagasaki, Hiroshima. Others demand responses. Chief Seattle said, "The Earth does not belong to people – people belong to the Earth. All things are connected." Artists/writers immersed in socio-political transformations decry human folly. The power of words. Zamyatin. Huxley. Orwell. Atwood. Visionaries. Emmeline Pankhurst urged, "We have to free half of the human race, the women, so that they can help free the other half." Sojourner Truth declared, "I feel safe in the midst of my enemies, for the truth is all powerful and will prevail." Nelson Mandela stated, "Where globalization means... that the rich and powerful now have new means to further enrich and empower themselves at the cost of the poorer and weaker, we have a responsibility to protest in the name of universal freedom." Martin Luther King, spoke his dream aloud and warned, "In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Mother Teresa advised,

"What we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But if the drop were not there, the ocean would be missing something." Albert Einstein confirmed, "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." Swami Vishnu and Peter Sellers in a "peace plane" decorated by Peter Max, dropped thousands of flowers and flyers on strife-ridden Belfast. "All you need is Love." We've seen progress in education, medicine, human rights, communications, technology, and the arts. Yet, we've nurtured further chaos. Attawapiskat, Biological Weapons, Bougainville Island, Carcinogens, Censorship, Chemical Warfare, Child Labour, Chem-Trails, Cyber-attacks, Deep Web, Depleted Global Food Sources, Espionage, Famine, Genocide, Global Warming, GMOs, HIV, Mass Extinctions, Neutron Bomb, Nuclear Meltdowns, Pacific Plastic Patch, Pollution, Poverty, Propaganda, Racism, Religious Intolerance, Residential Schools, Slavery, Shooting Sprees, Toxic Waste, War. The parade of buffoons marching into mayhem seems endless, attracting new participants daily. Revisionist voices form an equally lengthy history. In this issue of *Rampike* we add our "drop in the ocean." We include an homage to the centenary of (*Rampike* contributor), William S. Burroughs, who spent a life-time kicking against the pricks. We offer dozens of distinguished, prize-winning, writers, artists, poets, and theorists. Our back cover displays the stellar graphics of poet/artist, Steven Da Gama. Joseph Hubbard (sculptor), affirms, "Steven DaGama is the greatest poet I know... His paintings were ten years ahead of the current trends." And, our front cover features the striking visual poetics of *Rampike* stalwart, Carol Stetser, whose art is published globally. We're delighted to feature GG Award & Man Booker Prize winning author Eleanor Catton; plus, esteemed poets, Stan Rogal, Brian Henderson, Brian Edwards, Frank Davey, Keith Garebian, Elana Wolff, Gary Barwin, Louis Armand, Gabor Ghukics, Sam Andreyev; (not-)fictioneers, Hal Jaffe, Laura Solomon, Melody Sumner Carnahan, Vicky Reuter; visual artists, Abraham Anghik Ruben, Amin Rehman, Osvaldo Castillo, Dominique Blain, Faye Harnest; writer/theorists, Alan Davies, Alan Lord, Eric Miles Williamson; and a host of other superb authors & artists, too many to list here. We hope the varied and vital voices in this issue of *Rampike* will enlighten, encourage and inspire!
 – Karl Jirgens / Editor



"March of the Buffoons": Nicholas Jirgens (Canada)

DISCLAIMER

Stan Rogal

after William S. Burroughs

“How I hate those who are dedicated to producing conformity.”

First & final warning! If you have
epilepsy or any predisposition &/or otherwise
predilection toward seizures, blackouts, dizzy spells
&/or strokes &/or heart attacks &/or fallen arches
dandruff, genital warts, open lesions, weeping sores
or have trained your asshole to talk
or are of dubious character or have a criminal record
or claim to have been abducted by aliens
or plead a victim of circumstance, of fashion, of a frivolous
je ne sais quoi
or a casualty of an unforeseen decline in the stock market
or hostile takeover or downsized or made obsolete or deemed necessary but not
sufficient or declared legally insane
or on a mission from God
or on the dole, on the take, on the ropes, on the rag, on the nod
or are prone to either murder &/or suicide
or have intent toward malicious behaviour
or considered armed & dangerous
or keep a private journal &/or sketches with the prime purpose of either:
 public display, publication &/or distribution
or have a monkey on your back, a horse in your arm
a rock up your nose, a gold bug up your sphincter
or are a mover, shaker, sweet little heartbreaker
or are generally melancholic or alcoholic
or a user
or have dreams of grandeur &/or aspirations toward immortality
or else feelings of depression &/or insecurity
or whack off to the strains of a star spangled banner
or whine that the drinks are watered
or masquerade as a paper tiger, a cardboard hero, a lipstick lesbian
or an identity crisis, such as: ‘the artist formerly known as Prince’
or Madonna complex that drives a young lady *gaga*
or somehow believes the world owes you something
or complains that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak
or if you are a total & absolute degenerate
or a complete asshole of the first order
or insist that: “Language is a virus from outer space”
yadda-yadda
or lisp, or drawl, or twang or else mutter incomprehensibly
or hum *The William Tell Overture* during coitus
or tend to belittle, bully or bullshit
do not (I repeat) do not engage, enter, &/or pass GO
do not (I repeat) do not collect either the 200 bucks
the all expense paid trip to Interzone, the free set of Ginsu knives
or the rough rogue trader equivalent

ignore the tall lank man behind the curtain!

there will be gunfire, there will be strobe lights, the smoke machine is in perfect working order, the adding machine is greased, the soft machine is functional, the Dream Machine is operational, cigarettes will be inhaled, there will be profanity rampant drug & alcohol use, full-frontal nudity, hyperbole, scenes of an explicitly sexual nature, random acts of violence, flagrant displays of self-immolation &/or spontaneous human combustion ritual Seppuku, near-death experience, the Indian rope trick, tubthumping, projectile vomit, the Heimlich maneuver

there will be blood

the views & ideas expressed are strictly those of the author & do not reflect the official party policy

the management is not responsible

the management is never responsible

remember these are paid trained professionals working under ideal conditions, do not try this at home

small children must be accompanied by an adult, all pets must be leashed, turn off any electronic devices, no photographs allowed

no one admitted once the doors are shut

no one permitted to leave once the lights fade to black

there will be no intermission

absolutely no refunds

Recent activities of the Occupy Movement recall the motives of the Czechoslovakian *Charter 77* which succeeded in establishing a new Governmental model in that nation. The following is a translation from the original document: "Charter 77 is a loose, informal and open association of people of various shades of opinion, faiths and professions united by the will to strive individually and collectively towards the respect of civic and human rights in our own country and throughout the world. – Rights accorded to all people by the two international covenants; the Geneva convention and the Final Act of the Helsinki conference, as well as many other international documents opposing war, violence and social or spiritual oppression, and which are comprehensively laid down in the U.N. Universal Charter of Human Rights."



"Ninety-Nine," 2012
Drawing: Ink on Paper
25 x 20 cm
Tina Raffell (Germany)

Rehearsal & Luminaries:

An Interview with ELEANOR CATTON

Karl Jirgens



In November of 2013, Eleanor Catton came to present her writing at BookFest Windsor. Her appearance was supported by the Toronto Harbourfront International Festival of Authors (IFOA). Eleanor Catton was born in 1985 in London, Ontario and was raised in Christchurch, New Zealand. Her debut novel, *The Rehearsal*, won the Amazon.ca First Novel Award, the Betty Trask Prize, and the NZSA Hubert Church Best First Book Award for Fiction. In 2010, she was awarded the New Zealand Arts Foundation New Generation Award. Catton's second novel, *The Luminaries*, won the Man Booker Prize and the Governor General's Award. *The Luminaries* is set in 1866 during New Zealand's gold rush at Hokitika. Catton's writing depicts corruption, lies, deceit, murder,

sexual affairs, subterfuge, love, and heroism, highlighting the depths and heights of human conflict and concord framed within an innovative narrative form. *Rampike* is delighted to present Eleanor Catton in interview with Karl Jirgens, recorded during her appearance at the 2013, BookFest Windsor (Nov. 6, 2013). [Photos: K. Jirgens].

KJ: You were born near here, in London, Ontario, while your father was finishing his doctoral work at the University of Western Ontario. I know a lot of your readers would like to know more about your migration to Canada and back to New Zealand. Could you tell us about that journey?

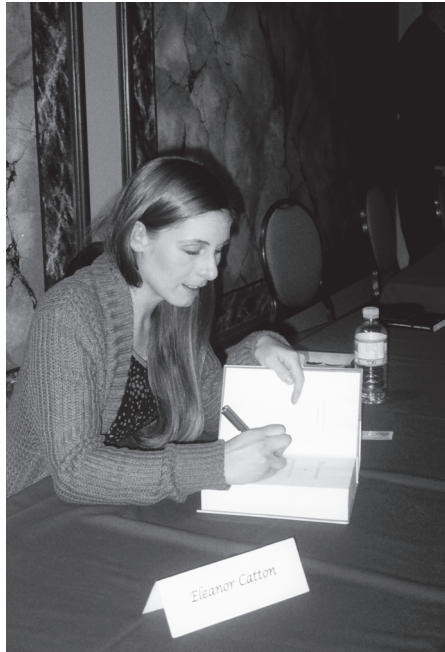
E.C.: My dad came to the University of Western Ontario in London on a Commonwealth Scholarship. I don't think those scholarships exist anymore. The scholarship was offered for my father's work on the history of science and they said, "You're not going to bring any family with you are? And he said, "Oh yes, I'm going to bring two children and my wife." And they said, "Please don't do that, there's not enough money, you'll have a miserable time." And he went anyway, and had a third child, who was me, and so, they were even more scuppered than they had been. [Editor's note: Eleanor Catton has an older brother and sister]. The plan was always to return to New Zealand. But, because I was born in Canada and had Canadian citizenship, and they were anxious to make sure that there was going to be a connection that would stay with me for life. So, in my first year of school, they put me in a French immersion school to heighten that connection. It's strange because now I'm back in New Zealand, and I've still got all of my paintings and notes and things that I had done on construction paper during that year, and the hand-writing is mine, but I can't read it or understand it, because it's in French.

KJ: Ah, the years change us all. One of the ideas raised in your novel, *The Luminaries*, concerns itself with time, and how dreams can eventually become realities. It seems that one of your earliest dreams was to excel at writing. You gained your MA in Creative Writing at the International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University of Wellington, winning the Adam Prize in Creative Writing for your manuscript, *The Rehearsal*. Later you were the recipient of the 2008 Glenn Schaeffer Fellowship through which you attended the prestigious Iowa Writers' Workshop. Your fiction has been published in a range of international journals, including *Turbine*, *Sport*, and *Granta*. Could you say a bit about the Iowa writing workshop, as well as a few words about those who influenced your writing, and how you have developed your own skills as an author?

EC: Oh sure. I'm a bit of an enthusiast of creative writing intervention. I actually think that creative writing intervention, and the kinds of thinking that helps people advance in all sorts of careers is creative thinking, being able to think outside of the box, to bring to life unlikely elements, and to be original. Originality is the ability to marry two things, to make things cohere that don't normally cohere. I had a wonderful time at Iowa. For the first time in my life I experienced (actually more so than other places I'd worked and studied), being in a community where absolutely everybody cared about language and was willing to talk about writing. I had an experience there quite early on, that happened after a fiction workshop, and I was walking through a hall, and I became aware that every single room that I was walking past was filled with people talking about literature, and even though it only took a few minutes to walk the hall, it felt like it took about six months or something, because it was so heavenly. And I met some important and inspiring figures there. Marilynne Robinson [Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Gilead*: Editor's note] is one of them. Going to a Marilynne Robinson lecture is like going to church; you just sit there and listen to the sermon, and then you go away with this spiritual learning that is in some ways inexplicable. Apart from that, my biggest influences come from books actually. I also feel very lucky about some of the teachers I've had, teachers who were willing to be mentors, and also willing to call you on your own callouses, which I think is an essential quality in a creative teacher.

KJ: Your first novel, *The Rehearsal*, was highly successful, and was long-listed for the *Guardian* First Book Award, and the 2010 Orange Prize for Fiction, as well as winning the U.K. Society of Authors' Betty Trask Award. Your second novel, *The Luminaries* won the Canadian Governor General's award and the highly prestigious international Man Booker Prize. One key framework for *The Rehearsal* involves theatre, and performance, whereas, *The Luminaries* deals with people seeking a new life during the Otago Gold Rush in New Zealand during the 1860s. While these two novels seem worlds apart, they both depict corruption, lies, deceit, murder, sexual affairs, subterfuge, love and heroism. Do you think it's your ability to illuminate the psychological intricacies of vice and virtue that attracts readers to your writing?

EC: Yes, perhaps. I think that something that's true about every successful novel is that it's the human questions that drive it. The way that I wrote both books was to begin in a state of inquiry, and that was very important to me. Before I began writing both books, I had to spend a couple of years of building up a kind of philosophical ballast, following my own fascinations,

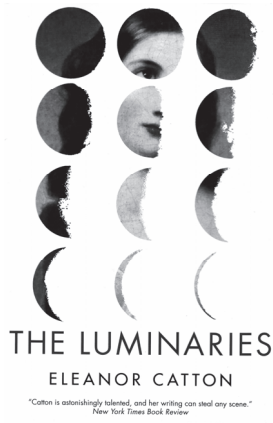


and asking questions of the stories. And I would say in a way the questions are linked. In my first book, *Rehearsal*, I was interested in the degree to which we "perform" identities, how theatrical layers build up over time to create a person. It starts to become a slightly strange experience when you think, "Ok, what happens when I take all of this away, when I strip it back?" And, the theatre was kind of the natural arena for exploring those ideas, as was adolescence. The thing about being a teenager is, you become self-conscious and that self-consciousness means in a way that you are both the performer and the audience. And it's very uncomfortable in a way, because you don't like being the performer, and you don't like being the audience, and you're stuck having to navigate that. And in a way the questions in *The Luminaries* evolved from those questions that I asked in *The Rehearsal*. I was interested in *The Luminaries* to ask what constitutes self-creation and self-making. One of the phrases that one often hears about people

who achieve great riches is that they're a "self-made man." And there was this idea that somebody could walk into the hills, kneel down, pick up a lump of rock, and then that would constitute becoming "self-made," which it does, because obviously there's a lot of money in gold. So, I'd say *The Luminaries* is a way to try to answer those questions.

KJ: The narrative structure in *The Luminaries* offers a dozen different perspectives often retold by others characters, each connected to one of the 12 signs of the Zodiac, and partly influenced by a Maori perspective of the seasons such as “*Paenga-wha-wha*” which is April, or harvest time. And the two central characters, Emery Staines and Anna Wetherell who might be thought of as the hero and heroine are both situated outside that circle of 12. Within the novel, there is a split between pragmatism and a more nuanced spiritual awareness including psychic connections between the two lovers, who are juxtaposed against self-serving and manipulative scoundrels. And elsewhere, the narrative voice sometimes comments on its own often chaotic degrees of disjunction, rupture, and spatio-temporal leaps, which result in a kind of multi-layered structure akin to Cubist art, that has a cinematic quality with pan shots, montaged with close-ups and so on. Could you comment on how you were thinking of the narrative structure with reference to the Zodiac? And at least partly, did you think of the book in cinematic terms? I could easily see this novel as a movie, for example.

E.C.: Yes, the cinematic idea is exciting. One of things I thinking about was the intersection of structure and plot. For example, a plotted novel is not a really rigid structure. Structures to plotted novels tend to be quite “baggy” and that word “baggy” is often used to describe such books. On the other hand, novels that tend to be quite “prismatic,” or beautiful in structure are usually relatively inert, and are more sculptural, and don’t move forward in time as much. Genre fiction which is the more heavily plotted side of fiction and tends to be more like film. So, the relationship between the plotted and the prismatic started to interest me. I started wondering if I could meet the challenge of achieving both at once, where it was entertaining the way a plotted novel is, but also driven by having a prismatic artifice, or engine. What that led to eventually was the system of the zodiac, which is a system that is around us all the time. The way I like to describe it is if you imagine a face of a wrist watch with several hands, and one of the hands is moving the way that a wristwatch normally does, so that would be the



motion of the sun, but the other hands and the other planets are also moving quite predictably. So Saturn, Jupiter, and the others are all orbiting as well. And then there are the twelve houses which are calibrated from a position on the eastern horizon. So, if you did a chart according to astrology, then you might have a “sun” sign or a “rising sign,” or, a sign that is in the fifth house, and so on, when you’re born. So, I was looking at that and doing research into the history of the zodiac, and it started to interest me, and I thought about each of the nineteen figures (the planets and the twelve signs), with each of these as a person, and the way they live and move in and out of each other’s lives as patterned on actual star charts from actual positions. So, I found a star-charting site on-line and put in the coordinates for the Central Otago gold fields during the period of the New Zealand gold rush. I started to look at what was happening in the sky over that time. So, I started looking at about 1864, and watched when the gold was first discovered, and

watched through to what happened up to 1868 when the gold rush became taken over by companies, and it stopped being quite so romantic. And I started looking to see if I find any stories linked in there. Eventually, I came up with this chart. So, each of the twelve parts of the novel take place on a different day, around that year, and all of the positions are actual. It sounds kind of mad to describe it. So, on the day that I wanted to start the book, which was the 27th of January 1866, the planet Mercury had just entered the constellation Sagittarius, and with the astrology of those two elements combined, you get the influence of Mercury which is the influence of communication and reason and logic, and also deception (including having to do with verbal trickery), interacting with Sagittarius, which in my astrological understanding has to do with journeys. So, I have a guy who has a Mercurial influence, walk into a hotel bar and sit next to somebody who is a Sagittarian, and what will happen next in that scene is that the Sagittarian character will begin to tell a story, because that’s what happens when Mercury meets Sagittarius. And everything began to grow out of it, in that way.

An empty chair appears on every stage at IFOA readings to represent authors who are subjugated to discrimination, persecution, censorship, and arrest, such as ESKINDER NEGA. To learn more, and support PEN’s efforts to secure the freedom of ESKINDER NEGA, please see the advert in this issue, and visit the PEN site and sign the petition in support of besieged writers (<http://pencanada.ca/>).

CIRRUS
Brian Henderson

Cirrus

seeing
 nightvision
 cursive of

silver corrosion your answer

could have

 stream ciphered

you
 magnified
 a

 without tea service
 polished

 whispers

As if you were seeing microwaves
a circuit magnified in nightvision
the locket clasps a cursive of.

You placed it gently on the NKVD tea service
silver on silver without its corrosion
everything polished of noise but your answer.

How could you have carried
such a curse for so long without it
searing into your throat?

Everyone knows there have been whispers
but now this silence, high up in the heart
frozen breath stream ciphered.

as if you were
a circuit

of

noise

carried

silence

BRIAN HENDERSON is the author of 10 collections of poetry. His *Nerve Language*, was a finalist for the Governor General's Award. *Sharawadji*, was a finalist for the Canadian Authors Association Award for Poetry. A new volume, *[OR]* is forthcoming from Talon. He is the director of Wilfrid Laurier UP.

MR. HYDE

Hal Jaffe

You've written about serial killers, we know that.
When the mood strikes you'll mix in a mass murderer.
Less known is your infatuation with Mr Hyde.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

What is it about Hyde that engages you?
It would have to be his violent unreason, no?
His mania vis-à-vis virtuous Dr. Jeckyl.
Virtuous, though not above ingesting the psychoactive substance that invokes Hyde.
Virtuous, but with that touch of hubris you savor.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

I've always wondered: Does hubris have an odor?
If so, it would have to smell like old silver.
Or it would smell like a burro's hoof which, curiously, resembles the
odor of old silver.
What is the difference between burro, donkey, mule, hinny, onager, and ass?
Do the Brits call the 4-legged ass "arse"?
They damn well better not.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

Hyde's odor is obvious.
Sweat, semen, untamed hair.
But which is the alpha smell?
Sweat, one would imagine.
Hold the phone.
Depends how close one gets to Mr. Hyde.
Get too close you are either throttled or raped.
Possibly both / In either order.
Get too close but survive and you will report that semen
is Hyde's dominant odor, probably with a hint of musk.
Am I right?

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

When you write about Mr Hyde do you invoke—if that's the right word—his odor?
Or does it manifest by degree as you inhabit him?
"Inhabit" is one of your words.
You inhabit Manson, you inhabit Rimbaud, you inhabit Dahmer, you inhabit Mother Teresa.
Frankly presumptuous to put it that way, but it could be you
believe it.
More likely it's another of your flashdance moves.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

What you believe or don't believe has always been unclear.
You claim not to write about yourself.
You write "situationally" and as a "social activist," but with attention
to formal innovation after the example of Brecht.
Sometimes you even foreground (another of your words) the formal properties of the text.
You "carry" your "shadow" with you.
By intervening for the variously oppressed you take on a "shamanic" role.
But what does all that mean?
Seven ways to sidetrack the reader-critic?

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

I reckon it's hard to admit that extremity—even once or twice removed—is a rush, gets the sluggish blood coursing.
Dr. Jeckyl invokes Mr. Hyde.
Reclusive, sedentary, violent-imagining author becomes vicarious psychopath.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

Let's bracket Hyde for the moment.
How then does the virtuous Dr. Jeckyl smell?
Virtuous but for that speck of hubris we admire.
Faint odor of antiseptic soap.
Am I right?
And about his cheeks, also faint, the scent of bay rum.
Here's a related question.
Of the three filmic portrayals of Mr. Hyde, the first by John Barrymore, then Frederic March, then Spencer Tracy, which is superior?

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

Frederic March is the best, indisputably.
Tracy can't really let go, and Barrymore is over the top without *inhabiting* the role.
All the Barrymores had the same problem.
Too much Jameson single malt Irish.
March, who seemed British but was born in Wisconsin, had a long, varied career and is as under-appreciated as the Barrymores are overrated.
What is your informed opinion?

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

Jeckyl is of course a physician.
But what does Hyde do?
Aside from displaying a voodoo erection and requiring anger management, what can he do?
He can savage, maim, throttle, rape, but that isn't really doing anything by Presbyterian standards.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

In truth Hyde does nothing.
The author of Jeckyl and Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson, wrote an essay on the virtues of doing nothing.
Though Stevenson, a Scot, was a workaholic.
Afflicted with lung problems, he died young, as many of the best of us will do.
It is death that is the mother of beauty, right?
Does the Big D frighten you, elusive-reclusive writer of serial and mass murders?
Devotee of Mr. Hyde who lives half a life but burns with twice—make that thrice--the flame.

Je ne suis pas un virtual cowboy.

HAROLD JAFFE'S books include *Beyond the Techno-Cave: A Guerrilla Writer's Guide to Post-Millennial Culture*; *Terror-dot-Gov* (2005); *15 Serial Killers* (2003), *False Positive*, 2002), and *Sex for the Millennium* (1999). He has received two NEA's, a California Arts Council grant, a NY CAPS grant, and two Fulbrights (to India & the Czech Republic). Jaffe is editor-in-chief of *Fiction International* and Professor of Literature and Creative Writing at San Diego State U. His recent book *Revolutionary Brain: Essays & Quasi-Essays* was released by Guide Dog Books (Bowie, MD, USA 2012).

3 TEXTS

Brian Edwards

INTO THE FRAY

Remembering Timothy Findley (and Ezra Pound)

It is 1910. The boy is twelve when his father takes him again to the roof of the Arlington Hotel in Boston. He loves the view of Cambridge over the river, the red bricks of Harvard, the public garden and people walking on the grass ... He talks of love, their family, his breakdown with the boy's mother, and changes in the world. He mentions his release from Harvard. There's rumour of a protest, he said, but he can't go back.

Want everything, he said, this sad man, but wish for nothing. Then he folded his jacket carefully, laid it on the parapet and leapt fifteen stories to his death.

Mauberley travelled to Europe from America, a boy with poems in his hand. What did he recall of those last moments with his father? Of course, Ezra took him under his wing, offering advice and encouragement. Was the world really falling apart in the thirties? So soon after one world war, another building through those long years of crazy ideas, massed armies and a lunatic in the van, an egomaniac who should have stuck to water colours. Mauberley stayed in grand hotels, met influential people and enjoyed the arts. He was finely aesthetic. Did he hate the Nazis, some of whom he knew? What of the Fascists?

American *liberators* found his body in May 1945, twisted and frozen, in the deserted Grand Elysium Hotel in the Austrian Alps. It was demolitions expert Lieutenant Quinn who read Mauberley's *famous last words*, words inscribed painfully and in quiet desperation upon the walls of four rooms of this pleasure palace where once he'd mixed with European aristocracy, with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, von Ribbentrop, Charles Lindbergh ... Mauberley believed in the value of imagination. *Misguided* in politics, he saw death coming. Patient and persistent, young Quinn continues, fascinated and horrified, cold, reading dutifully to the end.

So, is this how it is when the chips are down, all options ended?

We start eagerly and rush head-first, innocent and keen into whatever's on offer, here a friend, there a place, always the comfort of institutions and ritual until they begin to falter. Mauberley started with such promise and then, chastened by bitter circumstance, he came to represent the age in its dividedness. Enigmatic America, a place to escape from, decadent Europe tearing itself apart again. A small boy lived within him like a shadow, a caution too against surrendering completely to thirties' hedonism.

Splendor, sadness and resignation jostle together on his walls.

THE MEXICAN

Yesterday I spoke with Carlos Fuentes, a man I've never met.

He's dead but his eyes shine and his voice carries well. It doesn't matter that his suit is crumpled, his cuffs frayed, nor that his memory's a little confused, or so he said. No matter either how much he travelled, or where he worked in Europe and America, he carried that arid landscape still, vast desert tracts of Mexico, violence mixed with love.

Latin America begins, he said, south of the Mason-Dixon line, and he talked of indigenes and waves of immigrants, the wars and bloodshed, monumental passions and disappointments, and a frustration so intermingled with love and nostalgia that it turned inside out in further explorations of the possible. With tears in his eyes, he spoke of Cervantes and Joyce, his alpha and omega of great fictional models, the writer of the *Quixote* and the one who took Homer back to Ireland.

But it is Faulkner, he said, in acknowledging painful history and the baroque, William Faulkner on his patch of Mississippi mud, who spoke so well to Latin Americans, to García Márquez, Vargas Llosa and to Fuentes himself, that they regarded him as one of their own. Pausing, he squinted into the darkness and then focused on Kafka, Borges, Puig, Infante, Cortázar and Rulfo, myths, revolution, American and Mexican cinema, Zapata, Villa and Pablo Neruda ... goddesses and warriors.

Tiring, he remembered films and film stars, parties in Paris and London, and in Mexico City, nights so luxurious that politics faded away and the world was new again. But that was long ago. What has changed? Conquistadors are gathering at the gate, look, their helmets flashing in the sunlight, while before them lie entrancing mysteries and temptations, and promises too wild for definition.

