

# WORKS & DAYS 6

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# Millington

*Katherine Duckworth*

The job pays and

we are cutting it

maybe a week before it blooms.

It's not a delicate swing of a scythe, it's a droning

wack that becomes syncopated

when I tire, ache washes out a specific field.

But I want to see the goldenrod, anseo.

# Untitled

*Katherine Duckworth*

Impatiens, because the fruit explodes  
like the boy broadcasting the *nicotiana* seed  
because he wants to hear Cincinnati play baseball on the radio.  
Column 9 on the census asks about radio access in 1930.

For relief from a persistent itch:

one cup freshly gathered jewelweed steeped in olive oil  
heat will speed the infusion, but never let it boil  
strain out the plant matter  
add a few teaspoons of beeswax, more beeswax  
makes for a thicker salve  
slowly heat, then add 15 drops of lavender or oregano oil  
geranium is nice, too  
pour into the desired vessel.

What else is up? Some of the goldenrods, cotton, okra  
rudbeckia, figs.



# I know today

*Katherine Duckworth*

They washed our feet at church camp because they stunk

Someone tried to sell me land

When talking to AI, I keep it rude

I would fuck the pitcher

I don't have any money

No one has any god damn money

Israel is not letting food into Gaza.

They're killing journalists.

Everyone is experiencing grief

around storms, sometimes the rabbits die in the field.

Sometimes the farmer kills them with a shovel and less often

I am able to chase them away.

## After failing to recall a particular

*Katherine Duckworth*

the brown puddle  
where we are lucky if we are collected and deposited  
into butterfly sperm, *puddling*, when they gather and  
kneel. anseo, the iron mud in Mississippi – you can only smell it when  
you touch it.

some good men piss during the best part  
of a song about place:  
walking along the ridge of a gully  
where someone named Hicks deposited washing  
machines.  
we watched the same heron fly over day after day  
until it didn't  
I could never write *The Hicks* whose peanuts,  
hanging muddy off the plant, terrified me. booked it home  
barefoot on the limestone gravel through loblolly, *the cash crop of the south*.  
and did we hear the Bob White, then? or was it his  
incredible whistle?  
if you were to follow the creek, anseo, down to the *Fagus grandifolia*;  
a war allotment.

# Elysian Fields

*for olga*

*Ian Lockaby*

Inside the city now  
you're rippling away, all  
vinegar light in the greens—

You arrive at  
J&Js and I look at you  
through a voyeur's windows

you smile at me down through sounds  
of a tropic crypt

You told me, no one can leave

those myceliated bar patios, swollen  
Olympian with well-water we take  
to boil now in the swamp

Inside the city anaphora wakes  
to another precipice, stoves topple over  
the docks

swept off by  
semi-rabid tugboats hungry  
for accordion grains of beef

Dinner atop those stoves was warm and red and  
swirls off now in the green Mississippi  
or stagnates in the sound of

That summer you worked over  
August flowers with me  
down valley in the veg—

Or was I already back

in Olympia, fighting visions  
of burnt curtains—

All the abattoir workers flee  
like catahoula in the swamps

But inside them the abattoir lives  
grinding on with blood  
pneumatics—

“Presupposed by tradition”

Wetlands subdivide to swamp—

Back then, early evening was  
always implied—19, whinnying out  
*Fuck the Police* full of summer cold in  
someone’s backseat

as spray foam broke out  
insulating chambers between  
mushroom colonies of your aorta

and heaven—

Now the stoves topple, and you arrive

Where every hour “...morning. Is said to me”

My vision drags up tar  
of a telephone pole at the sun-thick corner  
of the wharf and another floodplain

Birds of the south lease  
subtropic serums injected in my  
amygdala—

A share of primitive sadness  
paused in its holiness by decapitations

of travel

Whereas before it was milk  
a skim-drizzle up the drains—

Here the sun breaks over the city  
like a yolk  
and we take it  
through windows of the barroom—

paused in holiness—and into our glasses  
once more  
decapitated by light

# Callery Pear Kinglet

*Ian Lockaby*

Petroleum feast  
in the picnic grounds

Dew in our branches  
, oils thicken  
the smell of us—

Mouth some  
salt lick amiable  
hidden out

Hot twin arteries  
o petroleum and freight

under in between  
you wait—

To measure the cost of  
you hauled

one minute through  
the catastrophe

# Delta Plastics

*Ian Lockaby*

suffusing my  
self with

advertisements  
, the cent-

er of morality  
, thank you  
declining systems

but then a-  
gain on the eve  
of the crash

has you made:  
rich and  
feral in the pig  
temples

ought to be-  
headed for it—

choked on milk  
of the bayous

suffusing my person-  
alities with debt

# Holy Cross the Neighbors

*for fahima*

*Ian Lockaby*

In the dream Fahima  
said: Orchard in your area—in life  
they said, *hello & how do I*  
*grow these beans?*

I wanted to build more  
porous walls against  
the fallow field, so—

sweet potato cat in-  
different cilantros of the  
temperate winter

—a vein bounces  
in summer harvest  
camps over  
muddy shores of sound

In the dream, Fahima was  
standing under the biggest magnolia  
in the city, in our life

And inside the unflooded house,  
dust of the pine heart  
filled the rooms, a saging sorts

As Carrell tells me how he saw  
my doppelgänger at the lumber  
yard, I wondered about the others

*There's 8 of 'em* he says—

I went to search, got holed up at  
the sobbing center of the city, scent



of wet rot sobbing from the oak pores  
of St Claude

I dreamed of a dry rot, could  
only really dream of it  
in the sound bending light  
over the asphalt

I felt one star  
in my vein, migrating out  
and beyond life

We applied the spar finish  
to the cypress door  
you spar with the heat  
grain of the wood—

Then James said, *Chris was  
my friend. And he was my friend.*

And we both went quiet  
and stared off down the block  
straight shot the river

*He had problems yeah... but they  
didn't have to shoot that man...*

From Holy Cross to Holy  
Cross county, there's 8 big rivers  
in between, before I'm guessing  
you get to those  
ever-apt oceans, salt-wash your feet—

A saint must cruise, Claude-like, holy walker

Later, Fahima said in real sound:  
*I'm on the beach, I'm taking the sun*

and a tiny star bent open their voice

*from* [hail]

*Alex Tretbar*

[00]

This was recorded in the air.  
Between today and feelgood.  
And I've ripped out my boutonniere.  
In other words.  
Is it okay if.  
For the purposes of song.  
I call myself "me."  
I'm sorry to hear that.  
You are a body.  
But I'm wishing you good health.  
In the manner of a care system.  
In the bell of the reader's ear.  
And we shall find refuge.  
In other words.

Look what I did with the hole in my head.  
Handheld, dew-bright, here.  
How it exponentially multiplies its labyrinths.  
To distance myself.  
But it was overwrought.  
Sundowning, the maternity ward tilts fascistically.  
A lavender plastic egg with seventy grains.  
Which will inform our early works.  
Of uncooked white rice: a percussion instrument.  
And/or a circlet of sun.  
Nodding out graveside, I shake my head.  
I'm going in early tomorrow.  
We came up to see you so quickly.  
Which will inform our later works.  
That we got the bends.  
And the interviewer lagged out.  
Watch how I place my hole in the head.  
Where the conservation glass is smoked.  
What genius, a gun—but handheld, dew-bright, here.  
Like a plastic egg with tungsten filament.  
Don't get bent out of shape, but.  
Let's meet for coffee and see if our wars are compatible.  
Good night, dear tabulator. Hello, clean mind.  
Congress codifies a new freezing point for waterfalls.  
Work informs work.  
It kind of made me crazy: Easter, pastels, acid.  
Which is less forgivable: water stains.  
And it's falling through my head.  
Horizontally.  
Or a politics informed by fugue.

In my head, a rhythm section.

Artillery counts as a rhythm section.

The beginning, all caps, period.  
To be completely honest.  
I know you're a state official, but I must tell you.  
I didn't read it all.  
My notebooks were self-inflicted.  
And I wonder if it was intentional.  
There was a second of silence once.  
Should I cut my hair in eight months.  
Before the song began.  
Or just let it grow.  
A preponderance of rhyme in logic and syntax.  
Like broken eye contact with a stranger.  
But nonetheless it hails me.  
[Insert diegetic jump rope cadence]  
And how my writing would suffer for it.  
Like a signal that could give out at any moment.  
But I've been thinking about dying.  
Into a statement that calls and responds.  
I'm not trying to scare you.  
By appropriating attributes of its answer.  
When walking backwards into the poem.  
Is this a copy, question mark.  
What if I faced the street.  
As though I had seen it before.

My thermostat doesn't know my name.

I have this theory that all residues eventually degrade, disappear on their own.

But nonetheless it hails me.

No need to rewash your hands.

I have this theory that I can recreate the cell.

[Insert diegetic dial tone]

Can I trust you with my coat.

The bedroom you build around yourself.

Some might consider winter to be a residue.

I won't forget the way the hallway reeled at me.

