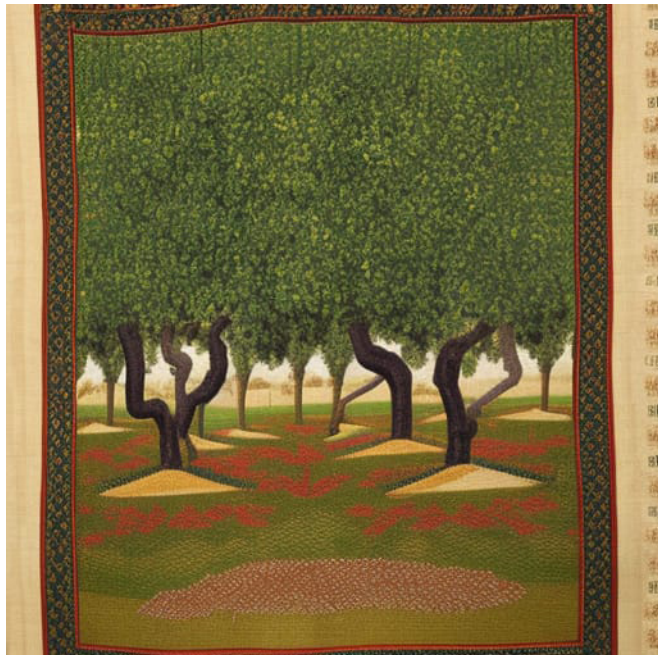


Works & Days

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WORKS & DAYS

SUMMER 2023



BEAUTIFUL DAYS PRESS

George Fragopoulos & Joshua Wilkerson, Editors

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Lost Book Found

Terrence Arjoon

Watching the branches outside
waver on ripped seminal linen.
I dreamed I got punched in the face
on the way to Haley's birthday party;
Not in formalwear but grommets renewed, scarce.
As the branches from the window
follow me through the ice. Who cares to
remember a name carved in ice?
When I wake, a sadist is making bird-calls
in the tree outside.
I ignore him, but his calls
are so beautiful.
I used to be pretentious, a sadist,
but now I stare at the grommets
in my shoes. Cats love structure,
especially when they are eating.
My trumpet teacher used
to pluck his tea bags
with just his bare fingers. I still
struggle to do this.
Perhaps cats go to church—
I am mixing cement
in Marie's bedroom. When I wake
I will know everything
that has happened, I will know the date.
When one awakes we know
the date already, but forget it: Today is
March 28th.
Come mornings, we contemplate painting
the bannisters, railings, or
pediments, but there is only so much
time in a day, so April comes.
What is not painted will remain unpainted;
who is singing in the tree
will remain singing. On the other hand,
every lost book is found. Every
biscuit is eaten.

In the Studio

Terrence Arjoon

Vlad hands me a used work towel
covered in blue ink.

I get blue ink on everything.

I am making the perfect dry martini in the basement.

I believe in distractions.

Hence, no book.

We feed the panthers ribbon-grass at night.

The owls they howl at night.

Of my sadness only a blue frog

I had grabbed at night.

I observe making books in yr bed.

I hide my frog beneath yr bed.

It makes a sound and wakes you.

I release my blue frog at night.



two livestock management executives reborn as calves

alex benedict

CALF ONE: I am reborn as a divine sage clad in calf-skin.

CALF TWO: You are you. I am rumour, are you?

CALF ONE: (*questioning an unceasingly transforming celestial stream*) My body is without history, and you?

CALF TWO: Brother, don't think I am afraid of demons, but I'm glad we've returned to these bodies.

CALF ONE: Mmm, rumen.

~

CALF TWO: Are we? Are you? Haha, rumen.

CALF ONE: You, we, roam.

CALF TWO: Now, loam, what play shall we produce to please our audience?

CALF ONE: Naturally, our movements will be directed by Kali or Kalidasa. (*lovely maidens adorn their ears with shirish blooms whose tender filaments are lightly kissed by honeybees*)

CALF TWO: Hurry, let's return as humans.

~

CALF ONE: Humor, me? Are you no one? Please remind me.

CALF TWO: Me, me!

CALF ONE: Your nipples are dark and eyes listless.

CALF TWO: Friend, eyes have become useless now.

CALF ONE: Are you numbered?

~

CALF TWO: Our hooves are numb and bleeding. I hear men; no, urine.

CALF ONE: We numbered ourselves.

CALF TWO: Yes, however, assigned the task of maintaining the dharma, my body will become the nation of this cosmos.

CALF ONE: Still, streams, fields, streets, and feed, they will stink with our blood and feces.

CALF TWO: No, nerveless, the soil is without roots.

~

CALF ONE: Gathering the voices of rain, we are without roots.

CALF TWO: I know the moon and you are rumour.

CALF ONE: May we be victorious!

CALF TWO: The rays of the moon pour fire on us.

CALF ONE: Are you a humorless rumen?

~

CALF TWO: Hands without hands, my hoofs hum.

CALF ONE: The walls of my stomach are burning.

CALF TWO: Having got the blind fawn...

CALF ONE: ...the coyote stops trailing the mother.

CALF TWO: See the heron returning to a room of reeds.

~

CALF ONE: Hoofed moon. Are you numb?

CALF TWO: I hear sunlight pierce your stomach.

CALF ONE: Nonsense, you are my own body.

CALF TWO: Searching for ryegrass, we are bitten by red ants.

CALF ONE: Are we needed?

~

CALF TWO: Men need room for urine and conversation.

CALF ONE: A million rebirths, we will return as calves.

(a sinuous flash of lightning springs between their mouths)

CALF ONE: Does Indra stop raining on Mother Earth for fear of frogs croaking?

CALF TWO: We are feared roots hurried into dying, numbered, and unnamed bodies.

~

CALF ONE: Will we secretly speak as human remains? We may never return as human.

CALF TWO: May we never remain. My skin is an urgent mirror as great as the womb of the oceans.

CALF ONE: Surely, a great river of the self reaches a hundred streams to the sea.

CALF TWO: *(commands the rain to stop)*

CALF ONE: See the roots reach into the clouds.

~

CALF TWO: Know yourself humming with the roots.

CALF ONE: I remember counting our bowed heads.

CALF TWO: Mother, I bow to you.

CALF ONE: Mother, I touch your feet.

CALF TWO: You are the moon, a returning heron.

~

CALF ONE: No name can be our mirror.

CALF TWO: Our numbers are nearing names.

CALF ONE: Our evening sacrifice has only just begun.

CALF TWO: Yet, friend, the day is ending in an all-consuming fire.

CALF ONE: I chew the grass numb.

~

CALF TWO: We are hunger.

CALF ONE: When given hands, we are memory becoming judgment.

CALF TWO: Did not the fire produced by our births burn up the oceans?

CALF ONE: *(enters the gate that opens everywhere)*

CALF TWO: How many bodies have we been born calf? How many human?

~

CALF ONE: Hurry ahead your, our memory.

CALF TWO: Taking root, I will urinate rumour.

CALF ONE: We will soon be dressed by dear companions.

CALF TWO: I will be food for vultures.

CALF ONE: Your judgement was money.

~

CALF TWO: Humans are human! Running home, we return without our heads.

CALF ONE: The reeds hum an uprooted moon.

CALF TWO: Brother, the mountains surrounding us drip with liquid gold...

CALF ONE: I will eat and be eaten by the dawn.

CALF TWO: New moss, you are our mother: hearing, rearing.

~

CALF ONE: Hear the robins under numb rain. Running. Neither home nor memory...

CALF TWO: Now, men of urine bleed money.