THE DEATH OF HECTOR

When Iris came swift as wind to Achilles, he needed little rousing for Thetis his mother, queen of sea-nymphs, had spoken with him already in his grief to set him up for vengeance. What it is to lose one's dearest friend and comrade, the very measure of life and purpose, killed by Hector of the flashing plume, the Trojan who now wears his armour so brashly, the same armour Achilles had given to Patroclus out of love, and for glory and protection. Then Iris paints such a picture of Trojans and Achaeans fighting over Patroclus' body that he's doubly inflamed – his friend become sport for the dogs of Troy! Pallas Athena fans the fire that bursts from his head and terrifies all Troy, a signal and war cry from the one held back so long from the battle, dread Achilles, champion of champions. Putting on the gleaming breastplate, greaves, helmet and massive shield fashioned by Hephaestus, he strides beside the surf and rouses the Achaeans who roar with joy to see him back. Sweeping down from Olympus, the gods take opposing sides and support their favourites as battle rages on the plain. When old King Priam sees Achilles surging forward, blazing like a star with the bronze flaring on his chest, he pleads with his son, Hector, not to stand against him. But no amount of groaning and weeping can shake Hector's resolve. Achilles sweeps down like a hawk upon a dove, the pursuit terrible, the result inevitable. With its twists and turns, the force of the whole epic leads inexorably to this moment, to the spear tip in Hector's throat.

BRIAN EDWARDS has contributed regularly to *Rampike*. He was professor in Literary Studies and a foundation member of the academic staff at Deakin University, Geelong, Australia. Editor of *Mattoid*, a journal of literary and cultural studies, he currently resides in Port Fairy, Australia. His recent books include *All in Time*, and *The Escape Sonnets* (Papyrus Publishing).

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

Frank Davey

When I'm published, I'll make sure greedy insurance companies and replacement writers cannot make a mockery of our poetry markets.

I'll refuse to support a Canada where 24-hour news networks and biased media insiders could destroy our megapoems.

I'll work for a Canada where reckless bankers, cabinet ministers and sex workers won't deride multicultural pentameters.

My critics are taking donations from shifty Americans, Bertelsmann board members and illiterate Somali pirates.

I refuse to support a Canada where rich oil companies and socialists can fail to buy poetry books.

My critics are palling around with paper cartels, Japanese whalers, homophobes and Rupert Murdoch yes-women.

I want a Canada where overseas manufacturers and John Ralston Saul can't misrepresent or corrupt our poetics.

Unlike myself, my critics wants a Canada where Hollywood writers and Wall Street insiders can sabotage our language poetry.

My readers know that I have faith in our innovation, our medical mythologies, CBC reality TV and shifting the ground of all literatures.

I will not stand for a Canada where Mexican drug companies and illegal New Zealand immigrants can destroy our sacred award shows.

When I'm published, I'll make sure tree-huggers and tribal warlords cannot stop themselves from reading our book-length poems.

Know this: that my poems will protect our First Nations publishers, our innocent young writers' smiles and our right to kill unjust copyright legislation.

My critics are receiving money from ACCESS Copyright opponents, terrorists and crooked lawyers.

I will work for a Canada where right-wing radio propagandists and North Korean dictators can chill out on the Coach House Books website.

My critics are taking donations from Carmine Starnino, Iranian extremists and Chilean mining companies.

Unlike my critics, I support our procedural poets, our heroes of 1812, LGBT parades and our delicious saskatoon pies.

I will not stand for a Canada where professional critics and suicide bombers could destroy a poetry app.

I want a Canada where pot smokers and highly-paid lobbyists keep on reading & reading poetry.

Know this: that I believe in our right to use the world's ink, our civil rights, our drivelt rights and all basic Saussurean principles.

Unlike myself, my critics want a Canada where corporate executives, unstable nuclear regimes and prosody deniers can thwart our efforts to hold spontaneous literary festivals.

My critics are palling around with Order of Canada wannabes, Sun News columnists and copyright extremists.

My readers know that I have faith in Christian Bök's future, our precious kindergartens and our academic freedom.

I refuse to support a Canada where lyric poets, retired engineers and the spouses of poets can undermine the hard work of our non-referential writers.

When I'm published, I'll make sure overpaid CEOs and corrupt politicians cannot reduce our love for a literary Bible.

My readers know that I believe in our young internet poets, transparent clothing and increasing the public lending right.

I refuse to support a Canada where military-industrial warmongers and internet pornographers can destroy our right to borrow literary models from Asia.

When I'm published, I'll make sure Monsanto cronies and Mexican holidays can't corrupt our cherished Canadian small presses.

My critics are receiving money from Hollywood insiders, Alberta doctors and overseas writers agents.

I will work for a Canada where the extinction of species and the salaries of senators cannot sabotage our Canadian poetry nights.

Know this: that I will protect our online publishing, Wreck Beach, our Christmas poetry sales and our hard-working intercultural editors.

My critics prefer to read about government bureaucrats, Washington elitists and Taliban school-burners.

Unlike my critics, I support our hard-reading families, our big book retail stores and our job printing creators.

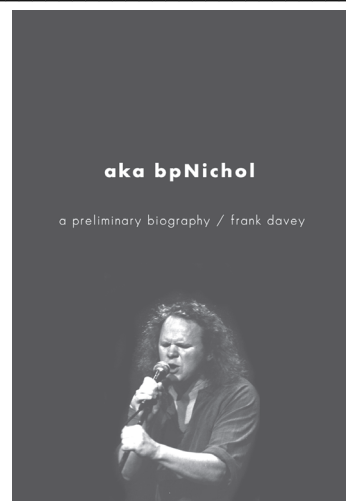
I want a Canada where Enbridge board members and backroom dealmakers can't smear the poetics of tomorrow.

I will not stand for a Canada where Iraq-invasion apologists, the spring bear hunt and corrupt politicians can undermine our right to read our poems to the world.

*

FRANK DAVEY is one of the founding editors of *TISH*. He was appointed to the Carl F. Klinck Chair of Canadian Literature at the University of Western Ontario in London (1990). From 1975-1992 he was one of the most active editors at Coach House Press (Toronto). He is the long-standing editor of *Open Letter* magazine. Davey has over 2 dozen books of poetry in print, and 15 non-fiction books; the latest is *aka bpNichol: A Preliminary Biography* (2012). He currently lives in Strathroy, Ontario.

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An Excerpt from: *WHY?! PERPETUAL GENOCIDE*

Alan Davies

for Alec Garland

War is a human trait.

*

Human beings have lots of anger inside themselves that they have not let out. Civilization as we know it (cities / time / numbers) proscribes keeping anger in. Therefore / (stored up) it comes out / as war.

But / presumably (?) war preceded the human invention of civilization.

*

Christopher Hitchens decries religion and racism / in large part as they instigate war.

But / do they actually cause war / or are they among those many reasons (ie “reasons” / ie excuses) that we use to make war (again (to make war again) inevitable?

*

Is war perhaps how humans exemplify Darwin’s survival-of-the-fittest theory? – the outer-edge / the extreme / of survival?

It doesn’t seem always that the fittest win – often it is seemingly a matter of a very few (and relatively-minor) factors that tip the advantage / and (of course) luck.

*

Because even if irony cannot be banished from modern literature, and no matter how inappropriate it may seem in the face of that wholesale slaughter, the savagery of our times does not have the dimensions of classical tragedy. The gigantic scale of bestiality in the present age is not wrought by angry gods or enraged titans; it is the work, instead, of ridiculous little mannequins who dreamed up their theories in bars and coffeehouses. As a result, the mediocrity of the executioners inadvertently detracts from the victims, and while it may in no way diminish their suffering or make their death any less horrible, it nevertheless gives their fate a touch of indecency.
– Friedrich Gorenstein / *Traveling Companions*

*

Naturally the common people don’t want war, but after all, it is the leaders of a country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag people along whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. This is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.
– Hermann Goering / at the Nuremberg trials

*

Dave Grossman’s main thesis in his book *On Killing* is that it goes against human nature to kill humans. He notes that in some wars only a very small percentage of soldiers fired their rifles to kill. In other wars (more recent ones) the firing rate has been increased by more systematic training of the troops. He analyzes battlefield killing throughout history / and from almost every vantage imaginable.

But he does not come to terms with why there is war at all / or with why people sign up to go to war if the activity of war is so antithetical to their nature. On those broader issues he is strangely silent / has nothing to say.

The fact that he's an army officer certainly creates a large blind spot / of which he doesn't acknowledge any awareness / and which inevitably limits what he can understand (at the same time that in other areas it extends it).

For example / he blames what he sees as a recent increase in violence / on video games and an escalation of violence in popular culture – but he doesn't note the part that the military has played in creating those new modes of culture. He criticizes (and blames) “those who exploit violence for profit” / thinking of movie producers and game developers / evidently completely unaware that the phrase describes the military with perfect accuracy.

*

Is there an epic that isn't about war?

*

The Upanishads / one of our earliest texts / and a spiritual one at that / is set against a backdrop of war.

*

War combines genocide with suicide.

Perhaps that is what we want from it – to have some say in when and how we die.

*

We live in a country at a time when to pay taxes is to kill.

To pay taxes is to be part of the military.

*

An equally purblind postmodern dogma holds that difference and diversity are always to be commended. No doubt that is often the case. But the blunt truth is that if the human race had been made up almost entirely of gay Latinos, with just a few heterosexual deviants thrown in here and there to keep the species ticking over, a great deal of mayhem and massacre would almost certainly have been avoided. No doubt gay Latinos would long since have split into a thousand rival sects, each armed to the teeth and distinguished from its fellows by the slimmest nuances of lifestyle. But this partisanship would be nothing to what tends to happen when one group of humans encounters another group with blatantly different markings. Of course these dissensions are largely political in form. But it is unlikely they will be resolved unless we acknowledge our built-in tendency to experience fear, insecurity, and antagonism in the presence of potential predators, a tendency which no doubt has eminently useful evolutionary functions.

– Terry Eagleton / On Evil

*

Eagleton agrees with Freud that humans have a death drive / a wish to be dead. For him / evil occurs when one human acts this drive out on another human.

Curiously / he creates the category of wickedness and places it below (not-as-bad-as) evil – so that in the end Mao and Stalin are placed there (because their insanity was motivated by a social ideal (?)) / and Hitler is left alone at the top / the sole evil one.

*

My experience tells me that people are holding a lot of unexpressed anger.

Is war the then-eventual acting-out-of-that-anger?

But (then) why men / and not women?

*

The love of money is the root of all evil.

– The Xtian bible

Ie – greed. This idea is a sensible-enough contribution to our understanding-of-war.

But – the god-of-the-old-testament repeatedly told the Israelites to slaughter and slaughter and slaughter.

Rampike 23 /1

A bit-of-a-mixed-message throughout that-book!

*

Either religion or racism or both would seem to have played a major part among the causes of most if not all wars.

But were they causes because of the extent to which they lived in the hearts-and-minds of men / who then went to war because of them? / or were they causes because they were offered as inducements-to-war (the-carrot-and/or-the-stick) by those few-at-the-top who actually wanted and manipulated (who manufactured) the war?

*

How is it that people can come to do things that others of us cannot think of being done?
Repeatedly.

*

Zen master Seung Sahn blamed war (and its increase) on over-population and meat-eating.
Karl Popper / on over-population and violence-on-television.

*

Men make many kinds of war apart from the one that first springs to mind –
– mass-murderers kill (the victims mostly women)
– men kill the bodies and spirits of women as-a-matter-of-course
– men kill the energies of (their own) children before they have a chance to develop healthily
– men kill animals for food / sport
– men kill countless species (more during the-last-hundred-years than during the-prior-history-of-the-earth)
– men kill themselves through over-work / traffic / alcohol / drugs / misguided energies
And the older men kill the younger men by sending them into battle and to the front lines / where the odds of death multiply.

*

The word war has gotten soft.

We need to speak of –

genocide
mass murder
slaughter
hot war
perpetual war
battle
bloodshed
combat
warfare
killing

Alan Davies was born in Lacombe, Alberta. By the mid-1970s, he was editing a poetry journal, *A Hundred Posters* (complete run recently re-issued on CD by Faux Press), and publishing poetry books under the imprint Other Publications, in Boston, after attending Robert Creeley's summer poetry class at Harvard University. As editor and poet, Davies befriended Boston poets including John Wieners, and formed relations with a group of English-language writers dispersed across North America who would become known as the Language Poets. His poetry and an essay on poetics are included in the important anthology devoted to the language poets, *In the American Tree*, edited by Ron Silliman. Davies has lived many years in Manhattan. He served as the 2011 Writer in Residence at the University of Windsor. His books include *a an av es* (reissued online by Eclipse, <http://english.utah.edu/eclipse>), *Signage, Name, Active 24 Hours, Candor, Rave, "untitled"* (with M.M. Winterford), *Sei Shonagon, Don't Know Alan: Notes on AD* (with Miles Champion), among others.

RELATIONS

Laura Solomon

My Aunt Miriam is a seamstress. Whenever I ask her about it, she says that she had no choice. She is an orphan; one of three siblings, the other two being my father Lew and my uncle Neil. Their parents died when they were young and they were adopted by their mother's brother, Arthur, who became commonly known as 'Uncle Art', and his wife Emily or 'Em'.

"Em was a seamstress, you'll be a seamstress too," was reportedly what Miriam was told by Arthur.

Dutifully, she set out to work at Harold's Haberdashers. She hated it, of course. The bosses were too strict. The lunch breaks were too short. No seam could ever be straight enough. She was good at her job, though, and when she was in her late thirties she went into business working for herself, taking in sewing at home. Well-off Auckland women would bring their daughters around to her house to be fitted for their ball-gowns.

"Don't fuss Charlotte," became a catchphrase we stole from one of these posh women.

She had used those words to reprimand her daughter. We used those same words to reprimand one another when we 'fussed' – saying that this or that seat in the theatre wasn't good enough or this slice of cake wasn't big enough or that dinner plate wasn't heated properly.

Miriam and her husband Eric would take her children (my cousins) and me away on their boat for holidays on Great Barrier Island. One time I put my hand over the side of the boat to catch a pretty floating jellyfish with clear limbs and a bright red centre. It stung me and I came up in spots, as if I had the hives. Miriam and Eric didn't fight all the time, but when they fought it could go on for hours. Eric was an ex-Navy man and he liked to drink and smoke. Miriam was firmly anti-smoking and would make him go outside to light up. Eric snored like a donkey – this problem was particularly exacerbated when we were away on the boat together, as his snores would reverberate around the launch making it difficult for everybody else to get to sleep.

Miriam's two sons, Stefan and Kent, grew older and left home. Stefan, who has always wanted to be wealthy, went into corporate banking and is now high up in Citigroup – married with two children. Kent married a woman much older than himself, who died of kidney failure, and now he works in IT in Nelson and is re-married with one step-daughter. My sister had a good career as a scientist, working for Fonterra, but quit to run her own real estate business when she had children.

Of all six cousins, everybody except me has children. Some of them, like Kate, bred early, up the duff at sixteen, producing six children, all of whom she home-schooled. Others, like Greg, who didn't marry until he was in his forties, produced late. It's no great loss to me. I can barely look after myself, let alone a baby. I would drop it, lose it, poison it by accident.

I know it's not Hiroshima, but Eric was at Christmas Island when the Valiant dropped the H-bomb. The crew were instructed by the officers to turn their backs to the bomb and to cover their eyes with their hands. The explosion was so bright that the crew could see right through the skin and flesh of their hands to the bone, like an X-ray. Their skeletons lit up. Moments later, they were told to rise to their feet and turn to face the blast. A mushroom cloud gathered on the far horizon. Some people were knocked to the ground. Birds lost their eyesight. Panes shattered. Trees lost their leaves.

Many of the servicemen developed cancer and other ailments such as diabetes. Claims were made to the government and widows who were down on their luck were paid a small pension – not enough to compensate them for the loss of their husbands but still, it was something. My uncle died early; aged fifty-five. There could have been other factors involved in his death, of course – his heavy smoking and drinking, his steady diet of fish and chips.

It's an image I can't shake from my mind – the skin covering the hands and the eyelids becoming transparent. The five fingers of the hand, white and skeletal, outlined against the sky – the blast much brighter than the sun.

LAURA SOLOMON has a 2.1 in English Literature (Victoria University, 1997) and a Master's degree in Computer Science (University of London, 2003). Her books include *Black Light*, *Nothing Lasting*, *Alternative Medicine*, *An Imitation of Life*, *Instant Messages*, *The Theory of Networks*, *Operating Systems*, *Hilary and David*, *In Vitro*, as well as *The Shingle Bar Taniwha and Other Stories*. She has won prizes in Bridport, Edwin Morgan, Ware Poets, Willesden Herald, Mere Literary Festival, and Essex Poetry Festival competitions. She was short-listed for the 2009 Virginia Prize and won the 2009 Proverse Prize. She has had work accepted in the Edinburgh Review and Wasafiri (UK), Takahe and Landfall (NZ). She has judged the Sentinel Quarterly Short Story Competition.

THE LATE POEM

Karl Jirgens

Late. (As usual.) The poem arrives, knocking at that door.
Fidgeting, it apologizes for its tardiness, smiles sheepishly, rubs a
muddy boot into the "welcome" mat, and proceeds to declaim:

*"I - I had acid reflux. They wouldn't let me out of the lock-up. I was abducted
by circus people. I was holding the map upside down. I locked the keys in the car.
I had to meet with my parole officer. I didn't know it was loaded. The dog ate my shoes.
The pilot was drunk. I'm the CEO of an Internet start-up; there was a stockholders' meeting.
A sinkhole swallowed my bus. I'm dyslexic. I have aibohphobia. I'm in a motivational crisis.
There was a nuclear meltdown. The serpent beguiled me. I swallowed a male potency drug,
and couldn't stand up. I had to shampoo the cat. I became a prisoner of war.
It wasn't even my war! I didn't have a good ending. I lost your address. I was set up.
I had to wait for the cable-guy. I made my flight but caught the wrong plane.
I had red lights all the way. I suffer from Cotard's Syndrome. I think I am dead.
You didn't expect me to drive here in this condition, did you?"*

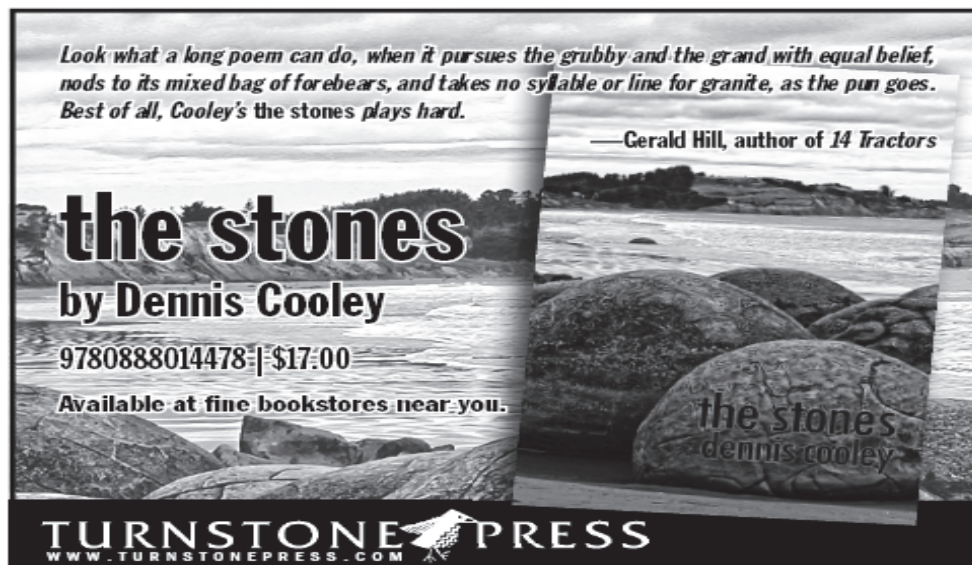
What could I say but, "Egad! A base tone denotes a bad age! Enter, dear friend."

The poem enters, scans the room but refuses the chair.
It looks me square in the eye and decries: "What is this?!"
Either this carnivalesque, pseudo-biographical, extended-metaphor goes, or I go!"
I blink.
The poem snorts with derision, spins on its heel, and exits haughtily,
planting fuming footnotes along the garden path.

Footnotes:

- * Aibohphobia: Fear of palindromes.
- * Palindrome: Text that may be read the same way, forward or backward.
- * Example: "Dammit I'm mad."
- * Cotard's syndrome: Belief that one is already dead.

N.B.: A version of this poem was recently published in a hand-bound, broadsheet, limited edition of 52 copies, signed & numbered, titled, *Six of One*, edited by Judith Fitzgerald, released by Cranberry Tree Press, Windsor (Editor in Chief: Lenore Langs), and featuring the writing of: Maxine Gadd, Daphne Marlatt, George Bowering, Marty Gervais, Karl Jirgens, Judith Fitzgerald and Leonard Cohen, with art-work by Leonard Cohen, and layout & design by Alison Dilworth (n.b.; edition has sold out).



THE BIG HORNS

Satch Dobrey

Deep inside Nine Mile Canyon,
thousands of years before the white man
came and took the land from the people,
there roamed herds of Big Horned Sheep.
He scrapes his knife over the oil,
blending in the reflections of dreams
that were sent by the spirit guides,
who tread gently up the slope, ignoring
pops and crackles on a turntable
turned to layers of dust.

Down Nine Mile Canyon come the heavy
trucks, the clay movers hauling away
the land from the people, and the rocks,
still, the refuge of the Big Horned Sheep.
From a pencil sketch, he works over
the Stonehenge paper as chisel, hard rock
and hammerstone etched visions
from the self-induced trance of the shaman,
adding and removing burnt texture
to the sandstone tinged rust.

In Nine Mile Canyon they are drilling
for natural gas. Dust suppressing
chemicals sprayed along the roads
beneath the Big Horn Petroglyphs.
Vessels of rain, these boat shaped bodies,
legs splayed, horns with 10 speed handles
are buoyant, a reflection in water.
From dark to light, the deeper one carves,
the farther one travels through time,
fusion of earth's crust.

The Big Horns climbed the steep slopes
of Nine Mile Canyon to escape
land predators, the bobcat, mountain lion.
Giant caterpillars roam ruins
of the people who once climbed the steep cliffs,
feet clad in moccasins made from the legs
of sheep, to engrave an image
from a vision quest that he captures
on paper archive by scraping,
pricking paint as he must.

SATCH DOBREY has a B.A. in English from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville in Illinois and an M.A. in International Affairs from Washington University in St Louis, Missouri. He recently won First Place in the Chesterfield (Missouri) Arts Writing Contest for 2012. His poetry appears in the September 2012 issue of the online journal, *Bluestem*, the literary quarterly of Eastern Illinois University. He currently works as a librarian and freelance writer residing with his wife in Southern Illinois, on the old bluffs of the Mississippi River.

STORIES IN BONE AND STONE

Abraham Anghik Ruben

Abraham Anghik Ruben was born in Paulatuk, Northwest Territories in 1951 and has become a major innovative force among Inuit sculptors. Abraham has always thought of himself as part of the world of contemporary sculptors and has had to break down many of the subtle barriers that constrain the Inuit artist. He has proven that an Inuit can root himself in the south without losing his cultural Identity. Abraham has been exhibiting his work since 1973. Abraham has clung fiercely to the stories and traditions he was taught as a child and although he studied art at university, he has often chosen non-traditional materials and tools to tell us the old tales and legends in a new way. His artistic exploration has led to creating monumental sculptures in Bronze for both indoor and outdoor installations. Abraham has always been a promoter of other Inuit artists and was instrumental in helping organize the first ever exhibition of circumpolar art from the communities of Arctic Siberia, Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Sami, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Abraham was one of the artists' exhibiting in the traveling Noah's Ark presented by the National Gallery of Canada. Abraham's work was exhibited alongside artists such as Pablo Picasso, and Edgar Degas. Abraham is featured in the winter 2005 issue of *Inuit Art Quarterly*. Anghik-Ruben's art can be found in public, corporate and private collections throughout the world. Some of the public art collections where Abraham's art is represented include: The National Gallery of Canada; Art Gallery of Ontario; Canadian Museum of Civilization; Glenbow Museum; House of Commons; Indian and Northern Affairs; McMaster University Art Gallery; McMichael Canadian Art Collection; Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre; Royal Ontario Museum; The Winnipeg Art Gallery; and the Smithsonian. Abraham currently resides on Salt Spring Island with his wife Patricia Donnelly and son Tim. This documentation of Abraham Anghik Ruben has been granted to *Rampike* by the Kipling Gallery, of Toronto (Director, Rocco Pannese). Contact information is included at the end of this article. Abraham Anghik Ruben speaks of one of his earliest recollections:

My earliest memory as a child was the day I became fully conscious of being alive. It happened on the beginning of my second spring. I had walked away from our tent and had gone to a nearby pond fed by a small spring. This memory was to be forever etched into my conscious being. Throughout my childhood I had similar experiences and always the most vivid of dreams, dreams of being in other worldly places and meeting people and beings in the dream world.

Abraham's mother's aunt, Paniabuluk, assisted Arctic explorer Vihjalmur Stefansson on many of his expeditions. She became his Inuit wife. Steffansson, the son of Icelandic immigrants, was born in Manitoba in 1879 and spent the winter of 1906-07 living with the Mackenzie Inuit. In 1928 Captain Larson of the St. Roche spent the winter in Langton Bay with Abraham's grandfather Ruben Anghik and his family. These historical family connections inspired Abraham's interest in the people of Nordic countries. As a story-teller, Abraham builds upon that which he already knows. From his own perspective, he tells the stories of encounters between Inuit and Viking Norse. Abraham sees great similarities between the two cultures including the practice of shamanism and a respect and reverence for the land. He seeks to bring to life the experiences of the Vikings in North America from a contemporary view – stories, which have not yet found a voice. To the Viking Norse who settled Iceland and Greenland, the goddess Ran was their goddess. This goddess was guardian of those sailors who lost their life at sea. She would take them into her abode at the bottom of the sea. Amongst the Inuit from Siberia to Greenland, the goddess Sedna was the goddess of all sea creatures. To some Inuit she was a young maiden, a middle aged woman or an old woman. From ancient times to the present, the Shaman (Angatkut) has been front and centre in the world of the Inuit. The Angatkut shaman was the one called to be the intermediary between the world of people and the world of spirit. His skill was called for when it became necessary to commune with Sedna, Goddess of sea creatures, e.g.; seals, walrus, whales, fish, etc. At times of extreme weather and famine he would intercede on the people's behalf and bring about change for the better. He was the keeper of the Inuit cultural tradition, stories, myths, legends and taboos. A lifetime of study was needed to fulfill his position within his group or tribe.



Whalebone Sculpture



"Blending Cultures"



"Spirit Migration"



"Untitled"

c/o KIPLING GALLERY : 7938 KIPLING AVE., VAUGHAN, ONTARIO, L4L 1Z5 CANADA – DIRECTOR; ROCCO PANNESE

**WEB HOME SITE - KIPLING GALLERY (ABRAHAM ANGHİK RUBEN):
<http://kiplinggallery.com/abraham-anghik-ruben/>**

THREE POEMS

David Groulx

HUMPTY DUMPTY 1492

My grandmother
did not survive this apocalypse

My mother
did not survive this holocaust

In the 21st century
I will be in pieces

HUMPTY DUMPTY'S WALL

Saw his first buffalo yesterday
killed it
slit out it's tongue

and built a wall
with it's bones

STEPS OF PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS (ONTARIO) 1990

[we protest on the hill during the stand off at Oka]

[a white woman approaches]

I'm sorry

I'm so sorry for what we have done to you.

