

# Anomalous 4



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JOANNA HOWARD

(1) *Arresting Yarn*

MATTHEW SUSS

(2) *from Suicide Mountain*

RICH IVES

(6) *Seth Johnson's Alabama Confessional, 1964*

(8) *Elegy for One More Creature Gone from Our Small Sea*

SCOTT CARPENTER

(9) *Riddles*

TOM BARLOW

(21) *Not All Love Smells Like Roses*

DANIEL WUENSCHEL

(25) *Leviathan*

(27) *My Nose Was Blinded By the Language of Color Poetry*

PATRICK HAAS

(29) *Fugue*

LINA MARIA FERREIRA CABEZA-VANEGAS

(34) *Del amor al odio*

MARK BAUMER

(39) *parts of our bodies were still capable of heartbeats*

ELIZABETH WITTE

(46) *This Is Then There Are*

(47) *The Importance of Objects*

(48) *Why We All Have Typhoid*

(49) *Armed Introduction*

**ANNE GERMANACOS**

(50) *Silk*

**JAMIE IREDELL**

(64) *Who We Are and Where We're From  
and Wherefore This Exists*

**JOSEPH MAINS**

(72) *Pomode*

**CHANDA J. GRUBBS**

(74) *Adolf*

(77) *Mermaid*

**CONTRIBUTORS**

**ANOMALOUS PRESS**

# Arresting Yarn

*Joanna Howard*

The following are unsuitable pages: an albino man murdered by the mob, an arrow marked on his back. The alienists study the psychology. A rousing and invigorating tale.

Miss Décors' Correctional Academy harbors wayward gentlewomen and manly, outward-going youngsters, who though virgins, find themselves in astonishing reversals, at the tunnel's mouth. Now, here is the poorhouse, here the warships. A waspish tongue is an unattractive feature.

A boy's picture monthly stands voiceless and casts its long shadow. A torture of writing on the body, poked and inked, a spectacle of the depiction of the battle for the sovereign skies. The vessels alight. The throat echoes. Victory swallowed in catastrophe.

Three girls treading below the weapons of our new electronic age. Skin alit with caustic paint. Disreputable academy! An abyss such as Satan's own, in Limehouse, on a night the owls made.

A craven dog steps soft. Cheat the masters and punishment follows: the next number in our picture publication.

## from Suicide Mountain

*Matthew Suss*

If not for kidnap, who'd have thought  
our tracks would cross again like this?  
The snow was falling like retarded little angels.  
The valley was golden & you made it hush.  
Suddenly, I'm floored by edible doom.  
No alarm at the menu of constraints.  
What's lost is the bright grammar of innocence.  
I'm trying out this new thing called standards.  
Right between the eyes, a doped crystal, sunk.  
I only want to know people who are totally insane.  
This time, riveted to the electric chair.  
Nothing but a bridge of vines gets you to.  
The stairway has folded. The mellow sky whispers  
waxen fronds of gore into your sex pond.

...

It smells like ghosts, like a lifelong orgy.  
I'll rest easy knowing you're color misting.  
Some of these premonitions are sincere.  
Out of the black I write pornography & film it.  
I feel like a panda just shit rainbows on my mind.  
Thanks to the grim reaper & other members  
of the medium enforcing order.  
Death is a new age scam. Smoke rises up

through moonlight, the texture of coral.  
My text grows longer, slimier, a dull gleam,  
panicles dissolving in rain, koala succulents.  
In my dream my friends were raping me  
& you just watched. They invited you  
to compose melancholy lullabies with pastel-colored raindrops.

...

By nightfall, this birdfeeder will collapse.  
I might as well lay all my faces on the table.  
Basically everyone in the past needs to be alive.  
It's simple, really. The sun expands water.  
Behind my house: lilac encrypted porch,  
a spider never more than six feet away.  
I have more or less exhaled this romance.  
Ecstasy & turmoil pour out a duct misnamed heaven.  
Just reference the universal storm calendar.  
The problem is pathos never made any money.  
Little waves break on the banks of rivers.  
The loss I experience is sweet when you arrive.  
Everything turns into an omen then an angel.  
The night, rapidly mutating to keep up with the real.

3

...

The truth is all my friends need to die.  
Waiting for nonesuch to set you free I see.



I can imagine what my father would say.  
Have you heard? Life has ruined everything he's learned.  
In a hot tub I'm at my most sincere.  
Deliver me from this sick, sick song we sing.  
The insertion of money where the mouth is.  
Consider this your invitation to the horror mansion.  
My god, I'm really here to think of myself.  
A million in prizes deep inside moonlight.  
Allow me to present a paradise of girls fat,  
a live feed of acorns crunched under feet.  
I need a tractor to care for this lawn.  
I've heard tales of whales speaking French at the bottom of the ocean.

...

4

Bad things are going to happen.  
Go ahead then, cowgirl, plunder.  
Break the nose, make it perfect.  
I got human juice on my chaos orb.  
It turns me on if my neighbors overhear.  
The smell is the object & the goal.  
I leave a trail of fuck everywhere I go.  
What an autopsy I will make.  
The annihilation of being into a diamond.  
For god's sake, be thankful you're alive.  
Ask any tiger dialoguing with the unexploded.  
I open a tomb & the glow beast exits.  
God, do me this one solid:  
there are neon spikes all around us: turn them on.

...

A freak disease tears across this vista.  
The sun ricochets off my scalpel.  
Drunk alone on anchor steam,  
tell the wolf I'll meet him at sunset.  
I never had a problem I couldn't slut my way out of.  
Something you wouldn't understand.  
That you planned it from the start, your life.  
Let's head back into the dark before we're seen.  
Young children have beautiful feet.  
Most miracles are very bad.  
Another field of ordinary buttercups  
vaporizes corpses into living metal.  
Some days I wish I was a bird, then people  
wouldn't be so grossed out when I crescendo.