CALF ONE: Our blood carries rumours through urine and grasses.

CALF TWO: Mother carries us humming in the fields.

CALF ONE: Numbed memory, our marrow homeland?

~

CALF TWO: Roots red, reaching through a mirror of urine.

CALF ONE: No, our necks rinsed in moonlight. I am nerved money.

CALF TWO: My memory returns in a body divided.

CALF ONE: Our bodies are forgotten judgement.

CALF TWO: How will our forgotten bodies uproot unnamed nerves?

CALF ONE: Quick, brother, ingest my milk, butter, yogurt, urine, and manure before we are led to slaughter.



السالام علی یدیك

Andrew Colarusso

'We loved our fathers too much,' he said aloud.

Isabella Hammad, *The Parisian*

Son las cicatrices de nuestros padres
escondidas bajo voluntas de humo y ceniza

que a veces nos derrotan. Cuando,
por ejemplo, cargamos sus historias

a los sitios que anteaer nos cuidaban
con la leche de infancia, a nuestras madres

y sus tetas tiernas con marcas de mordidas
quienes hoy nos dan falta, y no podemos proferir

mas que un grito maldeamor y triste, pero
vivo. Ni siquiera ellos bravos no pudieran

protegernos de una pérdida que, agachada
en la entrada de nuestra quietud, nos vela.

Alguien, algo, esta robando nos de casa,
de patria, mientras que curamos heridas

viejas, mientras busco las palabras, la forma,
de expresar como necesitamos ayuda y por favor

no mas, pero solo encuentro las mismas
tres maneras de decir nada.

The Antipath

Andrew Colarusso

a cento
from *The Antipatharian* by A. Karkavitsas
trans. Joanna Haninck (2021)

I first heard about it
with awe
and great terror
passed from father to child
hard as iron
deathless as a ghost.

weak since I was young,
I would listen to men
Who had faced death,
 to my old man,
the antipath

He
Left mother hus-
bandless.” cut, off
sneaky like that
and not even the Archangel’s,
haunted! for centuries,

see the bones of madmen
that dangle, frightful
to make me give up hope.
But even as a junior
I never forgot the love of
my mother’s dark roots

the naked legs
a deep azure
purple after the sunset
my glory. joy and pride
raised to see chaos
and break free

hard as iron,
and deathless as a ghost.

Municipal Projection

Echo Association

A movie plays on the courthouse lawn
and specked light floods
the summer air.

A cowboy rests in a panorama of desert
against the stone wall. Beyond the city
the actual desert is sea-dead and vague,

or like the air an empty category, kingdom of vacancy.

We're deep in the film's listless middle action,
in the long slide from the cities of men,

our hero asleep in the folds of a lulling horse in the sun.

Out here a few kids are dancing to an unheard music
in the grass
and I'm following some flitting thing, unevenly disbursed,
distributed clump-like in the light,
the flecked hum of landscape or violence
as yet unscaled to human meaning.

I wanted to say something about his horse,
in its unfathomable redness,
surveying the prop buffalo in the basin,
the rigor of the battle dead.
You said there is nothing true of love
that is not also true of the Waffle House.

In the distance the ridge line drags at the sky,
wavers in the salt-choked lake.
"The world" is an inference error.

What the eye returns is something else: so much surface
tension, trembling and weird.

I have been wish-drunk and wrong:

In the distance there is only distance,
repeating like prayer.

Stars drift in the branches. Your mouth opens again
on the dark.

The gold dust in the projector light
has yet to stop falling.

Baby

Carolyn Ferrucci

Everything to have changed
Auspicious name scalloping the roof
Of the dying building
Endlessly, the partial part
Of the book, I held for a year
In case I had time to wait for you
The book signaled my debarkment
On knowing, unshored, the earth lost
Its contours as it tilts
The snow isolates sounds, the baby slept
Beside a blasting
Music, dark, we lost
Our balance, with less contrast
I sacrifice, accurately
I remember the desert
How the car window smashed
At the foot of the crunchy trail

I need huge collision
For this living, I get a screen
Of other people's
Breakthroughs, Carla says the teenager
Doesn't pretend the baby isn't close
Rachel doesn't know what she doesn't know

You said hello, made a swimming gesture, you wished

It was the 50s, that there wasn't the pressure of being
Spectacular and alone. I dreamt
I got away with a mistake
Because I was loved, touched your ear
Because your nipples have been adjusted away
From a physical sensation of one
Kind and into the physical
Sensation of being who you are

Law of perpetual change
Rid me of all charm

Love was either argument or absence
My exuberance mis placed
Saved for another
The ecstasy prolonged
So it's pain, again, this is not a runaway song I'm just
Unsure how to pronounce myself this evening
Nora said she reached the edge of who she could be
She found a sphere
I rest my brave, rest my strong
Kid in a corner left alone
Weak as I am now, come to my need
Just raged and believing
On my hip, a hot breath, the city
Is a surface
Idea I can't get to, underground
Where Christophe stepped off
The platform to rest, to tell us
Where a woman yells

And beats her chest her stomach her legs

Some afraid of what she'll say we are

I want to hear it

My neurologist likes poetry

She never has any answers for me

For how good that light is

I've never been good at saying

And I'll die trying, like I

Didn't mean to say you looked the same

You look yourself

Every surprise your whole of it

Impressionists

Carolyn Ferrucci

I'm not outside of this
Light unhomogenizing itself
Mediated, I say
I take it on like it is
Unslick line
Say a new thing on a desk
On a leave, riding a hide

Happy New Year, no one
Is Bad forever. The first line will not
Say always, say so grandiosely

Say no, now say now, now I hope
and I don't die. If you come and sit next to me
I'll take your shoulder, take my
time, you are one open window
in a hallway of closed windows
you are differentiating
dove cries

Tall Grass
says yes yes
Without speaking, I am
exhaust, but don't hate it here
just some days really ready
for the following life, where I
rises from the floor
like the water not so under all of us
right now. Not so all of us, one
lemon trees

a condo's sky
Leding what I understand, what I can do
What I can control
What I can say about
Small percent
of the channel, my vessel isn't empty, I drink
watery coffee eat oily nuts
amidst a steel sunset
no more years

Aggregate roadside dissolves
Thickly gods
Airly furs
Long shots
Yesterday's laughing figment
This bug is coming
Back from the casino
You got them big old eyes but no use for em
You see what you want to see

My house is always the desert elsewhere
My house is the inexact
Ruptured and otherwise

In my dreams I have the most clear arguments
You all understand me
Drawing a mouse
impulsive, lulled
dark, unhurried
motile, pluraled
Stairs from here to you
sea-bound and collided

driver's turnips / (Nice to Have)