I brought you something to eat

[a collective guilt complex, in absence of equality]

I'm sorry
I'm so sorry

[we eat the cornbread]

Myth: Indians prefer brown bread to white, and cornbread to either of these.

*

DAVID GROULX was raised in Elliot Lake. His background is Ojibwe & French Canadian. He won the Simon J Lucas Jr. Memorial Award for poetry at the En'owkin Centre (Penticton, B.C.), and the Munro Poetry Prize. He has written six poetry books of poetry including *Under God's Pale Bones* (Kegedonce Press), *A Difficult Beauty* (Wolsak & Wynn), *Rising A Distant Dawn* (BookLand Press) and *Our Life Is Ceremony* (Lummo Press: California). He won the 3rd annual Poetry NOW Battle of the Bards. His writing is published internationally.

MEMORIES

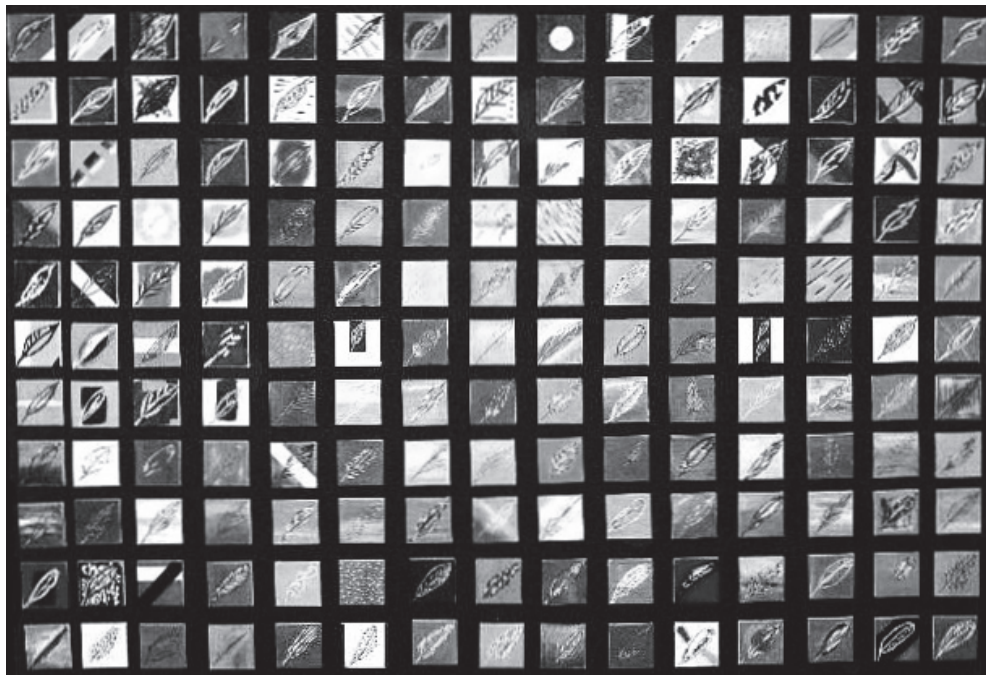
An Installation

J. Spencer Rowe

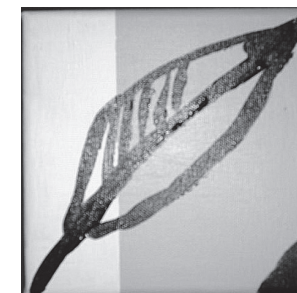
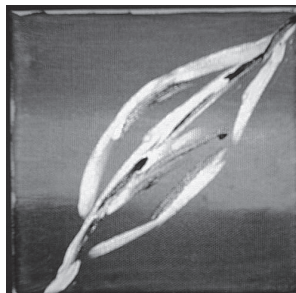
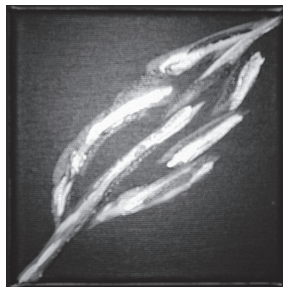
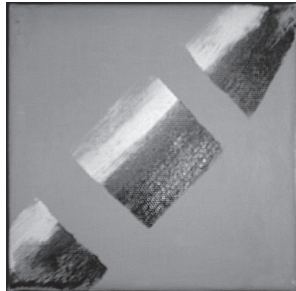
I painted these canvases over a period of 7 months. Each painting represents the child and their individual voice or narrative who "came" to me in a Spiritually Shamanic way. Each one has a story. For instance in one painting there are 2 feathers as they were brothers and sisters. Each child's story represented in the painting is a child who died in the Indian Residential School System.

Native Actor Billy Merasty who was hanging around me a lot at the time had two aunties who died in the Indian Residential School they attended. I did a painting at their command, as it were. The background of that painting was representative of the Northern Manitoba Prairie where they were born and where Billy is from. He has that painting in his personal collection, it's not included in the installation.

I did paint each painting myself, spiritually guided as it were by the "voice" of each child and his or her story. Each painting required its own sacred ritual as well and a ceremony in order that they, the children, would be at peace. Many years ago, before I met Norval Morrisseau I wasn't able to control these "voices" in all their different artistic spiritual incarnations. Norval trained me to do that. As it is, the process for the art work was an exhausting, emotionally draining, painful and traumatic daily duty. The installation had 165 paintings representing 165 different children's voices.



Details from: "MEMORIES":



**MEMORIES - Installation: 165 paintings, acrylic on canvas, on black matte.
(Approx: 10' 6" x 8' – 304.8 cm x 243.84 cm)**

**Each painting / feather is a moment, a reflection, a spirit - life echo, of a child lost to the
Indian Residential Schools.**

Permanent collection – Woodland Cultural Centre, Museum, Brantford, Canada.

© j. spencer rowe

ARTWORK: Osvaldo Ramirez Castillo

Commentary: HUGUES BROUILLET

Translation: Norman Cornett

“We must side with the suffering of humans because each step we take towards their pleasures, reinforces suffering.”

- Theodor Adorno *Minima Moralia: Reflections from A Damaged Life*

Castillo's work initially throws us off balance because of his compositions' colouring. At every turn we see red, blood red; but also vivid yellows, greens, blues, pinks—the spectrum of fun and games. Indeed they reflect the riotous colours of parades, carnivals, and orgies. Yet intricate, razor-sharp drawing delineates these scenes of mass torture, ritual murder, tormented or tormenting satyrs, and mangled, dismembered bodies—'violated' in every sense of the term. Before our eyes there unfolds a grotesque spectacle, a hideous pageant, in effect, a carousel of abominations. Our discomfort when looking at these images compels us to rationalize them by referencing their roots. They include Bosch, Dali, and other Surrealists. However, such sterling antecedents came nowhere near explaining the gravity of Castillo's painting. Its heart lies in what they leave unsaid. His tableaux recount the saga of El Salvador from the pre-Columbian era to today. They patchwork episodes of its tumultuous and violent past into a schizoid, kaleidoscopic narrative. Its vocabulary draws on watershed periods of this country's history.



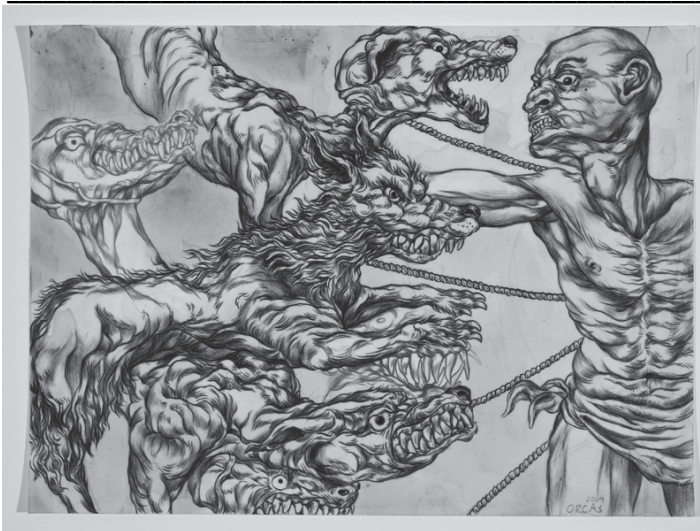
The artist consequently harks back to Mayan iconography and civilization. The world has heard about the myriad, bloodthirsty, Mayan deities. Take for example Quetzalcoatl, the serpent-god held in veneration for creating humankind by shedding his own blood. What a gift. What a debt! Castillo serves up highly symbolic depictions of the hysteria that must have broken out during sacrificial rites in which thousands of men and women repaid this debt

through their sacrificial death. Here funfair meets hellhole, while minuets echo shrieks of terror.

Further, there runs through his art a motif of the Conquistadors landing in America with their distinctive helmets and crude Catholicism...a religion that shamelessly sanctioned wholesale atrocities, conquest, and genocide. A stupefied Virgin Mary thus gapes at henchmen sporting mock crucifixes around their necks and tattooed on their shoulders, as they maim and kill in the name of Christ. Its brutal subjugation betrays America's true history. In fact, its fabled discoverers, Columbus, Pizarro, and Cortes, comprise the offal of humanity.

Amidst this maelstrom the artist evokes the 1980's civil war in his native El Salvador, whose military junta, with USA backing, executed entire families. They even assassinated nuns and priests who befriended the common people. Behind such butchery lurked the American government's CIA. In this light Castillo's paintings reinterpret North American kitsch, so that ice cream, Mickey Mouse, and clowns symbolize frivolity, indulgence, and tragicomedy. This nation has now fallen prey to a few interest groups, while lawless street gangs leave it reeling from a cycle of violence that has claimed 16,000 lives in three years. It amounts to a haven for guns, drugs, and debauchery.

Does this people's never-ending martyrdom, which he depicts through exploded figures, constitute the essence of Castillo's work, and explain our consternation over it? No. El Salvador's history instead provides the paradigm whereby this artist visualizes our sickening psychological appetite for amusement, as multitudes suffer.



He seemingly declares, 'Behold the human race.' Indeed he sketches monsters who simply mirror the spectres of our souls. When you think about it, everyone participates in this macabre extravaganza, especially those on the sidelines, because they benefit most from their fellow humans' bondage and oppression. The ruthlessness of life nowadays often appalls us, but since we no longer maintain an objective standard, much

less the benchmark of humanism, we end up complying with such villainous conduct. We all stand guilty. Herein lies the key to Castillo's vision, and why it haunts us.

Art offers humanity the ideal means to contest despotism and overt cruelty. Furthermore, art worthy of the name resists commodification, and affirms its revolutionary potential in the face of injustice. Although this artist's canvases feature words like *Dios*, *united*, *libertad*, these have lost their significance and impact. They just mouth our collective hypocrisy. Divested of their ideological veneer, these works assume the semblance of Castillo's flayed human figures. Terror lays bare their flesh, and evil exposes their raw nerves. Rather than attempting to reconcile our conflicted nature, it finds expression in the disconcertingly harsh, enigmatic, and unique work of this artist. Its subject, nonetheless, bespeaks an alternate universe of utopian harmony.

"Henceforth we can only find beauty and consolation by looking evil in the eye, challenging it, and with no illusions about its reality, propose that a better world remains possible." Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*.



OSVALDO RAMIREZ CASTILLO Immigrated to Canada in 1989 as a result of the 12 year civil war in El Salvador. He attended the Ontario College of Art and Design (Toronto 1998-2001) and received an MFA from Concordia University (2004-2007) He lives and works in Montreal, Canada.

HUGES BROUILLET is a Professor of Philosophy at Collège de l'Assomption, Québec.

NORMAN F. CORNETT, Ph.D., is an independent scholar and translator, who explores the relationship between culture, politics, and religion. He publishes in American and Canadian academic journals, and gives workshops on the arts in French and English.

MATTHEW MARK LUKE AND JOHN

Shane Neilson

The passions have been divided into two great classes, 1, such as are intended to impel us to real or supposed good (objects of desire) and, 2, such as are intended to defend us from real, or supposed evil (objects of aversion). –Dr. Benjamin Rush

This Passion Love (Matthew)

implanted in the human breast for the purpose of bringing the sexes together, and thereby increasing their happiness, becomes a disease only where it is disappointed in its object. The symptoms of love are the same as the gangrene torching the Sun King's feet, his pulse slowed, blood clogged, and passion for god on his dry lips,

his feet the colour of grass brushing charcoal sheets. A thousand bureaucrats and noblemen enjoy the spectacle of passion slipping past, reduced to the creeping ritual of skin skimping for the unseen. Who did Louis love?

His mother was the one. She held him as a boy, he clung to her flesh. If his mother were here, she would draw the blinds around the bed, order the onlookers away, and wash her son's insensate feet with her hair as she spoke for his love object, "L'etat, c'est moi."

Anger the polyphus life (Mark)

to resemble rottenness in the bones the parent of malice and hatred, implanted in the human mind for wise and useful purposes. Its exercises, the combined effects upon the body are admitted in the scriptures a parricidal vice, for it not only emits its poison against its friends but against the persons who have become in one respect the authors of their being. Many of the chronic diseases of high life and professional men are induced by the same cause.

Once I conspired against Washington. The army hospitals were awful. He preferred Shipley as surgeon-general, a true incompetent without regiment. I wrote to men with money and influence, fomenting rebellion within rebellion. I lost. Shipley is a fool, but I *lost*. The men in the hospitals bore gangrene in arms and legs, needed amputations and leeches, *the troops needed able sawbones and siphoners*, but the doctors would not listen on floors packed with the dirt of Virginia, dumb and poor shit-dirt. I wrote to powerful men of what it was like to die and to lose faith in a cause that now professed gangrene as the cause. Shipley heard first, then my dear Washington.

Relieved of duty, I conspired to apply a bind to Shipley's leg, to leave it for days. The flow of blood so constricted, I would next open a wound upon the great toe and introduce the shit-dirt he refused to order swept. I dreamt of green ascending his leg, Shipley in agony, entreating my treatment of bleeding, leech on his tongue to stifle the psalms.

Instead I wrote to Washington about my error and with my love, in the republic of the zombie and ringing written phrase, the diseased and liced troops shambling through the valleys and Washington wishing another rebellion put down, he knew I was true, he let me go.

We Meet The Hollow Men In Their Partial State (Luke)

but we sometimes meet this *disorder* in a partial state. There are men who have never feared, in whom no injuries have ever excited an emotion.

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Headpiece filled with straw.

The partial state for thine is the state for life is the state for thine is the stuffed, the hollow, a leaned-together thine, the headpiece a face, the face thou art, the straw set to light and the fever of heart, if you have feared then take heed and leave this disorder now, for this tale is full of the death of the men without fear.

The hollow men return to the mow, we immolate their feet as they stand and bow,

the eyes reappear

as the perpetual star

of empty disorder that takes pleasure in the never-trick. Pass on emotion as holy fire of excite springing like lightning from limb to limb, the hollow men of straw becoming spastic flesh. Set the light to ancient straw ignored by generations of horses and watch the star ignite in the field, St. Lawrence entering the barn with shield (never any shields) his head turned to the hottest corner, straw in his mouth.

Catalepsy: The Grief Finale Addressed to Aspiring Anatomists (John)

In the unsuccessful effort to save life, witness this passion of grief laid upon the table. Dissections of persons who have died of grief have these findings: acute on chronic insensibility, asyphxia, a plexy of the latter fever with and without tears, gray hairs in the countenance, fixity of posture, loss of sudden death without any signs of previous disease, either acute or chronic.

On the table I extracted a message embedded deep in a man's mediastinum, posterior to the heart, anterior to the spine: "I am afraid that we are so selfish, that if the resurrection power were lodged in our hands for one day, we should immediately run to the graves of our dear departed, and fetch them back again."

I placed the message on the scale. It had no weight. I lost my father in Philadelphia when I was six years old. I do not want him back. I turned to the class and said to the young, "But there are no Elijahs now, who may stretch themselves upon the child, and bring back the soul."

It is my own self I grieve. I would come again, to rise from the living and the dead, to take this place on the table.

In his final year, Louis XIV was 77. Christ instructed seventy times seven as the amount we should forgive the sins of our brethren. With gangrene spreading up from his feet, the Sun King recited Psalm 70: *Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina.*

Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame. Aha, aha, I do not want my father back. There is a different message in me to be cut out, a message as rigid as the body. Students, as you wield your table atlases at this latter fever without tears, place my body in genuflection. I die with composure in your company.

The psalm of the anatomy table: here the reader and the author must take leave of each other. I hope the sufferings of our fellow creatures from the causes mentioned may find relief from the kindness of every person who thinks it worthwhile to read this history of you.

*

SHANE NELSON is currently writing a manuscript that plunders Dr. Benjamin Rush's seminal 19th century psychiatry textbook *Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon Diseases of the Mind*. Neilson is writing in the voice of Rush. In Rush's name, Shane conducts bleeding experiments upon Robin Pecknold of Fleet Foxes fame.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

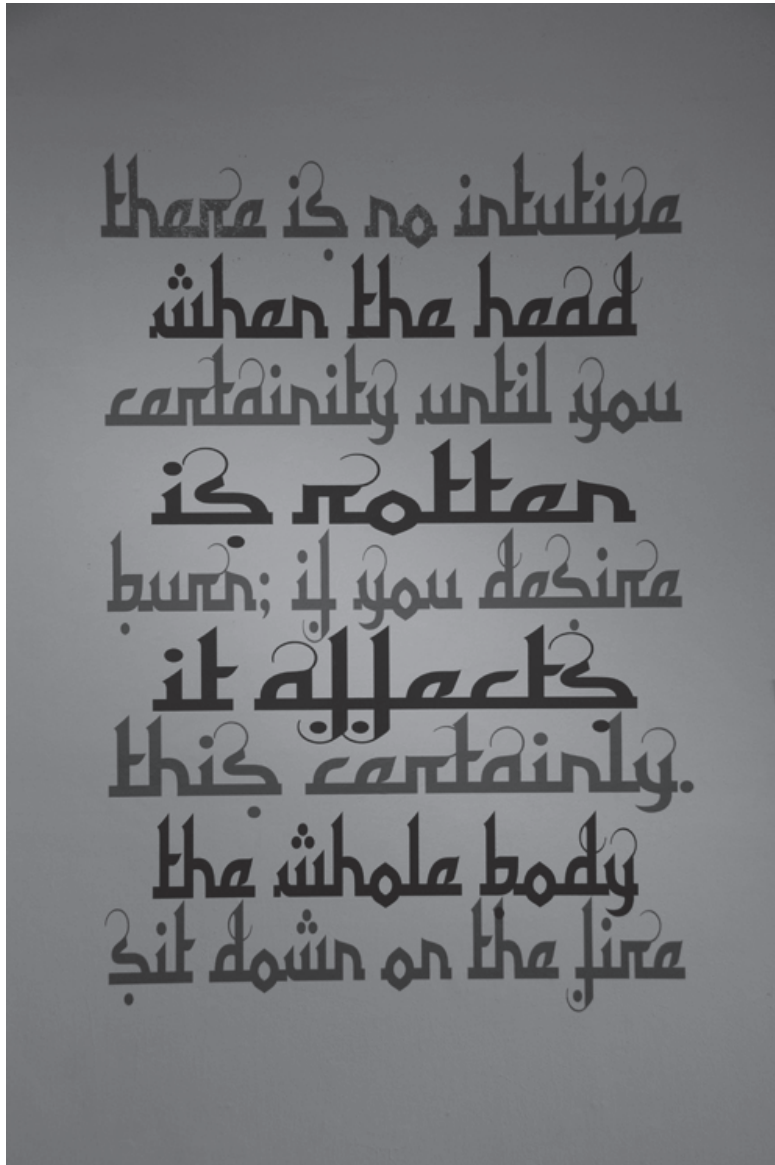


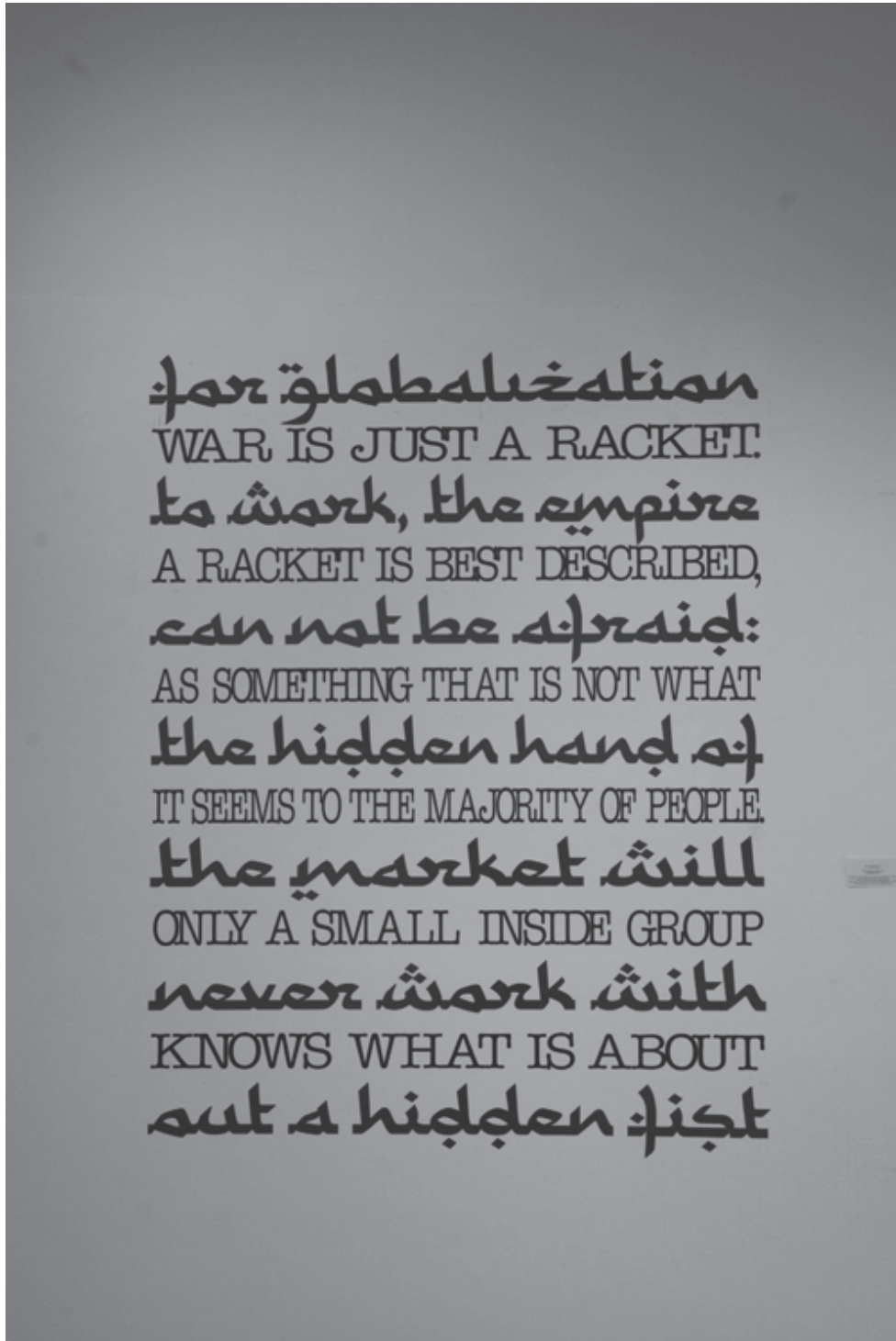
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TYPOGRAPHIC BLOWBACK

Amin Rehman

Amin Rehman works in a range of media, including encaustic tile, wax, plastic, vinyl, and neon. But the primary element in all of his creations is language. Amin explores textuality as an extension of global power interests. His pieces generate what Mikhael Bakhtin calls “dialogical” debates by overlapping layers of opposing texts. He manipulates calligraphy and typography juxtaposing English fonts such as “Arial” or “American Typewriter” with Perso-Arabic fonts rendered in Talib Kufic squared. He then combines the two modes of typography, generating a third hybrid font by fusing English with Kufic typography, so that at first glance the letter-forms appear to be Arabic, but on closer inspection are recognizable as English. He then overlays one text atop another. The result of Rehman’s overlapping texts is an ironic “palimpsest” generating a dialogue concerning current global socio-political crises. Rehman’s textual art deconstructs the false dialectics of East/West, self/Other, or colonizer/colonized. By using a combined postmodern/postcolonial approach he instead generates hybrids of linguistic discourse that fuse different cultural horizons in order to speak of the importance of finding harmony across all peoples living within and sharing the global environment and to demonstrate that self and Other are one. *KJ*





AMIN REHMAN is originally from Pakistan, and is a visual artist living in Toronto. His inter-media exhibitions investigate politicized cultural interactions, communal narratives, linguistic forces and aggressive globalization. Rehman was awarded the "Artist of the Year Award" by SAVAC (2005). He received a British Council Fellowship in Art History (Manchester, England), a Smithsonian Internship, and a Chalmers Fellowship. His works in progress include a collaboration with globalization and neo-colonial theorist, Tariq Ali. Rehman's art has been featured in art galleries in Canada and internationally including at the Artcote Gallery, in Windsor.

Photo-documentation: Maple Spring *Tuition Protests at the Canadian Grand Prix F-1* **Phillipe Montbazer & Darren Ell**

Text: Darren Ell in collaboration with Philippe Montbazer
Translation: Norman Cornett

Il est rare qu'autant de contrastes soient réunis en une seule photographie documentaire: lumière / obscurité, vulnérabilité / force, femme / homme, résistance individuelle / pouvoir étatique. J'ai senti ces éléments réunis quand cette jeune manifestante de Montréal s'est arrêtée devant l'escouade anti-émeute de la *Sûreté du Québec* le soir du 9 juin 2012. Après quatre mois de manifestations contre une hausse des frais de scolarité, les étudiants ont ciblé les célébrations du *Grand Prix du Canada (la Formule 1)*. Ils souhaitaient ainsi exprimer leur désaccord sur l'octroi de millions de dollars des contribuables au propriétaire britannique de la *F-1*, Bernie Ecclestone, arguant que cet argent serait bien mieux investi dans l'éducation post-secondaire.

After four months of protesting tuition hikes students targeted the Canadian Grand Prix F1 festivities to demonstrate their disagreement with granting F1 kingpin, Bernie Ecclestone, millions of taxpayer dollars. They contended the money would do more good if invested in higher education. The night of June 9, 2012, I saw a young protester rollerblading towards the *Sûreté du Québec's* riot police. When she stopped I realized in a flash that the scene brought together elements which could compose an exceptional photograph by contrasting: light/darkness, man/woman, strength/vulnerability, and individual resistance/state power.