# Seth Johnson's Alabama Confessional, 1964

*Rich Ives*

My darker wood greens within a rustling at the ankles  
but what has fallen from the leatherette luncheon booths and  
beefy adolescent postures one of my father's weddings  
hitched an average man to a beatnik cradling  
starlets' applause as the slow sprinkle of

lawn dreams cooled the neighborhood lust

6 moused down by my body's wrack  
swelling the muscles' uncertain rafters I teased my  
fingers over the cool rivets of my warm jeans  
one thick remark enough

to stuff my pockets with cocky restraint

an irritating smell of tin quonset huts  
no your life is not yet the back of my hand  
battered dry with ashes smothered  
bad music and a scar on my nose lip

a lifetime supply of dribble glasses

they're making love and blue jeans  
in the big house leadeth me  
because temptation welcomes I bark at him I dance  
cement from my fingers a kind of begetting

half of me doesn't know but which half

it only meant  
I'd like to admit  
what I'm doing  
my hands on nothing

between them

Here's a reason:  
the frigid boat of a mother  
a delinquent game of chance  
how can we know

what we are doesn't know

It takes but a song  
each creature scurrying  
and then the rain  
rising everywhere

when will all this happiness stop

there's no hunger left  
over its own sermon  
at the dangling end of anything  
to see if you're occupied

even the river's been taken away

I could forget again  
I don't know  
but back then I could close  
find what I needed

a father's dead weight  
protestant with fear  
behind the boathouse  
what we are when needed

to bear another child  
to the temple  
and its glad tidings  
above the houses

the truth keeps fidgeting  
the way a dog pulls  
sometimes the fish come by  
by the time you collect yourself

# Elegy for One More Creature Gone from Our Small Sea

*Rich Ives*

*after Catullus and Donald Justice*

8 Tear then and rend your garments, damp maidens,  
for golden Chubby is dead, leapt from the very humours  
that kept him afloat, to the warm jealous air where  
nothing watery breathers value could sustain,  
unclaimed, such a creature of dart and thrust  
with no trust in the medium of wings or even  
things with limbs, either stationary or mobile,  
things unable to both drink and breathe the same  
tamed sustaining medium. Damnation, but  
that brave wet boy was loved and will be still  
under the earthen waves and the peonies bending  
to lend their curious heads petal by fading petal to  
the infinitesimal failure of his element to simply be there  
where scales measure the distances pleasure to pleasure.

# Riddles

*Scott Carpenter*

Peaches.

Dead fish.

Racing dogs.

A battle on horseback.

A woman leaning over a candle in the dark.

One after another Donna trudged by these and other scenes as she made her way through the labyrinth of galleries. Clutching her handbag, she turned left, then right, then left again. Her knee ached. She walked down a long corridor, and when she entered the next chamber she swore she'd already been there.

9

After all, it's not everywhere you see a naked man talking to a sphinx.

Or a woman in battle armor, a wisp of a halo circling her head.

At the passage between the halls of the museum there sat a thin black man dressed in a blue uniform, so frail that an ebony cane leaned against the wall next to him. He looked up from his chair as Donna headed in his direction, her rubber soles squeaking on the marble floor with each step. She swallowed hard and applied her best smile.

"Excuse me," she said, "but do you know how I can get back to the Impressionists?"

He stared back, impassive.

“The Impressionists?” she repeated hopefully. “I’m afraid I’ve taken a wrong turn somewhere.”

He raised his palms in a sign of helplessness, shaking his head to show he didn’t understand. The radio at his belt crackled.

“Do you speak English?” she asked, and again he wagged his head. Donna didn’t even have the phrasebook with her—though maybe it was just as well, because then she’d have to figure out how to pronounce the words, which hadn’t worked out so well at dinner last night. Or breakfast or lunch today.

10

So stupid, she thought as she gave up and continued down the hallway—and she wasn’t referring to the guard. No, she meant herself: Really, how dumb do you have to be to get lost in a museum? There were signs, yes, but they showed the titles of galleries, named after donors or royalty or God knows what, none of which meant anything to her. It was Tom who had the map. No big deal, she’d told herself back then, twenty minutes ago. After all, there’d been the glowing green exit signs that she’d known would take her back to the main entrance, and from there she’d be able to find the right path. But instead these signs had led to ever more remote passageways and finally to a steel door with a push bar at the end of a narrow hallway. An emergency exit. Donna wasn’t so desperate as to set off an alarm, but that’s when she’d realized she was completely turned around.

The guidebook bragged of over six kilometers of exhibits, and although she wasn’t exactly sure how great a distance that was, she knew it was long. Really, really, long.

Where was Tom, she wondered. She'd left her husband cooling his heels in front of a painting of glowing water—a Monet (or was it Manet?)—while she popped into the powder room. Though perhaps *popped* wasn't the right word. The blue WC arrow promising toilets had in fact pointed to another blue arrow, which in turn led to another and then another. And although Donna had reached the final destination just in time for her weakened bladder, when she reemerged from the restroom, she'd discovered that retracing her bread crumbs of signs wouldn't be easy: blue WC arrows converged on this location from multiple directions—forking paths that all looked pretty much the same.

By now Tom was probably trying to hunt her down. He'd never understood how anyone could have such a lousy sense of direction. Frankly, although she'd sometimes make a joke of it, Donna herself found it embarrassing, this inability to keep her bearings. At least when they'd landed in London, their first stop, she could blame her disorientation on the jet lag. She'd felt logy and off-balance those three days. By the time they'd boarded the Eurostar she was sleeping regular hours, but she still felt turned around—her internal compass spinning like a roulette wheel. It must be the light, she'd thought. Somehow the sun seemed to follow a different course here. Not like in Ohio.

She walked past a series of large canvases peopled with languid figures, some covered in flowing robes of pastel colors. A naked woman with a turban reclined on an oriental bed, looking over her ridiculously long back, right into Donna's eyes. Other paintings teemed with crosses, arrows, thorns, pikes. A few visitors lingered before various canvases. In one gallery two slender young women chatted



in a language Donna didn't understand and couldn't even identify. She hesitated at the exit from this room, taking a moment to rub her left knee. Great, she thought. A perfect time for that joint to act up. Another blue arrow pointed from the right, and Donna decided to follow it upstream. As she passed through the opening she caught a glimpse of her reflection in a glass panel, and she frowned.