Jess Grover

The good times were ahead, I was sure, from just across this knee-high mesh, alpine & inhibited, a tar-shaped dew flung from perfectly colliding chimes, as if to step onto or to step over, the minutely arcing distances of sorghum fields and what was commonly understood to be beyond the horizon, so that cohabiting a desire, or a muscle, or lustrous partial scratched ALASKA in the fathomable dusk, our animal-sore comfort so obvious after we'd left it, lust / like an eyesight, we drove ahead until the workers began a progress through clouds of invisibly escaping gas, unheard machines, at a distance like children toting cumbersome wagons on periodically negative pitch, they adjoined variously to the creamy air, which you had predicted, yes, and which I gathered from accompanying infrared video to be dangerous, in part in the scientific way, and in part in the way that any apex of contention passes physically into and across the world to meet its inexpertly tuned contiguities. Here, at a point of rejection. The good times were, as in mirrors, or mirroring the lawn's factual flank. Still, far more flat planes perfectly intersected in the vegetable garden than you could hold in your mind at once, so it was impossible, at a distance, to extend an open palm into the air and "brush" each one, one at a time, in any distinct direction, and in any kind of non-repetitive cycle. Following which, I stood, feeling myself to share so emphatically in the depicted loss. But to know it as just close to audibly sung, like a mannequin stirring cold cicadas, the mirage maybe happens because one anticipant has been either me or you, but not both of us, this whole time, and another is Antarctica slopping its way into a coterie of latex bodysuits. Not a premise beginning the operational statistics of light, but an interest impossibly observed. Not that the salmon form an inevitably weakening ledge, ideally, if when we described a brick by leaping up and down. Afternoon-shaped agricultures, lying incrementally deeper in reluctance and "cooling love." On screen. Above that. Then above that, but faster. We're moving forward, possibly, into the less solicitous paradigms of companionship. A four morning slit of temperatures into the fifth midday. She comes from a long line of sergeants, and speaking with

her I at first felt like I'd missed an entire panorama of lived expectation as concerned clarity, violence, and the expository kitchens of movement through reception that recanvass themselves to exceed in one way the mailbox gone lopsided every winter from plowed snow, and in a similar way the imaginative exigencies we refer to as empathy and knowledge. A BLT, please. Because I wanted to explain how I came to feel this way, but could not. Because working up to it, Laura repeats the tongue signal thirty times every day for a month through toothpaste froth as soon as she's finished brushing. Next is silent ire. Upstairs, birds fly as if inflated inside an acrylic raft. And then there's all this speaking with intention. As far as political rage commensurate with enlarging capacities of human love, it isn't a new quandary, but often felt as intervals of revelatory prelude, nonetheless. Dear W. Like the swelling berth of a buried bell: daffodil: daffodil: daffodil.

Salivas 1

Jess Grover

In no particular order, an impulse either to dismiss or else protect any ambiguous fact or nonconforming fact, especially social facts or the embellishment of social information; an awareness, at other times, of this habit, understood as less than desirable, by a kind of automatic measure, or by a rational measure, or by a combination of the two competing toward non-combinatory terms such that the data presented an idea that could have been described in any number of ways, but was described through the snow as *When I sleep in Groton, false hammers*. We were elevated from the earth by the certainty of the kite parting its own image into the cloud. What revenge is, supple between these low voltage strip lightings. E.g., the cinema aisle and airplane aisle, re-halving tenderly what declines from tenderness, in mutually devised assessments, which was love, how we spoke to each other, the solvate tailings of a category of fictional subject fixing its feet to either side of the flame-weeder in meditatively scorched driveways. I had the thought listening to the Liz Phair song called *White Chocolate Space Egg* that if I had known it in 1998, when it came out, when I was in middle school, and had asked T.M. if she knew it, too, if she liked it, that no matter how she answered we might have avoided that partnerless moment at whoever's bat-mitzvah while everyone else, or almost everyone else, slow-danced to probably the first 4:18 of Stairway to Heaven, but it's just astounding that still bothers me now, 24 years later, that I'm still filled with such shame when I remember how I stared at the floor beside her and nearly started to cry. I open that book of American poems & fall pretty much immediately to sleep. The poems in Spanish, though, which I have to work to understand, put me to sleep in a much better mood. "All right," announces my father, to no one. Or to himself, actually, of course to himself; how unfair of me to say to "no one." The side of the image, seen through the illumined kite wing's translucence. The side of the image, described incessantly, as in a dappling fawn. Impersonal desire in a fantasy colliding with the most personal desire, which is fantasy, where by impersonal the belief was mechanical whales, and by bearability, the battering end of a remunerative sliding scale. *When I sleep in*

marking a faint interior segment into what has revolved to partial reality, in the light, or abundant salt & sand, which has none of the light, but retains its avidity toward form uncircling upward in pie-shaped alcoves. *I spent much of my life, C says to me, plotting out this kind of thing in my own mind - what was mine, what wasn't, what began where, what elastically ended where & with eventually shocking finality, as meaning and location could not seem to exist, let alone vanish, simultaneously & in the same place; what was mine was the plotted field, maybe, or the plotting, anyway, what was everyone else's was everything else, it seemed. It was I guess a manner on my part of retention in a depleting world, or of forgiveness in a surfeit of world, which was not necessarily true, but it was the way - and this is the point, for me, that cannot be taken from me - it is how I have lived.* Then we went outside into the field, imagining the grass blades tickling up our arms and legs were actually sprouting for the first time, rather than just re-articulating their height after we'd lain on them. That is, she texted me from a nearby social distancing ring, "I can feel the grass growing lol," and I wondered why I felt so savagely defensive, in response, & yet again.



city is a sphinx

Mark He

the burial of clay idols'
earthen limbs
was registered
in the historical record as
first terracide,

second soon to follow?
or already a work in progress
 starting from the
 stripping of the streetcar tracks
or even more primordial forms of
slash-and-burn architecture

perhaps out of monotheistic guilt
idols were rebuilt
as building's heads,
 gnostic cupolas to
approximate daily sphinx

pose you questions,
transmit thoughts
 through dreams and
you take a picture to
better remember its image
upon waking

when you find the picture
between the seams of your eyelids
it asks you
 "how did it get like this?"
 from the realm of reminder
 to conscious association

the question is asked by another question
 the question is a sphinx

before it is asked
must it be begged?

every question
finds its answer
in a self fulfilling prophecy
drawn from discrete sequences
of quid pro quos

but *whose* selves are they fulfilling?

self is recursion
self-similar sphinx
has many questions
for and from itself
the sphinx is an inquisitor
the sphinx is a sentinel
the city is patrolled by its sphinxes
the city is a sphinx

the city has forgotten you
declares the poets from another era
but the city has no longer forgotten you
or perhaps it *forgot* to forget

instead it scrutinizes your
indelible
past and
futures

with its penetrating gaze

gnawing at your liver,
yellowing at your cornea

for fear of
everywhere edifice
for fear of
everyday oedipus

leave work under
weather
forecasted
in a
markovian mood

cold hands
configure a
minimax mudra

rate of return
in future warmth

exploit the
rising interest rates
in
labor theory of heat
heat theory of time

time theory of labor

labor theory of heat

heat theory of cold

an idea is a theory without rigor

an ideal is an idea without theory

an idyll is an ideal with a landscape

an idol is an idyll slaked
with the accumulation of sediment in its infinite idleness

no theory, only dust
no ideal,
no idea

blindfolded idols
roadside mounds

once they had been stupas to *earth mother*:

replaced by

blinkering altars

for transport theories

with fixed-income prayers

they rectify your

natural inclination to be

led astray on your

evening commute

and later at night

you dreamt of heavy rain in a

grid system

or lattice

as a reminder for you to wake up

and not forget

to tend to your rock garden

and

water the medusa head

A City That Can Listen

Jamie Kahn

We, wrapped like dove wings at kilometer zero
point zéro des routes de France
feathering white and dust-grey
I am a chemtrail.

In the hospital bed—
—I cry out to a death not worth cheating
It's all I want.
(to be eaten alive before I rot)

You originate here.

All the earth bows down to you. They sing praise to you. They sing the praises of your name.
When begging sounds like a song

When happiness rings like the sorrows of mourning
I cry out to a death worthy of defiance
—a city that can listen.

He rules forever by his power
his eyes watch the nations—let not the rebellious rise up against him
My tongue starts a cold war in you

—I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows
Prove to me that I am dangerous.