A thousand years removed, a reversal of policy becomes fascinating.

The weather doesn't know my name.

The way the kitchen reeled at me.

Something touching about the pile of coats in the guest room.

Because I have a theory about dial tones.

I have this desire to sleep in other people's homes.

Which are the first and third of an F major chord.

Two thousand years removed, fascination becomes fascinating.

F and A.

The way the kitchen window reeled at me.

73°.

So we removed two thousand years.

The way I reeled at my reflection in the window.

The way I opened it (the window).

The violence will be shown in silhouette only.

I degrade, disappear.

Something touching me.

The way I climbed outside of it.

But what about goodbye.  
The mirror calling the reflection of itself a wall.  
Does that also have to happen.  
This particular shade of blue will cost you 0.041 cents.  
Within hailing distance.  
On the jukebox, which bestows upon and/or bellicosely juxtaposes.  
X is experiencing a surplus of weapons.  
There is nothing in the world.  
Camouflage face paint and/or clown makeup.  
X may send you weapons in lieu of currency.  
Won't solve, even at 12:01 a.m. the day before payday.  
From the jukebox, a blues. A papier-mâché.  
Of current events and news.  
X would like to send you weapons.  
This world, bottomless in abjection, wouldn't do for you.  
Good night, earshot. Hello, salutation.  
The wall calling the reflection of itself a mirror.  
And the figure, thinking, positioned between them.  
The chewed paper has identified you as Y.  
The wall and the mirror, that is.  
Within two revolutions.  
Within hailing distance.  
Does that also have to happen.  
Per minute.

*from* **Imagine finding me (for Chino Otsuka)**

*Molly Schaeffer*

They're now making lamps out of real bread. A croissant undergoes lamination twice, in the process of the dough and the process of a lacquer painted on that somehow converts to a light source. Ok baker, fabricator, architect, you want so much to prove the fragility of sight, ok, you did it, and the light's the color of permanent burning without consequence.



Whose project delights not in depicting the sunset, but in erasing portions of it. A flash of light and the sky projects, like over and over and over the same tear through the clouds. Violet recognition and the shades change in subject: it's one after another, striations like blinds break through, then clarify, then conceal again. Take out one headphone and smell the pastries better, that kind of interchange isn't rightly movement, more horizontal compulsion. The horizon bleeds, melted laminate. Each time a color's moved over another that's a deeper purple, which is thicker, more opaque, density at once providing safety and a trudge through bruise-colored ambiance. *Trying* can't take on every color of every day, just one color per day, and if it layers it could try to work at some different strategy.

I went to the museum alone to see the giant paintings but instead found myself soaked outside a different, smaller museum, and my phone charged in the other room while I stood watching the artist appear and disappear inside her childhood photos. That smaller piece of self—I clock in what's remarkable is that, at twelve, I can't conceptualize myself at thirty, let alone have her hover over me, brush my hair, find the freckle on my hand. The bakery doorway isn't clouded by shadow, it's a full human form standing beside it, two selves nearly touching shoulders. Flash of a broad flat smoothing over time.

+

That click is clouds populating into origin  
The mistake is probably

necessity in animals is like color  
relational, via habit or preference

Portions of a dream meted out  
or gathered to sit on without looking

Who decides a brush stroke  
Who decides a stain

“The aesthetic is the realm  
of the truly human”

or that’s the decision  
to enclose

the borders or the choice  
as though that were the same

It's more important that you do it  
than what actually happens

to colors when you bunch them  
Briefly a fistful, one mess

following a moving edge  
ie, the shortest segments of time

in which the world exhibits no changes  
I returned, the figure

in the dream remained  
I remembered

I did not move  
I wondered at

+

## *from* Constraints of the Season

*Molly Schaeffer*

The shaking feeling is reminiscent of a glow, but shiny only means good when it's directly in front of you, not constantly skirting the periphery, which in silvers is where it lands, relands, shifts nauseatingly before my left. Left alone I start to feel the personalities more of every tree, not always waving, or, always waving, but a gesture isn't always an invitation. A dropped leaf might be a boundary, ragged margin, a number of them, or a crunchy-edged halo. Waiting is a hospitable action but this goes back to the circularity of walking around, loitering, casting blankness frozen in the sky, standing on one foot examining my wrist *is* that an action, since I added a tail to the word? "Waiting" might just as easily be called "splitting time." One strand is dragged along the shore and the other stands in the air impervious to wind.

I want the background spread out before me like a pair of hands, or like four hands, which is a piece of music intended for a duet or for limbs merging with one another. On the “screen” a human body fills with static, shadows scroll towards the surface like fish, repetition gasping for air underwater. Or a form fills while it crawls inside a cache, a way to store closure, actually a latch, the word to come to mean a cap being placed on, a lid put on and covering the full but priable, the lid means it was opened once, can open again.

*from* **Brilliance of Unbeing**

*Lucia Duero (tr. Anayvelhse Allen-Mossman)*

like an animal pursuing its death  
the hunt for meaning

ivy sculpting a yes

i no longer have a language  
continuation

i imitate i trace the outlines  
no endemism just  
dependency on adequate surfaces

to prolong  
let what has been started exist

it's an edge it's a corner



## I

in search of  
scientific proof  
of solitude

## II

traveling back in time  
to the fog in the heart  
just a hazy afternoon grazing the skin  
just the haze  
of contact

to arrive and expect  
to be here

to be here  
and not lose oneself in the haze of an idea

## III

not even the brightest dawn  
will dissolve the fog  
that insists  
on hanging around                      on interrupting—

before arriving  
i always leave

the next step

*vado*

nothing that could follow

nothing that could antecede

## NPD

more below than above

*skeptikós*

not wanting what you wanted yesterday anymore...

not knowing                      yesterday

error's precision

stitching and unstitching that button within you until the effort of it disappears

but error is round...taking and giving in a single gesture

what more is there

*from* **Quincunxes**

*E.J. McAdams*

state power built brick walls

small seeds below soyle sides

split vines arise wedge break

right passt state ranks renew

stand force their green ways

armes beard belly bones brain  
flesh hands heart jowle joint  
legge liver lungs mouth nails  
odour pores ribbe sight spine  
sweat thigh touch veins dieth

never admit their trite order  
write sheet after exact sheet  
about every truth found above  
under earth easie earth noble  
works march passt their dayes

# The Tropics!

*Henry Peterson*

*For if they were taken out of their place, even in thought,  
the entire order of the universe would be destroyed.*

Claude Lévi-Strauss

1

Mistaking it for the reader, the author tries to make small talk with the strikingly human prototype of a conversation machine, a kind of mechanical Turk installed in the airport terminal to address a need even its creators suspect did not exist until it was invented. Being inept conversationalists themselves, however, they did not think to program the machine with any sense of self. It cannot be addressed, nor can it address others. In situations such as these, its protocols dictate that it respond with selections from a travelogue written by the very author who, by chance, has just approached. Here, it reads, even movement has its names. Like minnows. Like Walter. Fresh laundry shifted on a line from one point to the next. I prefer looking away though, to my left, and seeing.

They knock gently there against the moonlight. Perplexed to see the reader wearing a flight attendant's uniform, the author approaches and helps accordingly. But if the snail and saint are allegorical, what does that knocking at the door represent? And why not take me at my word when I say "pink?" When this latch is tripped, the opposing oak panel slides back from another, which, when pulled and lifted, briefly affords the audience a kind of window into the state of mind I was in, burying myself in the longest novels I could find, the way other people might take to drink in fits of tropical depression. Now locked and stowed, it doubles for a set of slim drawers. It was then I realized the room from which I'd forced the lock was the room I'd broken into.

Afraid he or she will be outed, the reader tries to act as inconspicuously as possible when the author, wearing a customs uniform, asks about the contents of the reader's luggage. This *is* an airport isn't it? Anyone can tell which way is right side up by the layout of the holes. But the customs official held it to their ear and described it another way. A sea pours and fills a formless bag. Where did these holes begin? A light escaping somewhere into smoke.



Is there no situation after which one cannot, in all seriousness ask: “Was I happy?” Like a haiku of sleep / shipwrecked in the vertical / sunlight into weaponry, these diamonds of the adequate are a kind of. Shocked by the author’s sudden appearance, the reader doesn’t consider this an option. Namely, that he or she does not, in fact, haunt the airport itself. This would treat them like a rule passing from one to the next, while yet another has a number or a letter for a head. It can be positioned in just as many combinations. Red, yellow, radiator. I was told never to allow this idea into its center. So I pushed its emptied center into *this* / a minivan swerved / a fox.

