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1991

This book of Poetry was intended to be read aloud, a conversation with life, encouraged by artists who seek out the truth present in everyday existence, who point to wonder and beauty where it exists and hold it up for the world to see, that allow us to be human in a time when we are separated from emotions, forced to forgo passion and art, to give up our souls for the immediate needs of the present. This book was intended to prove that being human is still possible, that we must indeed begin to live before we die.

Thanks to everyone who shared their work with us.

Staff: Lisa Bonsall, Jim Brown, Sam Hamilton, Christopher Hammond, Julia Kelahan, Douglas Roberts, Camille Tabone, Nicole Reeves

Cover by Sam Hamilton

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Morning

The soul as the throat
has the wind
so calmly to it.
One, exaggerated
before creation
settles softly
as leaves,
into the Equal
of Each along side the All.

Jim Brown

Instinct

in the mirror of
the pool, wings blossom in
the quiet dayfall

all spirits are strengthened by
impulse, faith in a
guidance makes for happier men

Webb Ghallager

Five Step Plan To My Destruction

I Muse,
but,
it is no muse that
supplies me these words.
They are mine alone:
From me
For me
Of me
They Are Me
Burn them and I go up in flames
Scatter the ashes and I fly the wind
Change them and I transform
Erase them - watch - I disappear
Discount them and I am no
longer worth a damn.

Julia Kelahan

along the rocks that sat along the beach

each gull,
voice to the wind coming off waves,
in close looking for chunks of bread
found a soulless misplaced tourist-shell, and
rested soon again under the rain protected pier.

Ghosts

patting the ocean with memories
rested for a time, intrigued
a light thunder "Hello"
----agreed with the birds
moved on with no goodbye
and left the wet body alone
searching for such power
looking out to new calm english waters
enslaved within myth
entranced by reality

Webb Ghallager

Frost, a contemporary adaptation

Two roads diverged
on an urban route
and I

I

I ran my '76 Buick
through Chuck's
Sunoco station

and that
has made all
the difference

Jeff Lewis

bigOtries

“This is a work of art-
A master-piece.
But, frankly,
it won't work for this
class”

Christopher Hammond

Hitler burned them, ours remain unread

Human cattle of the supposed american
intellectualism unidentified
and moving very fast
to nowhere
frown at the thought of noon
walk up the stairs
to a classroom
and moo.
All the books ever written
can not beat back
the tides of inherited
ignorance,
all the classrooms in the world
can no longer cure
this apathy-disease

We are here to witness the disintegration
of a culture that never began.

Jim Brown

elmwood avenue (tragically hip)

black on white
on black on
trial

anemic rebels
without
a clue
down elmwood avenue
pursue
delusions of persecution

too droning English deadpan
vocals consummate
the cutting
while coagulated pretense
scabs the wound
most fitting

Isn't it past your gravetime?

Jeff Lewis

Soul Crush

My friend's on acid and I'm
just a vision of psychadelic
bongle-banging mish-mash
turnstile in blue-green loveliness.

My friend's making music and
I'm an eighth-note diddle-blam
G-clef la-la of a running hot
mile of sheet music.

My friend calls himself a hardcore
and I'm full of spiky shaved fuckall
purpleness with leather bash
Circle Jerked dark love.

My friend is dying and I'm
nothing but a wooden sadschmuck
deathbox dirty six feet under
soul crush with redhate turmoil.

I hate my friend.

Julia Kelahan

INDIGO

I AM A SPACE CASE
BECAUSE I AM A HIPPIE-LATE
FREE LOVE, "DON'T HATE-MEDITATE",
COME BACK TO WHERE YOU BELONG.
"MIGHT IS RIGHT!" IS WRONG!
I KNOW THAT BACK THEN
UNDER THE SPELL OF LOVE
THEY WERE THE TOPS OF LIFE
ENSLAVED ONLY BY THEIR FREEDOM.

Lucia Costello and Susan West

Bottle & Smoke

Thanks and praises,
Thanks to Jesus
I went to hell
and to the races.
I went to hell 'cause I bet on a horse,
The horse called "Bottle & Smoke."

The night being clear,
the sky being bright,
he came up on the left
like a streak of bright light.
I was a drunken fuck on a Saturday night
and up came my "Bottle & Smoke."

But twenty fuck-en five to one
my gambling days were done
I bet on the horse called "Bottle & Smoke"
and holy shit my horse won!