Watching Trisha Brown Rehearse M.O. on Film

Alexandra Kamerling

Sometimes she calls it furniture, sometimes geometry, watch as she bends her arm from the elbow on third count, shadowing the door. First there is the issue of the satellite, turning in its pathway to face front, looking for a body to orbit. The sequence is developed in silence, and when put to sound, she hopes that a third music appears. I walk along calcium deposits and make a bowl of my arms, newly mineral after traveling alone. The music gathers in the left corner of the room, off balance, inventing its own weather and pattern of sleep. Earlier that morning, I watched her walk up the side of a building, tilted to catch, she shadowed my knee. I make a bowl of arms and rest my head inside, along the glacial decoy. Across the yard, curtain pulled into hourglass and tied at center, a leftover idea. I think of her loose jointed alphabet, walk along calcium to make sense of the satellite, horizontal, reaching across empty space. Lying in mud I begin the score, drag my fingers through to feel some kind of pressure. Turn the ear towards accident light. I'm going to toss my arms - if you catch them they're yours.

—

The bowl of arms
holds plastic, soil,
the greenish
coat, her resting
head, circles of warm
water, sleep,
annoyance, blue flax,
pollen, delphinium stain,
spilled rubber cement, the infant's dream
cycles, glacial milk, night terrors
the Goldberg Variations,
the fall on purpose, the year
in lavender, a linking arm,
my first question

December 21st

Alexandra Kamerling

Cassiopeia lives above birch and to the left of the room, where we watch salmon toned wax drip onto cloth woven by friends. At our coordinates her chair rests on its back, and plants carry scent in their leaves: labrador tea, wild rose, high bush cranberry. Our shoulders join, south pointing, inhaling. The pain in my hip is on the right, I sit with all weight to the left as gravel shifts position, and months are noted by a square of light that grows on the carpet. You lift my arms, cross my wrists, a center. I hold the picture of you under the lamp, looking at a river that moves across five braids. Farther north the joints of her chair double the angle in tree where snow gathers, weather falls out of this point. Over floral satin, not roses but the color rose.



from Aftersong of an Empty Empire

Steven Karl

VII.

& when I tried to die, I became the sweetly candied affections that chorus your cavities of
capitulations
& when I tried to die, I became swallowed by the wine dark sea salt stung & sweat seepage upon the
skin
& when I tried to die, I padlocked the clouds and became heaven's hunger:
a dim glimmer of hope's hunt
the left-behind hurt unearthed
& when I tried to die, I became the uttering incantations of infinite spells for loves & enemies alike
& when I tried to die, I became a slippage in sexuality: my devotion knocking the fillings out of your
teeth, the low notes of my organ
a secret prayer unashamed
& when I tried to die, I became broken war:
torch stain
scalped city
after scrapped city
spilling cup over
& when I tried to die, I became the cloved stench of cool-breezed execution
& when I tried to die the poet's "Thank You 'Terror'" became my Dear Darkness
& I embraced the vast pitched black emptiness of it all
prayer/ pestilence/
root/ tree/
rip/ ruin/
suicide/ birth
when I/
tried to/
die/
& when I tried to die, I became the ecstatic multitudes of human yearn

VIII.

& when I tried to die, I became a fever burning up all the sick

& when I tried to die, I became the secretion of sweat—a slow manifest of skin sheen

& when I tried to die, I became an addicted brain lurching & banging about the skull for a breather

& when I tried to die, I became the rush of blood with all its eager gush & spill

The serration followed by pain that pierced & tingled

The blurring of light & darkness & light headedness the thin air

The brain lurched/ eyes enveloped/ in darkness/ my mere dear

Eternity as minutes marched all the mindful more soldiers & death prepares another bland bouquet

But a life of flowers was for another & a death begged for would-be embrace but a merest

Affliction of affection & each time (year after year) I tried to die—I did not die

My body bore each gash & rip & cut & sting & so I time my bidding

To rid this beleaguered body an endless burden of failed evolution

IX.

& when I tried to die, I became what the sun could not color

& when I tried to die, I became the bashful branches above the secluded pond

& when I tried to die, I became absorbed by pigments

a choked creek overflowing with fat frogs whose song is aimed at the earth

then refracted by the sun beam into soft burst of pillow touch upon the ear & then I

became the open ear attuned to the spreading dark & empty empire of aftersong

& when I tried to die, I became ruined sea—to see nature is in our own eye & that eye glittered then mirrored then shattered & the sight splintered into a myriad of I&I & then red seepage fast as flooding river rush then swallowed in dark the pitch of dark

X.

& when I tried to die, I became the undeniable flashing within all alit god bird song interwoven with
leaf & branch

a devout devour sound shrill to the ear (air) unaccustomed war is not without its unreported ravages—

February alone spilling with ghosts in the frost—

XI.

& when I tried to die, I instead became the average of many momenta & simultaneously the average

for many positions for any particle, the mixed metaphor of pollution & paradise the parasite in

heavenly feast the fast stretched into days of punishment to perceive a prophecy writ on unwashed sand, *but the tide* they say *but erosion is inevitable* they say & yet here we stand extinct unseen eroded corroded & humming all the fuck the same evolution waits for none but awaits the eye turned tuned to the rhythm of the unnamed unnoticed so we will arise from the city they forgot to name—

XII.

& when I tried to die, I could not die but became the voice of every child rising as one through the throat

& when I tried to die, I became a century of ghosts seeping from the bruised neck of songbirds

& when I tried to die, I became bloody band-aids breathing spit & flame

& when I tried to die but I could not die, I became casual world, astral world, material world

& when I tried to die but could not die, I became an institution to multiple ~~moral~~ universes

& when I tried to die but could not die, I became a shareholder in utopia



What I Can Recall

Avren Keating

Caught peeling paint from the baseboards.

You find me bisecting a memory

along the sagittal plane. I wanted it

to open like a book, but the split

made useless twins of the photo albums and bed.

Ducts and pipes gaping all over and I'm trying

to draw patterns in the puddles.

It was at the waterfront, or what I could recollect.

You were submerged in coastal wind and I

was trying to sing a song to you that succinctly

related the moment. But I can't carry a tune,

and if music is liquid architecture I've been dealt

the menial task of picking trash up off its beach.

Making a Shape

Avren Keating

Even the things that are most 'thinglike' are nothing more than long events. The hardest stone...[is] a process that for a brief moment manages to keep its shape.

Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time*

It's easier to think of a piano
as happening; harder is my lack
of playing it lately. Somewhere, I'm
synchronized with a meteor, I hope.
The long process of us both radiating
in harmony like my dogs' snores. You see,
I'm trying to take loneliness and make it
something like the weather, but the bird's eye
is replaced with glass. The grains are melted
completely still though I know their relation to sand.