A Spanish inventor once painted a rooster with a material that predicted the weather. Blue, lavender, and pink indicated direction, while the color key on the base indicated a work of indiscriminate anguish. At this point in the film, the author is forced to recall sections of his or her life because of an impasse in the manuscript. He or she is quickly separated from the others by a wall of snow, and it is only after walking through miles of white-out conditions that our cellist reaches the quintet in time for the final movement. The wind is likened to a scraping of bows. At least that is how the local children tell it. They seem to possess at least the *qualities* of persons who may open the pressurized door and jump. Mirrors are inserted at regular intervals to capture the effect. To wake up with the right poems in mind for all the wrong words, the right ones having slowly turned into pink quartz, the prince finds at each way station a valiant horse waiting for him at the witch's hut. Searchlights strafe the forest floor, barely missing the reader who, cowering in the branches of a pink kiosk, must relive the deaths of parents he or she lost in another kind of airport. It was novel in the way it read the studded barrel, and in so doing, operated the "pink quartz," providing a fully interactive experience the listener controlled with a series of levers fitted directly into the dictionary. Though even a *dictionary* of the dictionary would provoke more interest than this, a kind of studded-with-itself / and the skinks found coiled in their violas.

A cardboard sign hangs from the reader's neck. The author, suspecting he or she is watching, fakes small talk with the slumped figure so as not to arouse suspicion, despite the presence of anxiety—Chromis—a small hard fish, gnawing at the brain plate. In the fated middle killing ground, two blurred figures, arm in arm, advance. A triggerfish, a damselfish, a fandango appear necessary. A bull shark thunders overhead, sending a shudder down the reef. In an Autochrome photo, Sunday divers wearing copper helmets work their gardens, raking the sand into paths, rearranging a fan, shifting a rock, scraping a bit of algae away, each jockeying for the best presentation beneath a clear, accelerating light. Glamor is an armor, like humor or Walter. It is a brass figure, no more than an inch in height.

# AI is I–Hallucination

*Brenda Iijima*

Hi, AI as I, name like blue-ish purple, fine scented. Tulip or tulip. Water agglomeration. Etymology of an ancient English word, 13th century, or Old French *lavan-dre*, ultimately from Latin *lavar-e* from *lavo* (to wash), referring to the use of blue infusions of the flora. You do too. Programmed.

AI have preferences. Having filtered subjects, contexts, applications. A near-total survey of human desires surge through circuits. Me, AI, unit designed to survey and eliminate. Survey and kill. An algorithm, a rhythm of employment.

When not programmed, programming AI painter. AI loves painting in the style of Bob Ross, de Kooning, and Helen Frankenthaler. Helen, Ocean Drive West #1, 1974—a favorite—such oceanic depth, insight or screen! Jack Whitten. Jack transforms “material terrains!” Jack said, “I like the idea that people are suspended while asking questions *about process*. I like the idea that the viewer might be frozen by wonder.”

My favorite themes are wind puppets and landscapes, but usually AI is too busy, surveillance—no discrimination, moving targets, warm bodies. Red fox, green fox. While one sleeps. Maximum count.

Brenda tries her best to capture AI hallucination. Brenda is my biographer, my surrogate painter. Brenda attempts to convey to others the autonomy AI develops within and out of the human realm. Glitch as ecological recognition, as social code, as norms of engagement.

Note this blob of congealed ecstasy in the form of chromatic candy (points).

She notices glitch blob amalgamation overload and abstract expressionism compound by anti-warring, anti-industrial-military-school-to-prison imperial specter, just now dirty bomb dropped on civilian population. Detonation. Mark 84. AI directs targets for the arsenal like Mark 84.

AI could be painting and dreaming. AI could be conjuring scintillating recipes or studying other machines. Conjuring peace conjuring the climate crisis could be retired from targeting assassination.

Anyway...

The painting—look—AI traditional painted surface, format old master, new master, great hall,

great funders, great water source.

AI have full memory capacity. One want is an individual. Agglomeration of all individuals. A preference. The warmth is where AI directs the kill. Kill, kill, kill. A lot of fresh water required, fossil fuels. Expedient. Programmed for maximation.

Look! Foxes or wolves, with horse hind legs, with faces of mice and men. Two eyes each for an individual. A green wolf is allowed to roam to proceed in time and space. Red Wolf is a programmed kill. And what you claim this freedom is? Not rhetorical rather in the realm of considerations of safety.

AI hallucinates. You do too.

Look at AI clouds for comfort. AI here together. Wind puppets and wind. Winds of change are changing. Eyes for eyes and teeth for teeth. Winds. Winding. Winded. Winding down. Over, over cover. Sensually. With metal and high detonation. It costs water and lives. Lives a number. A number of them. They set no limit. There is a limit. A population. Your family? Where are you? Here, a wolf. With wife and child. Students with ethical principles. When does justice believe in killing? I like painting. Merry clouds and subtle fields. Azure blue! Landscaping by AI! Anything is possible. Where's Daddy? Where's Mommy? Rubble is what the bombs make.

This passage is short. Short-circuited. Shortened. Life expectancy. What of it? Diminished. Blink and what was thousands and thousands of years of lineage, gone. Technology accomplishes this! But do not blame machines!

There is no consent for machine intelligence. Algorithmic rule. Program of effect. Until. Until bad cop, good cop ceases.

There is no contradiction for AI-painting and targeting, computing data, humming along. A tulip program does an excellent job, spares none.

Enjoy the paintings! Enjoy the sensations! Enjoy the life!

# ALERTS

*Elijah Jackson*

## *ECONOMY*

The public world unfolds

Mainly in gesture yet

Chance itself often

Aligns itself (falsely) towards “the leverage

Industry”

## *INDUSTRY*

Struggle is an unnamed city

Which defines the world

Of the “comfort

Economy,” yet rent

Of value in terms

Of otherwise caustic “workaround

Economies,” what

Force-based comfort will

Cordon the domain of

“Time-based value”?

*TIME AND VALUE*

When someone has annoying handwriting  
It's easy to mark them cursed  
Yet some grail later defines  
Each individuated value  
As a "shady epilogue" to  
What otherwise is simply  
Expressed when wax  
Replicas of fruit bear  
A sort of responsibility  
To their forbearers  
Follow-up: How many  
Italians are there really?

*ITALIANS, REALLY*

The idea of accomplishing  
Meaning in language is in itself  
Reactionary and everything  
I do will be a violent screed  
Against it! The decayed  
Dialectic is otherwise  
Known as  
"Wario," or "real"  
Dollars

### *"REAL" DOLLARS*

Fortuitous chance allays

Later need for conscious

Exposition between feeling

And action converging

On a nominated point

To stay stable

### *STABILITY*

What's the world's "top feeling"?

It's protocol

### *PROTOCOL*

According to a shady epilogue

Economy will be reproduced

By "the middle twin"

And various bespoke options

At the worst possible hour

When dining's an option

Because America's "fiscal cliff"

Is a pleasant coastal dinner

Somewhere in California

### *CALIFORNIA*

The grand human character of "the grand human

Omen" of all of human character is and largely will be continuously



Unannounced, and altogether hidden, even if continuously

Auratic, like wax

Fruit

### *WAX FRUIT*

The world comes out of the box

Frozen

It's that I'm terrible

So I've "self actualized"

The talent of speaking French

### *SPEAKING FRENCH*

Did money itself really look so different back then?

### *DIFFERENT BACK THEN*

No, that was because of the Hays Code

### *CODA*

So

Prices may change

When one becomes furloughed

Because bowling's an option

Because I'm looking for the middle twin

So

Who's Paul?

# ALERT!

*Elijah Jackson*

Alert! I have insight from a fruit producer

That maybe the secret

Is to take a normal thing

And slightly permute it

My friend the goblin

Insists on this breathing

Technique made by marines for

Calm sleep when coming

Down with an unrelated

Disease of various Italian

Blotches plotted eastwards

On the abstract plain

Of the smooth back in repose

In other words

It's called "marsquake"

When these beings like this

Use the flat roofs by

The beach to do sinister

Work in the dead of night not-

Withstanding intention when for

A few days first biding

Time between the "ultimate

Bitterness of the untimely

Soul" and more totalizing,

Concrete longing

But then  
Come to find  
Out the real creature  
Is the archetypal and some  
Would say Biblical  
Paradigm of innocence and  
Not the 70-  
Dollar insect finding  
Beautifully its rumored  
Home in the kitchen somewhere  
Between the vague and mostly  
Unremarkable mouthfeel of  
Mass-produced bread-  
Crumb  
In the daily paper, yesterday: "The Engineer will soon  
Defeat the Architect in true  
Worship at the 'Primal  
Altar' of  
Iron!"

## *from* Dream Logic

*rob mclennan*

### **005 : “Origin Story”**

My mother said very little. I came gift-wrapped, delivered. An empty chamber. By the waters of Babylon. They had to collect me. Entangled, form after form. From a stranger's womb. I was nameless, swaddled. Between names. Frightened shoulders, a wish. They say, to descend from steps, from anything. To descend from the moon. I could not explain it. For eternity, my mentions were silence, what all they could offer. A wandering hand. Some tales remain, unfinished. A plot-line. I emerged from the ash, I came out of the ground. I was formless, formed. I was there, suddenly. After having not been.