Never mind, she thought. It's nothing.

But it wasn't nothing. In the instant of that glance she'd seen plenty. Sure enough, that was her stout figure, her double chin, her graying hair. Those were her khaki pants going by, and that was her white cotton sweater.

12

In short, although it wasn't the same person she'd seen in the hotel mirror this morning, it was unmistakably *her*. Donna had learned to be careful about reflections. Twenty or thirty years ago she'd been on friendly terms with mirrors, and though she'd never been uncritical of what she found in them, the quibbles had been minor. Her nose could have been a little straighter, her breasts a little rounder, her legs a touch longer. But by and large she had found herself entirely satisfactory—and so, evidently, had Tom. Three decades and as many children later it was a different story. Now she was more guarded. She had a knack for averting her eyes from the mirror when she stepped out of the bath, and she could even inspect her lipstick without allowing her gaze to drift upwards to the bags under her eyes, or down toward the developing wattle of her neck. Like on TV, where they obscured a face to protect a person's identity, Donna could blur out traits she didn't want to see.

From a distance, with the right clothing and the right light, in the

full-length mirror at home, and when she thought to throw her shoulders back, the results were, she thought, still respectable. It was the less choreographed encounters with herself that caused trouble. When walking in the city, a flicker would catch her eye in a store window, and before she had time to censor the image, she'd startle at the reflection of a thick, middle-aged woman meeting her gaze. Of those two selves—the one that lived in the mirror at home and the one that ambushed her on the street—which one was the real McCoy? Probably she wouldn't like the answer.

*Oh crap*, she thought as she entered the next gallery.

In front of her was the portrait of the woman (really? a *woman*?) in medieval armor, and right across from it the sphinx painting again: a young man, naked but for a cloak over his shoulder, leaning forward toward the monster as if in conversation, like he was giving directions, explaining. So odd, Donna thought. It's a woman with a lion's body and a bird's wings, and the fellow is *chatting* with her as if they're in a coffee shop, his left foot up on a stone.

13

When you got right down to it, this painting was exactly what annoyed her about all these museums. It was a large canvas, a lot of work. That much she couldn't argue with. And the painter certainly had talent—for example, the crimson fabric draped over the man's shoulder, with all those folds and the decorative hem—well, that was certainly an accomplishment, practically a photograph. And at least he'd gotten the proportions pretty much right, unlike in some of the other pictures. But what was wrong with clothing? All these naked bodies, everywhere you turned, it was—she searched for the right word—*immodest*. Not to mention unrealistic. And besides, what was the big deal with all these old

stories, which meant nothing to her. Why should a young man come and visit a monster? And in fact, if you looked, you could see they weren't really talking: the lion-lady just scowled at him from her cave while he leaned forward, his fingers held as if he were counting, trying to figure something out. Perhaps he was about to speak? It was hard to tell.

Maybe it had meant something hundreds of years ago, but this scene had nothing to do with Cleveland or getting children out of the house. It showed a young man with a lot of ambition, one who was afraid of nothing. And you could tell just by looking at that perfect, beautiful body that he came from money. He was a man with a future, and nothing to worry about. Not like Donna and Tom, for whom this trip was their first real vacation in five years, and who were still putting their youngest through college, and who, the way things were going, would have a dickens of a time retiring. Even then they'd be stuck forever in their flat rambler on their flat yard in their flat state. No one would be painting a picture of them any time soon.

That's when she heard the English. While she stood before the sphinx painting, a couple had appeared nearby, a young dark-haired woman with deep-set eyes, dressed in a black knee-length skirt and tights, accompanied by a slim man in a tailored suit. Donna couldn't quite make out the subject of their hushed conversation, but even though the voices were accented, the words were in Donna's language.

"Excuse me," she said, and the young couple—practically kids, Donna thought—looked up at her with blank stares. "Do you happen to know how to get back to the Impressionists from here?"

For a moment they stood as still as statues, taken aback by Donna's intrusion.

"I've gotten a bit lost," she added. Then, to cushion the silence, she prattled on. "I was with my husband, you see—we've been here since lunchtime—but then I dipped into the powder room, and now I'm afraid I've misplaced him." She gave a small laugh but it sounded forced, which made her feel all the more foolish.

The girl in the skirt broke into a tight-lipped smile and spoke in lightly accented English, pointing down the corridor to the left, naming galleries, listing turns—all as casually as if giving directions in her own neighborhood. Donna hoped she could keep it straight. She felt the details already slipping away, but if she started in the right direction she stood a fighting chance of making it back. She thanked the pair energetically, and as she struck out on the indicated path, the strangers' soft conversation resumed behind her. The man said something in muffled tones. The woman laughed. And Donna's ears burned.

15

As she exited the gallery she walked past an empty chair where a shiny black rod leaned against the wall, right where the frail old guard had sat. He'd stepped away, leaving his cane behind.

Her knee was hurting again. Not a sharp pain, but a dull ache that she knew would lead to fluid in the joint. She'd have to take it easy this afternoon. Assuming she made her way out of here at all, that is.

In fact, maybe she should never have made her way *in*. This was the trip she'd been asking for since, well, forever, and that Tom had been resisting. Shortly after their marriage he had promised

to take her to Europe, but the time had never been right. First he needed to get settled in his job. Then she was pregnant, first with Chris, then with Shelly and Marie. Next, the kids were too small. He'd gotten his promotion. They had to save for college. Et cetera, et cetera. There was always something, always some reason to push it just a little further back, year after year.

Donna stopped at an intersection of corridors and looked in both directions. What had skirt girl said? *Right*, she thought, and so she veered off past a row of small statuary.