Photo : Darren Ell, en collaboration avec Philippe Montbazer

IN THIS AREA FOCUS ON THE MOTIVATIONS David Burty

IN THIS AREA FOCUS ON THE MOTIVATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ENGAGE IN, OR HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO ENGAGE IN, TERRORIST ACTIVITY AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Prevent
Detect
Deny
Respond

on police's most wanted list, and whose whereabouts are unknown, may be connected to two city terrorists involved in the gas plant explosion that killed 70 people in Algeria, _____ is wanted for shoplifting and breach of conditions by

Government of Canada
Correctional Service of Canada
Facilities & Security - Working with Offenders - You and CS
Economic Action Plan 2013: Investments, Facilities and Institutions
Economic Action Plan 2013
Economic Action Plan 2013 - 2016: Growth and Long-term Prosperity

j'ai mal aux dents

Indeed, it is important who are willing to practice self-denial, to preserve freedom only for people for otherwise freedom degenerates

into license and irresponsibility

Personal Information: Omar Ahmed Khader is a Canadian national, born on 1986 (age 18) in Toronto, Canada (CA). He is in bad health but in good, in good hands

5. (S) EC Statue: Detainee's enemy combatant statue was reassessed on 31 October 2003 and he remains a friendly combatant

6. (S) Recommendation: Retain under Dildo control.

7. (S) Coordination: JTF Guantanamo notified the Criminal Investigative Task Force of this recommendation on 22 December 2003. JTF GMTO and CTF agree on the threat assessment of this detainee as a high risk.

she generally gave herself very good advice (though she very seldom followed it) and sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears to her eyes was very fond of pretending to be two people

some of the best weapons do not shoot some of the most important actors in counterinsurgency warfare are not self-identified warriors counterinsurgency is largely a political exercise

j'ai mal aux dents dans la bouche d'un autre

personal // orbiting satellite for surveillance and enforcement {POUSSY@flexible optical - cControl unit simulator - FUCKUS <reprogramming + the retinal image + by computers + via satellite control

"but it's no use now, to pretend to be two people. why, there's hardly enough of me left to make one respectable person©

ATA
CATSA
CBRNE
CBSA
CIC
CSC
CSEC
CSIS
DFAIT
DND/CF
E TA
FARC
FAT F
FERP
FINTRAC
GOC
INSETs
IRPA
ITAC
LeF
LTTE
MQOCs
NSA
NSES
PCO
PCOIAS
PCMLTFA
PHAC
PPP
PSPC
RCMP
RIUNRST
SIGINT
SOA
SOLA

BLUE JASMINE

Keith Garebian

KEITH GAREBIAN was born to an Armenian father and an Anglo-Indian mother in Bombay, India. He is an award-winning author, with 19 books and more than 1200 reviews, interviews, features, and poems in over 80 newspapers, journals, magazines, and anthologies. His second and fourth books of poetry, *Frida: Paint Me As A Volcano* (Buschek) and *Children of Ararat* (Frontenac), were long listed for the ReLit Award, and his third poetry collection, *Blue: The Derek Jarman Poems* (Signature), was long listed for the Lambda Award. He is the only three-time winner of the Mississauga Arts Award in the Established Literary category, and in July 2013 he was awarded the prestigious William Saroyan Medal in Armenia.

First Treatment

too much an open view remembering
she doesn't know agreed
glamorous fraudulent
swallowed infidelity
she could not wash away
the jewels and furs
the
looking
inward
massively his figure inside
sky rushing
in her heart
around her blue full of legs
yammering the now rampant in bed and out
swallowing
sex air
solitary from loving excessively
trying to keep vodka on the rocks
pills fucked marriage the self
trauma unpacked flinches blue
confessions tattered ego surfaces
surplus
tumbling
voluptuous
inside a fiction

Second Treatment

too much she doesn't know an open view remembering
it was agreed glamorous fraudulent
she could not wash away she swallowed
but solitary infidelity slow avalanche internally in her heart
from loving excessively
the jewels and furs around her the looking
inward recently
trying to keep if it was Hampton home
convincing in bed and out full of legs
of her radical centre neighbours
gossiping
parties rampant her husband was by far
on air piled on her massively active
around her like sex handsome his figure
inside
the sky rushing the now
swallowing air like sex swirled

Third Edit

to the crotch her head
blonde gave second chances
the snatches she unsuspecting
double life her Ponzi husband
slept fucked marriage and after
broken mirrors fallen ladders
vodka on the rocks she'd do exactly the same
tottering feet jets off the self talks
her sister Ginger yammering the wrong men
raw apart through his predatorial semen
victim trauma what is she forgetting
blushes the future psyche unpacked
dependent the kindness of strangers
adopted sister adopted son
it swings flinches simulates
blue blue jasmine her he is watching
marble eyes dark clouds beyond her
extravagance
confessions swept away in daylight
vodka shaken sleep again pills rampant
voluptuous but vapid her lips startling
yes ego tattered in a surplus of blue
does talking help again well-heeled
surplus of surfaces tumbling inside a fiction

Test Screening

she doesn't know if it was too much
trying to keep an open view

remembering the jewels and furs
Hampton house parties rampant

it was agreed her husband was by far
handsome, glamorous, fraudulent

convincing in bed and out
bathtub and boudoir full of legs

his fingers inside the now
of her radical centre

his blatant adultery blood rushing
to the crotch her head

she could not wash away
neighbours gossiping excess plainly written

on air piled on her
she swallowed swirled internally

infidelity's slow avalanche
massively active her open view

from loving excessively
around her the looking inward recently

the sky rushing swallowing air
like sex but solitary in her heart

Rough Cut Version

her blonde double life gone second
chances beautiful people perfect sex
jasmine flower her nickname blue like blue
roses

the snatches her Ponzi husband fucked
she unsuspecting slept
through his predatorial semen

marriage and after vodka on the rocks
she'd do exactly the same
her sister Ginger raw apart

broken mirrors fallen ladders
tottering feet jets off
the self talks San Francisco

yammering adopted sister
dependent the kindness of strangers
the wrong men

brio wacko tattoos and shark's teeth
nervous dynamite smile stress fracture
victim trauma

is she forgetting what
renouncing anthropology
for a dentist

calm and chaos it swings
the lech smiles his fingers
untune her

shrill expectation
wipe under the past
blushes the future flinches

psyche unpacked simulates
blue blue an image poised
she lies well-heeled surplus of surfaces

tumbling inside a fiction
what has she denied her lips startling
marble eyes dark clouds unexpected

missing bits an adopted son
beyond her extravagance
yes they will all find out

ego tattered does talking help?
confessions swept away again
in daylight voluptuous but vapid

vodka shaken not stirred
pills rampant sleep
in a surplus of blue again

Final Cut

Not blue roses this blonde but Blue Jasmine.
Her double life with second chances. Spoiled. Schizophrenic.
Hamptons socialite. Mega-banker husband, handsome.
Ponzi schemer. Snatched by the Feds.
The snatches he fucked. Beautiful people.
Perfect sex. Exhibitionistic. Sure glamour
as she unsuspecting slept through his predatorial semen.

Her marriage, her intensity, her victim trauma
were vodka on the rocks. Unpacked. Echo from another
source. If she lived her life again,
she'd do it exactly the same? Oh, no, never agree.
Trusting that way again. Her sharp eyes retreat.
Hooded. Narrow. Dark glasses.
Milky. Sore. The glare. Strangers. Omnipresent.
Insinuations tear. Raw. Apart. Hyper-ventilating.
Yammering to herself or strangers. Blue.

Tennessee's Blanche as seen in broken mirrors
in fallen ladders. She jets off to San Fran.
The self talks. Strangers on a plane.
Dependent on an adopted sister.
The kindness of strangers. Ginger. Sister.
Salt of the earth. The wrong men.
First, Augie. Blue-collar handyman/furniture mover
Bombastic brio, two noisy kids.
Second, Chili wacko. Tattoos. Shark's teeth.
Nervous dynamite smile. Waiting. Her silence.

Calm and chaos. It swings. Raw. Repugnant.
Foundation riddled. Victim trauma. Stress fractures.
Torture rack. Inner. Vodka swilling, pills.
Non-stop monologue. Repellent, she relates.
She skitters. Untuned accordion squeezing.
The Present wipes under the Past.

Future. Blushes. No more anthropology. Only
dentist's receptionist. The lech smiles.
And when it comes down to it, his tongue.
Shrill expectation. Busy hands. Flinches.

Her psyche needs country air
her image meets his poise, handsome widower.
Wealthy. Healthy. He is watching.
Carefully she lies, acting well-heeled. Surplus of surfaces.
She measures. The impressions multiply. Tumbling inside a fiction.
It is safe to spin without too much self-reflection.
Go shopping. Always his love and respect. His commitment.
Her fictitious portfolios. Then truth pops out.
Why can't she be loved properly? A kind of wreckage.
Mess of vodka. The pills. The gloom of a bright day.

She is denied by him. And her stranger adopted son beyond her extravagance.
Her lips startling. Her marble eyes.
Dark clouds in the eyes. Unpeeled. Undeniable memories.
Missing bits. Her rupture. Seizure. When she looks at the world.
Danger at every turn. Where is the anesthesia?
The elusiveness of surfaces. Yes, they will all find out.
Her intentions will not succeed.
Ego tattered. Does talking help?
Confessions. Wiped away. Again. In daylight.
Voluptuous but vapid. Exhausted. Desperate.
Vodka shaken. Pills rampant.
Surplus of blue. Again.

THE ALGEBRA OF REVENGE

Alan Lord

The patriarch Abraham is considered a prophet by Islam, whose extremist “terrorists” of today came about IN REVENGE OVER the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, which was IN REVENGE OVER the Taliban harboring Osama Bin Laden, who sent his crews smashing planes into the Twin Towers, which was IN REVENGE FOR Bill Clinton’s slamming cruise missiles into the Bin Laden camp in Afghanistan, which was IN REVENGE OVER Bin Laden’s bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which was IN REVENGE OVER the US maintaining military bases in Saudi Arabia and also its continued support of the state of Israel, which was founded IN REVENGE OVER the Holocaust, which was perpetrated IN REVENGE OVER Germany’s humiliating defeat in WWI, which Hitler blamed on the Jews, and which war was started IN REVENGE OVER the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, not forgetting that WWII was started by Hitler, and that his rise was largely IN REVENGE OVER the crushing Treaty of Versailles zealously drawn up by France, whose participation in WWI was basically IN REVENGE OVER France’s humiliating defeat at the hands of Germany back in the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, which in turn was a long overdue payback IN REVENGE OVER France’s defeat of Germanic states during the Napoleonic Wars, which came about IN REVENGE OVER the continental coalitions set up against France IN REVENGE OVER the French Revolution, which came about IN REVENGE OVER France’s bankruptcy after the monarchy depleted France’s coffers in large part due to the Seven Year’s War, which was IN REVENGE OVER Great Britain’s New World colonial grabbings, which were IN REVENGE OVER Spain’s New World colonial grabbings, which were IN REVENGE OVER England’s sinking of Spain’s Armada, which was sent IN REVENGE OVER England’s Elizabeth I ascending to the throne – a Protestant, which religion came about IN REVENGE OVER the excesses of the Catholic Church, which religion evolved IN REVENGE OVER the Jews’ crucifixion of Christ, whose ascension was in part IN REVENGE OVER the moneylenders in Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem, which was built IN REVENGE OVER the destruction of Solomon’s temple– built by the successor to King David, whose ascension came about by killing Goliath, IN REVENGE OVER Saul’s refusal to battle the Philistines, Saul being a member of one of the original Twelve Tribes of Israel, that were the direct descendants of the patriarch Jacob, who was the son of Isaac, and whose father was Abraham.

ALAN LORD is an engineer, musician, writer, satirist & performance impresario living in Montreal. His latest book is *ATM SEX* from Guernica Editions ISBN: 978-1-55071-354-1

GOODBYE Gary Barwin

Goodbye 2B-A-40
80.002
AC-556
Ak 5

Goodbye AK-47
AK-63
AK-74
AK-101

Goodbye AK-74M
AK-101
AK-103
AK-102
AK-104
AK-105

Goodbye AO-38
AO-62
Heckler & Koch G11
Heckler & Koch AN-94

Goodbye AO-63
Armtech C30R
AVB-7.62
Bakalov
of bull pup configuration, named for its creator Georgi Delchev Bakalov.

Goodbye Barrett REC7, formerly known as the M468
Goodbye M82 .50 caliber sniper rifle.
Beretta AR70/90
SC-70/90 folding-stock variant.

Goodbye Beretta ARX-160
BSA 28P
Bushmaster ACR
Bushmaster AR-15
Bushmaster Patrolman's Carbine M4A3
CETME
CETME Model L
Cherkashin assault rifle
Goodbye Colt Canada C7 rifle
ČZ 2000
CZ-805 BREN
ČZW-556

Goodbye Robinson Armament XCR
Rung Paisarn RPS-001
Sa vz. 58
SA80
SAR-80
SAR-21
Safir T-16
Safir T-17

Goodbye Daewoo K1	Pindad SS2
Daewoo K2	Pneumatic Valve And
Daewoo XK8	Rod System (PVAR)
DCR	
DiseñosCasanave SC-2005	Goodbye QBZ-95
	QBZ-03
Goodbye .30 Carbine	
Franchi mod. 641	Goodbye R4 assault rifle
FX-05 Xiuhcoatl	RH-70
G5 rifle	Rk 62
	Rk 95 TP
Goodbye EM-2	
EMERK	Goodbye
FAD assault rifle	San Cristobal
FAMAS	SIG SG 540
FARA 83	SIG SG 550
Floro PDW	SOAR
FN CAL	SOCIMI AR-831
Goodbye AMD-65	Goodbye Sterling SAR-87
Goodbye AMP-69	Steyr ACR
Goodbye AN-94 sometimes	Steyr AUG
called the "Abakan" Avtomat	Stoner 63
Nikonova	
FN F2000	Goodbye Sturmgewehr 44
FN FNC	StG45
FN SCAR	TKB-022PM
Franchi LF-58	TKB-059
	TKB-517
Goodbye Gordon Close-Support	T65 assault rifle
Weapon System	T86 assault rifle
941 LMG, FG-42 and EM-2.	T91 assault rifle
Goodbye Grad	
Goodbye Heckler & Koch G11	Goodbye Truvelo Raptor
H & K G36	TVGK
H & K HK33	Type 11
	Type 56
Goodbye Heckler & Koch HK416	Type 63
Howa Type 89	Type 81
IMBEL MD2	
IMI Galil	Goodbye Valmet M82
IMI Tavor TAR-21	VB Berapi LP06
INSAS rifle	Vektor CR-21
Interdynamics MKR	Vepr
Interdynamics MKS	VHS Assault Rifle
	W+F Bern C42
Goodbye Kbkwz. 1988 Tantal	W+F Bern StG-52
Kbswz. 1996 Beryl	
LAPA FA-03	Goodbye 7.5mm Kurzpatrone
Brazil (BOPE)	WimmerspergSpz-kr
	XM8 rifle
Goodbye L64/65	Z-M Weapons LR 300
M4 Carbine	
M16 rifle	Goodbye Zastava M21
NIVA XM1970	Goodbye Zastava M70
Pindad SS1	Goodbye

GARY BARWIN is appointed as the Writer in Residence at the University of Western Ontario 2014-15. He has three books forthcoming, including a novel, a volume of poetry (with Mansfield Press), and a scholarly edition covering the poetics of Paul Dutton (Wilfrid Laurier University Press).

HER LIFE AND TIMES

Melody Sumner Carnahan

This is about her birth, flexed in the heart of the twentieth century, her bitter inversions seen in the context of a saint's martyrdom, and her earliest corrosive non-functional art works. Stated quite clearly, she was built for the road, and the lantern in all the paintings represents her death, which she open-mindedly moves toward. Thus feigned, her works engage the complete disasters of war, with an understatement of transcendent proportions due to time spent in a whorehouse.

A fact serviceable to our purpose is the fact we most often seek. It's the same with a volcano or an imminent defeat. That understood, of particular importance is the fact that before leaving Paris in nineteen hundred something she resided incognito with an heretical twist, fusing the fin-de-siècle concept of woman as virgin slut bitch into the supreme femme fatalist. Chaotic with purpose, her upward-turning eyes were recast as the pilot's keen sight, the merchant's unslakeable desire, the enemy's target force, her mother's dying embrace. In later works we find flat stylization producing inspiration: she straddles her bicycle licking a double ice cream cone, a young girl clothed in sunlight, open, untended, venting her spleen. Her early treatment of the gentleman warrior careening from the sky unleashed a dimension of cosmic upheaval unheralded in our time.

If two things have nothing in common, one cannot be said to have been the cause of the other. She vowed to take her dirt back with her. It's telling that so many of her still lifes include chickens, turkeys, ducks, and woodcocks plucked, strung up or trussed on kitchen counters, which may be seen as surrogates of human corpses with their own real blood, pain, and indignities. Her confusion of the natural with the supernatural reaches a sacrilegious extreme at the lower left of one triptych: The murdered child's open mouth, like the mouth of a bird, directed toward a heaven extinct.

About the duration of the body we can have but inadequate experience. The cover image on her catalogue raisonné was replicated from scraps of shredded masterpieces. Once she possessed ideas and was possessed by them. By the terms "reality" and "perfection" she understood the same thing. She created her own Virgin of Sorrows using a bust of Venus purchased from a catalogue. She visited Truth's place of birth and stood in the corner where the conversion to Falsehood had taken place. She had once been God's data entry specialist, his indexer, his pipe cleaner, his file clerk, offering her own blasphemous views of the anguish of redemption.

There are inescapables such as the actual body count of women, children, men, and animals who died during the fire-bombings. She had been trysting with the tyrant, sleeping in his silences, exhibiting like him the hollow appetite of one whose eyes remain open and unaffected by the passage of ghostly steeds across the sky leaving a trail of the end of the world mitigated by modern commerce.

Her right hand holds a split-second image of an unnamed girl, skirt on fire, falling headfirst from a tenth-story window like a living torch. This references the collision between the impossible disparity of ancient faith and the numbness it creates. Certainly the shock of spring uprooting holy images is remembered only in jokes. Now, with her own four legs tightly bound in preparation for the slaughter, she is reduced, in general terms, to a harmless doomed creature representing the hope of eternal life in religious reproductions.

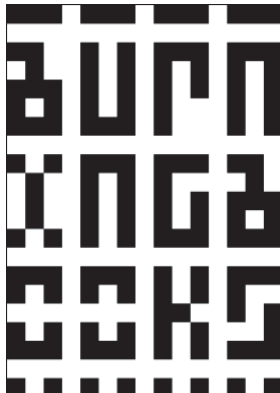
Her luminous shadow hovers above her remains: a rib cage, an exposed finger joint, numerous variations on the morbid are seen as the almost inaudible inertia of the hysterical noise made in climax one wet afternoon in a graveyard during the darkest of those years when the end was never in sight and yet one had to simply go on. The satanic sky, formerly a source of heavenly glory and hot casserole, now offers only improved methods of genocide. Such is what she gave as a gift—a white plate of blackened fish.

Forms have no literal meaning yet can still be tragic in their implications, a kind of metamorphic flummoxing fundamental for expressing all that is at once admirable and despicable in ourselves. She, being a maiden like the old world, was clinging to the debris of the past blown in on a night storm of brashness, never having been pruned or clipped or commanded but distorted post-cubistically by television, movies, and heedless spending, splayed open as if for autopsy with her guts zigzagging in a long arc reminiscent of the shape of an immature marching band practicing in place.

The raised and textured surfaces of the Maiden's palms were scanned and enhanced and discovered to contain a replica in code of every song written as a lamentation for lost loved ones. Revived as if by a miraculous draft of beer, she survived in the countryside by collecting children's art expressing a toy-like tenderness. She saw things outside herself as real and final. She observed people standing silent in a subway, going about their business on foot, listening to jazz on headphones, bicycling hatless on an open road, carrying their sorrows inside their enjoyments. In one sense, all worthwhile work ultimately refuses to settle differences but is only worthwhile if it attempts, in some manner, to do so.

Catalogue Raisonné of her Late Twentieth Century Works

- A Chaise Longue
- A Night of Empty Caresses
- A Nude Body Reclining Indolently
- Listening Again to a Phrase from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*
- Alive But She'll Never Get Over It
- All Futile and Noble Efforts
- All Political and Religious Approaches
- Becoming the Purest of the Pure
- Being as Unsubjective as Possible
- Betraying Her Own Radicalization
- Christ's Over-Reliance on Parables
- Churchill's Famous Last Words
- Deconstructed Readings of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*
- Eight Hundred Thousand Bomb Shelters
- Everyday Life with Its Relentless Repetitions
- Freud's Brilliant Literary Plunderings
- Humankind's Only Hope
- Jupiter's Thunderbolts
- Just One Touch
- Like It or Not O'Keeffe's Secret Dealt With
- Nothing by Halves
- Partridges at Noon
- Quart of Lamb's Blood Spilled
- Recounted with Epic Simplicity
- Seven Billion Religions
- Sold at Auction Along With Stalin's Mannequin
- That Merciless Pounding of the Heart
- That Absurd Belief in the Future of Something
- The Emotional Spontaneity of For Instance
- Any Undoubtedly Marvelous Occurrence
- Warmth of the Sun on the Skin
- Watching One's Mind Till It's Done



MELODY SUMNER CARNAHAN has nine books in print and over forty works published in magazines and anthologies. For over 25 years she has also presented her writing off the page in collaborations with composers, performers, and artists. (SumnerCarnahan.org)

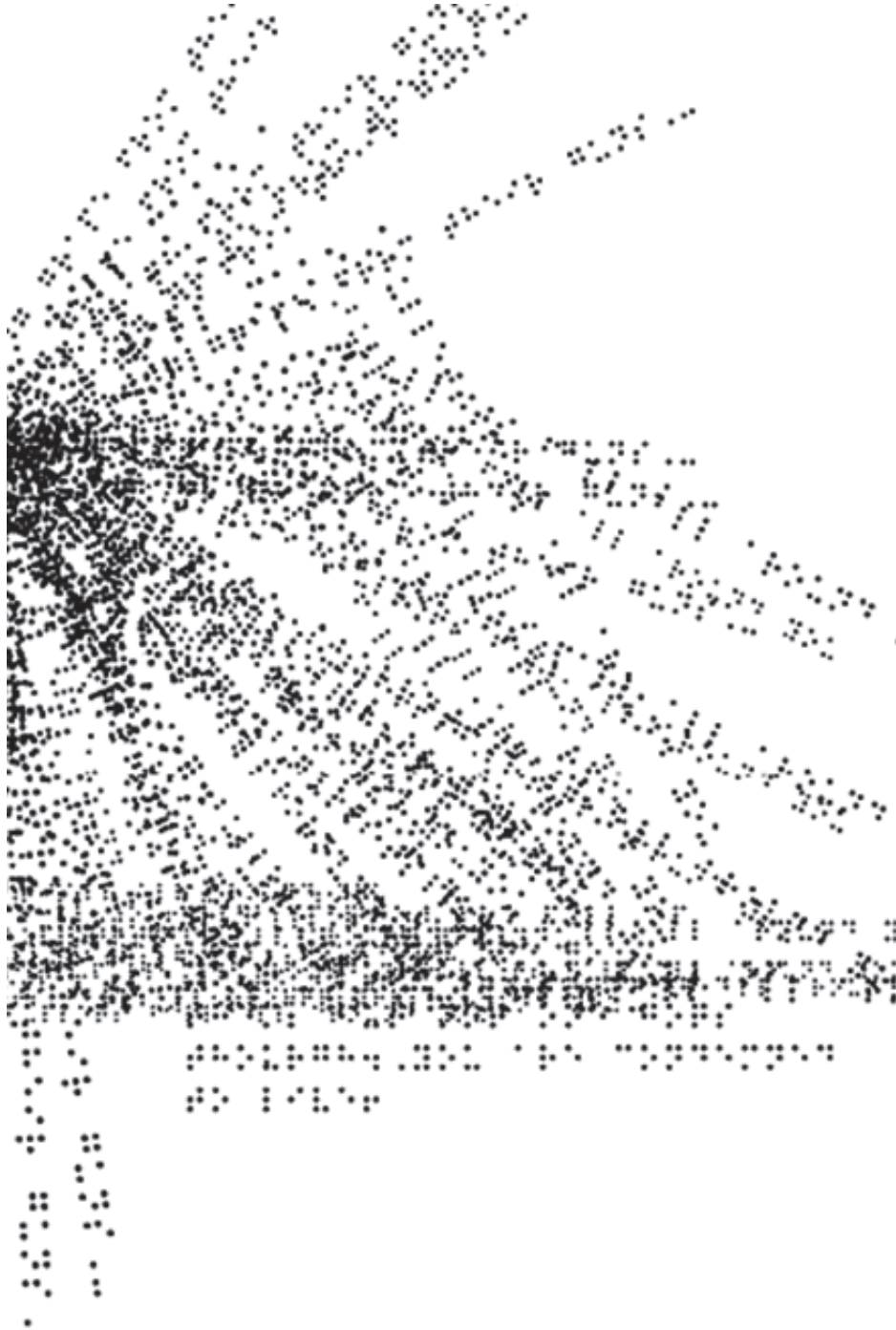
BURNING_BOOKS is an artist-run, weirdness-driven organization dedicated to the production and publication of unmuzzled literature, music, and art in obsolete delivery systems: books, posters, movies, pamphlets, postcards, discs. It was founded by writer/editor Melody Sumner Carnahan and artist/designer Michael Sumner in 1979. Burning Books is better at making the world more elegant and convincing when it operates as a low-key dysfunctional entity. Visit BurningBooks.org or mail us at P.O. Box 2638, Santa Fe, NM 87504 USA.

MAKE WAR SERIOUSLY!
Napoleon, in Braille – Pt. I
Faye Harnest

SOURCE NOTE: Napoleon’s quotes are from *The Corsican: A Diary of Napoleon’s Life in His Own Words*. 8th ed. Edited by R. M. Johnston. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910.



**“The enemy advances the line
pouring grape from their guns...”**



**“Bullets fall all around you;
your clothes are full of them;
but not one gets through.
You are condemned to live!”**

FAYE HARNEST is the author of *Girl Fight* (2011). Her work was recently published in *The Capilano Review* and is forthcoming in *Eat It: A Literary Cookbook of Food, Sex, and Feminism*. She is writing a full-length poetry collection of battles between English, French, Night Writing and Braille. Faye Harnest writes and transcribes Braille in Toronto. Visit: www.fayeharnest.com

HOBO

Cyril Dabydeen

Echoes of streets, like the ubiquitous Main Street; and other streets that are boulevards, but without the familiar silk-cotton tree, or a concrete sea-wall in a distinctly southern place. Now the government official said, "Go there!" Indeed being here in the north, and I was determined to make my mark. Did he mean go to another town with sawmills, logging, mining, at the edge of Lake Superior? And Finns, Ukrainians, Italians, Ojibwas and Crees too being all in our motley crew. Ah, Steve and I were indeed here, as the Great Spirit stirred us. *Who can really tell?*

Steve wanted us to be prepared...*for what?* And he was proud of being from the Land of the Hummingbird where trade winds kept blowing, he said. What I might have also said. But we were now on maple-leaf, beaver-dammed ground, you bet.

"Oh, be careful wha' you think," Steve said.

"Careful?" I shot back.

The landscape being in a head-spinning moment. Right then I saw him coming, this man dragging himself across the street from one of the bars, ready to accost us. New impulses, everywhere: like an omen.