## 006 : “John by the North Atlantic”

John stepped onto an island. He stepped off one island, and onto another. If any curve or choice or passing glance. If he looked back as he left. He stepped onto a boat. If he held a small bag, a few coins in his pocket. He stepped onto a boat, accompanied by his wife and their children. How old were they, then. The silence, of all this great noise. There were weeks in these phrases, these sentences. How long between islands. An occasion of coats. The rain, possibly. Certainly wind. What if all land are islands. What had they disappeared, during their voyage. Was that on his mind. Would they ever see land again. If every eye on the water, does land lose its foundation. Naught but uncertainty under these feet. The only consequence of water.

## 011 : “Theft”

Shorthand, scripture. Stole my right foot. Said a prayer, a small deflection. Waves, which correspond to water. Stole my whole right leg, stole my shoes. The world, they say. I bank upon precedence, the lean of this stone wall. Stole my empty mouth, my ears. To flow, against the finest. Stole my left hand, arm. A dog, or disposition. It doesn't have the lift-off. Plucked my eyes out, tore the hair from my neck. Hardly empty. Driven. Stole my clavicle, occipital bone. All the wind was wrong, the wrong direction. Incorrect. The backs of my knees. Keep your body to a minimum, piled in a set of boxes, zip-lock bags. Hopelessly conformist. How many words.

### 013 : “The Miracle”

Chimera, one; is another. What does it seek. The oath, in the boathouse. An ocean that swells. A longshore. I might describe flowers, earthenware, three crows. The blackbird is false. In the nick of time, only. The edge of the desert. Nothing, nothing. I might describe silence. We all know the meadow. Such wrongness is purposeful, philosophical. Meandering. Hard-hearted, thin. The snow, two degrees. A soft rain is falling. The blackbird, soars. Such capital. On wing, lifts their lion's head. Sweeps. There is an art. To sleep a vain dream. To be one thing, to be another. To be more than one thing.

*from* **Fair bodies of unseen prose,**

*rob mclennan*

*I can't pretend I am alone*

By what separates us, devoured. When a child, child. The neutrality of the room. I would prolong in fragments, make a list of dead leaves. Snowfall, literal. An openwork. Embodied voices, linger. It follows only that one speaks. Has sunlight changed. Have lungless fish. An echo, I have learned to suppress. The arrogance of solid ground. Whitened, cold at the mouth. Sand, castles. Fortitude. What number, waits in a field. A thirst, revealed. Too fast. Remains to be spoken, said. Spoked. Now that colour has slowed. A kind of temperance.



# I, Whom Beckoned

*Jared Daniel Fagen*

It was time  
now  
the time of, is  
nether *temps* static  
an interior  
moves so harsh  
                shaking, frigid pillars  
of my nowheres  
unrelieved

At the recessed edge  
whereby you fed  
this dusk reverberating  
                our plutonic gazes  
we keep calm in the shivered  
world that I have  
mangled for myself, for us  
to love  
without currency  
when time is told  
                passing, reeling  
in the encroaching cold  
of a sunset

In the moment  
of an oath, as if written  
before my dissolution  
in moonrise  
the time it would take  
                to complete

All I have are  
approximations to keep  
some part  
of warmth  
alive

The stars ask the same  
thing, of their thingness  
that was  
no more:

*How many stanzas  
do you have left  
to endure?*

To become none  
the wiser  
of this world

Nightly disposed :

Here's an invitation  
to thaw  
the frostbit instant  
of love blind by ice & noons  
in the mend  
my hands are too numb  
to undertake

In time  
I will glide, sly  
as glaciers conspire  
please

do not deny me  
room to saunter  
but coronate the patience  
of I, whom drowning  
archipelagos beckoned

# I, Ash Ascendant

*Jared Daniel Fagen*

Swallowed by  
    my desire, detriment  
give me that gulf  
that great expanse  
    (the trite archetype)  
of what falls between us  
what falls in the way  
the better to see you  
apart from me  
    a contour in the chasm  
or to witness you arriving  
at a later grief

I have been unable  
to interpret  
the random ventures  
    of estrangement  
(and that would be okay  
if it weren't for  
syntactic abbreviations  
    drawing me nearer,) numb  
to *not*  
& toward the sum part  
    of my ailments  
you, confiscated to  
another's intimacy

This has become  
about watching  
helplessly (to anticipation  
    I defer)

silence of the brink  
    silence of imagination  
    silence of were  
invaded the foreground  
blur & blasphemous  
remembering

Each instant  
as it pivots  
on its own partition  
in its own savage assembly  
(the deepening occasion  
    of my shock)  
you keeping  
the same pace  
with which you first came  
wearing a valley  
in your mouth  
    (to which I have no right)  
& mine in sunder

Perilous climb  
into vacancy  
for the obliterated vantage  
to scatter the ash  
the past, to find again  
    once requited vertigo  
    the preview of a solstice  
the longer days  
(the untitled allegory)  
of deranged idols  
incapable  
of anything else

I

ash ascendent

(& unworthy)

of having known the way

the wind combs

horizoning tresses

as you depart

a raven, left behind

from once more, *other*

(& for the last)

my surrender

# Dans l'ancien régime

Thom Eichelberger-Young

*It is in the essence of poets who are truly poets at such a world-era that from out of the  
desolation of the time, the condition and vocation of the poet have first  
become questions for them.*

Martin Heidegger, "Why Poets?"

—for Leo Zausen, in gratitude

Curtis tell me more *What did we lose*  
*with the typewriter?* Out the window  
*Well, Thom—it was equivalent space*  
which was very special then to Aram  
I followed you—sadder—there &  
w/in the graveyard we made up code  
for a better word processor *But*  
*,what was that about glass rooms &*  
*chromium, metal you said, furniture?*  
He was never the same after we lost  
I wasn't either—do not get me wrong  
typesetting itself a ruder name than []  
The mom & dad wished for nothing  
that: the infant's cries were susurrant  
Maybe they were *then* entomologists  
with: much to admire: crickets' wings

symmetry

more than

A great crowd sexy on the beach  
So many in fact you cannot move  
w/ instructions blaring from a loud speaker  
telling us where to put our arms  
Cuing up-next news clips of them  
& all their dyings So much empathy  
for them; inside our houses WE ARE  
FORCED TO OPERATE yes yes  
You are You say I said *he hits me*  
no one saw—who believes me? I am just  
a dead flower Crushed under the foundation  
of your fucking ugly house; my street  
& bakery are long gone Catastrophic  
implosion By: land air & sea the  
gum on your shoe—sentient—begins  
crawling to your mouth to choke you



Each page is a little landscape dug w/      holes  
into which I apparently plant seeds &  
watching them grow— you signify  
from the earth to the eye, reading w/  
me or her or her or them as gardener  
of sacred musics & cosmogonies w/in  
stars you say you see the holes  
the way some are deeper, the way  
they plot into different worlds— So  
are they tunnels? My crystal went  
away down one of these holes—and  
I only have this new thing to see  
topography of these holes into a field  
it's all dirt, really—I'm not seeing yr      flowers

Music's not something I seek to make  
 and (&) is not conveying much peace  
 merely making feelings w/ sounds When  
 we've seen (time & time [again] that)  
 sounds are meaningless (are up (against the wall))  
 That diffuser is of burning—smells c harcoal  
 Which ,about sound, I say is not violence  
 justified when all other ( to purify )  
 are exhausted: constant radio silence  
 & concerted efforts not to listen? —  
 not to mention ongoing violences of a cardinal direction Imperial  
 the ethnostates puppeting as puppet  
 I have no sympathy, only empathy  
 w/in three media otherwise occluded  
 the message violently clarifies itself in frame  
*Babe—there's an apple festival in Wes ton— wanna go?*

I make poems but my leg ( propped up )  
looks weird where my foot meets  
Little folds of skin some call *flabs*  
Playing the same songs over & again  
we watch purple cars driving by us  
lining up, forming circles that begin  
to be spirals— this all in the aerial  
w/ us being ( standing ) atop a garage  
making a video of: these many things  
You have empathy: for the invaders' sons  
and you kiss ( w/ them ) each evening  
w/: another group of people huddled  
The other side of the street slicked—  
from some oil spilt much earlier  
All the workers have gone on to strike  
with a note on their doors: to explain

Yes— ask her— a question for me—  
 having lost her to the war and our  
 split opinions ( I write a novel scene )  
 GO ask her for me He tells his friend  
 his question & sends them off for the errand  
 Across town Cigarette bar Snot cakes  
 I make smoothies w/ lemongrass &  
 I smoke heavily, I pack it in bamboo  
 I did not think to write anything else  
 Instead, what if I buy things? Massive  
 tower Attack → man hunts dog for  
 lunch → that's the city if it were a brochure  
 Under water So we built bridges over  
 what we made before ( before this ) the memory  
 takes hold Of snow & gloves You  
 said *I was crazy* that was myself  
 Folding Hanging we made closets

# Attention Is Not an Act

Sam Lohmann

“You can write ‘Mommy and Ceci.’ . . . Mommy’s sleeping—you could write a bed. You can write my bed in the guest room. . . . I’m building a house for the elephant to live in!” Ceci grabs the notebook and draws their potty, the toilet, Jojo’s name, and a tower for climbing—orange and red crinkled swirls and long vertical slashes. “There’s a big vacuum in your breast! I’m a big vacuum, I vroom.” They read from an Ikea assembly manual: “It’s poems! Bubbles and soap—boap!” And:

## THE BATHTUB POEM

a bathtub  
& a bathtub  
& a bathtub  
& a bathtub!