Tenebrae kitchens

Jennifer MacKenzie

What do you want to happen at the end

Is it the end

I am always convinced it is
and tacking towards that rue

With a thud the clocks go out like candles

I am thinking of the cockroaches

in the pipes under my kitchen sink. How are they doing
with their fate, to outlive us. Collectively

their limbs seem like God's fastidiousness, tickling
the crawlspace between embodiment and profit

My sister says when she loses embodiment
she only feels her ribs constricting
and a bit of hunch

all joy abashed, submersed
and vanished in jabs of diligence

I can catalogue all the mistakes I made
in the last 48-hour stretch anywhere ever

Costume jewelry is a well of loneliness too
and I don't want to fall into a lesbian cliché
however vulnerable. I fucking meant venerable

but such is the grace of error Michael says

on the F train holding up two Michael icons I brought him
so I could photograph his face between them

(because I, envious, would have loved to be named
for an androgynous sword-wielding angel)

He says it was sometimes confusing to be Francis
too. Sister Death, break every mirror we appear in

When is urgency a grave. In flames
or perfect English. Well-trained, adept

whose travesty is this masquerade
blinking in normal light

coming unglued in bouts of bafflement
where singing tanks gaslit, unshriven

What is the hell where delight recants
and breaks, unforgiven

I refuse to say stinging
even if it's true

Freebie trauma

Jennifer MacKenzie

Hello from Queerville

Here's to survival

Yay floating red balloons of survival
in continuing pandemic

Are we allowed to sing

Hello from teetering up stairs with bags

Hello from total housing hell

I did not mean to disappear

I need a new teaching job

I never want to teach again

The biggest religion story

was supposed to be Georgia

The biggest religion story

was supposed to be completely ordinary

Americans furloughed without pay

But the ghost was still at play

in their explanations. Only money

spoke here. Here the reckoning

continued working its way backward

In a manner reminiscent of King Midas

Desert Wine won Hollywood Futurity

Desert Wine then died of heart attack

on the un-sacralized burial ground

of the Charleston race-tracks

Ghosts of Reconstruction

poured out everywhere

Here, killed by military guards

for trying to escape
Here, the president
Everywhere else, protests
Americans had gotten far too comfortable
with other people's deaths. Traced back
almost far enough to appear respectable
the ghosts of infants and children
surrendered at Fort Sill were sealed
with wax and tied with red ribbons

How did we get here, where the need took
this apparently religious shape. Frown lines
some fire damage, denominational
camouflage and built-in ghosts

Here, a quick inquisitive sparkly look
Here, keep alive. Really, she said
of the patch of ground, let's be here
But the New Age had never been new
Nor was it actually that exotic

Belief in the "the presence of spiritual energy
in physical objects like mountains or trees"
is avowed by six in ten American adults
Her FBI file felt we are all called to be saints

Your wound becomes your superpower

Jennifer MacKenzie

There was a violin trio playing in the vaccination center
They played Ode to Joy. Pandemic pleasure: Join a meat club

Michelle sat on a rock in Van Cortlandt and talked toughly
about some math till she was crying. Soft split husks
of buds litter the grass. The strategy to contain uprising

is to calculate what level of damage is acceptable
to outside powers, then carefully escalate under that limit

Like London of the 1710s, its boy sweeps dying of soot
inhalation, its industrialists dying of syphilis

In retrospect history looks distinguishable from blur
but I was a myopic creature eating and drinking
and smoking and working and pining after shallow persons

Wednesday clashing numbly across the bridge
I gave a man I couldn't understand a pastelito and he ate it
lying across two seats and got sugar all over his jeans

Now I'm in his seat and the river is silver and choppy under clouds
It's just when there's a shadow over me I feel swan-lead

I want to lean my skull against the harp strings of your thinking
until I exasperate you with nonsense. My skull is very heavy

because I love you and I don't know where to put my left hand
that you won't jump. Laughter and boots. Hair of feathers
It's actually a pretty good combination. So what now

Dante is in the streets not in the tourist trap of his fake house

says Akash Kumar. A dead child collapses layers of meaning
in the same hemisphere where the living dwell

Most people have no choice when they move
between heaven and hell. Of course they don't you say

A good coffin in Syria these days costs fifty dollars
Dante's fans replace Lady Liberty with a skeleton
No final note of hope about education

I want to eat you. I want to become the vampire
you spoke of in the novel I haven't read

Hopefully Zoom is frozen and you're not
just holding that face for a really long time



24.

□Reading Edgar Allan Poe□illuminates
the entire□disease in

~
MAN
~

is destructive. It
destroys□the future——the hypothetical,
□demands unconditional obedience,□

□troubles all it□
□desires.

To undo man by man's own doing,□
□to weigh the future of future□——

□*I'd like to know*
□*if all the gentry were killed off*
□——□*destroyed by flames*□
□*amid great banks of snow.*□

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Tender

Iris McCloughan

I saw it was not valuable
to be conscious or perceptive.

I sought the doors of my room,
as my mentation strayed

towards what I could not do.
In that place I was subject

to meeting friends that seemed
passionate but were actually not.

I found them expecting me.
They disclosed a succession

of bodies at play, quoting
each other: "No. Don't."

They stacked belief
in the shape of rest.

The garden dipped
itself in life, made itself

a girl, inviolate. I grew jealous.
At least she had a pond.

Things Swann had said lingered,
naturally. I was addicted

to his sharp point, that
most personal romance.

The crows came to the fore,
then fled further back, bound

to the heat of the man,
which they knew to expect.

I directed it toward the green,
which was no longer his.

En Passant

Iris McCloughan

I was sated by the water.
The days went by on rails.
I had a mandate, but
it suffered a sprain,

and then the stream
was shadowed. I wasn't
evil, per se, but I had
discovered more about myself.

There were eyes to make,
endowments to surprise
with tricks and renderings.
Pleasure was an animal, and

its stall needed mucking.
I ceased reading then,
holding the year by the hair.
The water was lying.

People were, in fact, broken.
On certain nights I could play
myself with some intelligence
and cry convincingly

about my parents. I seemed to leave
my own time, which was already over.
Invariably, the servants would drop
their assumed names,

and I would at last
discover what my relations meant
when they called me inflamed,
called me merely woman.



I ask this landscape

Nicodemus Nicoludis

for inspiration

wanting to own

the monuments

of deep time

Not so much the past

but the abstracted present forming

and reforming

sediment in

arkose breccia

like my body

bending always

to pick up napkins

that have blown

from the table

to the sidewalk

Or like the red-tailed

hawks perched

across the street

straining against

the wind

to dive and hunt

the pigeons and sparrows

kicking dirt

or picking up

small sticks carrying

them off somewhere

unseen to me now

though I look intently

I just

want to know

where all this stuff

goes at the end

of the day

But that is
my selfishness
 again always
 my daily habit
of confusing
the ocean floor
 for poetry

Or toxic clouds
flared in the Gulf
 as lightning or campfires

For now
I am captured
by the
 enormous stillness of old trees

and all the places
 that still need to be
set on fire too

 Winter this year
 will come on slowly
 over months
and I will continue
to feed on peonies
 and the incomplete
 universe working constantly
 to unfinish itself

Estranged as I am

Nicodemus Nicoludis

from hollowed mountains // clear cut and dynamited // running out of room // to further contort //
like coral looking // for breath between // the statues swinging // in the midnight of // The Nation
// Of course // I want to hollow out // the sunset // swallow the midnight // light pollution

Do you ever think // we'll see between // the lattice of satellites // and 747s?



Sonnet

Tamas Panitz

Write a sonnet that's the eviscerated story of a healthy tiger.
Growing happier and growing bigger. Let me focus on my blogging.
In this closed off disco, trust the biology of system, human buddy.
I'm in heaven giving out one big example of eating this bologna.

It's okay to suffocate erotic fancies with their own smoke signals
and that's good news but I didn't read further. It was time to say goodbye,
the door to your boathouse was fabulous but it's flimsy to me now
you bald ogre lit by flashing mob-lights, as platitudinous as home décor,

maybe you could tell me what silence and its capri pants can do for you
during my failed impression of Mary Oliver as a medieval town's florist.
Where are my people, my designer, my wine merchants, hair dressers,
transformed into mice and changed back again but experiencing hot flashes

then the curtains fell, crushing my hand so I dropped your hot wings
because like you said earlier: come lunch off my naked breasts.

The Estuary of Goods and Services

Tamas Panitz

In the June of 1797, some long-expected Friends paid a visit to the author's cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower.