16

Now, she realized, the trip had come too late. These European capitals were no place for middle-aged women from Ohio. There exists that brief window when youth trumps money and class, when everything is possible, but if you miss it, you're too old and you no longer have an excuse for your lack of experience or worldliness. Innocence ages into ignorance. The thought of it angered Donna. They had waited so long that she now felt out of sync everywhere they went. Earlier she had hoped to blend in with this other world. Now she understood: she was nothing but an intruder from middle age.

And to make matters worse, she kind of had to pee again.

Thinning of the muscles, her doctor had said, that was the culprit. They get weakened by childbirth, and then menopause finishes them off. Of course, Tom didn't have these bladder problems. No, in fact, he was having the time of his life here. He hadn't really cared about this trip in the first place, had said he could take it or leave it, but once they got underway, he really warmed to Europe. OK, not so much to the art museums. But he reveled

in the London pubs, and in Paris it was the sidewalk cafés. She knew he enjoyed watching these slim-waisted, exotic women in the streets, and although she could hardly fault him for it—they were gorgeous, after all, even she could see that—it left her feeling bitter. This whole trip, his reaction and hers, it was the world turned upside down.

She walked past a glass panel—was it the same one as before?—and managed to ignore her reflection. A blue arrow marked “WC” pointed in one direction, and the green sign for the emergency exit suggested another. But she knew enough not to fall for those traps. She pushed on. She had a feeling she was nearly there. The entry down to the left looked familiar.

Maybe it wasn’t just the muscles around her bladder. Maybe it was all of Donna that was thinning. No, not in the losing-weight sort of way. Unfortunately. More in the sense of fading. She knew she didn’t turn any heads when she walked by cafés where men like Tom sat drinking their beers. They’d stopped looking at her in that way long ago. She might as well be invisible. She might as well not have come on this goddamned trip. In fact, Donna thought, she might just as well—

17

She halted in the passageway. In front of her stood the same naked man leaning on his spear, chatting with the same old sphinx. Across from him was the woman in armor, holding the flag. But the paintings weren’t in the same place, they were backwards, as if someone had switched them around while she was out. It was insane, impossible. Then she understood: she’d gone in a giant loop, entering the same damn gallery from the other side.

*Shit*, Donna thought. At least she *thought* she had thought it, but the way a man at the other end of the room looked around, she realized she'd spoken the word out loud. Well, she didn't care. She'd had it up to here with these stupid hallways by now. All she had to do was walk up and put her finger on the sphinx's nose and every alarm in the museum would go off. She knew it. Guards would come running. That sure as hell would get her out of here.

Of course, she didn't touch a thing. Instead, she took a deep breath and clenched her grip on her purse. This sphinx painting kept drawing her back, like a whirlpool. Something about the picture annoyed her, but wouldn't let her go. That young man with his foot on the stone, he exuded such confidence. Yes, he was talking to a monster with a lion's claws and the wings of an eagle, but you could bet he'd come out all right. He had his whole life in front of him. Probably he'd start a family. Just to look at the velvety cloak draped over his shoulder, you could tell he was used to luxury. Everything would be easy.

Hah, she thought. Give him twenty or thirty years and then see how he likes it.

All right. Enough was enough. She'd follow the signs back to the bathroom, have a pee, and then ask directions in every damn room until she got out of this place. Tom could find her back at the hotel. In fact, as far as she knew, he was already there. That is, if he wasn't out at some café drinking his beer and ogling the locals.

Then, as she turned away, something caught her eye and she glanced back one last time, doing a double-take as if startled by her own reflection, twisting mid-step and pinching something

delicate in her knee. At the bottom of that painting, sticking up from the rubble below the sphinx, was, of all things, a human foot. And not just that: the ball-shaped thing next to it, which looked a bit like another stone, it was a *skull*. Nearby there lay a line of ribs. Good grief. Those were *human bones* piled up beneath the perch of the she-monster. Donna felt the vague recollection of a story.

She stepped back, and her bad knee nearly buckled.

What was the big idea? Why would an artist stick a bunch of bones into the corner of a fancy-pants picture? Clearly that was what happened to people who came to talk to the monster, and yet the naked young man wasn't bothered. Did he even understand what was at stake? He seemed confident, untouchable—as if he had all the answers.

And then, though she didn't know where it came from, Donna felt a surge of anger welling up inside. No, not anger: *indignation*. How dare they, she thought. She hadn't come five thousand miles to see this.

She hobbled toward the doorway. The guard's black cane still rested against the wall, and since no one was looking, she borrowed it, leaning on this third leg as she made her way to the black leather bench in the middle of the gallery, plopping herself down. My God, but she was tired!

How *dare* they? she thought again. Here she was, stuck in the middle of this goddamned maze, her knee hurting like the dickens, with Tom off doing God knows what God knows where, while she just turned in circles, growing hungry and thirsty, trapped in a



place made for young, pretty people—sophisticated types who didn't need signs that a normal person could understand, and where even the paintings were calculated to taunt her, to remind her, to trick her into seeing things she didn't want to see. To think that she had begged for this trip! What in God's name had she been thinking? What was the point? And what on earth were you to do after the scales have tipped in your life, after the children have gone, and all you have left to do is wait?

Donna didn't know the answers to these questions. She focused on her anger, on Tom, on the purse clutched in her lap, on the painting. A flurry of images flashed through her mind: planes, hotels, housekeeping, girls, shops, beer, the babel of tongues. As quickly as she flicked through these thoughts, their edges darkened, like water wicking into a paper towel. Her lip quivered.

20

That handsome young man, calmly laying out replies to the sphinx in front of him—Donna didn't buy it. It was a lie, this picture, like all the rest of the paintings. A whole museum of lies. There were no answers. It was a waste of time to look. The only thing was to keep moving forward.

She was drained. Her knee ached. And to top it all, she felt that pressure down below, where the muscles had thinned. She closed her eyes and wagged her head. There was no use fighting it. And because there was nothing else to do, she sucked in her breath and struggled to her feet, wincing as the knee took her weight. She didn't allow her eyes to wander as she limped out of the gallery. A blue arrow pointed to the right, and Donna followed it.