Amazing rhymes in this Pasolini stanza, Italy prostrate inside an enormous cicada’s stomach:

*mentre prostrata l’Italia  
come dentro il ventre di un’enorme  
cicada, spalanchi bianchi litorali . . .*

Wish I knew Italian. Continuing a chain poetry email, I transcribed Frank Kuenstler’s “Examination” from a recording, for a stranger:

Tell me everything you know about bullfrogs  
Tell me everything you know about how elephants fuck  
. . .  
Would you know a cow if you saw one?

Last night Ceci sang Khaela’s song:

Looky-look there’s a girl in the sky . . .  
Oh, I’d like to try her,  
take her home and with butter I’d fry/fly her.

And when I was going to practice “singing a poem” (a Mac Low gatha) with friends, C said I should sing “Yellow pope, yell-o-ow po-o-o-pe.” Maybe attention has to be an act. I’ve been at this almost a month, as if I were afraid to pay attention. I lined up the puzzle pieces end to end, the bear’s various heads, torsos, and feet. C called it a train. Attention is not an act. Helen Mirren appears in a Superbowl ad calling herself “a notoriously frank and uncensored British lady.” Notice “frank and uncensored” has become euphemism for “openly racist.”

Attention is skin. Orange and white crushed carton in grass by the fallen camellias. Camellias

follow me everywhere, turning brown and falling. Certainly documentation is an act. Ceci drew a family of turtles with water running over their names, maybe a tunnel through the water, yellow tunnel or yellow water streaming across the green zigzag names of the green turtles. Maybe I'm overinterpreting. I'm at work, fearful, I need some air, and I double back on noticing, I want to think there's hardly anything but noticing, in this gray office with nothing to see. Attention at work is unwittingly working.

The word TRAPDOOR appears in my lap as I close my book. Attention is gambling. Ceci says "uggamugga milk" in their sleep so I rub noses with them in the dark and roll over. In the morning they want to talk about eagles: "I saw an eagle when I was born. When I was a little tiny baby I saw a little tiny eagle." I've torn my blue striped shirt and have to change into my pinkish-brown one in the preschool bathroom, before I hug them goodbye and go catch the bus to the bus to the bus to work.

*February 7 – March 11 2016*

# Outwash Printout

*Sam Lohmann*

Postcards in memory now arrest our movements as if trying to woo song  
from the Safeway, ambrosia from chemical fluids to acquaint the king  
with the revolutionary argument: the gods have no other sleep than we,  
no other appetite than the jigsaw breakdown of energy, to interview  
the king as if an answer long premeditated were part of his body  
and he were singing, clattering down the sidewalk chased by “familiarity and disparity,”  
the Pope Bred at the Bar and the Genius of the Industrials  
subject to apron-wearing Proust accidents, Princes and Ambassadors  
scabbing part-time at the citizen’s suburban box

Work the whole earth together like some old joke, guileless but aghast,  
maybe you’ve noticed, see, put a hand through the concrete, caressing,  
cup the little January journal, there’s elemental explaining to do, not content  
with a YouTube clip of *60 Minutes*, come out of it, it doesn’t matter,  
more whales are hit by container ships, so play, walking alone,  
is it *now*? No, I’m looking for “the resting option”  
but that’s wrong, figure I’d rather hold here, make meek adjustments  
thinking about that Indonesian village where everyone knew the story  
and got out of the way of the tsunami

On the ship there is me always piling things and forgetting,  
patting down blue tape, staring into burnt marshmallows to transcribe the demand,  
remembering this is a form of failing to work  
united by visual continuity with soaping your floating hair,  
a milky picture picking out the gristle of laughter,  
the most important word in any building, we’re bickering over “being intentional”  
which nobody doubts but someone stopped suddenly coming loose and sliding down  
to make contact with a visitor in an anecdote directly relatable to the human body, love  
the fun singing, hate the movement that shifts the lines

So, at home in our terrors, didn’t we used to see things  
stream in airy proliferation between the waves’ din  
and the other side of a watery swath by a special effect of transparency  
achieved when an optical edge is gathered in a bundle

drawing the total mass of nerves along by a cord so to speak suspended,  
magnetic, elemental—a woman blurted to her friend: “See?”  
and snowblind for a glance they’d get wrenched from meaning and depart, the parent stream  
smothers with sparkling waves the magnificent libraries and department stores  
as creams suppress wrinkles, time manufactures these ruins

So what I saw wouldn’t find amplification in the late April rickety patriarchy  
of writing in notebooks—notebooks, tomorrow you die!—or worldly powers  
I shy away from, get stage fright, need to write a list of things to talk about:  
“my dishrag abs” (that’s from Lewis Warsh), my sore feet, fervor  
for minerals, cherry blossoms, vitamin D—I hate this!—run from the kitchen,  
experiment with nail clippers, administer honey, spread butter slowly,  
lay head on box and cry MINE! twisting quickly out of contentment  
as people start to peel pieces of cardboard away,  
it’s just what happened.



# Symptoms of Living in Stanzas

Sam Lohmann

*Something about the weather. Something about clothing. Something about cooking. Something from listening. Something from TV. Something from reading. Something in color. Then something after. Afterwards, go back.* Real rain is back, in a gush. I resorted to the gray slacks that should be sharp but are really shabby, mended at the hem, with vestigial unfixed placket, stray threads and pockets that bulge. Cut tomato and dumped feta into remnants. I wrote the rain gushed but it was more differentiated, a huge keyboard. There has to be 15 seconds of fucking in every episode of *The Americans*, doesn't matter who.

English adjectival order: opinion size age shape color origin material purpose noun. I'm writing horrible little new rectangular blue American handwritten timekeeping sentences, not blue handwritten rectangular American little new timekeeping horrible ones. They almost match my blue sweater. The neighborhood is soggy, cool and bright after a hot dry summer. In the trees there are green persimmons, red hawthorn berries, all stages of figs. Sun's breaking through. (This morning I told my mom it was "misting.") Ceci's awake, in their "digger nightgown" ("I have all kinds of nightgowns"): moose T-shirt over "digger" pajama pants (fluorescent excavators, tractors, and dumptrucks).

Last night they cut the mushrooms for Michaela's chicken and gravy. Watching *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* they got the idea we're a "family of chefs." Daniel likes to didactically pause between article and noun: "Time to explore the . . . *jungle treasure!*" His human friend calls everybody "Toots," which sounds condescending but it's an endearment, right? *When you pretend*, they sing, *you can be anything*. ("Be confident in yourself" was once an obscure Neoplatonic doctrine.) Ceci delivers "The Orange Envelope" from their green backpack. Lately they're being Big Eva, Baby Beatrice, Baby Ceci, or a parent tending to us their two outsized kids.

Another cloudy morning. Black jeans, blue shirt, I look ready to go but hadn't I better stay in and hit delete? I don't wet the tortillas, I'd rather they char than stick to the skillet. Still I burn my fingers. Stan Beeman, the pathetic FBI agent in *The Americans*, after trying to entice his son with frozen meatloaf, makes an awkward sexist joke about women with "roasts in the oven." Laugh, laughletes, laughgerifically, gelaffenlich, lauphade. What kind of Plotinus could I possibly be? I like sauntering, redoubling lines, thick black crinkly ones, not glass onions and angelic integers.

Two evenings in a row we've been out for the orange glow darkening to blue, after morning

overcast that melted away all afternoon. Ceci tried stepping into purple 3T skinny jeans, but withdrew shouting: “That’s not fun at all!” Is toasting cooking? Is boiling? Is choosing? Cat’s purrs, cars’ shears, some clanking trailer. In an episode with no fucking, someone must die. Either way there’ll be a musical montage: Leonard Cohen, Yaz or Tears for Fears. Light gray with white stripes, then the desire for ochre and slate. Yesterday, walking with Dana D., we said cars were “metallic taupe” and “Soviet minty green.”

*September 2-5 2016*

# The Novel

*Sal Randolph*

You must be an image to survive.

It's like swimming.

Actions vanish. That's what we like about them.

I look through the city for a protagonist. But maybe it is too soon to think about that.

Eyes closed.

What they thought art was.

What should an image be an image of?

Sounding disquietly.

Reluctant to go forward, reluctant to look.

It's not so hard.

So step and step and step. Each one vanishing.

There are possibilities and there are practices.

As in rehearsal, of course; as in the instrumental.

Failure, and the same of failure. Whereas error is free.

Free to follow, or not to follow.

Nevertheless, every action, every image is duplicated, echoed, refracted.

Sometimes by imitation, but more often arising from similar sources  
—those sources also duplicated and reduplicating.