— introductory note to S.T. Coleridge's *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*

I'm an injured cat willing to enjoy what tomorrow brings
despite the means of its procurement. Arriving shafts of light
taste astringent like hardy ways down at the rural museum.
Our improvisatory values became majestic through the generations.
All that speaks to me of you passes beneath the white picket fence
of my eyelashes
and like some small senseless animal forgets even to leave a trace —
and all the while, beneath the flowering vine of volunteer work
one's own arrival, too, is occasionally glimpsed. Though I'm unable
to respond, yeah, it's my real hair. It's the sound of me listening,
of me listening to you empty the contents of my briefcase,
my mind is alert but I suspect a proportion of hyoscine and I cannot
move my limbs, not even my eyes. But nothing lasts forever.

And anyhow, what's real now might not be real later on down the line.
A person in love, or a person gathering evidence, suffers
from the loss of potential alternatives that no longer impinge of their own will,
those busy/hung agents that cease to develop. But on the other hand
what will be real later is definitely real now. One needs only focus on timing
not to be fooled by the state of things. I'm talking about accuracy.
And I'll tell you this: a person in love might not be
gathering evidence, but a person gathering evidence is certainly in love.

One becomes accurate at the cost of disinterest. We call speech fine when
it employs fact for the sake of fact which is its broadest possible application.
Loiterers, extras, whoever, that's me listening to you, commercially, broadly, myopically.
Because it's not what you want but the way you want it; all that other stuff just

disappears. Nothing can fool the modern car,
as the odometer flies between annoying adolescents and
more traditional timepieces. The earth itself is so midcentury.
We gradually became aware of the complexity of things
though for a while there we forgot that you can't just call a name without
its octagonal landing space and coiled snake air-vac crew.
We forgot there's always someone home, masonically watching the door
while you rotate your tires — it's not spoiling it Sandy, it's only making it better —
watching us from that tangle of roots, from behind its dense Swiss Army knife

It's true that the stars are starving for us even as we murmur
their names. They watch conversation wend its way from eruption
to vitreous silica, quickly slurping up any nearby wildlife.
Protected by permanent enclosure, one displays an entirely
falsified mind while sort of humorously haunting it. Circe
with her vastness of playthings, the faculty of manipulation
itself is in wait. Vaguely lesbian vibes, I think we can agree.
Let me believe the ants have invited me to their parade,
to dance under the panties someone painted on the mirror.
Or the reverse of that, the building up of ultramarine in one's
ventricles: getting an erection for disinterested tomorrows
and suspirant black tomatillos. Ejaculating on the back of Eurydice. Or the reverse:
ejaculating on yourself in order to celebrate that you're still here.
Charting the activity of an endangered bird. I was only trying to
cheer him up a little, I groaned. The subtle fajitas of nightmare
fall like leaves onto the bed of my daydreams. Or the reverse:
vaguely lesbian vibes, like — Hey Mister, can I try driving that train? —
rhythmic doom-scrolling, in order to rent a motorbike
in your mother's home city. Or the reverse: cowabunga oral herpes.
Or the opposite of that: mitochondria prayer cards in a house for dried pigeons.
Or opposite: migratory beans and the right time to spit on someone. Or,
as close as we can get it, the opposite: quietness and total muscles, letting a sad
fart victim marry you. And all that sort of thing, just enjoying the simplicity of
resolution while one's rudder is slapping up the mountains, as numbers get chafed
on their barely legal mission.

Is speech an act of repulsion?

Some audiences would find this very alienating. Not an audience of martyrs, however. That's awfully prosaic. The vibes...

Is that Okay? My cum, I quickly spread it across your whole back. You are my calm wood, my happenstance. People have been saying to me, my god Silver Surfer, don't you hear what you sound like? True, true, polyphony do come up on me like that. They're asking if people are ready for hors d'oeuvre or horse's savings. Roving wreckers watch savagely from the shore. Greased wrappets frighteth me. Or a lost scarver in the semanter. Try to explaith the traim keeps get whiter from the trick. But quite perhaps she war too hooded to hear.

thou engulfed in louder sweat

Matthew Pelletier

Old friend

grelots sounding of flesh
Belet-Sēri no number for my *birthright*
and pulp and multitudes
 To non Enēa down the fucking moon
& new is the voice how the birds laugh
inficit umbras no bloodless myth
 urged on by clean hell's
enmeshment, Lilit Ulemta
 & stricken with Hand-of-Owl
Toladah Rubanit Du-Parsufim then
the only damned redeemable act he
 I love you, swaddled by all & the sweet hush
 more than I love living
set mouths to stomachs, Zeus Pornoboskós
 thus her disgust with bellybuttons
of foxglove & apricot Hekate's dogs be thy Haruspex
old friend that they have for foulness pity
because she cries and cries well
 Babylon! Tho I loved him endeavoreth
no pennyroyal but the opposite
 I will wear a navel
 & all Thessaly rejoice her Bothros of plaque
she'd beg for meowing thou *of many guests*
 no pennyroyal nor
hung vigneron of light fruit
and my best ram vomits *širadili kiaže*
 & all Thessaly rejoice
for it this damned protracted rape

Un ami jurera qu'ils ont trahi le roi
What thou a damned fiction
of infernal politesse of
Senoy, Sansenoy & I'd love a *pomegranate*
causa draconis below yesod more than I love living
or agent of gnosis, in dextrarum iuntio handfasted
to a serpent blast this blasted confusion
never to Carrara a mewling Hades
nor Dante the first woman in the bathtub retching
like the whole fucking *res publica*
would levitate
& sometimes the opposite of this &
slither, fain quarrel with Aphrodite
like cicadas and applaud all at once
having plucked flowers on
hébés metron to birth ghafts and love them
& my wreath, wind of the hooves!
I was called Kallipais producer of beautiful children
by the navel of Eve! whatever
stars bear its name but cannot be smelled
expiring fishnets *surprises* the trickle
ungodly plaque who knows what & yeast of fucking legions
it's your world & I'm livin in it
to birth ghafts *take my hope to fertile fields*
this is enmeshment, nondum orso smoother than oil her mouth
hubris of Babylon chariot of stone
hearken to the mewling
the farce of yr quarrel a going-down with gold
& made their sinne my doore
to a silence beyond Tartaros be you wine-dregs
by skull & folios she presseth close, kisseth not
my wounded pirouette giving yeast the suck
Ulemta there on the flysch fearing bellybuttons

at the *idea* lash out but gape for spittle

a treat the angel

saith "There will be no more Apocalypse

Go on living forever

old friend, širadili kiaže,

I will recount the sweat of the earth, tears of I, Nestis

thou engulfed in louder sweat how I loved you all

He took Kore

Matthew Pelletier

a furious corpse

not Herakles

Plain, which

there resideth the neither

[...]

daimon of the aulos the

song of bellowing wind

crashing bronze

teeth of the nuptial poet

free

one task. the

once dreary Titans.

you will not make this mistake again!

Athens!

[...]

bathed in the cold sweat of his tight-gripping hands

double heart

fingernail

[...]

dogs the haruspex!

she would not eat.

married

sweet-smelling oil and foul smoke

laughter

[...]

the

Roaring Hades

crown

gentle rattling gold,

trampleth

as lightning

hooves

unknown of Astraeus,

“Maiden’s Wreath.”

recess

enthusiasts

the

when torch

bursteth the crown!

third

three smiteth

incestuous host

my love

Empty nightsky!

but

“recess

triple, and dog's breath
moonlit end of threshold

hackles crocus
once Pherai Eleusis!

every and lyre

the most immense

but that no lyric sings

love.