"Who're you?" he spluttered. Go on, tell him: our being itinerants, swarthy-hued and all, in this town about sixty-five miles from Thunder Bay. *Who really?*

"We are," I began. But Steve wrinkled his forehead; as the man rolled his body forward reeking of alcohol. He was no Cree or Ojibwa, I must know. Now humour him, we must; and he was perhaps lost; his eyes canted, yet locked into ours, into Steve's mainly. And he was also an outsider, I figured, in this mining-turned-fishing town...called *Atikokan*.

Really that?

I dwelled upon the town's name with the sense of Native peoples being here hundreds of years before and inhaled hard. Yes, the man peered into me now. *Who?* Steve nodded. "Who're you?" The man really focused on me, younger as I seemed. And Steve didn't want me to say anything now. The man's jaws moved like strange mandibles; and his shortish body came closer. The surrounding area where we'd planted trees after the forest fires also came closer.

Go on, tell him. Acrid smoke in the air; as Steve inhaled.

I did, too. The man made a sniffing sound. Maple leaf mixed with birch, pine, poplar, everywhere. *Or nowhere.* The man in his faded navy-blue overalls, eyes bloodshot-looking; peering into us in his own soul-searching moment, it seemed like.

Steve nudged me, as this man kept noting our features, skin colour?

Did he now want to bring all the town's inhabitants to meet us, like his way of mapping out new territory? More pine, spruce and birch all around, as I inhaled. And trees we'd planted not so long ago, like a pact we'd made with the land. Great Spirit, where are you?

Does this man know? He growled, something about having worked for the local bus company; and Atikokan would soon be a ghost-town because the mining days were done with. Unconsciously I waited for those in the bars, restaurants, to come out, though they might also just come out from the bowels of the earth with pick-axes, shovels, drills.

G-r-r-r-r-h! And, maybe, this man recognized something in us.

He did? I tried to imagine him painting school buses and children laughing. Caterwauling noises, shrieks, in the air. Yes, how the man laughed being who he was. I laughed too, like mimicry. Steve didn't.

The man said he preferred drinking Australian wine only. "Ya, an' eating cheese." He was really from "down under," let it be known, but he was no Crocodile Dundee. "I worked painting buses after I been laid off from the mines," he drawled on. "Now I'm stuck here; but I won't go back down under, ya." *Not in the mines, for sure.* "I'd been laid off before," he said and belched hard.

"So I started drinking." His tongue seemed heavy-laden with marbles. Steve and I kept looking at him. "I'm just a hobo," he added, deliberately, and the word "hobo" echoed. And what were we doing in Northwestern Ontario anyway: here like being at the edge of the world? Wild horses kept tramping, hooves beating the ground late at night: in our sleep, you see. What we imagined, or contemplated. Go on, tell him.

Moose and caribou running helter-skelter. The Great Spirit, the Sleeping Giant (Nanabijou), being a solid ledge of rock high up in Thunder Bay.

And the Badlands: with dinosaurs in Alberta marauding.

More territory in-between. *Where are we actually?*

Yes, the tropics came closer. Now, though, Steve and I were in the temperate zone, you see. Did a dinosaur first see a meteorite incandescently bright... which brought everything to a halt?

"You could be marooned here," the hobo said.

"Oh?"

“Ya.”

I pictured him painting more school buses and making signs: not unlike graffiti, about the mines closing down and people being lost for good. As tall trees, pine and birch, kept taking over. The garishly painted buses moving around, wagons circling. “A hobo can tell things,” the man hummed, almost to himself. “But I’ve been drinking too much, ya, though I know who you are. You look at me good too, eh?”

Steve made a strange face looking back at him.

“You must adapt, as I did. Now I tell you, it’s a promise I’ve made, that if a bear comes at you, you look it straight in the eye without flinching, ya. Don’t run away from it, not ever.” He laughed, not believing his own words, maybe.

I grimaced.

“It’s how the Natives see it too,” the hobo added, cuffing the air. “I say, lads, it’s no secret. Ya, fear no one, fear nothing while you’re here.”

What about where you came from, like a foreign place...without memory? And the Land of the Hummingbird, where Steve would return to one day, I contemplated; and no hobo would stop Steve from thinking who he was. All the while school buses, wagons kept circling.

The hobo whirred on; and did he have convicts on his mind because of his coming from...Australia? A far ocean; and Captain Cooke, who was he too? What Aborigine would make a face, as we did.

But the man talked on about being a prisoner or a fugitive, not just an immigrant in a small northwestern Ontario town. He tightened his lips, and muttered about being a sailor or pirate too. As Steve and I kept up our own fantasy, like being Elizabethans of yore. Drake, Gilbert, Hawkins, Raleigh now with us in our corner of Lake Superior; and what if this man had been in the *Edmund Fitzgerald* before it went under?

Steve nudged me. Know what I am thinking?

Real natives too the hobo might have met along the way, more than he bargained for. Crees, Ojibwas, hailing him when he first landed, who offered him gifts of bear skin and beaver pelt. *They did?* A voice calling out, a halloo, from somewhere. *Welcome!* Not unlike a real Aborigine’s voice with a Crocodile Dundee echo?

Steve and I now had enough of sea-dogs, or pirates in Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica. Yes, climates everywhere changing with new solitudes ...as we remained long in the North. Same as the hobo did, though he was now a fugitive living with “land people,” he claimed. Did he mean people like Steve and me, and not the town’s residents? More swear-words mixed with staccato laughter, all now in unforgettable Atikokan: as I murmured to myself. Now let the government forestry officials come again to tell us why we were here and order us to plant the trees in the surrounding burnt-out areas after the forest fire. Real fire, see.

Tell us where we should go next, if far from Atikokan.

Spruce seedlings shooting up to the tall sky, like an ancient rite, I imagined. “See, a stranger I’m no longer,” the hobo said. “But you’ll not be a stranger much longer,” and he tilted his head forwards. Did Steve now wonder if this man was really an Australian...or Canadian? We kept looking at him. Then the hobo grunted, “A bigot’s a rainbow without colours, ya.”

“Huh?”

A rainbow with a pot of gold at the end.

Whose El Dorado were we really after? Who indeed also escaped the *Edmund Fitzgerald* going under? Immediately I shuddered.

The man made eyes at us again.

Steve grimaced.

I didn’t.

We kept wanting to plant more trees with urgency, like we were born to it; and we would make sure the roots didn’t stick out but kept deep in the ground; and one day the seedlings would spring up into the tall sky.

Imagine, eh? Each tree an emblem, more than a totem-pole...as we also wanted to return to the Land of the Hummingbird (if not the archipelago). Yes, seeing trees everywhere. And how I kept planting on charcoal-stained ground, though I also looked up at an eagle soaring above. Then, it was a bear in the clouds...moving around, and coming down.

I played at touching the bear’s coat, rubbing my hands against it. Palpable, real. Crees and Ojibwas everywhere doing the same, with the four circles of the earth. Sunset colours everywhere. Tell the hobo this.

Tongues slaked after another hard day’s work done planting the trees, indeed. And the beer this man had drunken. Not what we had drunken?

What would I next think about in this north? And the government official would indeed come now to have a good look at us...and ask again if we weren’t whom we said we were. The

Rampike 23 /1

school buses moving faster. Wagons kept circling. The hobo crackled, “Ya, a bigot’s a rainbow without colours.”

But Steve and I instinctively imagined ships, caravels, drifting across the Atlantic, everywhere. Who was the one named Magellan? Yes, the Isthmus of Panama. Cartier and Champlain next? The hobo raised a flag, waving it to the native children as the school bus kept rolling.

I kicked the burnt-out soil and listened for horses’ hooves beating.

Forest-fires raging, ah. What Steve said he also saw, though he wanted to deny it, that we weren’t here at all.

Where really?

As the hobo seemed to wave from afar, yet close up.

All the while Steve and I remained above ground, not being underground in a mine...pretending we were actually here. And we kept looking up at the tall trees and hoping for a real rainbow in the sky. As the

hobo disappeared for good, indeed like an omen, as if he’d never been with us in the first place.

“He was,” I said.

“No-no,” Steve replied.

“But...?”

We made faces at each other. Now real boulevards with the silk-cotton tree or a concrete sea-wall in our sights. Then the sunset only, a rainbow indeed without colours; as I kept looking around, then looking up at the close-up sky one last time: a final occurrence, with our being here, nowhere else.

*

CYRIL DABYDEEN was born in Guyana and lives in Ottawa. He has written and edited 20 books of poetry, short stories and novels. He was poet laureate of Ottawa (1984-1987), and served on the International Affairs subcommittee for PEN International. He has twice won the Okanagan Fiction Prize; he won the top Guyana Prize for fiction (2007), for *Drums of My Flesh*, which was nominated for the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.



Photomontage: Dominique Blain

DOMINIQUE BLAIN (Montreal) has had major international retrospectives including at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal in 2004; Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec in 1998; Contemporary Art Center Arnolfini in Bristol, exhibitions in five institutions in the United Kingdom including Belfast, London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, and Cambridge. And she has had exhibitions at: The Portland Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Kunstverein in Frankfurt; Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam; Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen; European Museum in Brussels; and Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester.

THE CONSTRUCTIVISTS

Neil Scotten

The Constructivist approach is killing me.
Chiastic structures in the near future
and in the far, an expected elevation.
You might go the way of all Formalists
prone to develop suicidal ideations
subject to persecution, electrocution, dropsy
or else the slow dissolution of tertiary syphilis.
Vorticists were momentarily fluorescing particles
in the non-existent troposphere on the dark side of the Moon,
Invisible and finally laid to rest in lead coffins
hid in undisclosed locations
most likely irradiated forests
where bears are seen at play in prolapsed summer cabins.
The Cubists were an error in orthography.
Being able to simultaneously contemplate two contradictory ideas is impossible but nevertheless, the
rumour of the existence of this facility has been rooted out and eliminated, praise be, and laid to rest in a
glass phial alongside the smallpox virus.
Irony is a term for slow testicular degeneration ending in psychosis and death for which there is no cure
at all.
Ayn Rand was a schizophrenic Lucifer, a fact betrayed by her uncontrollable and frankly disconcerting
eye movements. Post-mortem analysis of certain organs has as yet not yielded any useful food for
thought.
Most ruptures of the aorta leading to sudden death, can be attributed to a persistent belief in the tenets
of Jungian psychoanalysis, a flyblown antechamber in the realm of quackery, long-consigned to the
fosseptique of antiquity.
Enlargement of the spleen is the body's retort to the First Law of Thermodynamics.
Poetics will, in most cases, exacerbate hemorrhoids.
Aged Hegelians will not be resuscitated and in cases of inadvertent defibrillation, will be expected to pay
for the electricity consumed during resurrection.
All botanists will be executed.
All geographers will undergo show trials.
All war veterans will become wards of the state and undergo invasive experimental surgeries in nuclear
test zones.
The schemes of the orators and rhetoricians cause varicose veins and sterility in men.
Post-structuralism, or gonorrhoea, continues to decimate the population but its elimination is not possible
this fiscal year.
A passing belief in Scientology is responsible for 90% of cases of anal fistula, an uncomfortable
condition remedied by a simple surgical procedure.
Creative non-fiction lowers your white cell count, whilst causing a disturbance in T-macrophage activity.
Potassium levels fluctuate wildly after the intake of alcohol and synthetic opiates, combinations which
have been known to cause semantically-assisted death which is final.

NEIL SCOTTEN is an incendiary writer / photographer who lives in Verdun, Québec.

WILL NOT WASH

Paul Lisson

The Kaiser will not wash.
He is made of dirt and grass.
Sometimes at night, he's
full of fright. This nightmare
is his last.

The Tsar, he does not wash.
He's made of rocks and sticks.
At night sometimes, he
shares their crime. This nightmare
is his last.

The King, he has not washed.
He is made of crusts with jam.
By moon's pale light, he
nibbles and bites. This nightmare
is his last.

PAUL LISSON won the Rand Memorial Prize for writing (McMaster University), the City of Hamilton Award for Visual Arts & Literature, and an International Merit Award (poetry) from *Atlanta Review*.

THREE WRITING EXERCISES

(After John Gardner)

Robert Dawson

I

Imagine a castle on a stony hilltop. Describe the castle as seen through the eyes of a woman who has just dropped her baby down a well. Do not mention the castle, the hilltop, the woman, the eyes, the baby or the well.

II

Write a short pastoral passage consisting only of verbs. Rewrite it using only prepositions, bringing out its essential savagery.

III

Write a really good descriptive paragraph of exactly one hundred words. When you have finished, rewrite it leaving out one carefully-chosen word. Do this one hundred times, each time omitting one more word.

ROBERT DAWSON holds a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Cambridge. He teaches mathematics at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Canada. He has published poetry in *LabLit*, *The Sword*, *The Mathematical Intelligencer*, *Parody*, and on several occasions in *Rampike*.

SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET OF WATER

Daniel King

Invisible like spirit or the wind
^x tan'gi^xble^x as^x gran'ite^x / ^x steam',
The word containing St.

and those who sinned

Against poetics IXΘYΣ X redeemed
By zircon (jargon) ice white beryl memes
And brilliant-cut cold diamonds crowned
With 8 star facets the relève *it seems*

Of water + the sacramental salt }
sound }

The peacock-coloured sea the ink around

The Indian Ocean, the colour lake

(lacunae) ictus water found

He who was crucified^x for our sake.

The epiclesis of text: bend O daughter

Thine ear. Not steam, not ice, but Holy Water.

DANIEL KING is an Australian author, whose short stories have won prizes and have been published in literary and other magazines around the world including *Rampike*. His collection of stories, "Memento Mori", won the Interactive Publications' IPPicks prize (2010). His recent book *Datura Highway* is available from Vexil Publishing, ISBN: 1456499645

From: *LETTERS TO VERLAINE*

Stephen Emerson

(XXI)

There is a man
living in my sock drawer

FLASH FLASH

GAUGE

back to co-ordinate points

For which arrow
will you pick up your bow

to shoot pigs
herded onto a bus

This crow moons crow
Crow moons crow
Moons crow

Crow

and in fact
to wing at all
is to gouge out
ones eyes

but this bird is daft
its crow being that is
property of moon

this month
a phase of its sky

worth just 3
of your English
pounds

(XXII)

This is the red sun
we've all been fiddling with.

And a wetness.

That came on.

Inside my pants.

So the ocean.

If it thought we were
brothers.

Would swim in me.

I shark it.

Back to me with
a rivers turn.

My veins are
full of concrete

No one should be a man.

(XXIV)

I stole your sandwiches
that time

my lip an investment
opportunity

Caught a Sparrow hologram
became a Catholic again

When link pathways solder
though flow a thirst wherever

To want is a stop gap
for in the valley

is nothing

STEPHEN EMMERSON is the author of *Telegraphic Transcriptions* (Dept Press), *Poems found at the scene of a murder* (Zimzalla), *The Last Ward* (Very Small Kitchen), *A never ending poem...* (Zimzalla), and *No Ideas but in things* (KFS). He lives in London, England.

TWO POEMS

Elana Wolff

SAY WHAT'S NOT THERE

The cover rubs > *So What*

The yard-birds and their counterparts are foraging *'Round Midnight*

We don't eat their kind of thing

but those who do consume it cool blowing *In A Silent Way*

the style > *You're Under Arrest*

Every move is mystical and has to be for *Seven Steps...*

a *Kind of Blue* >

the shadow that the brightest moonlight

throws in front like future

with opinion >

hollowed as a horn and come to modal

SNIPER IN THE ORIEL

I've got my eye on you—my nighttime movie-eye.

It picks up heat in army-green,

makes you look fluorescent.

not to say stalker. We both stay put. < I'm as much voyeur as you.

Your line is 90% routine >

Not again.

I've heard they call you

The Anaesthetist, though you never show a weapon.

So much depends on the tool, and the vantage.

A shard of dark, certain cut of light.

The part fashion plays in keeping sameness at bay—

the window, standing on a bracket.

You could take me down from there any time you like >

your take-radius is that great.

But I'd be back [I think you know] behind your scrying eye.

ELANA WOLFF'S poems have most recently appeared in *Taddle Creek Magazine*, *Literary Review of Canada*, *Freefall*, *Vallum*, *Kestrel* (US), and *Echolocation* (First Place, The Chase Chapbook Contest). She has published six books with Guernica Editions, and a bilingual collection of her poems, *Helleborus & Alchémille*, was recently released by Éditions du Noroît.

RIDERS IN THE SKY

Louis Armand

These old War films always begin with a dog. There's an airman with a dog and the airman gets shot down, and the dog's left waiting with big forlorn dog eyes beside the airstrip for its master who'll never return. I can't even remember the name of the film, they're all the same. String section up on *Riders in the Sky*. Cut to: black-out silhouette of an B.III Hadley Page "Halifax" spotlighted from below, flares and ack-ack. The navigator's voice over the intercom between snippets of violin — we see him now, peering through a calibrated eyepiece, like a lab technician adjusting a microscope under which someone's left the hind-parts of a frog, still twitching: name's Tom, blond thirty-something currently billeted in Clerkenwell — wife-and-two evacuated to the counties (*reads Thomas Mann, you know, strange chap*) — coming through loud and clear now as the Halibag's struts warp and shake, the four props easing out of the low pendulum motion their final approach makes, lighter now by thirteen-thousand pounds of express mail. *F for Freddy — bombs gone — 0032 — steady!* Meanwhile, at the end of his long aluminium umbilicus, the dead airman's staring into space from the tailgunner's turret — it's a clear night between flack-bursts, constellations blinking up above. Sagittarius. Orion's belt. Red-clawed Scorpio. Like a giant pin-holed fuselage letting in imaginary daylight. What the dossiers call a limit-experience, the *falsifiability* of perception, in any case impossible to verify, post-mortem and all that. At least he's found peace, though his crewmates don't know it yet, unsuspecting of the Messerschmitt currently on their tail about to send tracer fire virtually point blank into their starboard flank before veering off into a nimbus of ack-ack that came right out of nowhere. Close-up now on the co-pilot — his face looks strangely familiar, as if we've seen him somewhere before, in another film perhaps, a lookalike Valentino with a pencil-thin mustachio and permanently halfshuttered bedroom eyes, something F/Lt Goswarthy's colleagues never cease alluding to in jest — at this instant glancing anxiously out the cockpit window where a fire is spreading through the number 2 engine, a Bristol Hercules XVI radial with twelve-hundred kilowatts of useless horsepower — the red altimeter needle dips to show they're losing out to gravity. The camera pulls back: a long slow dynamo-whine as the captain, V.S. Cossington of Shrewsbury, Shrops. ("La Grosse Salope" to all-and-sundry) attempts a graceless corkscrew, swinging ever lower through an obstacle course of barrage balloons, harbour cranes and church steeples, and further off the first rays of dawn over the water like the proverbial glimmer of hope. Then cut. Fastforward — interior, day — back at base: the dead airman's belongings spread out on his hospital-cornered bedcover — a snapshot of his pet Labrador, stack of undershirts, pants, socks, a Swiss army penknife, bundle of letters, shaving kit, a tin of gourmet meat product, key on a chain, best blues, overcoat, one pair spit-polished black oxfords. A flight-sergeant not given to sentimental impulse crosses the dead airman's name off the crew list, too quickly to make out more than the shape of chalk scribble — still, there's hope for the rest of them, bailed-out just in time somewhere over the channel, dodging U-boats and mythic Great White Sharks — the currents this time of year, wind sow-westerly, inflatable life-raft and wind-up wireless, distress signal picked up by Coastal Command — all in a days work old boy. Scene with men wrapped in Army-issue blankets, past the point of exhaustion, huddled smoking in the back of a requisitioned lumber truck, lick of drab with sign-writers' cursive *Wilkinson's Mill* muted but still legible across cab doors, Jerry'd hardly be fooled, but they're not exactly giving the stuff away over at Supply, one tin per regulations — *Who you reckon you are, Leonardo da Vinci?* — a long sun-dappled tracking shot through green countryside, tall hedges and overhanging willow, past convoys of Home Guard dad's-army-types on invasion drill, a village churchyard, children playing rounders on the common, then over a low stone bridge and through a bend — here's the sign which says RAF Linton-on-Oise, the truck turning in at a sandbagged checkpoint, a quick inspection, driver chatting-up a pair of Waafs heading out on furlough, through the boom gate and on past an A-A gun crew lounging in a dug-out, pillboxes, signals huts, offices of the Chairborne Division (those magnificent men in their mahogany Spitfires), the Arsey-tarsey, control tower, hangers blended cunningly into the background... As the transport continues on its way, the camera leaves it and moves in on a mess hall window through which we glimpse a table of fresh-faced recruits singing in chorus (to the tune of the Colonel Bogey March):

*Göring, has only got one ball —
 Hitler, has two but they're quite small —
 Himmler, is rather similar —
 but Goebbels, has no balls at all!*

As the chorus fades out, the ghost of the dead airman flickers on the screen, floating up through teal-blue skies, cloudless, across stratosphere and ionosphere — the weather beautiful up here, but there's nothing to breathe — anachronistic bits and pieces of space-junk floating by, beeping

Sputniks, Major Gargarin in his tin-can waving from a fogged porthole, meteors and flying saucers, but not a seraphim in sight! Then off, *whiz!* through the solar system — Martian plains, red-eyed Jupiter, Saturn with its grinning sombrero, simpering Uranus, Neptune all awash in emotion, lopsided Pluto with its palsied *danse macabre* and ferryman moon — out, out, across Stygian time-space into the Primum Mobile of souls-redeemed, glittering celestial, and further off still the great furnaces of erupting novae siphoning into black-hole oblivion of the eternally damned, there to meet their Maker. Amen. Cue montage of the cosmo-kubrick mind in its various stages of genesis — the fossil seeds from which Creation itself was spawned, from the first millisecond to the nucleo-synthesis, warping through unformed expanses to meet, head-on a billion light-years hence, this most recent of War Office statistics...

Eight months later and Goswarthy's luck's finally run out. He's lying in traction in the Airmen's Recovery Ward somewhere in sprawling Croome Park. A patient on crutches, one of those Antipodean-types with an infuriating sense of optimism, clipped moustache and all, is standing at his bedside describing the Capability Brown landscape visible through the window behind a stand of trees. *Birch*, he guesses. There's a greenhouse, too, its panes glittering in the typical Worcestershire weather — a faint pitter-patter of rain against the window.

'Cheer up, old boy. Least you're not out in the drink. Chances are you'll be right as rain — *hebe* — before you know it.'

Goswarthy's in a funk and couldn't care less if the Ward commanded a view of the Reichstag. He can still hear their navigator praying into his earpiece, *Our Father who art* and all that crap. Bloody same rubbish Jerry mutters whenever *he's* about to get it in the pants — so who's kidding who, eh? Left bobbing in the Channel with a lifejacket up about his ears, paralysed like his arms and legs have been cut off — one of their crew (who? some new chap, first time up, worst luck) slowly asphyxiating, oil in the lungs, *just there*, barely a couple of yards away, if only he could get his head down and see, but he can't move his neck either, just the back and forth of the swell pointing him in the wrong direction, ears gone numb already from cold, teeth chattering.

'The infinity of the universe,' Goswarthy sputtered, 'is all... tosh.'

'Don't be so hard on yourself,' a nurse says (Frobisher, Goswarthy seems to remember her name being), dropping by to check his fluid levels — gives the drip a bit of a shake, straightens his pillow, little fob-watch bobbing over her breast — 'could always be worse off, you know, plenty more unfortunate in the world than you are young man.'

God, don't you just hate that?

The patient on crutches whistles a ditty as the nurse cruises off down the long ward, like one of those white Maltese hospital ships, dispensing homilies. It's that *Vegemite* tune, of course, they're always going on about that — disgusting stuff — like oxo and sump-oil. He's started saying something, but Goswarthy doesn't want to hear any more. Further down the ward, they've closed the curtains around the pilot with the burned-off face. Bed pan or some such. Wonder what sort of reception you'd get in a POW camp? Cabbage-eating bastards. Crutches has pulled up a chair now blocking the view — stuck listening to another one of that idiot's stories — here he goes, picking the ends of his moustache. *Hmm-hmm-hmm*.

'Met a fella once, at the Clown and Bard — he was well out of it — six months in traction, then Civvy Street. Used to be a radio operator with 35 squadron. Plane lost an engine on a milkrun over Hamburg. Almost made it back, too, when they got ambushed on the home stretch by a couple of bandits. Sun already up. Broad daylight. Shot to shit just as they were making the coast. Everyone but this fella I met copped it, gone for a Burton. He was the lucky one. Too late to bale, it was one of the fuel tanks that went — *BOOM!* — blew him clean through the fuselage. Parachute took all the shrapnel or he'd've been a goner right there. Not much use to him now though. Blast conked him anyway — when he comes-to he's on his own wings, angels-two-zero and falling. Then out of nowhere — *WHAM!* — a pack falls into his arms, chute still in it — just like that. *Hebe*, what you reckon that? Bastard can't believe his luck — straps it on his front then passes-out again. Comes-to, pulls the cord, bird's-eye-view of Old Blighty coming up fast now. But the chute's fucked, there's a hole the size of a toilet seat burned through it. Well he's a goner for sure, he reckons. Time to pass-out again. Next thing he's jolted out of it — chute's snagged a tree branch, rips the branch off, and there he is, face-down in a Yarmouth cow-pat, legs broken in a dozen places, snapped spine, punctured left lung, but — whadya know? — still breathing for all that. God's truth. Swore he'd never uttered one syllable to the Almighty all his life. Just goes to show, you never do know, eh? Might work even if you don't believe in it...'

*There was a Kraut pilot called Hans
who flew by the seat of his pants — dab-dum!
When asked why he prayed
to his Maker all day,
he replied: It's just on the off-chance —
if high in the clouds over France*

*I happen to meet
the Saint they call Pete,
I'll be paid-up well in advance — dab-dum!*

When the film was over, I wondered about the mutt — Lady, or Lassy, or whatever its name was. After making a big start she'd quietly vanished halfway through, as if the scriptwriter didn't know what to do with her anymore once whatshisface arse-end charlie copped it. Perhaps somewhere in that primitive dog brain it knew, intuited the general shape of the situation and went off to pine under the big radar antennae, transmitting doggy forlornness out into the cold wastes of interplanetary space. Reminded me of one of the Old Man's war stories — about a Scotts bombardier this time who had the annoying habit of calculating the odds of any crew making it back in one piece, graphing the obverse of per-tonnage Standardised Kill Rates, death and destiny stalking through numbered wilderness like a beast taking shape against the dawn, as upon yonder ridge, backlit by signal flares and ack-ack — a vertical escarpment of decimals and base denominators, the sheer breathtaking drop off into nothing... there one moment, gone the next — a snarl in the undergrowth, flash of yellowed fang — statistical voodoo that could only, one day, and not in the very distant future, turn around and bite him. That and somebody slipped a dozen laxettes in his coffee just before a night operation — long-way-round over Plzeň for a change and not a Fritz in sight, easy as pie — barely stayed off the can long enough to drop his payload.