The clerk inquires,
"was you had the 'Bottle & Smoke?";
I reply with a gleam in my eye,
"T'was I with that Bottle & Smoke."
So my bookie's cursing
as my car's reversing
when I left that OTB
to go back home
at last alone
until I see my family.

Then I slipped the wife a fifty
and for each brat a crisp new five
To give me a break for my Saturday nights
when I have a "Bottle & Smoke."

The priests and maidens
who get drunk and stoned as pagans
they got their bottles and smokes.
But they aint as bad
'cause they aint had the things I've had,
'cause I won hundreds
with my "Bottle & Smoke."
So down here the moon's real clear
the sky's real bright tonight
and I'm happy as a horse's shit,
hoping some day
He'll find me - OK,
then up again comes my "Bottle & Smoke."

Craig Dennis Howard

(The) Socialism Trip

skipping down the halls
of the welfare building
'emancipation' for the 17's birthday gift
isolation as a next of kin

a birth certificate as my only appeal
to the 'civilized' society
endless lines of hopeless faces
lead to the paper piles that file your survival

the ghetto greets the innocent
with hungry eyes and motionless violence
the suburban white boy has come home
amid the filth that cobwebs the city

Greg Gatza

Quitting Time

The busy soldiers moved out slowly
across the paved fields
of glass, steel, and neon
unnoticed
crouching low
children of suburbs, church

then, like
time itself erupted
at the sunset of creation,
stood erect
bit down upon their souls
and marched ahead
brief case and car keys in hand

Webb Ghallager

Evening Constitutional

Psalms 42, 43

With the erection of night
in layer after layer
of fired-brick; a weary sun's light
diffuse, as the Lord's Prayer
from a child's lust
for a toy
I must
avoid the converse of men, by any ploy
or deception;
feeling my way by the scent of sighs
past avenues of convention
and the appraisal in intimate eyes.

Douglas Roberts

**politics physics: a boy and his dog
(the human Condition)**

he,
believing that I was going

to attack inselfdefense
was going to attack

inselfdefense

and so

I had to attack

inselfdefense

Jeff Lewis

A Face to Match The Hands Which Hold Me

In the hands
of humanity
lift from the tide
of faceless evil
I thought relief, planned
against poverty;
nurtered pride
in place of will.

Now a night
of fear
can no longer mask
an animal eye;
in a vulgar light
a face draws near -
familiar hands grip the cask
in which I lie.

Douglas Roberts

her gift

rising in the streaking
sunshine--stretching up,
sleek body, lunges--claws
grasp the prey, tear--
teeth snap the neck, a
tiny cloud of blue feathers.

Blue jay on the step, wet and
lifeless. Nails scratch against
the screen. She struts, expecting
praise for her gift of death.

Lana LaForest

Emperor Calleisses

He is no longer bold, but a boor;
sitting on a worm-eaten throne,
swathed in scarlet, a whore
Queen; with a heart of stone
he metes justice, a broken voice
behind a golden mask,
death and defilement the choice
of paupers, the wealthy need only ask
and any favor is Celestial Law.

Twice daily the balls of a bull;
the court cook serves his meat raw,
never tops a chalice full
lest the wine sap His Majesty's strength;
lessen the virtue of his sap,
refusing the King at length
the concubine on his lap.

Alas, alas, it is all in vain;
the King begets no earthly heir,
though he has taken every pain
and every precaution, with infinite care.
Charms, elixirs, each potion in store,
and every spell his wizened seer
could recall from out forbidden lore
to mumble through an ascetic sneer.

But still the sacrifice, unborn;
still the seeds, dry in the soil;
still no cloud, no rain, no storm
brings fruit from our toil.
The ceremony passes unfulfilled,
the magic lost, does fade;
in furrows we ourselves have tilled
we ourselves are laid.

Off, King, with your mask,
remove the gem from out your eye,
doff the heavy, gleaming casque
and let the scepter lie;

come, oh come, without the field;
we have each, an abalone shell-
in each blow, his figure reeled
and shuddered and quietly fell.

The gods have their sacrifice,
the earth drinking, drinks deep-
in autumn there will be rice
enough for us to reap.