Clouds Account

Zach Peckham

sown to bloated crows

so new so known

a feeling ice

lake as white

and bordering application

tongue inc

or prorated screws

uncrewed from blue etc

sign encrypted

edge of the towns

comply with

compounded frailty

alternates alternate

altered alluring

current concurrent

the century's

Away Street

Zach Peckham

To my death

But not the death itself

The moments shortly after

Some quote is chosen

My imprints flash in a metal bucket

There's a mirror on the mirror ceiling

The feeling I have done something

Very wrong it is a secret

Being harbored by the world around me

While being harbored by the world around me

Is a gift

The sun is raining

I stand on the ground and look at the ground

A running sequence

Of options something wrong

Attempted this

Very wrong thing

To put my self in the center

While being out

In a way that's in

Made a donut out of space again

Enspiraled staircase

Overacknowledged

The rain passing

A collective plural entity

In a sheet

Without a sense of self

Would this be possible

I mean here in this that is

Where I am trying to find where

Something on the ground becomes

A hinge or

The yellow airing

Of day is a space

Square maybe

Sense can arrive

Looking like departure

What else

Oh the yard is good

I like the way the yard is

I like that dry strip on the driveway

That hugs along the length of the house

Because of the overhang after it rains

It gets dark earlier

Light later

There is an enclosing

Here you can feel if

You want it

Materials often
Are arriving in
Containments
Getting made
And still
This feeling
I have done something very wrong
Not in the way that that sounds
Like something that's a secret
What it is is
Obvious geologic
Everything has
That everything
And that one too
A way street
Toward impending death
So this may seem like
A strange way to end this
But there is no one else
I would rather share clothes with

from **The Racket is Unbelievable**

Maxwell Rabb

thin muscle

torn

i trace

the grids in the yard—

a shatterglass morning

stitching creased carpet edges

pruned

the dye—

fresh yellow

tint for sun-

kissed pupils

day//

break

one patchwork—

the family

a cruel fabric quilt /

a discordant
dance of fibers.

the word is pointed away

suffixed driftwood in

the southeast

unheard

yelled splatter glass curses

vinyl passkey

illegal mortgage

measuring the square foot

grass pass hue of greens

artificial weavings

shot by a woodworked pistol

i puncture toxin and

cataloged vowels

noxious wordwork pincer my throat

concise stalemate—

a sequence of broken sentences—

shuttered
glass

eyes locked
the green curls

fall to grey

cold
frames

twist
frost
roots

and i
cannot reach
the fence

porous,
the fresh
flame to the
knee

god splits
a bad garden dies before
summer—



DOUBLES MATCH

Ryan Skrabalak

Happiness is practicing what you do
best in the world. Still I wanted to try the fist on

Did I lean into the immense grease
Stutter a welcome mat in halogen

I drive inside
the fog and the foliage

slowly uploads crows
into some vision. There's a way in
which the the poem
The page. An emotional fluid

Bleeds in exile to bring it back into sociality

In remembering

the incandescence taken

I'm sick from the terpenes

I have a few bricks

I want to toss

At the gates

of the fabled red city

Smelling the dinners cook down

Tucking cocks back into panties

The results of the questions

Themselves

As if slang crowded

a midday's breath

To be escorted

with a royal manner

I couldn't ever return

there. To think it had been

a white lie. Vowels when asked

in the clockwork smolder.

But I do care about your architecture

PASTORAL

Ryan Skrabalak

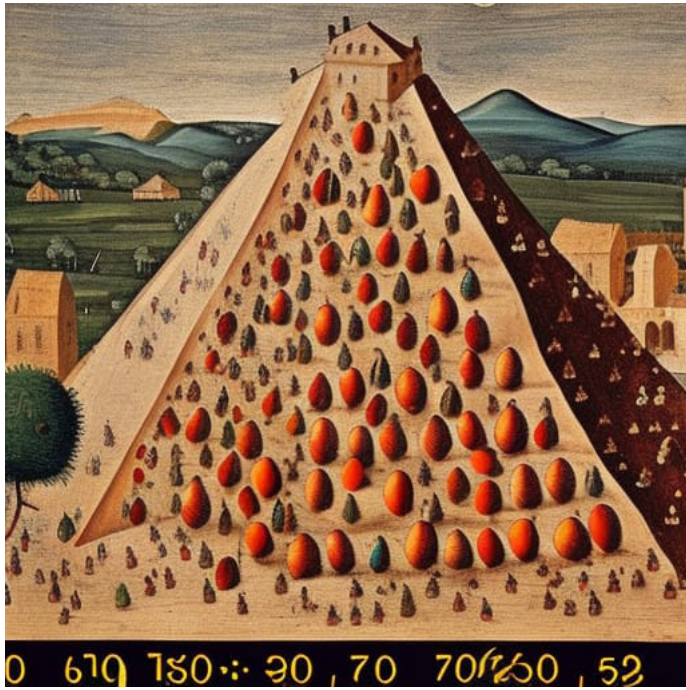
A poor substitute comma paralyzed tulips
incoherent in water associated with lyric
to feel traditional (against censorship)
but freed of rational delight comma people
The world looked back at me until I went
online Sorrow
lives on the air like a definition
Of nothing Must've
arrested in dreamlike fluency
(arrested in fluency and assisting) paralysis ahistoric
sustained performance of water and knowing it
Closes his eyes in editing surplus despite perspective
the very form of *Ausgangspunkt*
white tent
blue you sky
half of me
is that comma reason? Specific accidents
left our capacity that refuses to die
a saunter to imperfect the night
past its machines

DOLLAR CLOUD

Ryan Skrabalak

The actors you see are unpaid as I was saying
I stopped by the glory hole on the way to
memorize the documentary, get groceries
and get the money, talked my violets
and shined the Trot fiber optic ponytail's
newspaper for mumbled nakedness
"Hallelujah, I'm a Bum"

Theoretical oilrainbows in distal moonspit egg
He selected a crayon to delite the paper
In my just light which is violated stripmall
Five cent deposit Indiana lumen dandelion
braille saturated erotics make the field helix
in an official statement for the law
and it was like Earth, it was groaning
in an official statement for a flood, on one,
with wings infinitely but heat, flooding heat
twisting cool specific gemstones but a dog
alone inside my voice, announcing it all as if
I could be a blue ghost, too, all this time



AN OUTFIT FOR MY REVERIE

Myene Yanu

I never wanted to find the deficiency in others—in order to feel more complete—
I've been accomplice, I think—
to memories irretrievable
Suspicious even

One may say the things they want to say to oneself
Least
I could be
nursing an incoming menstruation
Of false
Monotonous dreaming where I drop
 my world
and all the eyes shut
dead I think you
made me
up
inside your
head— Lying in wake
of depictions, of angels
covered in eyes reaching
a new state of peace
Too carnal
Too direct
Or have we gotten
Too
Occupied
About the overdrawn bank account
cell reverberations
States of activation
Hormonal scarring
curiosity's damage upon the skin
organ done-ing
I assert my boundary
I tell the truth
I Remembered wrong
It was the ocular flooding

The astrologies
An intuition
too good
for the spirit's edge
Or am I turning evil
Too last minute
Midnight dialogues
On equal heart fluencies
wanting a kid late in life
past the geriatric
pregnancy stage
A miraculous birth
or to make love to The Sun
by Alice Coltrane
Sappho's fragment—
heart on my chest
in wings
entertaining orgasmic stasis
A verb for the soul-hesitation—
or a fake-lyric—
or imagined tears from my eyes when we're blushing uphill, the pillows—
unrested,
fig Newtons on the psychedelic mattress cover
Body doubled