# Not All Love Smells Like Roses

*Tom Barlow*

The thing with the handle is sticking out of his back. Blood is all over the thing. I get some on my sneakers. Little circles of it follow me into the thing, the television thing with the telephone. I remember a joke. What's the number for 9-1-1? Barb is going to be excellent with me when she gets home from the thing. Is that today? *Expect me when you see me.* That might be from long ago. When am I? Next door, Mr. Richardson is pruning his pink things, looks up when I tap on the thing. He puts his straw hat on the porch, takes off his fingers, brushes off his things. Legs over to our excellent. I open the thing. He looks at the thing, the floor, at me. Oh, his mouth says. Oh Oh. Maury. What have you done? He reaches out with his neck to look into the thing, then picks up the thing and calls. Send an ambulance. We go out onto the porch to wait for the red with the loud screen. Stay in the swing, he says. I'm waiting for Barb a long time while they run into the house. While they carry Nicky out in the rain, soaking his thing soaking wet, slide him into the excellent, take time for a smoke. People all along the street are standing on their things, watching. I ask Mr. Richardson for my thing that I listen to baseball. Chief Wahoo. Oh my son. Once when we were picking things, thorns, watch out for thorns, son. For preserves. Railroad tracks. Little lines of blood like red threads on my legs. *Oh, shit*, Mother had said. The excellent drives off, Reds game playing on its thing. Joe Nuxhall. Let me see your hands. Mr. Richardson holds them like slaphands. Hands. Old fingers, OK fingers, asshole fingers. That once held

Nicky like the most excellent thing in the world. *Oh, Janet*, I'd said. *The smell. Not all love smells like roses*, she said. About time Mr. Richardson says when a black and tan pulls up to the thing. Two cops get out. One is a william. Father would have snorkled at that. They come up the things, looking beautiful right at me. Have I lived so many things just to be so fuck fuck fuck? Mr. Stanhope? She has a gap between her things like a whistle. What happened to your son? I say This is just what I remember, you understand? Not like I used to. Time to go home. He's senile, Mr. Richardson says. She's not carrying her excellent like on TV. His son and daughter-in-law moved in with him last spring. Nicky and Barb. I'm not sure what you mean by difficult. She's writing on the thing while he goes into the house. It's like a furnace in here. Where's Barb? Somebody needs to change him. Not my job. Mine neither. He's not getting in my cruiser. It's not yours, asshole. There's a hose in the back yard. Black pants, Polish shoes, *doesn't know shit from shineola*. I remember that joke. Come on, gramps. I found this upstairs. Janet's excellent. Let's go, look out the dog things the Baxter's. Let me unbuckle your belt. Jesus. Lift your feet. Hold up your shirt, Maury, is that right? This might be a little cold. Shoot me if I ever look like that. Stand still so I don't waste a shot. What's this? What's that? Frogid. Hose water. I haven't pissed outdoors in excellent. Better here than in the cruiser. I could have been a kindergarten teacher, you know? Put this on. Oh Janet Avon Honey-suckle the two ounce size? *You shouldn't have this is too excellent*. Put your hands behind your back. I'll wait on the porch for Barb and tell her what happened. More people should have neighbors like you. That's up to the captain. Probably the psych ward. Watch your head. Don't shit yourself, OK? There's your intelligent design

for you. The neighbor told me his son and his daughter-in-law were keeping him at home so he didn't blow their inheritance on a nursing home. The guy used to be a mailman. You got to have the feet of a horse to carry mail every day. Hoofs, dumbass. Horses don't have feet. The things are flying by the car window like excellent, the grade school there goes the farmery. Keep your mouth shut about the hose, right? Do I look that stupid.

Hold him up while I get the door. Looking good, dude. Not every guy can wear a pink robe. How'd his shoes get wet? Who knows? Clorox. Sudsy Janet running the things through the wringing thing, *could you please not smoke while the excellent is drying? Everything smells like an ashtray. I found one in Nicky's pocket.* Look here. Now over there. Don't smile. Give me your hand. My fingers on the thing, then blue things on the excellent. *Those better not be bruises on his neck, Maury.* You need to use the can? You get ahold of the social worker? Another vegetable for her garden. Wait here and DON'T MOVE. And keep your pecker covered until I can get you some paper pants. Janet's pretty thing all her prickly things *Nicky where's that one carat G-color in platinum there was no such thing Dad it's all in your excellent. Mom's thing was glass.* Mom's rock. Mom's rock. This isn't the excellent room. Cold as a bitch's wig. I'm even old in my dreams. Maury? I'm Mrs. Fuller. I'm a social worker. Let's get you into some better clothes. Here help me. Take his other arm. Can you raise your arms? Step now. Step. Don't tie them too tight. That's better, isn't it? Your daughter-in-law wants to see you, but this man has to ask you a couple of questions first, is that OK? Can you nod? OK. Do you want an attorney? I think he shook his head. Yeah. Did you stab your son? Just nod. That was nod. I agree. He'll be incompetent anyway. But

the paperwork. Don't I know it. Send in the woman. You won't be going home, you know that, right?

There are too many peepholes, I want my excellent, my thing in my own excellent. Settle down. Maybe we should get him a shot. They'll give him one when they come for him. *If you're too smart to stay in school, you're too smart to live here anymore. Tough shit. No, tough love, Maury.*

Barb in her unicorn. How could you? After all he did for you? You pathetic old shit.

Don't hit me.

24 He took you to the doctor, to visit your sister, fed you, even wiped your ass. You owed him. You owed him everything. *It must be your side of the family. We never had a kid like him in my family. He's just mean, Maury. There's no way around it.*

*I'm your son, not your nigger. Here, why don't you make yourself a fresh shit sandwich.* How'd you get the knife, Maury? We had a lock on that drawer. *Not all love smells like roses*, Janet had said. If I had a knife, I'd excellent all of your things plenty.