A City Night

The crimson, emerald, and gold lights
in the tower
form a transparent pyramid
in the murky sky
beneath a broken oyster moon.
then a switch
seems to have been flipped-
the tower disappears
like an invisible statue
leaving behind
the neon gods-
commercial madness.
Brief serenity is achieved
by the breath
of jazz tunes
streaming from
a corner bar.
But soon the wind moans
and rustles the peaceful street
as a pair of tired eyes
fall
upon the front page
of a newspaper
drowned in a puddle
on the sidewalk
with a single bold faced word
sprawled across it in black:
Jihad-
echoing through the night.
Church bells ring mournfully
murmuring a somber song
as the watchful moon
pouts above the city.
Cries-
of the homeless
inhabit the night
as a man in a torn green jacket
searches for an alleyway...
Still-
the neon gods
scream at every industrious man
and torch
the melancholy city.

FIELD DRAMA

I saw a play years ago in Belgium
on a field in Flangers. There was only one act- the actors
(handsome lads from England and Germany) played soldiers
who were fighting for weeks in the muddy field, obeying
the commands of generals who were safe behind lines.
Many groaned and died on stage until no one
was left. As the generals stood silent, center
stage, staring at each other, the curtain
was lowered. Poppies were given to the actors, awards
for their performance while mothers wiped their tears.

Mark Kmidowski

Cave Art

One by one our hunters disappear
in darkness. Nervous in the night,
we huddle together - monkeys near
a fire, chattering in the light;
emotion cast on faces of clay.
Of the brave, few admit a black
heart; cowards cup ash; proclaim day.
Still the hunters have not come back
and all of us can hear voices along
the perimeter. Vainly named, the dead
haunt our dream; each individual song.
I rise, restless, from my bed;
steal a torch. In a cave, the faint
outline of tragedy in paint -

Douglas Roberts

I'm Bushed

Of soft

men

a soft

crisis

so soft

women

can sanction

too.

Christopher Hammond

(Hanging out flags)

Hanging out flags
again
for Johnny
when he
comes home in his
empty boots

In a grave yard,
in church, the colours
of hanging out flags.
In a small town
home the flags hanging
above the doors
in the window, on the car.

There was a better month.
Now days in cold January
no swings and bikes and wading pools
no laughter in the yard,
just quietly the sound of hanging out flags.

Jim Brown

Down the Road a peace...

I was leavin home yesterday and I dont think I got
no place.

Plumb down the road, the folks from these here parts
be raisin welcome mats up poles. Out front their porch
a yellow fabric from this here land got twisted round the
oak trees. Kind here dont member easy, they needs minders,
so they tie a string round a finger, but they dont ever be
lookin at the hand.

Anyhows, we dont be lookin at the trees much no more,
since the birds be leavin. I dont think they got no
place.

Yellow was the color of the leaves when the trees be bout
to rest. The blue sky used to set them off real fine, but
it be leavin too. I dont think the both of them is got no
place no more.

Nobody round here be laughin much no more. Nothing much
livin to be laughed about, and it be evil unrespectful to be
laughin at the died. No, laughins got no place no more.

Nowadays the smell gets pretty tame round these here
parts. Stinks just got no place to run off to.

This minds me, yellow be the color of the passed on. I
neednt no string to mind me of that. My son, he come back
this color after leavin home aways back. I dont think he
got no place.

Heck, it be a matter of fact, the livin be leavin at a
darn good clip these days. Maybe, just maybe, it got no
place no more.

Sometimes I be thinkin to me self, that if folks round
here just tie a yellow ribbon round their own hearts, and
an oak tree still be livin, that old oak tree be cryin for
you every year for a least a month runnin. But, maybe tears
got no place no more, and maybe we got no place neither.

Christopher Hammond

Grief

To spell
pain
put your
faith
in belief,
To smell rain
put your
face
in
a leaf...

Christopher Hammond

Samhain

And the frolls in
Floats down
Heavy and close.
It begins.

And the tombstones quake
Yielding might
Old and crumbling.
They awake.

And the ground goes numb
Spewing forth
Dirt and flesh.
Up they come.

And the demons dance
Thrashing frenzy
Ecstasy and evil.
Death's romance.

And the people gaze
Watching all
Fright and terror.
Devil's days.

And the sun ascends
Burning new
Light and living.
Dancing ends.

And the fog rolls on
Drifting past
Thick and lonely.
It is done.

Julia Kelahan

History

she has really gone far,
away is about time only
and I can do no better
than sit
slightly
someone
saying
something
while my ears listen
to the far away lost inside me

Jim Brown

Her hair
4 months old.
Ago, I had been seen
within it always.
Now without,
pull it from my sweater.