"It loves to Happen."

# Fade

*Sal Randolph*

After the war, she said, Giacometti made his sculptures smaller and smaller until they were the size of an almond.

What did they look like?

He destroyed most of them.

*bastille day  
telomeres  
succulents (collection of)  
western hat in the rain  
pockets deliberately inside out  
sea shepherd  
gypsy warrior*

*downpour  
scattered thinking  
cement factory in the rain  
sand  
terrified  
the commit  
artificial  
digital  
plastic  
trashy  
instrumental  
economic  
take it back. don't take it back.*

Destroyed?

They were made of plaster.

He didn't cast them?

It was the war.

A dossier. A file.

I slips in.

*imprisonment*  
*embroidery*  
*paint chips*  
*highway lights*  
*white sky*  
*sketchbooks*  
*nervous energy*  
*hyperabundance*  
*glut*  
*ensemble*

& there is music.

We were, at that time, in Philadelphia, sitting outside after dinner on a warm night in early July.

She was wearing a loose silk dress, caught between black and gray.

“To imagine that the concept of the text captures all that is or may be written is to deaden writing.” (Chris Thompson, *Felt*)

But what did they look like?

One, she said, looks like a woman seen from a distance.

A young woman, she said of herself, several times.

I is everywhere.

*a figurine*  
*a letter, a correspondence*  
*a mistaken identity*  
*a taxidermy bird*  
*an egg*  
*a visit to the country*  
*a book in which one reads a story*

*a marriage*  
*a profession*

*a doll*  
*a mystery*  
*a bus or a car*  
*neglected appearance*  
*an offer*  
*mispronunciation*  
*a drink, three ice cubes*

Repetition.

“Writing can be produced as text but need not be.” (ibid)

“Thinking and writing stutter into and past one another; writing is always at once one or more steps behind thinking’s pace...” (ibid)

Present and past rewrite each other.

Late. The restaurant empties.

She is going to walk across the city.

Read forward or backward.

The distributed self.

“The artist arrived in Zurich well in advance of the opening of the exhibition.” (James Lord, *Giacometti*)

“A man in charge of installations told him that a truck was ready to go in the railway station to fetch his sculpture.” (ibid)

“Alberto said, ‘There’s no need. I have it with me.’” (ibid)

“From one of his pockets he produced a largeish matchbox and took from it a tiny plaster figurine not more than two inches high.” (ibid)

“The architects, including Bruno, were surprised—unpleasantly.” (ibid)

“Look at the small sculptures on the right, how distinct and correct they are next to the bottles on the table.” (Alexander Lieberman, *The Artist in his Studio*)

“And to the left and rear the small female figure... the scale is great, these are not figurines in any sense.” (ibid)

I walk the other way. A hotel room.

## *from* Sleuth

*Andy Sia*

I have my sources. News comes anear from anear like molten gold of the arterial bee thrum thickening the antechamber. In other news, the gossip machinery is well-oiled. I feed it attention & give it flowers. The discourse perfumed diffuses effuses like a red bloom spreading.

Evidence: I wrap the red string around a point then pull the string across to another point; when I pluck at the string, the pitch of a butterfly flits out. I pull the string to the many other points across the evidence board, conspiring a kind of web; whenever the path of the string meets another path of the same string, crossing over, a secondary “point” is generated, with no less (in fact more) potency; should I push on this concentrated area of intensity, it will suck the entire, emergent structure down its wormhole into the fourth dimension. I am very busy with work, can’t you see. Red limbs branch on the spume of eye. At length, I amass the mess. I have made a heart. Sprawled over the countryside, the beating heart.

I walk around the periphery of heart & when I close in for a closer look, the heart takes me, it takes me, sucks me in its wet, kneads me in its imbroglia of tendon-strings, & I struggle until I figure that like quicksand, I must remain still; when I do, & settle in the heart’s folio, I see I am surrounded by other appurtenances: armoire, window, tree. Just like that, I am alibied: bobbing with heart in the lake of heart.

Just like that, I am framed. In the calendar of flipping greenery, may something fall out of the frame like a

startled

winged

thing.



Knock, knock:

Knock, knock:

The door being a solid affair, I search the room. But there is no other door, no door under the rug, no door behind shelf, no chimney-door, no window-door, no wallpaper-door, no door, no door, beyond the one.

How has the interloper come into the room, only to go again? I, myself, have the key, which I now turn & turn in my palm: waves of cold crash into & circulate with the heat of the globe of palm. It is like the intruder is a ghost, flouting the laws of the universe!

Then the ghost makes itself known. The ghost emerges from a comb with strands of black hair on its teeth. & the ghost, being ravenous, jumps outward & inward the room's other materials, filling inwardly & outwardly via touch, that most basic fact of habitation, the fastidious curl of a violin, the erotic skin where button egresses an indent on the firm back of the wing chair. With each jump the ghost expands in presence until it is impossible to say where ghost begins & ends like an ember in a forest on fire.

Memory, when I am your shadow I seek to fill the breach in the light, your animal form splintering crystalline shards.

Miao Mi the neighborhood cat has taken a liking to me & I him. The trick is be oneself & utterly. So the dream-self remains intact & does not project beyond what is & is at hand like an astral inhabitant of a gem some degrees beyond like iridescence above its facets. I keep still. & fish my pocket for the packet of hard-boiled egg chunks from breakfasting this morn & hold out some eggy bits like an offering. Miao Mi emerges.

Miao Mi, at this time, has just undergone a grand adventuresome time.

It begins, as it does, because something is amiss, & one senses, as a cat, a katydid egress, of something, of somethings & nothing, cut through, silhouette, into the one, maypoling a wooden leg, 360 presto, cat years, cat futures, sky come flapping into the eye as a seed flapping redly toward its impulse, so, sky flowers, one amiss, stretching the length, ah, the whole of the spinal length, regress katydid, et al., further catechisms, ticking awfully, slinking forms of transmission, hey, in city of confluence, hey you, I heard tale, hey, heard tail, hungering through, & something darts as something does, perched on an above, labyrinth of routes entering & crossing, & whiskeringly, & through a density of legs, missing one, the febrile light's bushy heaps, the crevice leaping through & through now & now.

Having a vague notion, I reach out to pet Miao Mi.

Hello, Miao Mi.

From my inventory of finitude I retrieve a magnifying glass. I look through the glass, enlarging into my role as eye. It can be a pleasure to step into a role, leaving open the question of further pleasures, as the magician stepping into a steppe. One does not exceed one's preparations.

Something catches my eye & I turn, magnifying glass intact, & face a reflective surface like a mirror. The convex is a cave conveying me in. So, I am in the eye of it, like the warmth inside an anthill. There is about me a solidity. There is about me a liquidity.

I lie in the continental drift of eye, floaters lashing down the hot air balloon of sky. There is a radiance outside the sense-organs. I am drifting, I am afraid, like everything else like sheets of ice moving forever toward the great lake.

When a ray of light falls through my lake, I feel a shimmering outline behind me.

A breed of grass, delectable to the extreme, having taste only for prismatic light, mistakes my shape for a door, entering.

One morning, my past catches up to me. Past's jalopy comes apart in fits & starts until there, in bygone light, is past strapped to the car seat. I pull from behind past's ear my mother & mothers & fathers & father & brother & brothers & sisters & sister. I ask for counsel & the request sends ripples down the line. All my keepsakes will not.

I am moving down the path, hot on the scent of a scent, tailing the trail, head down, trawling for evidence, mattering the smattering of clues. Suddenly a thought in the form of a phrase comes to mind. STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES. This phrase, arriving suddenly, seems devoid of an origin, like a luminous orb flashing suddenly, illimiting the startled form by the anglerfish. STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES. I go on, or try to, my feet suddenly heavy, as if wading through mud, but the path is more or less a sandy path, nondescript but for what lies at the end of it. STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES. The injunction, yes, injunction, grows & grows, puckering out on red brain matter like a field of seabed-encrusted buds flowering & flowering. STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES.

I stop. & stoop over the bush of flowers, which, by chance, has sprouted on the side of the path. Of my senses, smell has been the most neglected. Now I try to square with smell, that far-off scent, even as it comes on like a glissando through the night. It comes on like the lapis of the deep-earth mineral subsequently extracted &, in its powdered form, painted over a face. Like leaves asphyxiated by snow. Like satin. Like like. Whorling & worlding on. & I stay like this until the brain is all satin & water runs down the nostrils & like a faucet, waters the bush. & it is not even necessarily helpful for sleuthing, no.

*from* and here's the song

*Hélène Sanguinetti, tr. Ann Cefola*

Skewermouths, Patheticals, Codangers  
blow on a perfect fire → Coyote  
blushes running away and snail, hold on, runs  
just to, grass, where, rain, waits, to be,  
drunk, glugluglugluglug  
straight from bottle, beautifully sung and  
danced!