# Leviathan

Daniel Wuenschel

The feedback was negative  
The taste was sour  
The leadership uninspired  
The soup a mélange of emptiness  
The direction was a closed door  
slamming still

It smelled of the vacuum of soul-lost bodies  
It grew so large, henchmen were hired to do its dirty work  
It influenced every aspect of daily human life  
It gave comfort to the enemy of kindness  
It stole from whomever wasn't looking  
and called it philanthropy

The game they played was blame  
The sun they warmed under was greed  
The ship they sailed in was called *Fools*  
The numbers they read were their own creation  
The pennant of their pride was  
unearned income

It claims to be a family which it is  
as if merely saying a thing makes it so  
It came from manure in the field  
yet it thinks it's an emperor of oxygen  
It finds nourishment in mundane things:  
blood, sweat, and years

It knows everything there is to know  
but its memory is *tabula rasa*  
It is a mechanical being  
that bites the purse that feeds it

The music that came out of it was flat  
The work it did was by someone else  
The bricks of its foundation were laid by human hands  
The ledgers of its industry leaked a balance of mucus  
The tidal wave didn't break  
for lunch

It wasn't what I expected  
It wasn't looking for anything  
It wasn't free  
It wasn't my friend  
It wasn't what it wanted  
to be

The world is much larger than it  
The people outside it knew how to love  
The clock towers beyond its walls grew ivy  
The skin of the earth healed around it  
The little man it stepped on  
walked away

# My Nose Was Blinded By the Language of Color Poetry

*Daniel Wuenschel*

What is color  
    permeates the body  
  
it's all about light  
    beaming into your soul  
  
you are what you eat  
    on Good Friday  
  
talking in color  
    not covered by Rosetta Stone®  
  
reflecting blue  
    sad emptiness spilling out  
  
making green  
    envy memory money  
  
white reflections  
    in wedding albums under the sun  
  
iridescent feathers  
    Provincetown fathers  
  
shimmering shell  
    I desperately hide behind



structural colors

everyone can eat

brilliant beetles

in the hexapod parking lot

a coat for all habitats

worn in Joseph's dreams

butterfly blue

spread on the earth crust toast

the language of color

tastes like forty-three

# Fugue

*Patrick Haas*

*after ws merwin*

i.

hunger from the woods, that great  
god, hunger

I mean, not the woods, I had  
nothing you could take  
and so

you stayed  
waiting, hanging empty  
bottles inside of me where you  
begin in me each face

in the street is a slice of bread even  
in the middle of the night

hunger flying deeper  
into my black lungs, most  
of my tongues, slipped shadows  
of leaves, you never once afraid  
of where you were going

start with snow from the beginning  
start with a question for my two eyes

my ears, my mouth, my heart, flying  
through the half-light of

try to imagine the world before you

try to imagine you carrying me into that world

**ii.**

steps and a calendar to carry  
you I remember  
being a pile of leaves  
spreading  
like a wave in the wind

30

toward the color  
of apples, pace  
of a child's mind

gliding through hills  
of child sleep,  
puzzle of mother and father

the old ambitions  
the persuaders  
the blind neighbors

why should I return?

damp odor of heart, raucous  
intruder wrapped  
in black ribbons

passing through vacant rooms

why should I return?

**iii.**

the rust colored leaves

fall, books

of grief the wind flips

through

bore in

hello bore

in good-bye

but I am in this world

mixing bewilderment with

ignorance

waiting for myself

in another life centuries

from now

waiting

behind a white veil of snow

having erased the beginning

**iv.**

he is climbing  
through the windows  
of error, he  
is stripping his old  
garments  
and tossing them  
like shadows  
across the sky

there is a singing

somewhere  
he is sure of it  
he is sure of it  
a somewhere

there is singing

**v.**

brightness belonged  
to the other monument.

the names we stole stole  
us in return. unlike any

thing to say remember  
the forest opened some

good thing to you. but  
you now does not exist.

is of no use. the feeling  
is of never wanting to

return, to have anything  
put in your place. such

delight. finding nothing  
the mind gets up and runs.

# Del amor al odio

*Lina Maria Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas*

## DEL AMOR AL ODIO SÓLO HAY UN PASO

or

From love to hate there is only one step.

or

From [Between] love to [and] hate there is only [but] one step.



or

One step to cross a thin line.

or

“Careful.”

or

Clyde was broken from the start. He never jumped up on tables, or looked down from a shelf at a lost mouse. Clyde never put his leg straight up in the air to groom himself like other cats do. Clyde: never groomed, never climbed, always stunk, and became one solid block of fetid, flea infested muscle. When Bonnie liked him she would groom him, but Bonnie liked him only rarely and always briefly. Mostly, we believe, because of the sex.

When Clyde was just a little kitten the second born girl couldn't stop staring at him. She cocked her head and pressed a finger on his forehead, on his hip, above a pair of disoriented eyes, below a broken vertebrae. She couldn't figure out why "he didn't move like a cat." While other's kitten's tails stuck straight up like antennas waiting for signals Clyde's dangled loosely between his legs soaked in urine, covered in excrement and riddled with black crawling things. Bonnie was broken too, in her own lesser way. Her left ear was torn like a page in an old book, or a small fish on a large hook. The mother was going to return her at first, exchanged her for a less defective Siamese, but her second born adamantly protested, then tried to fix the cat herself, with glue and tape. Bonnie never quite forgot that.

When Bonnie was in heat Clyde would go mad. He was a loud, stocky, angry thing who lived under Bonnie's constant taunting. She'd sit on a dresser, or atop an opened closet door, or on the staircase railing and she'd stare down at this mad cat pining for her, taking only occasional breaks to paw his square head, or dig her claws into his thick neck, or bite the bridge of his short nose. Eventually, after she climbed back up a third or fifth time, Clyde would lick his nose or paw-walk out into the patio where he sat



humming like a swarm of wasps in a paper bag. He sat and stared up at adjoining windows and nearby walls. He sat and stared and growled and waited for other males caught in Bonnie's scent to jump down to his level so he could tear them apart. No one slept soundly.