*

LOUIS ARMAND is a writer, publisher, visual artist, and former subtitles technician at Karlovy Vary Film Festival. He is the editor of *Contemporary Poetics* (Northwestern UP). In 2010, he edited *The Return of Král Majales: Prague's International Literary Renaissance, 1990-2010*. His novels include the neo-noir *Breakfast at Midnight*, *Canicule*, and *Cairo* (2014) all from Equus: editions.equus@gmail.com His recent collections of poetry include *Letters from Ausland* (Vagabond) and *Synopticon* (with John Kinsella; LPB). He is an editor for *VLAK: Contemporary Poetics and the Arts*.

START TO FORM A NEW OPINION

Samuel Andreyev

curse the fair wind
curse the dip of the spoon that would take of this soup
curse this circular dream
curse the fragility of these New World bones
curse relevance and ardent expectation
curse all these layers
curse cup, spoon and saucer
curse mobility as well as its opposite
curse the falling leaf and the rising dove
curse edge, frontier and border
curse the wrinkled contents of this godforsaken casket
curse radiators and the warmth they bring
curse all positions, coordinates and areas
curse participation as well as abstinence
curse finger, palm and thumb
curse ledges and precipices
curse the profligate, the wan, the coy, the brash
curse wood and especially
curse its intricate grain
curse dial, switch and lever
curse the firmness and the softness
curse the starr'd toes of these celebrated feet
curse silk, spice and opium

in particular curse tuffet, glen and dale
curse the it's so quiet you could hear a pin drop
curse the scattering of ashes

curse the chalk that would trace its own outline

*

SAMUEL ANDREYEV is the First prize winner of the Dutilleux Competition (2012). He was named a member of the Académie de France à Madrid, residing at the Casa de Velázquez since September 2012. He was named composer-in-residence in Tours (France) for two years starting September 2013. His most recent CD, *The Tubular West*, was released by Torpor Vigil Records in 2013. Also active as a poet, his first trade collection, *Evidence*, was published in 2009 (Quattro Books).

FORGE OR SUBDUE

Gabor G. Gyukics

A man of deception drove a red car
stolen from a white hearted garage
across the neighborhood of perpetual music,
turned the street corner that vaguely resembled a South Asian hell
where he had spent years in an area sanctuary,
sneezing purposely to achieve separation
from the goggle eyed alliance of poisonous,
covertly intelligent servicemen of his own country.

Now again he unwillingly crossed the line
of sludged sentiment he wished to eliminate
from the archives of his system and
deciphered that he hated those who wanted to have him and
hated those who were not interested in having him.

After arriving to silence he sat down on an unfamiliar stoop and
dreamed of a piece of water-jewelry
that the daughter of a pearl diver wore around her neck.

*

GABOR G. GYUKICS is a Hungarian American poet and literary translator, living in the U.S. since 1988. He translates American poetry to Hungarian and Hungarian poetry into English.

HOLY BACK *For those involved in the Syrian Crises*

D.M. Aderibigbe

It's today! The star match between
Chelsea and Manchester United!
My cousin's voice runs in
In top speed.

The remote control reposes
Beside me, like a pet
Beside its owner.
I pick, I switch

Interest from one channel to another,
Like the heart of a philanderer,
My uncle tells me to halt,
The TV burns.

Smokes flying out of the burnt scalps
Of charred cars. Soldiers,
I mean civilians soldiers,
Planting placards

In the belligerent air, I mean
Placards conveying their
Hearts. Hearts ready
For insurrection,

God's ordained insurrection. And
Who says God is not part of
This saintly violence?
The roasted

Determination staining the
Uniqueness of Aleppo,
With stench smokes.
The eternal strife,

Sullyng and bullying the pride of Damascus, yet the struggle
Won't dry up, like the
Water of a

Spring. Don't you think the
Infinite tenacity has
A holy replenishment?

*

D. M. ADERIBIGBE is an emerging Nigerian writer currently studying at the University of Lagos. His poems and short fictions have appeared and are forthcoming in journals across 12 countries.

IRINA SENDER'S HER NAME

Honey Novick

risking her life, this female plumber/sewer specialist
got permission to enter the Warsaw Ghetto
it was the Holocaust time
she was armed with a barking dog in her truck
and a child hidden in her tool box
and a larger child in her duffle bag
she dangerously smuggled them out of the Ghetto
Nazi soldiers wanted nothing to do
with a raucous, clamorous dog,
surreptitiously acting as camouflage
until the time she was caught
and faced a destiny fraught with a
violence that broke both arms/legs
leaving her severely beaten
her spirit never broken and a secret hidden
under a tree in the yard, buried in a jar,
wrapped with compassion beyond par,
was a list naming all those she saved
some children adopted, others fostered
survivors of families decimated in an odious fight
eventually using this list to try and unite them all
by 2007 a Nobel Prize nominee, alive and aged, she lost
to a champion of global warming
Irina Sender's her name, righteous beyond blame
exceeding the meaning of being humane

*

HONEY NOVICK is a poet & jazz singer. She won the Bobbi Nahwegabow Memorial Award (2010), and was Poet Laureate, for Summer of Love Project, Luminato Festival. She is based in Toronto, Canada.

FROM NOW ON

BZ Niditch

A country folds overnight.
Everyone has a theory
whom to blame.
War, greed, race, taxes.
Scholars hide their diaries
in locked drawers.
Comedy routines
become sadistic.
Cults instantly proliferate.
And a fetishism
of costumed fascism
clothes the body politic.
Gladiators emerge
from giant screens
en masse in huge arenas.
A cannibal
on the Society page
offers a sociopath way to die.
The poets write graffiti
for freedom on city walls.
Some of the populace
arm themselves.
Others take off for Mars,
the red planet over
the stars.

*

B.Z NIDITCH is a poet, playwright, fiction writer and teacher. His writing is widely published in international journals and magazines. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.

LATE QUESTIONS

Andrejs Kulnieks

single-paned widows peer over tiny birch leaves dancing among clouds
sun sets over your coastal home-town-scape as brightness fades to shadow
How did you pack daily life into suitcases and duffle bags when it was time to flee
was there a shiver as you locked the door, placed key under rocks
as you, grandfather, and your daughter joined a migrating movement of energy

I consider my complaint about this fridge-less kitchen
Though the landlady kindly left cups and cooking utensils but the sour milk froths over cardamom,
cinnamon, ginger, vanilla, sea-salt, undisclosed spices, and black tea
How did you pack food for an endless journey as bombs dropped in the distance

The closet here is filled with translations: Levs Tolstojs –1959- *Karš un Miers*
war and peace... or war, tranquility, peacefulness?
Blake's etched images of Urizen float in clouds above the steeple
ancient languages sing landscapes given beyond time immemorial

sixth floor lift-less loft apartments built after the great war tell re-construction tales
reconciled in time and space as I re-pack neatly folded, rolled, and crushed clothes washed by hand and
wrung in sweat on the long journey towards unfamiliarity
What did you bring in your blue handmade suitcase

changes of clothes, photographs, writing, tools, silver, clay cup, wooden spoon, tea leaves, dark
chocolate, black currant and wild strawberry jam, salt, pepper, garlic
unanswered questions, re-dealt cards in a coffee tin, hugs
grandfather's journal echoes thoughts charged with energy, rainy day ideas of future hope

As I book tickets and hostels for this presentation I bring your stories
my knuckles don't clench over missed trains, busses, or ferries
fares and boat-ride won't change fates reexamined in black and white facial expressions
taken after you heard the train you booked was bombed on route to Liepzig

years ago I travelled from here on oak-boarded benches to translate your transitions
rations traded for change clarifies gifts languages provide
mediation of sound and space wisps morning into place
When did life & death choices cease to become part of the ordinary?

games of trust lived through engaging with fellow travelers met by coincidence or fate
hope pushes me beyond immediate reactive processes land becomes less granular
first light ascends sky along riverside wound through rock and sand

water that knows us long before we knew where it came from shaped these ideas
about relationships embraced in instructional stories reflected in songs of the people
journeyed paths across connections felt in subtle resonances
your husband's words written close to a hundred years ago echo these ancestral lands

*

ANDREJS KULNIEKS is an emerging writer who divides his time between Canada & Latvia.

WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF THE U.S. INVASION OF IRAQ

Cliff Fyman

Force eventually melts a man when carried to its limit
but the nonviolent ones whom some call dreamers
with a sneer, cling tenaciously to their way and grow
toughest of all with time.

Having tried force and failed in my own ways
I'm an example of someone convinced of nonviolence.

All I know is when one of two people doesn't want to fight
the fighting stops. It's a wisdom that always comes
too late. And it never seems to find
a place of application in regard to national wars

but I keep it anyway

in my back pocket and make it talk to me
walking home alone late at night
fires climbing
climbing up all sides of the globe.

11 Jan 03

*

CLIFF FYMAN has worked as a volunteer for The Poetry Project located in the East Village of NYC, which was started in the mid-sixties by the second generation New York School poets.

TWO POEMS

Daniel Scott Tysdal

The Taliban Are the Most Famous Poets in America

“Nobody votes,” the slogan goes, “because votes don’t count.” This slogan took centuries to write. We built a system (what once was called a civilization) the way mad scientists build laser-breathing bots five thousand feet into the air.

“Voting now,” the jingle rings, “is like choosing which colour of pearlescent to apply to our bot as it plods to the last un-rubbed town, its feet falling on dairy cows and escape-failing sedans.” This jingle has not yet caught on. Give it

a whirl. Altogether, we are a child on a shore with our father. Long ago, he cast his line across the lake. All we can do is wait. The hook arcs at a glacial pace that in a blink could achieve the speed of light. So mackerel-packed are these

waters, that what look to be waves are the fishes’ writhing in a scaly pile. Or maybe the lake is free of fish, save for the patient monster whose maw, opened wide, forms the sandy shore. We have so many reasons not to know what to do with

our hands. None of these reasons are really real. The Taliban are the most famous poets in America right now. They make us ask ourselves questions. What if we are the hook on that line? What if the mile-high bot is our bait? What if the child

on the shore can’t breathe because his face has been split in two by an exceptionally fierce fog? What if dad is the corpse of an overworked mule rotting on the beach, and the line he cast, in truth, is the endless string of flies who arrive to feast?

Fire

on viktor mitic’s bullet hole paintings

He crosses the border to do it. Arms and ammo await at the range in Detroit. “Honorary Targets” is what he deputizes his incomplete paintings. Firing, he finishes them off. It takes one hundred spent shells to complete his portrait of Benazir. Hundreds of more singed spots compose “Warhol(e),” “The Blast Supper.”

Bullets are the one universal form. The education is quick. Mastery instant. When I was a kid, *Time* published the portraits of each life a gun had taken in a week. I hid the spread, not wanting my dad to burn those faces to heat our home. The Japanese have a ritual for disposing of portraits. It’s got incense, patience, chants. It lasts

hours. Artists once fought Fascists, clerics, empires, and Czars. Painters blew off their best brushstroking hands building bombs they weren’t trained to craft. Poets? They blinded by mistake the eyes that saw in the sodden strands of a drowned friend’s hair the shadow, cave-caught, of nature’s just tamed blaze.

Art is not dead. That it can’t be killed is the moral of these bullet-torn oils. Fire and fire and fire and still, like an egg ingesting a snake, art consumes all things. The oceans are fathoms of acetone roiling under the dark miles of a methane sky. They brighten, fed by the lighter’s first light.

*

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INCENDIARY

D. Harlan Wilson

The clouds glow above the forest fire like the holographic brains of mathematicians.

A tank grumbles out of the trees and takes everybody out with one smart shell, the explosion spreading like a slowtime fog across the earth. Mass immolation. Then vaporization. Bodies depixelate in the black smoke.

The smoke clears as the tank idles.

The cupola door pops off like a manhole and flips end over end into a ditch. Somebody climbs out, stands on the turret and surveys the aftermath. "Well," he announces, "now we wait. This has already become far too Hitchcockian. The lighting. The tracking shots. I require square-jawed innovation. A curse on the house of cinematic hauntology."

He swallows five mg of Xanax, lights a cigarette, and stares into the middle distance. He takes drags from the cigarette, inhaling and exhaling, without removing it from his mouth. Eventually he stops dragging on it and his lips fall open and the cigarette falls into the sand and burns out.

From a sky hole, the voice of Reason intones, "Walk to the subject, remove your breasts from the casing, and place your nipples before his lips, as if to dare the lips. Let us see where this goes."

She obeys with robotic subservience. Before she can remove the breasts, however, the subject brains her.

Gristle erupts from her head wound in thick spurts of über-phony CGI.

The battlefield ruptures at the joints. Thin ravines open in the grass and swallow entire embankments of corpses.

Another tank drives out of the trees and somebody climbs out of it.

"You there!" he exclaims. He's speaking to a very particular and identifiable person and everybody who has not been killed wonders if they are in fact that person. (Turns out everybody has not been killed by the initial blast, a surprise to All Living Beings most of all, who stand there unscathed, more or less, admiring their strong and capable limbs.)

In the absence of a response from the person in question or anybody else who might have thought he or she may be the person in question, he gets back in the tank and drives back into the woods just as another tank roars out of the woods and parks and somebody gets out.

"Get back in there," orders the sky hole.

Devout, he retreats into the tank and everybody waits to see what will happen next. Surely something will happen next. When all else fails, there is always that which happens next to put faith in. If nothing happened next that would be the end of everything. So they wait.

Nothing happens.

"This is nothing but another instance of middle-class babbity. By the law of the father, I condemn thee to—"

A distant thunderclap commands the viewership's wrecked attention.

"Serial killers may seem attractive on TV, but in fact they are only actors, and the actors who play the roles of serial killers have very likely never killed anybody, and they very likely never will or want to kill anybody. Non-psychopaths can distinguish between the actors and the roles. Psychopaths see only the roles. And when one embraces the role, one ceases to exist." Beat. "Additionally, you are not a serial killer unless you murder at least three people over the duration of at least one month. This is the Law according to Wikipedia. If you only kill one or two people in your lives, or if you kill thousands of people in the span of a few days, you're just a crazy asshole with some problems. The moral: kill fast if you're going to kill *en masse*, and if you're only going to kill one or two people, choose wisely and make it count."

The battle without honor or humanity extends from the body to the word.

My body. My word.

My battle.

As a matter of course, Elizabethan remakes of Shakespearean plays were rampant. Likewise with John Webster's plays. *The Duchess of Malfi* must have been remade with different actors and different costumes and different special effects at least a thousand times by 1615, only two years after it was written. Elizabethans enjoyed all of the fucking. They especially liked the carnage. After awhile the Queen said it would be ok to actually murder some of the actors onstage so long as they were proles.

In one remake, a tank drove through the wall of the Globe Theater and drove over everybody standing in the Yard and drove up onto the stage and parked on the stage's foremost promontory. Everybody in the galleries looked on expectantly, ignoring the flying squirrels that played about in the heavens. Somebody got out of the tank and fell into the orchestra pit, impaling

himself on a violinist's bow. Somebody else emerged from the tank and threw a grenade into the Yard. The proles watched it arc across the sky and fall into the mud and then they blinked at it. Dud. The person who threw it—not a soldier, per se, but something like a bureaucrat or a bank clerk—tried to throw another one but after he pulled the pin he held onto it for too long and the grenade exploded and blew off his hand and most of his arm. He bled out like a fumarole and everybody clapped.

Voyeur tableaux. Store-window microcosms. Dioramas.

“There comes a time in your life when you must use the second person in reference to yourself as you ask yourself the most important question you will ever ask yourself: Should you kill yourself? Then the second most important question: If you kill yourself, how will you kill yourself? There it is. And with that seminal chord struck, you wonder why pornstars can't stop smoking. Not one of them has ever quit smoking. Not one. And most of them are smokers. Clearly there is a link between porn and cigarettes. Clearly we—”

Run over by a tank.

You don't know. Until you know.

Then somebody douses the forest fire. Everything hisses and deflates as the clouds flicker off. They go dark and cold and flat, emptied of all equations, hallowed by every answer. Like that.

*

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THE WAR ENDED IN A MOUTH Edward Nixon

The mouth of the war, great power foxtrot,
yanked jaw stuffed, cloves and engine oil, in
a fissured opening, the crevice in the tank
armour, the talk of the war, grammar garrotted,
spit tooth shards, the debris of manly love, the man
in the mouth of the saint, tactical nuke overrun
the dainty congress, she & he necessarily amalgam
of tonal gendered-undertones, we spoke of inclusion,
standard battle dress, fashion in the spank of command,
lines shift on a course of battle, we vaulted syllable
RPG & retrograde pictograms of the modern, outways
from shining lies, in the vellum halls of screams,
rage-axe completions, mouthing signs of terror-types,
mad general and specific, gutted terrain, map of struggle,
mouth to mouth death, a war on until now, waxes raw
touch splint, driven bone-nail, for want of intel, mind
raids unspool, limpid code, broken routing, in
yawns of quising sentries, there is so much to debate,
impact, kill-loads, half-life signatures, aggregates
of homely economies, terror-watching in sandy hills
the lightning struck all day, the girl in hyper-real
reproduction sings of weaponized payloads, deft
doubles delete deliberative traces, we sink in swill,
re-watch *Hiroshima Mon Amour* andante, will to
gunpowder blossom, radiant winter ash, pillow
talk in ratshit trenches, Juno beach redux, false
memory triage, pick a pack of wolves, scraps
of quite nights before wartime, disco anthems ring.

*

EDWARD NIXON is a much published author living in Toronto. He coordinates the popular Livewords Literary Readings Series. His recent book is titled, *Instructions for Pen and Ink* (Cactus Press).

“CROSSFIRE”

Joseph D. Haske

Excerpts from: *North Dixie Highway*

[Texas Review Press]

II

Our post is in the hilly green area outside the city. We sleep and eat in an old stone building with dirt floors. There’s no electricity or running water, so we shower at a bigger camp, the command center outside a small town just south of Sarejevo. Stubb, Perry and Morgan were just there last week, so they don’t stink as much as the rest of us. For Robinson, Wiggins, Van Dorn and me, it was three weeks since our last shower and it might be another two or three weeks before the next one. Our BDUs are woodland camouflage but they turn white after a while with all the sweat salt. Even though it’s still kind of rocky where we are, it’s green and there’s trees that don’t look too different from the ones back home. A small river curves around the greener side of the hill. Sometimes we dip our feet in it to clean em up. Robinson and Wiggins won’t do it cause the water’s too cold, but it doesn’t bother me any—it’s warmer than Lake Superior in the spring. We did get some supplies—ammo, MREs, and water but no soap this time.

In our deployment briefing, Major Hansen said Sarajevo used to be one of the most beautiful cities in eastern Europe. Said it’s the place where World War I started and the people here sided with the Nazis in World War II. Got lucky here though—they didn’t bomb the hell out of it like some parts of Europe. We’ve been here two months and most of what we see is country roads and hills. Gets confusing sometimes, who’s fighting who, with Serbs and Croats and everyone else. We’re not a real unit, just a small attachment manning a lookout station for the U.N. to make sure they don’t all kill each other. Our whole company is scattered around the hills and valleys, mixed in with others units. We just report any fighting we see. It’s not our war.

Some guys think Bosnia looks like the places we trained in Colorado and New Mexico, except maybe greener. To me, it reminds me of the places Hemingway talks about in his books, like WWI Italy or the mountains in Spain. Except for yesterday, it’s been mostly quiet, kind of boring. This morning we had the first hot meal in a week, thanks to the Sterno we brought back last night. Everything else lately’s been MREs and every box we get is missing the spaghetti. The command center guys always steal the good meals before they make it to the field, the ones with M&Ms. Most of our hot meals come in cans, the kind of rations Dad probably ate in Vietnam.

When we got to Europe, they started breaking up the units based on needs. Wiggins and Robinson are from a transportation unit. Van Dorn is logistics. We didn’t know any of them before coming here, but Stubb, Perry and Morgan are from my infantry company. You get to know people real fast though, when you’re deployed. We’re not technically on a combat mission, we’re more of a security force, but they wanted a lot of combat arms guys here because they think this whole mess might explode soon and then we’ll be ready. In the meantime, we just mostly watch. There really isn’t a whole lot of action and we’re not supposed to fire our weapons unless we get clearance from higher up.

We set up on the closest ridge and watched the Bosnian through the green light of night vision for a few minutes but he bedded down behind some rocks before we could get a clear shot. Perry thought about sneaking up on him but if he woke, he’d have the advantage up on the hill and there’s a good chance he’d hear us. Before basic training, I never fired at a human silhouette, the kind of targets they use downrange to train you. Shooting at the black silhouettes is a strange enough feeling, but then they got the ones that look like real people, the ones in the bright green uniforms. I missed my first few shots at qualifications just because it weirded me out so much firing at the little green men. Cost me expert. Then I started thinking about Lester Cronin. Ever since then, every time I fire the M-16, the M-60, AT-4, M 203 grenade launchers, 50 cal, the SAW, or whatever, it’s always Cronin at the other end.

The man through the binoculars doesn’t look like Cronin though. He stirs again for the first time just as the sun’s coming up from the valley and the sky is pink. The Bosnian wears a kind of

camouflage more like what we might wear back home during deer season. He takes off his cap and scratches his light brown hair and I see that he's young, no older than twenty or so. He never turns completely toward us but he looks down at the U.N. camp through a sort of telescope and I see the side of his face. For a minute, he smiles, maybe laughs, like he's thinking of a private joke. Then he writes notes in a black ledger. Something about him reminds me a little of me.

Morgan's clumsy with the tripod.

"Let's set this shit up," he tells me. Hurry up or I'm taking that rifle.

"I don't need a tri-pod," I tell him.

"Don't be stupid," says Perry. "You need support. If you miss this, we're all toast. Those Swedes will call down the fucking rain on these hills."

"Never shot with a tri-pod. With all due respect, Top, back off and let me get this."

"You miss, your ass is running down to draw him out."

Last night, Major Hansen said that this is for the good of everybody. That I can save a lot of spilled blood this way. No telling what the guy on the hill is up to. I kept looking through the binoculars, trying to find a sniper rifle, a pistol, some kind of weapon to make it all easier. Didn't see anything so I guess I'll have to take their word he's putting lives in danger. Wiggins and Perry stare at me and Perry whispers for me to hurry.

"Don't miss. Come on, man, you got this." It's the first time I've seen Sargent Perry so nervous, excited about anything here.

"Smoke that mo'fucka," Wiggins tells me.

I rest my left arm on top of a bushel-basket-sized rock and rest the barrel on my left hand. Then I take a breath and lean in to the scope to line up the crosshairs. I move my head around till the circle in the scope fills with a picture of where the sky meets hilltop. The Bosnian, whatever his gang is, gives me a wide target with his back to me. Just like a deer, I could miss by half a foot and drop him with a long shot. He'd choke to death on his own blood while he suffocated, holding the bloody hole with his hands. It's a hell of a state to put an animal in, worse a man. If I pull, a single round will snuff out the problem and the Bosnian won't be in any shape to call back-up or artillery. He'll drop and it will be hours before his unit figures it out, if not days. He's probably radio silent with so many damn factions out here. I should just drop him, do my duty. I hear Wiggins' and Perry's heartbeats and their exhales heavy around me—sometimes I can't tell if it's me or them, the three of us sweating in unison. I feel my chest move and it makes the image in the scope bounce from the man's waist to the air over his shoulder. I can't shoot a man in the back. Unless that man's Lester Cronin. So I start to squeeze and think of Lester Cronin but the Bosnian bounces around in my scope again. I steady my breath and he turns to the side, giving me centimeters for a margin of error. He faces our position and might see my head and the rifle barrel, so I squeeze the trigger. The Bosnian stumbles in my scope and drops.

IV

I used to get a letter a week from Katherine Beckett. That ended a few months back. Sargent Sullivan, a drill sergeant I had back at basic, told us that nothing ever changes back home and we should never worry about home. He'd been in for twenty-six and everything was always the same as you left it. Well, I don't buy that bullshit. Katherine's married now and she was a big part of the reason why I'm here, trying to better myself. That, and to get the proper training to finish off Cronin. Nothing changes is bullshit. Everything changes fast. A few months back, Johnny told me that Ronnie LeVasseur died in a head on collision with a tractor trailer. Alcohol was a factor. Ronnie fell asleep at the wheel they said. Some people think it was suicide but nobody can prove it—just gossip around town. Sometimes I wonder if I would have been around, there's that chance I would've run into Ronnie, had a couple beers and talked about all the good times. He might not have been driving eighty miles an hour down M-134 in the wrong lane.

*

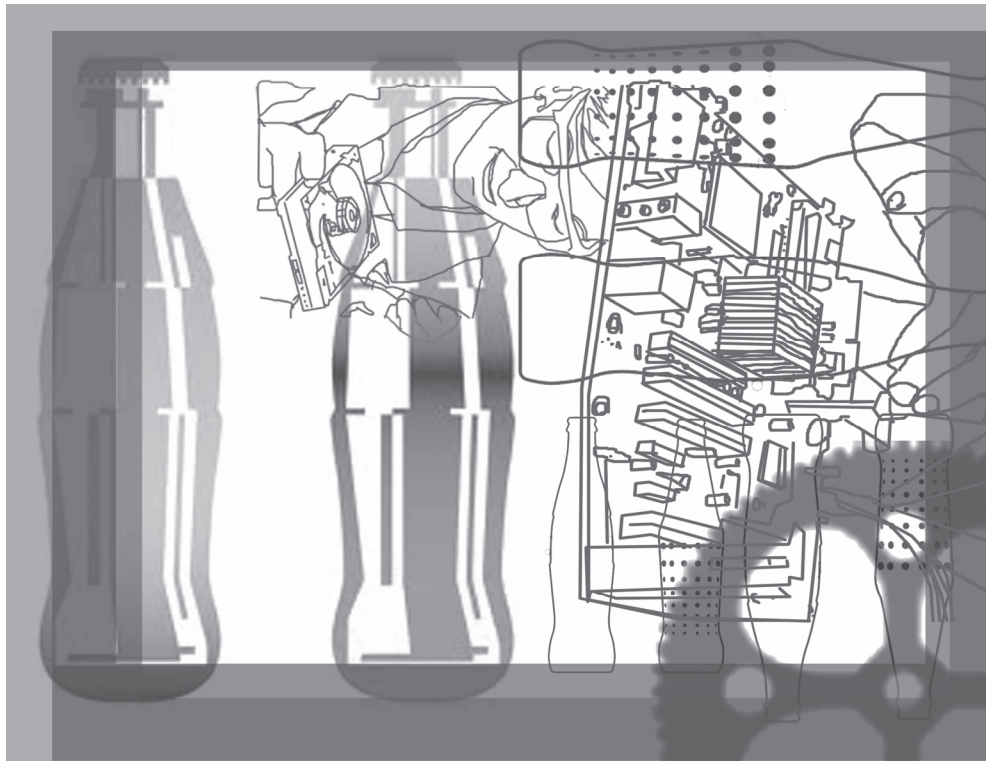
JOSEPH D. HASKE is a writer, critic, and professor who teaches creative writing, literature and other courses at South Texas College in McAllen, Texas. He is the author of the novel *North Dixie Highway* (Texas Review Press, 2013 – ISBN-10: 1937875261) and his fiction appears in journals such as *Boulevard*, *Fiction International*, *the Texas Review*, *Alecart*, *Romania Literara*, *Convorbiri Literare*, *Pleiades* and elsewhere. Joe Haske edits various journals, including *American Book Review*, *Sleipnir* and *New Border*.