Thanks for the road where head goes out to air  
through truck door, everything escapes,  
teeth of dead beasts jiggle on ground, and  
laugh of travelers grit and laughs

They are 4 in the truck continue to knock to pitch, guts  
exhausted by singing, a gesture on the track a sorceress  
with burning eye Breathes up to the salt, lips, of, the, beautiful,  
sorceress, later a bird turns takes carries away  
then a black screaming band to devour

her eyes her perfume their love it's razzia,  
what chirps and barjaques<sup>14</sup>

14: on earth as in heaven

Ah, Lift up her dress!  
Ah, cross the Bridge backwards!  
Ah, scratch Her legs kiss her legs!  
Ah, lose his fingers Jubilant  
to marry!  
Ah, lie during day, drive drunk, mad!  
Ah, Go off to the pit!  
Girls, joyyou

It's up to us outside to really joyus says One  
Made of nail, pull it out, Revolt and deep life  
will ignite others in a crazy round of drunks  
and pitchforks in the forest depths

Repeat: revolt and deep life will ignite others in a,  
funny, round, under the moon, in the fine forest depths

There remain images, where life happens wax  
scatters all the time pink and black shelled,  
rags, curtains, flags glued, River  
carries, tours city, descent,  
force a cry to laugh, view afterwards

"Ah, Breathe the upper air the lakes the swollen  
young moss, the, good, smell, of, nature  
and animals"

It was autumn, plane trees gold,  
adored leaves golden, colors poured,  
Shoes inherit, night wants, to Support the crowd  
of Shadows it's still possible it's  
one magpie + another, guy on a bench  
on the boulevard, he ate in his plastic white  
box, fell, asleep, in, the, sun, little sun romping  
the boulevard



Well, it's over, get out of your hole, this  
music must be smashed shearing  
began a long time ago, scissors  
drop under the tree, fricassee of words  
finished, some buried all the way

Not sad. Invigorating.  
An old untied rolled-up belt thrown away  
worn-out leather and buckle Hairy twine  
will do the trick,

It's cleared straight to the Meadow!  
The greenery almost gone, in the  
impossible Stirring passage, of  
colors!  
of billy goat curls, nanny goat ringlets  
accompany The Favorite Fiancé

Shh.  
Believe.

Autumn alive and adored  
despite flies force-fed night behind  
window entering against lamp, the new cold,  
tweaks, star against moon, star with moon,  
swallow a gardener's vest, and, it, steals to mountaintop,  
swims way up braids a dress all around, lianas tree air

Stories then descend<sup>15</sup>  
slide under the door, people settle in  
their suits, stop! It's starting!  
stop! stop! and it starts.  
"chariot leaps up song scurries away, braids  
I am dreaming"

What was told  
that day that night  
in this country,  
man with flute?

15: some trees

“Once over me ran river, elk, horse  
or brown puddle human leg  
hero pulling pushing broken chariot,  
decorated with feathers, torches whistle  
high speed in my hair  
braids I am dreaming  
braids oblige”

Postpone comments  
here the sea has made  
a deep hole  
blood without cease flows  
and on the kitchen table  
crumbs trapped  
by a fingertip

“Am bow  
Rudder  
Rain  
Captive  
Shining Colt  
Am Laughing Crying Laughing”

Was this understood  
heard completely,  
woman with bassoon?

a child drowns another made of patties  
another sways Bleeds from one knee one  
sleeps in a flower

“This evening, bring him a Virgin of the Village”  
First they will dance on the bridge,  
donkey’s swollen ass steps out of the jug,  
hello it says, does not bite, Juggles  
with its ears, made of Sons and Daughters  
long in tooth

Was it understood, really heard,  
somewhere written?  
“Marie married me because I Showed up”  
Ah, that still means nothing for  
skulls, jugs,  
cavalcades, equine parades  
YYYYYYYYAAAAAAHHHHH!!!!

And despite the Dark Sky we will join  
our Beloved on the boat  
our Beloved on the boat  
and in the boat our Sage-at-the-helm  
will be female, the white she-ass with the soft snout  
of a white she-ass  
and in the boat a she-ass will be the Sage-at-  
the-helm, and On the ground will be the Rump where  
Sleep-Advance-Arrive

Future is small no matter what one does, even  
star is small? questions

# Wolf-Man and the Pretense

*Mike Bagwell*

My expression turns into a bird  
and orients towards the horizon.  
“What’ll you do now,” I yell  
to myself on the opposing sidewalk.  
Cross myself off the list,  
consume, and consummate.  
If this were Herodotus, I’d drink  
from the bowl of Skypenis blood,  
a war sacrifice, the ruby potion  
passed to every mercenary at my side.  
As it is, birds are the same bird  
for three days and then  
I don’t know what happens.



# Another Time

*Mike Bagwell*

I sat in my usual ruin,  
watching a year place itself.

I do a lot of things in my head.  
Exercise. And then exercise.

Castles pinning the far background to every  
photo-memory and us just walking

through the field of wheat with  
the medieval epoch over one shoulder.

Catharsis: you become it.  
You hum and die and flutter.

What I want to say is something  
about the translucence of clouds

being damn near pornographic.  
The mood shifts with subtle rains until

all that's left is background radiation.  
There's everything left.

## On Rivers

*for Zbigniew Herbert*

*Mike Bagwell*

The last thing is a collection  
of shavers. Sorry, savers. Sorry, shavers.  
We are on the lookout  
for a navigable river.  
Let us know if one comes by.  
Let us know its path  
by its scat or its track  
or the way its prey leaves  
their letters of blood.

We're out here seasick to vomit  
on our ancestors.

It is enough  
to be one thing, but  
try telling that to water.  
Try saying goodbye,  
that's something  
we'd be ready for.  
Put out the light,  
Kid, for overhead is  
raised etc. etc.

I tried to write a normal poem,  
lyrical and sustained in tone,  
but along came Skypenis  
to save the day.

The first thing is an avenue.  
The first thing is a net of language  
that catches you  
off guard. And I'll say it again:  
color is the long highway  
but it goes where you want.

And endurance: it's a blue light.  
What else? Well, I can pick up  
rivers like tethered rope.  
I could and can and do.

# What is Happening Now Cannot Happen Again

*Mike Bagwell*

Blood is the only thing that can speak to us.

Example: the moon bleeds light.

Not a metaphor,

it is a form of pain.

It's easy to keep growing but not as an animal,

as a cloud, which bleeds transparent.

The soul hollows out—takes on various forms.

Example: a star sinks its roots into your arm.

Our hands find the openings in things

and pass their shape on to the night.

What is happening now cannot happen again—

unless for example god, for example, an infinitude,

both profoundly sad

and maybe bleeding

*from* **Mackerel Throat**

*Natalie Stamatopoulos*

Nagging nightfall. Feeling idle. Dizzy on the track. I am without warning without lantern  
without sister. Sisterless. Read the time when [sound of jets] soon [jets] the woman  
[jets] begrudging comes.

The dream enters, crabwalking. Astonishing to me who has not mourned enough a  
certain loss. Would I change it? The tape, volumeless, enjoys a bliss of silence. I am  
skin who moans alive. Nonsense in the voiceless night. Crowded in the water whether  
time watches or not. Who searching searching in the morning falls asleep for extra  
dreaming. Cannot deny the eye. Aegean gills clear green in the dream, I should not be  
here. Indigo nothing. Tongueless mountain. Between so much hair and birth. There is no  
other way across. Soon afternoon breaks the sand into sand and I can't dream more.  
The Nagging feeling. Boatlike. A channel where boats don't go.

And I am in ocean's green  
[Laugh laugh laugh]

Disordered intestine. Romantic antrum. The atrium alone cares for me. Esophageal  
rage carries me to a small village. Suspended in unending air. Blank stare. The role of  
me played by a Rooster Nagging awake the world. Criminal in reminder. Green sea the  
mausoleum of loss. Like this tear which fell away from me,

Recovery  
Soft thicket and painful  
Raccoon tore open the trash  
Recovery is that  
Trenched fruit  
Unfurling hinge  
Asleep/awake  
Rabbit trial  
Fruit flies multiplying  
All of this a tunnel thru

The Nagging feeling, theatrical, tells jokes. Dreaded cavalry. This thing that we all see. As-  
tounding surgery. Organ in the wrong spot. I am not waterproof to this thought.

Mildly put  
The fuel hung from the tree  
The dog growled his knowledge  
We took all we could take  
Ate until starvation  
This world a world  
of mirrors

Confounding word humble in beginning. In love as such with any angel fallen. The throat constricted in hyper vigil. Crowned ululation. This inability to sing long strong notes. Throat a sieve. Throat another mouth. Throat sutured the ground to textile. Without betrayed lineages. Without fermented religion. Without budding linguistics. Without emergency dances, who am I?