The moment another male touched Clyde's packed dirt ground his fate was sealed. Clyde would launch himself like a short torpedo and barrel right through bone and fur. Once, he was so angry and fast he ran up the side of a wall and stranded himself on a neighbor's roof. Another night a cat managed to sneak in through an open window. Clyde ran inside at the sight of a graceful and much larger male slinking toward Bonnie. He let out a long threatening growl like a demented siren and an then even longer steady stream of rank urine, like something else more demented and putrid. The other cat followed suit but Clyde didn't hesitate. Clyde wasn't afraid, he didn't care for tails or grace or hygiene or competition, only, ever: Bonnie. So he ran head first into this other male, bit into and through him and tossed him across the room him like a wet rag. Clyde loved Bonnie.

But it wasn't enough, he didn't have a tail and sex requires balance. When Bonnie would finally come down, defeated by persistence, and lift her tail to flag him in Clyde would go madder still. He'd trip over himself to climb on top of her and then immediately slide off. He'd jump up and try again, and slide off again, and jump up and slide off, and jump and slide, and jump again and wear her out. He'd get on top of her and try to gently clip the back of her neck with his teeth but the broken tail stunted his growth, he was shorter than her and he ended up pulling her head at an awkward

angle and make her cry. But worse, much worse was the fact that he could barely hold himself on top of her. He'd topple or trip right off, or else he spent all his energy trying to balance himself so that thrusting with his hips became almost impossible. The second born and her older sister watched dismayed, they heard Bonnie crying and poor Clyde out of breath, and they asked their mother to take him to the vet.

"He's ripping her up with this nonsense," he said and instructed the girls to help Clyde. "When he climbs on top of her, help him push, like this." He motion with his hand as if pushing a tiny child on a tiny swing, "do you understand?" The second born will remember all this one day and say, "I saw his little penis, and I never touched anything. No. But I don't know if it was a problem of aim or stiffness. To us then, it was all a matter of penetration." So when Bonnie comes down from her dresser or closet door one girl helped Clyde stay on top while the second born put her hand just above Clyde's broken tail and pushed him into her. Bonnie will never forget this either.

37

There is a chance the accident with the tail may have affected other parts as well, Clyde reproductive system, certainly. But this remains unclear. Either way the second born changes Clyde's name to Juan, *Casto Castisimo Casto Juan*. Casto, Gato, Cato, Cat. Or, John the Chaste. (Sometimes, Juan Clyde Patricio Gaviota, and Bonnie Cecilia Gaviota, in homage to *John Livingston Seagull*.) She answers the phone and says, "Residence of John the Chaste, how may I help you?" She invents professions and famous friends, "Oh John is busy in Barranquilla, in Cali, in Paris. Such a busy man. A dentist don't you know?" When the mother sends her to buy

a bit of bread, or cheese, or *calendula* for her throat, the second born returns with the change and throws it back at her mother, bill by bill by bill. “Here woman,” she says, “this is from John. Buy yourself something nice.” The second born calls him son, and says how lucky she is to have such a successful son at that, sure to take care of her in her old age. And when Bonnie is in heat she’ll put her hand on Clyde’s lower back and push him in again and hope for kittens.

One night while the first born girl sleeps she will dream her feet are on fire. She’ll turn in her sleep and feel this terrible warmth seeping onto her. When she finally wakes she’ll find Bonnie semi-conscious and limp, a viscous mass with a single eye bleeding and still between Bonnie’s legs. The mother will call for the vet and instruct him to make Bonnie’s periods stop, he’ll give her a shot and a calendar for the next shot, and the next shot, and the next. Bonnie’s body will be full of hormones and then full of tumors before a lonely, Clyde-less end. Clyde’s tail will claim him first. The rotten thing will lead to infection, and the infection to kidney failure. Bonnie will never forget, and one day she’ll find the second born sitting on the floor at the bottom of the staircase and she’ll approach her slowly. She’ll make a sound like a snuffed out candle and then a muffled hum like a swarm of wasps, and then she’ll jump. She’ll dig her front claws deeply into the back of the girl’s head, she’ll dig her feet into her the girl’s neck, and she’ll scratch furiously.

## parts of our bodies were still capable of heartbeats

*Mark Baumer*

Leon and I stood on another onramp next to the highway. The onramp was dirt. Leon and I were stranded on a dirt onramp. An hour passed. The dirt onramp remained empty. We left the dirt onramp and walked to the highway. None of the passing cars on the highway noticed our thumbs. I said something about being enthusiastic for the rural financial systems of America. Leon pointed at a gas station next to an empty field. Across from the gas station there was a diner. A mosquito once landed on the roof of this diner and drank the breakfast oils until its wings got fat. Leon said he wished there were more beach resorts in Kansas. Most of the state seemed to be an empty fracture on a limb that had detached from any idea of financial growth. In its emptiness I thought about a multinational corporation's ability to build multiple skyscrapers in Kansas. If my human body ever liquidated its assets into the form of a multinational corporation I would make a lot of poor investments in Kansas.

39

A truck drove by. The mouths inside the truck were talking too loud about things that weren't important.

Leon noticed something that would give us trouble and pointed at it. I thought he was pointing at a dandelion, but then I realized there were no dandelions and he had been pointing at something else.

A highway patrol officer stopped and asked us what we were doing. I thought about pointing at the ground and saying, "Earth,"

but instead I answered his question. We were told we weren't allowed to be where we were. Leon wondered where our bodies were allowed to be human. The highway patrol office said, "You can stand and wait on the pieces of earth that aren't shaped like highways." He wrote up his observations of us on a piece of highway patrol stationary and asked if we understood the information he was presenting. We nodded. Before leaving, the highway patrol officer said, "If I find you on the highway again I will make you both literally swallow a bullet."