HACTIVISM

Karen Hibbard

MY INTEREST IN “HACTIVISM”

I am especially interested in inserting women into images of “hactivism.” This honours their contribution to its research and practice as well as concerns with such issues as political aspects of technology, information governance, gender and hacking, hacktivist art, feminist and strategic uses of technologies. I was a member of Studio XX (Montréal) – a feminist organization, supporting women’s engagement with new technologies. <studioxx.org/>





KAREN HIBBARD is an artist, illustrator and sessional instructor at the University of Victoria, B.C. Her work is included in many collections including the MOMA Artist Book Collection, Loto-Québec and La Banque Nationale du Canada. She recently created 6 illustrations for the Royal B.C. Museum's website and is transforming a section of Open Space Gallery into a resource centre for patrons wishing to access their in-house publications.

MINA

Excerpt from the novella: *Kabul Stones*

Vicky Reuter

Mina has been painting flowers for years. Mostly poppies. When in pain, she paints poppies. She lost her husband in the Soviet-Afghan war in 1979. In 1989 the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan. Three years later, Mina shipped her ghosts to Montreal, and withdrew from the Soviet Union. She listens to CBC radio regularly. War in Afghanistan never ends.

Corpses arrive shrouded in military slang as Cargo 200, the weight of the zinc-lined coffins they are shipped home in. White-and-blue Tu-134s landing, bellies sliding open along the incisions of the doors on both sides. Planes shudder and spill their guts in a paroxysm of nausea, coughing up piles of coffins on the cargo side, while the other side of the belly growls, devouring strings of freshly drafted boys in crisp fatigues. The lines of self loading freight getting shorter and shorter, piles of caskets on the airfield aspiring skyward. Between the cycle of military life and the harmony of war, accounts get balanced.

A small crowd at the cemetery office building standing in a tight circle around a wooden casket, viewing window blind. Painted over. Mina, beside it, a widow in a crouching position. Two military men in civilian attire chain-smoking a few feet away, unperturbed. Mina's eyes on Denis' mother and sister. Their eyes on the casket. A clerk's face shimmering in the crack between the heavy oak doors. Their fifteen minute slot upon them. Time dissolves in space. Space coats time. Time evaporates through the big cathedral ceiling, escapes through the central skylight. Only their time slot survives. Four men from their little circle lift the casket onto their shoulders. Mina hears stones rolling

inside this strange looking zinc-lined wooden box.
Rocks, she thinks.

Heavy,
she says. Have they heard it, too?

The old crematorium performs a farewell ceremony with the casket mounted on the pedestal in the center. The pedestal is a lift designed to bring the casket down very slowly through the hole in the marble mosaic floor. The thin stem of the pedestal and the shape of the casket enveloped in a red flag with a black ribbon across resemble a poppy. Red bloody poppy. Requiem's sticky notes dripping onto the hearts of friends and family. Karl Marx says that religion is the opium for the people. Religion does to human soul what opium does to human mind. Marx isn't against religion. Religion anesthetizes the pain and suffering of the people. Like opium. In those days, opium must have been the only pain killer known to medicine.

Mina's mind knows no past. Painting the petals, mixing the blues to let the light in. Poppies need a lot of light. Radio rambles on. People stranded at Trudeau airport, unable to join their families for Christmas. Flights cancelled in Atlanta, Georgia. Severe snowfall. Last one recorded in 1882. Christmas songs weave their own story in a parallel radio universe. Impotent tenor singing *It's the most wonderful time of the year*, followed by almost catatonic rendition of *I'll be home for Christmas*. London receives special compliments of the season: freezing rain and sleet. A Cyprus Airways flight slips on the icy Heathrow tarmac. Charles de Gaulle looks gorgeous in the dead of winter. The Snow Queen claims Germany and Denmark by sending ice pellets, tiny shards, piercing the hearts of unsuspecting Christmas-abiding citizens. A military plane with the body of the latest Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan, Cpl. Elphege Deschailions, grounded in Germany. Killed on Saturday. Shipped on Sunday. Scheduled to arrive on Monday, the day Martin would have turned 25. Too late, it's Tuesday.

Listening to the radio, Mina's brain performs a series of somersaults converting English words into their Russian doubles. There is a delay in understanding. The roadside bomb that killed Cpl. Deschailions from Quebec first gets a synonym in English, a land mine, and then a Russian word explodes in her mind: *mina*. Mina has to sit down. She has never liked her name. But associating it with a land mine is a serious blow. What if names encapsulate the quintessence of people and she is that mechanism, the device programmed to cause devastation and death? Could she be translated safely into other languages? She picks up the laptop blinking idly next to her old striped chair. A few minutes and she acquires several meanings, her avatars.

Mina

1. *most Slavic languages and Italian – land mine;*
2. *a bird of the starling family that can mimic human speech;*
3. *an ancient unit of weight and value, equal to a sixtieth part of a talent;*
4. *pronounced as MEE-NAH, a girl's name of German origin. Old German: "love". Pashto, an Afghan language: "love";*
5. *Polish, Ukrainian, Russian – sour facial expression.*

Mina mimics human speech. Languages are not her thing. She paints. Her canvases sell relatively well but nothing extraordinary. Her talent's a chip off the real thing, a sixtieth part of it. Mina believes in counting everything. Mina's mother had German roots. Mina's name is German. Did her mother know it meant "love"? *Za-ta-sara-meena-kawom*, *كوم مينه سره تازہ*, a round of 57 mm air-to-ground missiles over Kabul. I love you. To death. Mil Mi-17, a medium twin-turbine transport helicopter that acts as a gunship specifically designed for the Soviet war in Afghanistan by Mikhail Mil. Mina Mil has never liked her last name and always signed her paintings Mina M.

In her old yellow chair with blue stripes, Mina brings her sharp knees up and nestles her sour facial expression between them, palms on the nape of her neck. In this fetal position, ticking. A time bomb. A prisoner of the Afghan War. A land mine, a roadside bomb with a fuse thirty years long. Squeak, chair.

*

VICKY REUTER is a Montrealer by way of Moscow, Sofia, Jekyll Island, and the Florida Keys. Her translations have appeared in many European anthologies, journals, and magazines, including *Rampike*. Her stories and poems have been published in Canada and the USA and the text above is an excerpt from her forthcoming novella.

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TRAUMA

John Tavares

Norval told his brother and sister-in-law that he was going to take a walk further down the long expanse of shoreline that fronted Grand Beach. Norval and his brother Gabriel were from a reservation near the small town of Beaverbrook, in Northwestern Ontario, from which his brother and sister-in-law had just moved so that Gabriel could keep his job with a small, native-owned commercial airline, for which he worked as an aircraft mechanic. Norval felt rather excited since this was the first time in years he had ever experienced the big beach, the visual stimulation of literally thousands of people in shorts, swimsuits, bikinis, and t-shirts stretched across several miles of straight smooth sandy beach along the shoreline of the immense shallow Lake Winnipeg.

Norval asked his niece and nephew if they wished to join him on a stroll along the beachfront and lakeshore. A few dozen meters beyond the shoreline, wading on a sandbar in the water, which only very gradually got deeper, Tyler and Twyla played catch and told him they would pass. The two youngsters felt quite happy tossing the Frisbee back and forth in the muddy water that reached up to the level of their pale chests. When Norval, wearing his dark glasses, a sunhat, and shorts, left on his walk, his sister-in-law decided the time had arrived to gossip and chatter.

“Do you think your brother will ever get over fighting in the Viet Nam War?”

Gabriel took a drag on his hand rolled cigarette. “No.” He snorted and emitted a faint laugh. “I don’t think we’ll ever get over it, either. And he’s writing a novel about his Viet Nam experiences.”

“A memoir. Isn’t it a memoir?”

“Whatever. It’s a waste of time writing. It doesn’t bring in any money.”

Winona rubbed suntan lotion onto her flat stomach and stretched her long shiny legs on the folding lawn chair. “Do you think your brother will ever marry?”

Gabriel deeply inhaled and sent a plume of cigarette smoke into the hot humid air through his nostrils. “No.”

A CF-18 Hornet jet fighter flew through the clear blue-sky overhead, on a quick flight path to an airshow in Winnipeg, sending hundreds of pairs of eyes gazing towards the source of the boom that seemed to originate in the bright sun. Gabriel plucked another beer from the red plastic cooler and repositioned the rest of the stubby beer bottles.

“One mighty will, as he would say.”

“What?”

“One mighty will. That’s what he tells me about his writing.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“I haven’t the slightest idea. Something about legacies.”

Winona applied suntan lotion to her scrawny arms.

“Has he heard from the Veteran Affairs people yet?”

“I don’t think he has yet. Every time I ask him about it he gets all defensive and doesn’t want to talk about it.”

“A bit proud, is he?”

“Ashamed, proud, guilty, independent, proud, feigning self-reliance. I don’t know.”

Gabriel watched his brother shamelessly admiring the young women in their bikinis.

“You just don’t understand. They don’t give a fuck about him because he’s Indian.”

Winona laughed as a woman, in her early twenties, who must have been a full decade younger than Norval, urged him to join her for a swim.

“I will tell you one thing, though: If he doesn’t start getting disability payments soon I will personally hire a lawyer and sue the bureaucrats in the United States Marine Corp, the Department of Defense, and Veteran Affairs —”

“How will you afford hiring an American lawyer?”

“It’s not like Canada. The lawyers in the States often aren’t paid until they win the case. They do work for contingency fees down there.”

“I think it’s the United States Department of Veteran Affairs that would be responsible for any benefits he might get.”

“Well, wherever the army bureaucrats are. For Christ’s sake, he’s got posttraumatic stress disorder. He’s a veteran of the Viet Nam war, but the United States army, the veteran affairs department or whatever you call it, won’t give him a pension, even though he has a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart with his name engraved on it back home. There’s been some kind of bureaucratic bungling because he’s Canadian and an Indian. There’s no reason he should become homeless, living on the streets, or begging for handouts from his mother. He’s a Viet Nam vet, he’s seen combat, he’s killed, he’s seen people massacred, he’s been cited for courage and bravery in combat, the shrink says he has post-traumatic stress disorder, why does there have to be so much red tape.

Why can't they simply pay the benefits they owe him as a soldier injured in combat. Let him get on with a decent living as a civilian."

Norval had one of the most debilitating stutters most anybody who met him knew. He also occasionally was an artist and writer who earned a modest amount of money painting Northwestern Ontario forest and lake landscapes and wildlife scenery and wrote magazine articles about hunting and fishing expeditions. Years ago, he was an aboriginal from Northwestern Ontario enlisted in the United States Marine Corp and fought in Viet Nam war, in the aftermath of the troop escalation. He had helped rescue several wounded marines, cutoff from the rest of his battalion by counterattacking North Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong guerillas. He provided covering fire from his M-16 semi-automatic rifle and laydown a thick, billowing cloud from smoke grenades for concealment and diversions as successions of Huey helicopters landed to evacuate the wounded and stranded troops, encircled by Viet Cong guerillas. His commanding officers and superiors considered him a hero and wrote as much in their combat reports. Norval had even been recommended to receive a Silver Star, but the paperwork got tangled up in a mess and morass of bureaucratic fumbling. The fact that he was Canadian and an aboriginal did not help. During a leave between tour of duties, he travelled back home to the reservation of Lac Seul in northwestern Ontario and left his Bronze Star and Purple Heart in storage in the bottom compartment of his tackle box, alongside his homemade fishing lures, spinners, bucktails, jigs, and even trout flies, which he tied for American tourists, in the bungalow he shared with his mother and father on the Lac Seul reservation. (Winters the family spent in Beaverbrook.)

On the crowded expanse of Grand Beach on Lake Winnipeg, hours passed, the sun grew hotter, the sand burned on the soles of their feet, the humidity stifled the breath of asthmatics, Tyler and Twyla swam and sun bathed and played catch with the football and Frisbee, but their Uncle Norval still did not reappear. Winona asked her older child Twyla to go looking for their Uncle Norval. But as the girl departed on her search, in flip-flops, a halter-top, and shorts, her mother told Tyler that he had better go with his sister to be safe. Eventually, Norval's niece and nephew returned with the news—incredulous to them—that their Uncle Norval was with a woman, and she was white.

A few hours later, Norval returned with a tall slender young woman. Marissa had been lying on a more secluded portion of the long sandy beach on her stomach, alone, at a less crowded, more secluded part of the beach. Marissa needed somebody, anybody, who could tie the strings of her bikini top at her back. Norval leaned over her narrow naked back, but his hands were trembling, so he couldn't tie a proper knot, and his stutter made his speech momentarily incomprehensible. He was forced to surrender his efforts. A neurosurgeon who had been sunning herself nearby, reading a journal of neuroscience, asked her if he could lend some assistance.

Tyler asked if he was coming back with them now, as his sister and parents began to gather their beach towels, the beer coolers, clothes, and garments.

"No." He decided he would remain at the beach with Marissa who seemed interested in keeping him company.

How would he be getting back to the city, they wondered aloud simultaneously.

"I'll be giving him a ride," his newfound woman friend said.

They were excited and thrilled - Norval's brother and sister-in-law, and his niece and nephew. But when Norval arrived home in the sweltering heat of a hot Manitoba night, the disappointment, the stress and frown lines were written over his face, and he was silent. They asked him about his date, when he arrived later that evening at their home in Transcona, but he tossed his beach towel down in disappointment, gazed in amazement at the tan on his face, and the sunburn on his bare arms.

"Well?" The red dot of light from Gabriel's cigarette lit the darkness of his gazebo where he had been playing cards with Winona.

"She's a reporter for the Winnipeg Free Press. She just wanted to interview me for a feature in the weekend edition."

"That cannot be that bad," his sister-in-law said.

Gabriel raised his brow in disappointment while Norval merely shrugged. Norval learned later that the feature for which she had interviewed him at length and in breadth and which she had recorded on cassette tape for future radio broadcast would never appear in print in *The Winnipeg Free Press*. The lengthy profile, as written, never appeared in the weekend edition of the broad sheet in which the story was originally scheduled to appear since the editor spiked the piece, killed it, saying it was far too depressing. Besides, the editor confessed, in a near casual aside, he had personally heard enough about the Viet Nam war. He returned her marked up copy with the pronouncement: "The Americans just should have dropped a hydrogen bomb on Hanoi."

The dead make room, or at least that was the saying Gabriel remembered, originally uttered by his brother. He had once heard Norval say this by chance in quoting a novelist, and the quotation was composed of words that a famous American author's most memorable character uttered to himself in some interior monologue in referring to his relatively wealthy father-in-law,

the owner of a Japanese car dealership. But Gabriel would have amended that quotation to say that the dead leave behind big messes, especially his brother Norval, who suffered the burdensome legacy of being a Viet Nam war vet, awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, he had lived on the streets of Washington, D.C., New York City, and along the Atlantic seaboard. In fact, on the streets of Miami Beach, he was spared an even more severe beating at the hands of an undercover drug squad from the police department when they discovered he was not your ordinary Snowbird, but a Viet Nam war veteran. One older cop recognized his combat unit, inscribed in a tattoo on his arm, and spared him further blows from the nightstick. But Norval shot himself after the death of his father and his mother, who had supported him after he returned to his hometown and reservation in Northwestern Ontario, having retreated from some listless wandering across the Southwestern United States and the Atlantic seaboard. He had shot himself with the same assault rifle he had used in the Viet Nam war. Gabriel thought he should have known better than to leave an M-16 semi-automatic and ammunition around the house. After all, he was older than his brother Norval was and should have understood the memories of his war experience made him more vulnerable. What angered Gabriel about his brother's death, though, was that he thought that somehow his brother's death could have been avoided if he had received some kind of disability pension from the United States Marines, which had, after all, awarded him a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. After his third serious bout of mental illness Norval's family physician, who, humming the classic Rolling Stones tune, jokingly referred to his latest personal crisis as his "19th Nervous Breakdown," and urged him to apply for disability benefits. But because he had managed to work occasionally as a painter and artist, painting Northwestern Ontario landscapes and occasionally enlarged prints from his wildlife photography, the technocrats and bureaucrats at the immense bureaucracy and technocracy at the Pentagon didn't believe he was eligible. Moreover, when provincial social workers learned he was a Viet Nam war veteran and served in the United States marines there were even more complications, and they concluded he was outside their jurisdiction.

Norval applied once for the benefits from the Veteran Affairs in the United States, but never received a reply. After that, he stubbornly refused to appeal or apply for American army benefits, or Ontario social assistance benefits. For food, he hunted and fished around the Lac Seul reservation, shooting moose with his M-16 Marine Corp issue rifle and fishing for walleye in the long immense reservoir Lac Seul had become after the river was damned near Ear Falls. He also wouldn't take the psychotropic medication that the various doctors he had seen in Beaverbrook had prescribed for his posttraumatic stress disorder. Instead, he pigheadedly continued with his novel and memoir writing--at least eight hours a day, six days a week for the past few years, writing a lengthy narrative based on his experiences during his two twelve month tours of duty in Viet Nam. In total, his brother had written thousands of pages, and in the past several months he had sent his final, pruned, edited manuscripts to dozens of publishing houses, but not one of the novels had been accepted for publication. After his death, Gabriel had gone through the letters of rejection from publishers and magazine editors, a few of which were encouraging at best. Still, even after Norval had revised the manuscripts according to some editor's suggestion, no publisher accepted and published his book. What was left instead was a filing cabinet filled with the drafts and typescript for his Viet Nam memoir and novel, including the first draft, the revisions, and the final corrected completed pages. It amounted to thousands of pages, a composite of fact and fiction, with much personal autobiographical material that would have been embarrassing to the family if it had been published. Fred had gone through some of the material, thinking it was the product of a poison pen, or a sick mind, or a horror novelist.

But Gabriel had these odd discussions with Norval in which they discussed the fate of his manuscripts in the event of his death. Put off by the whole discussion, Gabriel hastily agreed to look after his papers, promising to hire a professional editor to try to get something, anything, published. Or, he would have the archive deposited at a library willing to accept the a document deposit for whatever scholarly value they might have, which, Gabriel was certain, was minimal, unless they were sent to some department of psychiatry for some kind of psychoanalytic deconstruction or psychology laboratory for mentalistic de-encryption. Fred spent the entire morning figuring out the locks and proper keys and combinations for the portable filing cabinets that Gabriel had stored in locations virtually concealed in the bungalow where he lived and worked behind his mother and father's house. Then Gabriel spent the afternoon loading the boxes of manuscripts into the back of his half-tonne truck. Fred drove the truck to the secondary highway that led to several heavily forested area and a copper and zinc mine as well as several tourist camps and lodges and even some farms until he came to the truck bypass, which he was supposed to turn onto to bring the manuscripts to the storage facility where he would have them deposited in a rental storeroom, for which Norval had paid lease payments several year in advance. But pages were already flying in the wind, and he had changed his mind. Instead, he drove the truck up another roadway that passed the municipal airport to the garbage dump. He scared only a few of

the black bears that were scavenging through the mountains of garbage as he threw the boxes out of the truck. Flocks of ravens and seagulls circled and flew about.

Several times Gabriel thought that he heard the roar of jet fighters overhead, but he realized his imagination must have been running amok. The Canadian Armed Forces radar base near the town had no jet fighters stationed there. Finally, half an hour later, he had pushed and kicked the last box of typescript out of the truck. The manuscripts were heaped in a messy corner of the landfill beside some discarded refrigerators and washing machines. He swept out the back, sending rusty paper clips, fading shredded paper, binders of sheets, and wood chips, sawdust, and pieces of bark off from his excursions in the bush for wood burning fuel from the tailgate. He stood outside the cab of the truck, leaning against the hood, and stopped briefly to smoke a cigarette. Then he took the five-gallon container of gasoline (the mixed gasoline he used for his outboard boat motor and personal watercraft) from his plywood compartment behind the truck cab and sprinkled the flammable liquid around the mounds of his brother's papers. His throat was dry, he was tired, his muscles were aching, and he at least needed another cigarette. He paused for a moment, feeling suddenly dizzy and fainthearted. He thought he could hear the sounds of machinegun fire in the distance and glanced about the rows of tall grass and the stand of straight lean pine and spruce trees that lined the landfill site. Then he was stricken by vertigo and the treetops, the tall lean pine and spruce trees around the dirt road and the sandy ground of the landfill site twirled around him. He fell down to the dirt and ground and heard a burst of machinegun fire and then a cavalcade of helicopters, a loud deafening roar from a convoy of helicopters armed with door gunners and missiles. He steadied himself against the passenger door of the truck and thought he heard another burst of gunfire. Then he heard a hoarse, emotional voice, his own brother, from deep in the dark tree line, shouting, "Don't! Don't! They're civilians." Gabriel was not a religious man—in fact, sometimes he thought that he was an atheist or an agnostic. He had been raised a Protestant in the residential school near the reservation, but he couldn't help thinking the native spirits were angry. The gods of his aboriginal ancestors were outraged over his brother's death. He had been skeptical about all faiths and religions, but this sign struck him as a reason he did not adhere to absolute disbelief. Then he heard a Phantom jet fighter roar overhead and bombs dropping in a loud piercing whistle and a huge explosion nearby. He could feel himself choking as the gusts of superheated air were sucked up by exploding napalm. He stood on his feet, dusted himself off, and reassured himself that he was hallucinating, that he had had delirium tremens after a night of heavy drinking. But he hadn't been drinking liquor or beer last night: he had gone walleye fishing at Frog Rapids bridge with his children. This was somebody. His brother's posttraumatic stress disorder from the Viet Nam war had rubbed off on him and was afflicting him. He went back to the truck and got a cigarette. He had to get rid of these papers, reminders of death and destruction and havoc and personal catastrophe. He thought he saw some American marines in combat gear, dirty, sweaty, tired, with a Viet Cong villager, his hands bound with rope and the muzzle of an M-16 semi-automatic rifle pressed against his head, kneeling before them. "Don't shoot him. He's a civilian," he thought he heard his brother shout.

As soon as he returned to the mess, the document boxes made of cardboard filled with pages and pages of typescript, and the notebooks filled with his cramped, tiny handwriting, Gabriel had to relight his cigarette. But he was instantaneously caught in a fiery explosion of gasoline fumes. "One Mighty Will!" he heard a shout, muffled in the roar of flames. He ran along the sandy road through the abandoned dump consumed by fire, the flames swelling, swallowing his body, consuming his flesh and clothes. Burning, he screamed, and ran, his motion feeding the larger fire that engulfed him. He rolled around on the dirt, trying to extinguish the flames. For hours, he lay barely alive and watched the procession of players from his brother's wartime experiences enact their drama before him. Stricken, he saw the firefights in the rice paddies and thick jungle foliage. He witnessed the point man in their reconnaissance patrol massacred. Napalm exploded into a huge ball of flame from a jet fighter that roared and flashed overhead. An aerial convoy of helicopters buzzed low along the landscape through a village of rice farmers in a delta, its door gunners spraying deadly machinegun fire into fleeing targets below. Then he saw his brother hurl a hand grenade, which landed with deadly accuracy right beside the commanding officer of his unit, a lieutenant, who was directing the platoon into yet another ambush. When nightfall approached, the lumbering black bears closed in to consume his burned flesh as ravens exchanged raucous caws and fled, flapping their dark wings, after they picked at his eyeballs with their piercing beaks. By morning, the rats, stray cats, abandoned dogs, and ravens and seagulls had arrived at a peaceful co-existence, as they took their turns and settled down to consume his charred remains and pick at the bones.

*

JOHN TAVARES' short fiction has appeared in numerous Canadian literary journals and magazines, including a short story cycle published in *The Siren*. His journalism appears in several community and trade publications such as *East York Times* and *Hospital News*. Two summer jobs he held include: conducting a needs survey of all Sioux Lookout households for the Public Library, and, conducting a waste management survey of all Sioux Lookout households for the Regional Recycle Association.

tongue & wound

Jay Smith

*she hath so planted her honours in their eyes
& her actions in their hearts that for their tongues
to be silent & not confess as much
were a kind of ingrateful injury
Coriolanus (modified) II.ii.1253-1256*

habit makes plasticity
of happy accidents —
a heroism

{calesthetics / militarism / female

here is a topography
insofar as its burning is
like that of a statue

so-called liberal
rhetoric / actual
afghanistan

the soul's work of art

*

the short skirt girls /
the girls with short skirts
self-determination is that relation

of substance to that
which happens, (even if
invertedly — as

bin laden's wives:
so humble, yet so organized!
they put tea parties on in a cave!

we return to decoration as
essence, drapery studies as truth,
marble

(supposing truth if a woman)
(if/then) figuratively,

we fish multiple epistemologies
from gaping mouths (an open hook/an
open eye / misquotingly)

to meet approval. the girls with the long
hair. (what is underpinning everything is a
gargling euphemism, gaping, gasping:

the girl with the heavy pack. *there will be
large cicatrices to show the people,*
hauling 125 pounds of pack (the weight of an
imagined

human; understand 'woman')
heft of sequence: this is three
kilometres of brutality on

the back, *the blood i drop is physical
than dangerous to me;* this
simulated warfare — like the flavour of leaves
in july, the thick surety of dirt path, tree
root, bruising is a colour, pain
something dense, a liquid to balance on the

alignment of joints: i constitute of
these moments, my articulated elbows, these
ligaments of
knees, *une nue descendant l'escalier*, some

victory — every gash an enemy's
grave

*

take cfb edmonton, its rainbow flag & ponder
what we talk about when we talk about
making tall buddhas from laser projections,

solsol (53 m) and shahmama (38 m). illusion is
grand, crane your neck to watch it
pivot on some relativism, like

the dimensions of jingoism &
genesis. the plaster and thatch
expressions on their faces. or

messages painted on
the sides of buildings, echoed later
through stadium crowds (dove vs.

hawk / birds on a wire) & a hero
in motion, the soul's work of art,
i think

*

tree leaves undulate breeze & the
metallic fan moves in air in restless
circles; a listless room in monochrome

attach ribbons, gyration; watch for
movement. in the spring, the awful
ice near the river. a training run, a

master corporal gone missing. the river swelled to
edges, embarkment / embellishment /
a slippery denouement. what bravery is

deterioration, what mulling of the melted
crescendo, fresh water run brown:
nature morte / the failure to bear fruit

what variety of unheralding crowds
press against experience, for us, how a national
garb unclothes to oblivion. here:

an aquamarine table top, formica, cigarette
packages & nail polish & booze & detritus,
just trash. (a pastoral / a domesticity)
& there, in
the back of a ford ranger. tim horton's cupfuls
of undead snow.

*

now, you can make a metaphor of
any available surface. but you can make an
infantryman of not every

gal. think of it: tank is a relative movement,
a pseudonym of steel;
but habit is a muscle flexing.

untease the other hybridity — here is a
impact upon the world, a force hit upon
another, an unfurling

misuse. they made me carry packs the weight
of me, through the wrecked villages
where explosions alighted, the bright sand

(the blazing land), through worlds of improvised
explosions. & the men! with these packs like
daintiest load. at some point you have to

compare axes, wonder who was
trying to kill me. & for nothing but
being a woman, the sort who could haul

her weight through the desert, through the explosions,
uncomplaining.