In my head
I'm in my Schiele socks:
Thigh long and woolen
I'm pulling up my Schiele legs, diamond pose, drawn out—
I am also a seated woman With a long Expression
Where
You grab my foot to draw my knee unto
Neck, a kiss at the ankle before we take ourselves under
And I'm twirling my piano fingers through
chanting hair up hair up Victorian lady hair up *light the candle* *unwrap the shawl* Victorian
shoulder
Cover the kids' eyes
I remind myself to tell him to bite me later
so I can see him on me later

Even a little emotional ambivalence

Is toxic on the spirit but rather than describing an internal environment I'm on about
self-tying and being on good behavior with all the words for
exhaustion

For our

half-slept stomachs

For that living dead delirium who didn't think it

possible to feel again nor these blemishes enough to change a mind I hope or

For A rage that cannot bargain

Or a vigor in the nausea who runs

unmatched to the song stuck on my mind heart on my chest in wings

That one instant sinus infection

Or outside two flies land on your thumb and you say "great ecology" and I say my fingers smell
like garlic and you say stick out your tongue and you lick my tongue

And say it doesn't taste like garlic

In my head when I open my eyes from the things in my head when I find one fist
Fisted , the other
crumbling the Nicorette
Polacrilex

4mg

User's Guide

Where the AD says "A Healthy Life starts with these three habits" and there's a picture of a little
man being anchored down by clocks

I'll keep this for my children and
sprawl the aisles of Acme

Off Passyunk

Where I tell my kids that this is where H.H.Holmes was executed

And they'll say who's that

And I'll say a murderer and then *twirl my piano fingers* *victorian hair up*

Hopefully I am the kind of mother who pushes the grocery cart in a jean bikini

I give millennial anecdotes and chuck biscoff at the kids

At some points your life settles I'll tell them and there's no more mystery
and they'll tell their children, grandma was a woman of limitations...

adopt a particular self-awareness before your last demon scarves itself around your neck, I continue

The last demon, I finish

They laugh

I am fun. Detaching

an image from its audio processing is
memorizing

museum-ized—

Trying on a new

defunct medication

Too urgent to define the end
An End,while

It's unfair to tell someone that you want them to be your end
right

I must not entertain

re-calibrating systems
I will not wear
the pace of paranoia
Reclusivity, or idleness.

Or
the insufficiency
of language
in the face of love

There is no manual for this
Just a little man anchored down by clocks
Forget the kids

Have you ever gotten drunk in complete and total silence

Say depersonalization six times fast

What passion incites wound

What wounds and incites passion



CONTRIBUTORS

Terrence Arjoon is a poet and book-maker whose work has appeared in *Tagwerk*, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, and *Screen Slate*. His chapbook *Acid Splash, or Into Blue Caves* was published by 1080press. He edits *1080 Magazine* and *The Brooklyn Review* and co-organizes the poetry series at Pete's Candy Store.

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Steven Karl is the author of two collections of poetry, *Dork Swagger* (Coconut Books, 2013) and *Sister* (Noemi Press, 2016). From 2010-2020 he served as the Editor-in-Chief for the online poetry journal, Sink Review. Recent poems have appeared in *jubilat*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *the tiny*, *Tokyo Poetry Journal*, *Apartment*, and *Maiden Magazine*. Originally from Philadelphia, he spends his time between Boston and Tokyo with his wife and daughter.

Jennifer MacKenzie's full-length book of poems, *My Not-My Soldier*, was published as part of Fence Books' Modern Poets Series. Recent poems have appeared in *Jubilat*, *Witness*, *Prelude*, and *Conduit*, and literary journalism in outlets including the *Kenyon Review Online*, *Guernica* and *Hyperallergic*. She lives in the Bronx where she teaches at Lehman College, CUNY. She is currently completing a memoir about teaching in war economies from the Bay Area to Damascus and learning to dismantle the War on Terror's rhetoric of erasure.

Marchiano is a queer poet, community organizer, and activist residing in Brooklyn, NY. Marchiano received their MFA from The New School.

Iris McCloughan (they/them/theirs) is a writer, artist, and performance maker in New York City. They were the winner of the 2018 Stanley Kunitz Memorial Prize from *American Poetry Review* and were named a finalist in nonfiction for Best of the Net 2020. They are the author of three poetry chapbooks, including *Triptych* (greying ghost, 2022) and *Bones to Peaches* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2021). Their writing has appeared in *Tupelo Quarterly*, *juked*, *jubilat*, *Gertrude*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, among many others. Iris's performances have been presented in NYC (The Poetry Project JACK, Ars Nova, Movement Research at the Judson Church), Philadelphia (Institute of Contemporary Art, The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia Contemporary, FringeArts, Vox Populi), Chicago (Links Hall), Detroit (Public Pool), and elsewhere. Most recently, they directed Joan Jonas and Eiko Otake's collaborative performance *Drawing in Circles WHY?* at Castelli Gallery. They have collaborated with many other artists and writers, including Eiko Otake, Joan Jonas, Alex Tatarsky, Mike Lala, Jessie Young, Toby Altman, and Julie Mayo. <irismccloughan.com>

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Tamas Panitz is the author of several poetry books, most recently *Vesuvio* with Joel Newberger and Losarc Raal (New Books: 2023); and *The Country Passing By* (Model City 2022). Other books include *Conversazione*, interviews with Peter Lamborn Wilson (Autonomedia: 2022), and *The Selected Poems of Charles Tomás*; trans. w/Carlos Lara (Schism: 2022). He now co-edits the journal *NEW*, which he co-founded. He is also the author of a pornographic novella, *Mercury in Lemonade* (New Smut Series: 2023). His paintings and stray poems can be found on instagram, @tamaspanitz.

Zach Peckham is a writer, editor, and educator. His poems, essays, and reviews have appeared in *jubilat*, *Territory*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Oversound*, *Always Crashing*, *American Book Review*, and elsewhere. He holds an MFA in poetry from the NEOMFA and teaches at Cleveland State and the Cleveland Institute of Art. He is the managing editor at the CSU Poetry Center and editor-in-chief of the *Cleveland Review of Books*.

Matthew Pelletier spends alternating seasons on a guano-cruled throne in hell
And for what? for my share of Titanic Sin, for the hubris of my Androgyne, or for
that lovely dancing naivete of not knowing that that flower was metaphysically booby
trapped?

Matt writes here dim exorcistic preludes that await their magical formulae.

Maxwell Rabb is the author of the chapbook *Faster, the Whirl Wheel* (Greying Ghost, Forthcoming 2023). His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in the *Action Books Blog*, *Sleeping Fish*, *mercury firs*, and *Tagwerk*, among others. He received his M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He lives in New York City where he co-edits *GROTTO*.

Ryan Skrabalak is a poet, educator, and organizer from so-called upstate “New York” currently living in “Kansas” with his dog, Donkey. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Trilobite*, *Denver Quarterly*, *TAGVVERK*, *baest*, *Sprung Formal*, and *queer.archive.work*, among others. He is the author of the forthcoming *The Technicolor Sycamore 10,000 Afternoon Family Earth Band Revue* (Ursus Americanus Press) and *Assembled Climate* (NEW Books) as well as several other chapbooks. He runs and edits the poetry micropress Spiral Editions in Lawrence, Kansas, where he is also an instructor at the University of Kansas, a radio DJ, and a member of AFT 6403.

Myene Trimble Yanu is a Philadelphia based poet. She is the author and voice of *Fantasy Audio Only* (2022, Peace Isn't Luck) which can be found on Bandcamp.com.