It could be
all sweaters
bare her hair
wrapped inside their wool.

Webb Ghallager

past this hour
I have reached back
and finding
a returning
singular you,
lose myself in
mishaped roads
passing your house
with memories
that stand again
erect, whispering.

Jim Brown

ANOTHER DAY

Somewhere, overlooked
in drenched fields of marble,
I stand with this awkwardness
created by the rising sun.

I am thoroughly
reckless
in twilight not bright enough
to show my expressions.

Repulsed by your whispered
thoughts of beauty and hope,
I now race down sacred sidewalks,
that shine in this watery atmosphere.

(In my hurry to leave before
light disturbed you,
did I cover your shivering body
with the safety of old blankets?)

Once again,
I am familiar
with the dead, wet
grass stuck to my shoes.

Maija Schnore

Today's Weather

In the corner of a hardwood plane I crouch naked
in the blue.

the freezing rains came crashing through my windows.

in swirled the ghost of a girl-child who seized the
night by my throat trying desperately to penetrate
the tears of the deep.

deep into my shoulder blades I dig; saliva crawls down
my thighs. Pools form in the carved out recesses
bordering my joint.

Anonymous

Thanks a Bunch

She tossed my coffee
threw all my cigarettes away
gave me gas money
kissed me good-bye,
and sent me on my way.

Craig Dennis Howard

Content

Little boys running around happily shouting
The clamor of the unwatched television
Interruptions within the room

Hand on heart on hand

Fingers intertwining touching me
a smile arises both visible and within
Fresh smell of your body next to mine

Content

Nicole Reeves

For Ann

White laced virgin
Smiles believes
His starry eyes believes
Love
Is all they need

Does not see the future
Lucky bride
Does not know the violence
Standing now tuxedoed
By her side

White laced virgin
Guilted sacrifice

C.M. Knox

Upon Seeing Her at Regan's Bar

To be the snake in shining armor
And with this one especially
What fun to be the cause of rumor-
To be the snake in shining armor
And in the pub the boys all clamor
"Oh were it me! Yes were it me
To be the snake in shining armor!"
And with this one especially.

Jeff Lewis

Freedom

Emotions fill my every thought,
blurring my vision,
controlling my mind,
listening to your voice
echo scarred lies
tearing at my heart.
You left me with nothing-
my dignity shredded,
my life transformed.
Finally the truth
is set free to me,
and I am the last
Survivor to walk
away from defeat.
Emptiness, anger,
fear, loneliness,
all from a single source.
"Love forever"
vanished into
another's heart,
another's life,
and so your voice
enrages my tears.
I created you,
I destroyed you,
but you kept walking,
while I fell
to the ground
gasping for your hand.

Nicole Reeves

An encounter with a psychiatric escapee

From Saint Theresa's I depart,
the leaves all fallen, brittle red-
just like the sun. I ask the dead
October air if it might start
and save this grounded paper art
from human heel. The old man said:
"These leaves are not just Autumn's bed,
but pieces of a life, too short.
If there's but one thing I impart,
step not upon this life outspread.
Put in an envelope instead,
and when simple times have come apart
then mail them to an older heart."

Jeff Lewis

Jason

Hey I like when you take your glasses off...I
can see your eyes, but then I don't know what
you're thinking. I think I know you but it's
hard to tell. You remind me of the falls
and our relationship is like water...I am
not sure if I'm thirsty or I just like to
get wet.

Carla Gioia

Gilgamesh

At the Mountains of the Sun
where Scorpion-man awaits me
the colors of day melt and run
into a night of destiny.
Is he not ancient, and ancient
his wife? What is seventy years
before the eons; a moment
insignificant? a life dear?
Cold hospitality his; cold comfort mine,
an evening passed beneath his eye.
Can He reflect the image divine,
his body atwist, his smile awry?
The morning is cold, the road clear.
Enkidu dead; my companion is fear.

Douglas Roberts

A bird will alight
on the back of a lion;
upon a man slight seen
she'll soar north in autumn.

Christopher Hammond

Two Birds Blown by Storm Currents

singular life
tends to the wind
differently with upturned eyes
gales rise the tails of the coat
cut out buttons to the heart
which begins beating then
the moment the two black birds
speak out in response
to their now being off in the unseen
allowing the roots of companionship
to grip firmly to the conscious
thoughts of togetherness
to flower quite bravely in the eyes now
turned outward

Webb Ghallager

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