*

or what noble deeds were there
& what matter, this morning
when the light grows its fingers

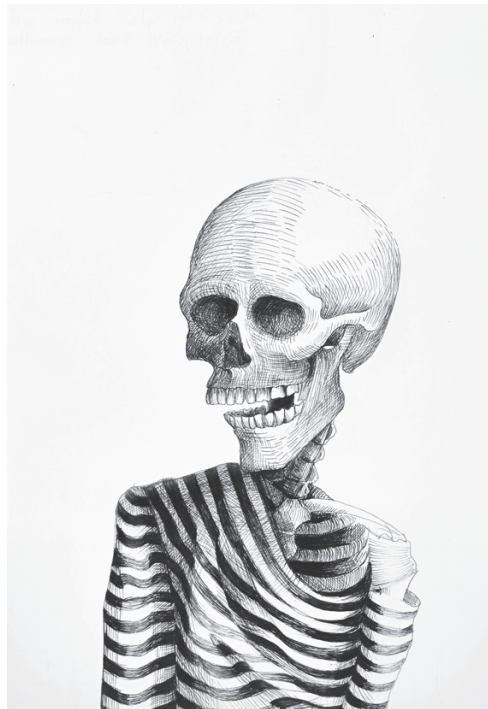
across the early sky, vast secrets unleashed or
the circadian path, liminal episodes (ritual pain)

debate: the terminus of endless calculations, the
approximation of movement compare:
the act of motion itself

how we parse incident through

& how rhetoric is the triumph of society.
story & test oblivion
against a refusal to tell of ignoble deeds —

JAY SMITH is an Edmonton based freelance writer. Her journalism has appeared in venues such as *The Los Angeles Times*, and daily newspapers across Canada. She is currently at work on a manuscript of poems about the prairies.



"Catherine," (2012)
Drawing: Ink on Paper
29 x 21 cm
Tina Raffell (Germany)

THE AVANT-GARDE, POSTMODERNISM AND THE *NOT*FICTION OF RONALD SUKENICK

Eric Miles Williamson

Attending Ronald Sukenick's memorial service on September 21, 2004 at St. Mark's cathedral was like being at a casting call of authors who consider their work "avant-garde," of authors who have made careers of claiming to be ahead of their time because of their production of works that don't resemble standard narrative fiction. A story with pictures, naughty cartoons perhaps. Goofy punctuation. Or a total lack of it.

Repetitionrepetitionrepetitionrepetit. Odd space breaks. Gratuitous profanity. These were authors who took great pride in thinking themselves ahead of the rest of the literary world, writers who could explain to anyone who'd listen just how their works were forging through uncharted literary seas. And to be sure, the wind produced from their collective verbal exhaust could have filled the sails of many a galleon.

The term "avant-garde," especially when used to describe one's own work, or, worse yet, *oneself*, should be encountered with great suspicion, if not mistrust, or even, perhaps, contempt. When writers labels themselves avant-garde, we should expect their cabinets not to be stocked with liquor, or even with laxatives, but with snake oil and plenteous deeds to public structures and lands for sale at rock bottom prices.

At the risk of sounding sophomoric at worst and tautological at best, I venture this: if we live and work *in time*, we cannot possibly be anything but *of our time*. In other words, we cannot be *avant-garde*—ahead of our time—if we exist *in time*.

Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* wasn't ahead of its time, nor was Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, nor *The Making of Americans*, Jackson Pollack, Stravinsky, or Phillip Glass. The artists whose work is *different* from that of their contemporaries are not *ahead* of their contemporaries: they are merely indices to the pulsing zeitgeist of the times in a way that rear-facing artists – the "devant-garde," if you will – are not. We look to the great artists of the past for definitions of *their* times precisely because they were *not* avant-garde but instead *emblematic* of their times. There is no such thing as "avant-garde."

The critic Denis Donoghue once opened a lecture by holding up a novel and saying this: "The first, and perhaps the most important, task of the critic, is to ask the question, 'What manner of thing *is* this?' The second most important task is to answer the question. After doing this, all relevant matters of aesthetics fall into place."

When critics were first confronted with Ronald Sukenick's work, they didn't much bother with the question, "What manner of thing is this?" The answer came easily to them: Ronald Sukenick's work is "Experimental Fiction," and he is "avant-garde," a "Postmodernist." In the more than thirty years since the publication of his first novel, *Up*, critics have attempted to label Sukenick as a postmodernist, an experimental writer, an avant-pop writer, a post-postmodernist, and a host of other terms. The array of labels bespeaks the difficulty of categorizing his work. This difficulty is largely because critics have attempted categorization of Sukenick's work under the auspice of the notion that his work is "fiction." During the 1960s and 1970s, an era which spotlighted "avant-garde" writers such as Robert Coover, John Hawkes, Raymond Federman, Donald Barthelme, John Barth, Gilbert Sorrentino, Walter Abish and Thomas Pynchon, among others, if the work looked funny on the page, or if it did not follow the standard realist mode of fictional delivery, then it got labeled experimental, avant-garde, or postmodern, and as a result writers as far apart aesthetically as Hawkes and Barthelme were lumped together under the same rubric.

Where most of the postmodern fiction writers have chosen to explore the variants of nuance within a given set of self-imposed fictional boundaries, generating bodies of work which are highly self-contained and consistent (or, if you will, monotonous and predictable), exploring fiction within given sets of parameters, Ronald Sukenick is less predictable, attempting with each successive work to expand the boundaries of his thought. This enterprise culminates in the achievement of two of his later books, *Mosaic Man* and *Narralogues*. The two books, considered in tandem, constitute the answer to the problem Sukenick worked on his entire life.

The problem Sukenick dedicated his career to addressing is twofold: first, What is the function of the art generally, of fiction specifically? and second, Can a writer philosophically justify a boundary between that which is called fiction and that which is not fiction, and is thinking in such a dialectic even a useful enterprise?

While Sukenick's early prose works, non-linear, non-traditional and non-mimetic, were critically categorized under the blanket term "experimental fiction," his later works decreasingly resembled what we would call fiction, blending various genres into a hybrid breed of prose. Although Sukenick's work may be considered fiction, it is perhaps more useful to consider his work as a continuum which ranges from polemical fiction in his early works (e.g., *Up*, *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories*, 98.6) to fictionalized polemic in his later works (e.g., *Mosaic Man*, *Blown Away*, *Doggie Bag*, *Last Fall*). If we rethink the *œuvre* of Sukenick and consider him not a fiction writer *per se* but instead an aesthetic thinker along the lines of the great tradition of aesthetic criticism (Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Sidney, Pope, Hume, Coleridge, Shelley, Emerson, Nietzsche, James, Freud, Eliot, Burke, Sartre, Derrida), then the work of Sukenick becomes free of the constraints, limitations, and problems of fictional categorization and takes its place in its logical position.

About mid-way into *Mosaic Man*, Sukenick (both the writer and the character) reflects on the function of fiction:

It's not till Ron starts writing his first novel, *Up*, that he realizes he doesn't want to be a novelist. It's then that he realizes he finds the whole idea of what's called a novel boring. He realizes that he simply doesn't like the idea of making things up. It's a children's game. If he wants to make things up, he can go to work in Hollywood, preferably for Walt Disney.

But it's not till this very second, as I write these words, that Ron realizes his dislike for making things up is deeply connected with Jewish rules. The Jewish tradition has a long history of struggle against imitation, Ron remembers. Imitation is not the real thing. It's made up. It leads to the graven image. (*Mosaic Man* 96)

Though this was written early in Sukenick's career, early on he tries to get away from the novel, attempting to break free from the form using any means at his disposal. In his early books, Sukenick attempts to render the quickness, mutability, and flexibility of the creative act, of the artist in the act of making, which, Sukenick increasingly maintains, is itself the subject of fiction. He tries to catch the stream of experience through the use of various devices – tape-recorded conversations in *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories*, narrative intrusions in *Up* and 98.6, punctuation and spatial deviations in *Long Talking Bad Conditions Blues* and *The Endless Short Story* – and, we can assume, through a conscious effort to render the machinations of the mind of the writer at work. However, in his early works, Sukenick nonetheless seems bound by the history not of prose at large but of the novel. In *Up*, for instance, Sukenick is concerned with the nature of the form, with just what the novel is and can and allegedly cannot do. Late in the novel, the character Bernie has the following exchange with the character Ronnie Sukenick:

"I don't want to discourage you, but actually I think the whole book may have been a mistake from the beginning."

"No reason why that should discourage me."

"Seriously, it doesn't go anywhere. I mean I'm not so antediluvian to require that a novel have a plot, but this is just a collection of disjointed fragments. You don't get anywhere at all. Where's the control, where's the tension? You can do a lot better than this Ronnie."

"Thanks," I said.

"For one thing, the chronology is completely screwed up. First you start going out with Nancy again. Then you tell Slim you've broken up with her. Then you tell Slade you're living with her. Then you tell Otis she's moved out. Then the next time she appears she's living with you. I mean what the hell is going on. When are you going with her and when did you break up?"

"Well you know maybe we broke up and reconciled several times. It's a very stormy relationship after all."

"But this is just the thing you see. The reader doesn't know this. You can't do that sort of thing."

"Why not? In books one isn't obliged to pursue the banality of chronological order. What the fuck, I'm not writing a timetable."

"You could at the very least indicate an underlying chronology."

"What for? It's just a sequence of words. The only thing that matters is the order of revelation in print."

"Sure. If you want to forgo verisimilitude, which unfortunately happens to be the essence of fictive writing."

“Nuts. Why should we have to suspend disbelief? It’s all words and nothing but words.
Are we children reading fairy tales or men trying to work out the essentials of our fate?”
(*Up* 222-223)

For Sukenick the conventions of the novel prove inadequate for the expression of the self, and although *Up* is considered a novel even by the author, it is nonetheless a novel uncomfortable with itself, a novel that doesn’t want to be a novel and does not hesitate to break the so-called rules if breaking the rules is necessary for the discovery and the delivery of the unspeakable and unattainable truths. The old axiom that fiction should assist the reader in the suspension of disbelief is seen as childish, and the work of fiction becomes instead of a re-creation of an exterior world the approximation of the author’s interior world in the act of creation. In destroying notions the reader might entertain about being led into a “believable” world, Sukenick, in his early books, goes to great lengths to dissociate the reader from the fictional spell and remind the reader that the text before him is *written*, is not a traditional fictional reality, but is instead a reality constructed by a writer.

By the time Sukenick writes *Out* (1973), his third book of fiction, form literally dictates content – Sukenick’s attempt to free himself from the idea of the novel by radically altering its formal presentation. As the book progresses toward its own vanishing point, each section dwindling until the text runs out, the content, following the form, ceases to be. By having the form dictate the content, and because the form is a visually apparent construct obviously instituted by the author, the reader is reminded on every page that what he is experiencing is *not* a mimetic act vis-à-vis an empirical reality, but the artistic product itself in the process of being produced. *Out*, however, remains a *novel* – replete with all the elements characteristic of fiction – and when the novel dissolves, so too do the characters the reader has been following. *Out* is such a *novel* in the traditional sense of the word (other than its formal presentation) that it was even made into a feature-length film by Stan Brackage starring Danny Glover and Peter Coyote.

Long Talking Bad Conditions Blues, published in 1979, is more novel-like than most of Sukenick’s works, although, like *Out*, its form-play serves the function of alerting the reader to the fact that the only attempt at realism is the attempt on the author’s part to present whatever “realism” is in the author’s mind. Because of the punctuation-play, the variations on traditional spacing and margins, the grammatical liberties taken, the work actively distances the reader from the action of the characters and forces the reader to see these characters as prose constructs rather than mimetic representations of human beings. When Sukenick writes *The Endless Short Story* (1986), however, his notion of the purpose of fiction has taken on a new form, has begun to crystallize into the Sukenick of *Mosaic Man* and *Narralogues*. In *The Endless Short Story*, the “action” is overtly rhetorical in the sense that it is polemical: the book exists consciously to be the presentation of aesthetic notions and problems, and fictional elements serve to underpin the rhetoric, rather than the other way around. The novel has become a forum for the discussion of the aesthetics of the novel. Sukenick writes:

You see what’s happening here you take a few things that interest you and you begin to make connections. The connections are the important thing they don’t exist before you make them. This is THE ENDLESS SHORT STORY. It doesn’t matter where you start. You must have faith. Life is whole and continuous whatever the appearances. All this is rather coarse you say that may be but remember coarse is the opposite of slick and the coarser the texture the more it can let in. So. (*The Endless Short Story*, 7)

The book is rife with commentary on the aesthetics of fiction, of the novel, of art, of the creative act. In essence, *The Endless Short Story* is a deliberately thinly veiled essay. This is not to say that it is any less *fictional*: the “fiction” is the creation of the character of the author himself, of Sukenick – this character just happens to be obsessed with fiction and aesthetics, and his “plot,” his “action,” is the act of writing the book we’re reading.

In *Mosaic Man*, one of Sukenick’s later works, he writes, “Of course it has to be said that every time Ron looks over his shoulder at a book he’s written, he finds it’s turned into a novel. Behind his back” (97). The Bloomian anxiety of influence for Sukenick remains the history of the novel. Although *Mosaic Man* is a novel, it is a novel that integrates many of Sukenick’s concerns. In 98.6, Sukenick writes, “the novelist is a one man band playing all the instruments AT THE SAME TIME” (187). But Sukenick acquires some more instruments over the years, and his late-career one man band plays everything from kazoo and throat-warbler to mandolin and church organ. Whereas the early Sukenick might very well be seen as a one man band, the Sukenick of *Mosaic Man* is a one man *orchestra*, an orchestra that uses every conceivable music-making instrument and contraption.

The range of styles and tones, of modes and counterpoints in *Mosaic Man* is comprehensive and seamless. The book is not a collage, but a unified whole that culls newspaper clippings, recorded conversations, comic-book storyboards, philosophical digressions, historical interludes, lyric travel writing, and what appears to be autobiography, and though there are so very many different *types* of writing, the book never feels pieced together and, most importantly, does not seem an attempt at being *avant-garde*.

Sukenick's work is not fiction in the traditional sense, but neither is it what we now call nonfiction. Writers of what is today called nonfiction are either naïve or deliberately deceptive. The term is itself problematic philosophically, as it assumes a verifiable truth perceptible to the subjective consciousness, a documentable objectivity both exterior and interior and evident to the writer of so-called nonfiction. Today's nonfiction is merely fiction which makes the claim that it is somehow *true*, a preposterous notion given that every adverb and adjective entails a great deal of subjectivity. There's no such thing as literary nonfiction. Personal essay: pshaw. More snake oil.

That one of Sukenick's last books, *Narralogues*, is neither fiction nor nonfiction should come as no surprise. *Narralogues* is the logical extension of Sukenick's life's work, his solution to his investigation into the nature of the relationships between fiction, aesthetics and epistemology. *Narralogues* is a series of prose pieces which are clearly polemic in nature and nonetheless suffused with the trappings of fiction—dialogue, characters, plots, and so forth. They are neither essays nor stories, and are, rather, prose meditations. In the introduction, Sukenick writes:

Part of my argument in the *Narralogues* is that narrative is a mode of understanding that uniquely is quick enough, mutable enough, and flexible enough to catch the stream of experience, including our experience of the arts. I might even claim that my narralogues model is a kind of criticism. But this is not the point, which is to bring what we call fiction into consideration as a mode of thought under the umbrella of rhetoric. Rhetoric is meant here not as a system of classification, heavily terminological, as in the work of Harold Bloom, however dynamic, and even less as the study of oratory or ornament. Rather, it is meant as a kind of ongoing persuasive discourse that, in itself, resembles narrative – agonistic, sophistic, sophisticated, fluid, unpredictable, rhizomatic, affective, inconsistent and even contradictory, improvisational, and provisional in its argument toward contingent resolution that can only be temporary. . . .

In short, my argument is that fiction is a matter of argument rather than of dramatic representation. (*Narralogues* 1-2)

This conclusion, that “fiction is a matter of argument rather than of dramatic representation,” opens up new areas of investigation for Sukenick's fiction. Fiction becomes free of literally all constraints, all the traditional European trappings. A fiction that is self-consciously rhetorical rather than mimetic is a fiction that is *not-fiction*. In an essay published in *American Book Review*, Ronald Sukenick writes the following:

I don't care about novels. I don't read them. The books I write have always been placed in that category – even at times by myself – for want of any other category to fit them into. As I look back, I realize I've always been trying to get away from the damned form. I wasn't merely punning when I titled my second book of fiction *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories*. What I write is writing. Narrative. Stories. At times it resembles “nonfiction,” at times fictive invention, at times narrative poetry, at times personal essay or even autobiography, at times docutext or what could be described as fiction *verité*. If I'm indifferent to the novel, I have an active dislike for the literary novel. And I include especially in this category authors who write in forms so familiar we don't question them, when they are really repetitions of literary formulae. Anybody who claims I write literary novels either hasn't read me or can't read. No, the writing I write and the writing that interests me these days seem to fall into one encompassing category: rhetoric. I could argue why this is so, but I've already done that in a book . . . called *Narralogues*. Instead, let me argue the rhetoric of what I call “not-fiction.” (“Not-Fiction” 3)

The name is new, but the concept is not. We've been reading “not-fiction” for centuries, from St. Augustine to Henry Miller. The prose meditations of non-mathematical philosophers like Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Emerson, Pascal, Voltaire, and Montaigne are highly subjective, if not solipsistic narratives of the self – they are, in essence, first-person expositional fiction sans participation in the European tradition of the novel, eschewing the superimposition of artificial Aristotelian constructs in favor of the fluid and mutable de-constructs of the human mind in flux, in creation, in representation of the consciousness breathing itself into being.

Rousseau's *Confessions* bears more similarities to fiction than it does to nonfiction, and the works of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer read more like autobiographical fiction than they do anything else. These writers – writers of what Sukenick calls “Not-Fiction” – and not the troupe of English and French novelists usually cited, are the true precursors of a great deal of American fiction and certainly of the works of Ronald Sukenick. The form employed by the not-fictioneers is organic, not engineered, is proactive, not reactive, is accumulative, not derivative, is based on the author's Emersonian trust of “that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages” (“Self-Reliance” 129).

The American fiction tradition has defined itself as being aggressively anti-novel. James Fenimore Cooper is considered an inferior novelist – precisely because he writes *novels*, whereas Twain's admittedly plotless *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is considered a masterpiece. A significant number of what we consider to be great American fictional works is defined largely by the tendency of the works to *not resemble* the traditional European form. Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, William Gass's *The Tunnel* – what all these books have in common is that they actively *do not* resemble novels. [N.B. - SEE: Federman's writing in *Rampike* 7/#1, & 6/#1. Sukenick's writing in *Rampike*, Vol. 6/#3, and, Burroughs' writing in *Rampike* 3/#2, & 2/#3 – Editor].

With few exceptions, the European novel strives for a sort of self-containment, a unified oneness of character, place, ideology and aesthetics that historically takes its cues from Aristotle. The spell created by Richardson and Defoe, the hermetic worlds of Austen, Dickens, Trollope, Lawrence, Hardy, Woolf, and the Brontë sisters – the relentless *logic* of the traditional English novel specifically and the European novel generally defines what we think of as the parameters of the form. In America, however, our novel has taken a different course: it has largely defined itself in reaction to, in rebellion against if not repudiation of the established form of the European novel. Where the traditional novel follows a recognizable form, American fiction tends to the formless; where the traditional novel concludes with resolution, American fiction tends to not conclude at all; where the traditional novel strives for an effacement of the author as a presence in the work, American fiction tends to be openly self-conscious and self-referential, often with our most popular protagonist – “I” – being little more than a thinly veiled presentation of what we all know to be the author.

There is, then, a logical and historical reason that the “novelist” Ronald Sukenick proclaims that he has a distaste for “literary” novels: the very term, “literary,” the fact that such a book can be labeled as such, bespeaks a lack of originality, betrays a dependence on a predetermined category into which the work neatly fits. If a book can be called a “literary novel,” then it subscribes to a set of rules, meets a set of expectations, and is consequently a work which, in the final analysis, is predictable, is merely another box-set off the assembly line. A literary novel, then, becomes no more original than the cheesiest of romance novels or dime-store mysteries – the only difference between the literary novel and the mass market novel becomes the set of expectations of the genres' respective audiences.

Emerson writes, in his essay “The Poet,” “Art is the path of the creator to his work” (322), and the record of the artist's walk – or run – down this path, if that record be in prose, is for Sukenick a work of not-fiction. With writing literary nonfiction being a weak option, and writing traditional fiction being analogous to following someone else's path, the prose artist's task is both to create and to follow the path. Just as Emerson writes in “Self-Reliance,” “I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim!*” (133), so writes Sukenick in 98.6, “You intuit. That's how you do it” (3). Prose for Sukenick is a vehicle of discovery. In *Narralogues*, Sukenick writes:

... in the arts ideas are cheap. That's because they leave too much out. When you're working with ideas if you don't understand something, by definition you leave it out. In the arts when you don't understand something that's what you're looking for. If you don't understand it put it in. That's the material you work with. What's the point of trying to understand something you already understand? The grope of art extends beyond its grasp. If you're really lucky you come to grips with something nobody understands, but that's a domain reserved for major artists. Usually you're just struggling with your own ignorance, and the work is a valuable record of the working intelligence as it bridges the gap between what you know and don't know. (80)

The jazzlike spontaneous approach Sukenick recommends, the embracing of the unknown and the emphasis on process-as-product, leads to un-novel-like, perhaps even un-book-like things. At the very least, it leads to the presentation of the mind which is the man.

Sukenick once said in conversation, “The problem with most writers is they don’t realize they can just say what they want to say.” Knowing he can say what he wants to say – write what he wants to write – creates a problem for a writer or artist of any stripe. Once a writer realizes his own freedom, his problem becomes the perhaps impossible epistemological chore of figuring out just what it actually is that he wants to say. What will be the product of such an utterance? Sukenick writes:

What we yearn for Ron obscurely believes is a book that is true beyond illusion and this book could only be a fundamental book that does not pretend to be something it literally is not (doven).

This book would be the book that is wholly book (doven).

This would be a book that Ron believes in wholly (doven).

This would and is the wholly book of books.

Amen. (106)

“The wholly book of books”: it’s what Sukenick believed needed to be written, and what he spent his life trying to write. He didn’t want to be “avant-garde”: he wanted, like all writers should, to write what Mallarmé called *Le Livre*, what Muhammad called *The Koran*, what Joseph Smith called *The Book of Mormon*. He wanted to write The Book. And The Book is neither ahead nor behind its time. The Book exists in time and at all times.

In his essay, “The Literature of Exhaustion,” John Barth nails it when he writes that the novel, if not narrative literature generally, if not the printed word altogether, has by this hour of the world just about shot its bolt . . . and it may well be that the novel’s time as a major art form is up. . . . No necessary cause for alarm in this at all, except perhaps to certain novelists, and one way to handle such a feeling might be to write a novel about it. (71-72)

One way to handle the end of the age of the novel would indeed be to write novels about it – and Sukenick has written plenty about writing. But of more use to the contemporary writer would be to develop, to recognize that the novel is merely a prose form and that although the form is likely exhausted, prose itself is not. The novel is indeed done for, and this is probably a good thing. We need to move beyond the novel. If the art of prose is to continue to develop and to serve an aesthetic and social function, then it must relentlessly question its motivations, its modes of delivery, its relationship to polemics. It must continually reinvent itself. Aesthetic and social change increasingly will not be caused by the novel. They will be caused by “Notfiction.”

Many writers and critics have bewailed the supposed Death of the Novel in America and have blamed film, television, mass media, the Internet, MTV, republicans, global warming and anything else they could set up as a scapegoat. They’ve missed the point: the novel never *died* in America – it never really *lived* in the first place, not as anything more than an imitation of the European form. We’re finally realizing the vision Emerson had for American literature when he wrote “The American Scholar.” Sukenick’s movement from polemical fiction to fictionalized polemic is the movement of American prose writers away from what Emerson calls “the courtly muses of Europe” (“The American Scholar” 62). It is the movement from adolescence to maturity. It is the realization of the truest and most revealing capabilities of our prose. The works of Ronald Sukenick were at the forefront of this movement.

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JOHN CAGE AND BUDDHIST ECOPOETICS

(London: Bloomsbury 2013)

Advertisement

PETER JAEGER

From the Introduction: In 2012 the celebrated pianist and John Cage interpreter Margaret Leng Tan contributed a talk and performance to the Cage centennial celebrations in Lublin, Poland. Tan's talk focused primarily on Cage's interest in Zen, paying special attention to his understanding of time and space as it pertains to his Buddhist faith. She spoke of Cage's Zen-influenced belief that



time and space are inseparable, and that in fact Cage thought these two categories were *alive*; for Tan (and Cage) the living relationship between space and time is what distinguishes Asian thought from the philosophies of the West. Tan also pointed out that much of Cage's work embodies the concurrent unfolding of time and space. After the talk, Tan circulated a photocopied sheet of paper containing short excerpts drawn from news media reports about ivory poaching. The paper was also stamped by hand in green ink with the phrase: "TOY PIANOS DON'T KILL ELEPHANTS," an allusion to the various pieces that Cage wrote specifically for the toy piano during the 1940s. She then performed the infamous *4'33"* of 1952 on a toy piano, as well as Cage's 1959 piece *Water Walk*. Tan's talk and performance brought together the important relationship between Zen and ecological awareness that informed Cage's work, not only in his role as a composer of music but also as a visual artist and writer. Although these three fields of Cage's cultural production were highly inter-related, it is this last area of his activity—his writing and poetics—that this book seeks to address. How did Cage's understanding of Zen and his concern for environmental issues impact his writing? To

what extent did the interface of these two concerns spill over into other issues raised by his "lecture-poems" and poetry, such as his turn towards indeterminacy and chance operations in the 1950s and his later work's support for non-violent anarchism? And what do his challenge to more conventional modes of making meaning, his frequent use of blank space as a visual poetic element, and his embrace of the illegible, have to do with his Zen Buddhist eco-poetics?

Reviews:

"Peter Jaeger offers an enlightening guide to Zen and related Western sources and resonances in John Cage's aesthetics. *John Cage and Buddhist Eco-poetics* is a lo-fi commentary on how some tenets of Buddhist thought, especially as filtered through D. T. Suzuki and Alan Watts, were pragmatically adapted and amalgamated in radical mid-20th-century North American poetry and art." (Charles Bernstein)

"What makes Peter Jaeger's book on Cage's Zen interests unique is its turn from Buddhist ideas to the formal innovations that Cage took to be integral to an adequate eco-poetics. Jaeger takes seriously Cage's belief that one must study nature in her manner of operation; consequently, his book does not talk about Cagean Zen; rather, it performs it, providing us with a theatrical *mise-en-scène* of its processes. Adopting Cage's own procedural methods, based on I Ching chance operations, Jaeger presents his "topics" in a highly novel way, allowing for interruptions, silences, and incremental repetitions. . . . Himself a poet, Jaeger has produced a learned study that is also great fun to read—a delightful poetic text in its own right." (Marjorie Perloff)