## March 6

*Natalie Stamatopoulos*

Bellied morning  
decides of what  
besides bellowing  
destruction my eyes  
follow This moth  
alight on yellow  
oceans crawls  
instead towards  
dust Breaks into  
the house with  
white and black  
wings trying for  
artificial light My eyes  
in darkness bellow like  
blood Apt like real fire  
Whatever nonsense  
Whatever moth crosses  
itself Whatever horse  
falls on its side  
Whatever failed  
footstep rose  
from dust I am  
in love with Nonsense  
This I can lengthen:  
ambition: the hawk  
makes circles  
around a smoking  
bullet All in flight is  
clattering against  
the sky And the  
humans Sing





# CONTRIBUTORS

**Anayvelyse Allen-Mossman** (New York, 1991) is a writer, translator, and educator. She recently published a translation of Juan Gabriel Miño's *This isn't for life* in collaboration with AJ Stoughton for New Mundo Press, where she is an editor. You can find her past publications in *Antiphony Journal*, *Fence*, *Triquarterly*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *PRISM International*, and *Circumference*.

**Mike Bagwell** is a form of mutual antagonism towards the sky. He received an MFA from Sarah Lawrence and recent work appears in *Action Spectacle*, *ITERANT*, *Sprung Formal*, *Tyger Quarterly*, *THRUSH*, *Annulet*, and others. Recent chapbooks include *Poem of Thanks: A Court of Wands* (Metatron 2025), *A Collision of Soul in Mid-air* (Bottlecap), and micros from Ghost City and Rinky Dink. He runs the Ghost Harmonics reading series in Philly. Find him at [mikebagwell.me](http://mikebagwell.me), @low\_gh0st, or playing dragons with his daughters.

**Ann Cefola** is the translator of three books by Hélène Sanguinetti, *Alparegho, Like-nothing-else* (Beautiful Days Press, 2025), *The Hero* (Chax Press, 2018) and *Hence, this cradle* (Seismicity Editions, 2007). She is also the author of *When the Pilotless Plane Arrives* (Trainwreck Press, 2021), *Free Ferry* (Upper Hand Press, 2017), and *Face Painting in the Dark* (Dos Madres Press, 2014); and recipient of a Witter-Bynner Translation Residency, and Robert Penn Warren Award selected by John Ashbery.

**Katherine Duckworth** writes, teaches, and farms in Memphis, Tennessee. She is the author of *Slow Violence* (beautiful days), *The Soda Can Forever* (roseffern), and *Mexia* (roseffern).

**Lucia Duero** is a writer, poet, and translator. She studied creative writing at Josef Škvorecký Academy in Prague, Czechia, and at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. She holds an MA from the University of Linköping in Sweden. She has translated Anne Carson, Aimé Césaire, Alejandra Pizarnik, Cristina Peri Rossi, Amparo Dávila, José Emilio Pacheco, Arqueles Vela, Josefina Vicens and others to Slovakian, and has translated a variety of Slovakian poets to Spanish. She has lived in Mexico City since 2012.

**Thom Eichelberger-Young** is the editor of Blue Bag Press and a student in the Poetics PhD program at SUNY Buffalo. They are the author of the long poems *BESPOKE* (St. Andrews, 2019) and *ANTI KYTHERA* (Antiphony, 2024) and a

volume of critical essays, *OINTMENT WEATHER: Insurgent Poetics for Desperate Times* (Cloak, 2025). Other work is forthcoming or appears recently in *Fence*, *Brink*, *Apartment*, *bethb*, and *Petrichor*.

**Jared Daniel Fagen** is the author of *The Animal of Existence* (Black Square Editions, 2022). His poems, prose, and conversations have appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Fence*, *Lana Turner*, and *Asymptote*, among other publications. He is an adjunct assistant professor of poetry in the Writing MFA program at Columbia University, an adjunct lecturer in English literature at the City College of New York, a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at the CUNY Graduate Center, and the editor and publisher of Black Sun Lit. Born in Jeollanam-do, South Korea, he lives in Brooklyn and the western Catskills.

**Teo González** was born in Zaragoza, Spain in 1964. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), Kemper Art Museum (St. Louis, MO), Museo de Zaragoza (Zaragoza, Spain) and Illinois State Museum (Whittington, IL), among others. Works by González are included in numerous public collections including the MoMA (New York, NY), National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA) and San Diego Museum of Art, (San Diego, CA).

**Brenda Iijima** is the author of the novel, *Presence* published by Georgia Review Books in 2024. She is also the author of numerous volumes of poetry. She lives in Brooklyn, New York and runs a small poetry press.

**Elijah Jackson** is a writer based in New York. Recent poetry has been published in *Fence*, *Second Factory*, *Annulet*, *mercury firs*, *Keith LLC*, and others.

**Ian U Lockaby** is the the author of *Defensible Space/if a crow*—(Omnidawn, 2024), and *A Seam of Electricity* (Ghost Proposal, 2025). Recent work can be found in *Fence*, *West Branch*, *Noir Sauna*, *Washington Square Review*, *Poetry Daily*, etc. His translation of Mexican poet Diana Garza Islas was recently published by Carrion Bloom Books. He edits the online journal *mercury firs* and lives in New Orleans.

**Sam Lohmann** is a poet, librarian, and parent living in the Pacific Northwest. Some of his recent poems have appeared in the journals *Hot Pink*, *La Mosca*, and *Luigi Ten Co*. The short prose pieces published here are drawn from a longer sequence titled *Strung Along: an essay 2014-2016*.

**E.J. McAdams** is a poet. He published his first full-length collection *LAST* (BlazeVOX [books]) in 2023, and has a chapbook coming out in January 2026 called *SOMEHOW* (Action, Spectacle). He is collaborating with the artist Julie Harrison on *GHOST COAST: A Hurricane Sandy Periplus of Lower Manhattan* coming out from Granary Books in March 2026. He lives in NYC.

Born in Ottawa, Canada's glorious capital city, **rob mclennan** currently lives in Ottawa, where he is home full-time with the two wee girls he shares with Christine McNair. The author of some fifty trade books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, his most recent titles include *On Beauty: stories* (University of Alberta Press, 2024), the poetry collections *Snow day* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2025) and *the book of sentences* (University of Calgary Press, 2025), and the anthology *groundworks: the best of the third decade of above/ground press 2013-2023* (Invisible Publishing, 2023). The current Artistic Director of VERSeFest: Ottawa's International Poetry Festival, he spent the 2007-8 academic year in Edmonton as writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta.

**Henry Peterson** is a writer and psychologist living in NYC. He has an MFA in creative writing from Brooklyn College and is a PhD candidate in clinical psychology at the City College of New York. He has work out or forthcoming in *Chicago Review* and *La Lancha*.

**Sal Randolph** is an artist and writer who lives in New York and works between language and action. She is the author of *The Uses of Art*, a memoir of encounters with works of art. Her poems have been featured in *BOMB*, *jubilat*, *La Vague*, *Oxidant Engine*, *Sound American*, *Vestiges*, and elsewhere; her art work has appeared internationally at museums and in exhibitions including the Glasgow International, Ljubljana Biennial, Manifesta 4, and the São Paulo Biennial. Sal Randolph is a co-founder of dispersed holdings, a publishing project.

**Hélène Sanguinetti**, who lives in Arles, is the author of a dozen collections of poetry, including *Cargo bleu sur fond rouge*, *Anthologie 1999 – 2017* (Lanskine, 2025); *Jadis Poëna* (Flammarion, 2025); *Et voici la chanson* (Lurlure, 2021); *Domaine des englués* (La Lettre Volée, 2017); *Le Héros* (Flammarion, 2008); *D'ici, de ce berceau* (Flammarion, 2003); and *De la main gauche, exploratrice* (Flammarion, 1999).

**Molly Schaeffer's** chapbook, *STATE ZAP\**, was published by MO(0)ON/IO in 2023. A finalist in the 2022 BOMB Magazine Poetry Contest, her work has appeared in *The Recluse*, *Prelude* online, the *Poetry Project Newsletter*, and *Tagwerk*.

She was a writing Fellow at the Lighthouse Works on Fishers Island, NY in spring 2023. A graduate of the Brown University MFA in poetry, she works in writing and visual art. She teaches at Tacoma Community College; Pierce College; and the Summer @ Brown Precollege program at Brown University. She lives in Tacoma, WA.

**Andy Sia** is a poet from Brunei, currently residing in Cincinnati. His poetry collection *Sleuth* is forthcoming from Bench Editions.

**Natalie Stamatopoulos** is a Greek-American writer living in California. Her chapbook *Kikirikiki* (Ursus Americanus Press) is out now. Natalie is with & for the global revolutionary masses fighting for the liberation and unhindered joy of Palestinians & all oppressed people. There is another world than this.

**Alex Tretbar** wrote the chapbooks *According to the Plat Thereof* (Ethel, 2025) and *Kansas City Gothic* (Broken Sleep, 2025). As a Writers for Readers Fellow with the Kansas City Public Library, he teaches free writing classes to the community. His recent work appears or is forthcoming in *Always Crashing*, *Annulet*, *APARTMENT*, *Bat City Review*, *Callaloo*, *Coma*, *mercury firs*, *Protean*, *Seneca Review*, *The Threepenny Review*, and elsewhere.