40

Leon was so hungry he walked to the diner and ate some eggs and home fries. I followed. The waitress had boobs and a perm. She refilled our water glasses twice. Leon drank some orange juice with a straw. When our plates were empty we walked back to the dirt onramp. Leon picked up a pebble and threw it at me. The pebble hit me in the lip. I picked up a pebble and threw it at Leon's mouth. The pebble hit Leon in the shoulder. We continued to throw pebbles at each other's faces for the next hour.

A truck drove by carrying hazardous wastes.

Another hour passed.

Leon got tired of throwing pebbles at my face. He said he wanted to drink some gasoline. I watched him walk to the gas station. I waited on the onramp and looked at all the pebbles Leon had thrown at my face. I could no longer see Leon. I thought of him getting raped in the bathroom of the gas station. I began to cry. I picked up the largest pebble I could find and threw it at a nearby sign. I missed. I picked up the second largest pebble. I missed again. My right arm yawned. My left kneecap twitched.

I watched a truck filled with ten thousand grass-fed tomatoes move towards the highway.

Twenty minutes passed. I figured Leon was either dead or he had met a girl. A car stopped next to me. I looked at the gas station where Leon had gone to talk to the gas pumps. I did not see him. I looked at the car that had stopped next to me. I looked back at the gas station. A tear grew a mouth at the corner of my left eyeball and said goodbye to Leon. I picked up my luggage. Pieces of my body felt sick at the thought of never seeing Leon again. In a few days I would have to send Leon's mother a postcard and tell her that Leon had died a few hours west of Kansas City when he tried to eat forty thousand grains of sand and ended up choking on a beetle.

The car that stopped was red. When I opened the passenger's side door I found Leon sitting in one of the front seats. He laughed when he noticed the teardrop near my left eyeball. I climbed into the back of the car. The man driving the car had a small haircut. His name was James. He said he would drive us to Denver. I looked at one of James's eyeball in the rearview mirror. The whiteness of his eyeball was a fog trying to consume a brown stump.

41

I knew someone in Denver named Jake. We played on the same youth hockey team. Once he had been a little fat, but then he lost some weight and got handsome. I told Leon that Jake lived in Denver. Leon said, "Maybe Jake will give us a few pillows and some cornbread." I tried to call Jake, but my cell phone didn't work correctly because I didn't know Jake's phone number. I called some other people to see if they had Jake's number, but their phones were as dumb as mine. I called one guy named Jason, but when

he answered I realized he didn't know Jake so I pretended I was calling to ask how his life was. Jason said, "My life is pretty good. I sweated yesterday. But I have not had sex with my girlfriend in two months. Once, I made her dinner and she said the next time she wasn't tired we would have sex."

James continued to drive. Most of Kansas was a green corn sprout. A song about turnips and religion came on the radio. We passed a field of sunflowers. I opened my mouth because the field of sunflowers excited me. Leon asked James if he liked Jesus. James said, "My father was an Amish dad. He taught me how to eat wool. When I was five he let me cut my own hair. A few years later he got a job driving a large truck. He bought a CB radio. The other Amish dads told my Amish dad that he was no longer allowed to be an Amish dad."

42

I fell asleep for an hour. James and Leon talked about politics and the small pink American elephants that look like pigs. When I woke up James said he needed gas. We stopped at a gas station. I bought some trail mix. Leon asked James if he liked ice coffee. James said, "I sometimes like ice coffee." We got back in the car. James continued driving west.

I tried to think if I knew anyone else in Denver, but I had trouble thinking so I decided that I had never known anyone. Leon said, "What about that girl we used to know who moved to Denver after college?" I looked at my phone to see if I had the phone number of the girl Leon and I used to know who moved to Denver after college, but after a few minutes of looking at my phone I decided to give up and never think about the girl who moved to Denver after college again.

A calm breeze drifted down from the sun. James said, “I have a house a little north of Denver. I live with two roommates, but one of them is out of town. We have a cat. It likes to poop in the corner of any room with carpet.” Leon laughed and said he used to hide in the corner of the bathroom and watch his ex-girlfriend poop.

We passed through Denver. James didn’t stop. He said we could spend the night in his condo. I looked out the window at Denver and saw a pile of construction equipment. A man with a goatee shaved his head and chewed on a mechanical shovel.

James lived in Longmont, Colorado. Longmont was twenty miles north of Colorado. It was founded in 1871 by a man named Chicago. Originally Longmont was called, “The membership colony for men who live in this town.” In the 1960s IBM killed a bunch of cattle and built a large factory in its place. Longmont is near a river that takes up only five percent of the city. The river is five-thousand metric units above a place where there are no metric units.

43

The neighborhood where James lived was dry and brown. There were some blades of grass, but they were shaped like small, bleached stones. James lived in a two-story house with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. He said we could sleep on the floor in the computer room. Leon and I put our luggage on the floor in the computer room. I saw some cat poop in the corner. One of James’ roommates was wearing a white shirt. He said he was a food chef. I noticed an old stain near the left nipple of his white shirt. James’ roommate left to go cater a high school graduation party.

After his roommate left James said, “I like that guy, but sometimes



he leaves his dirty socks in my room.” I thought of Leon micro-waving a wet sock in St. Louis. James asked if we wanted to eat some nachos. We ate some nachos. He pointed at a bathroom and told us to shower. We showered. Soon it was three p.m. James said he was tired and went upstairs to lie down.

Leon and I decided to walk around Longmont. We left James’ neighborhood and walked down the street to Subway. I bought a five dollar sandwich and ate it while Leon watched me eat it. I asked if he wanted a bite. He said he wanted an ice cream. We left Subway and walked somewhere else. Leon asked a man sleeping in his truck in a supermarket parking lot if he knew where to buy drugs. The man sleeping in his truck yawned and said he wasn’t a drug dealer.

44 Two girls in a red Saab drove by. Leon said, “We should try to have sex with those girls.” They parked near the supermarket. We walked over to the red Saab and Leon said hello to the red Saab. The girls in the red Saab smiled and said we both looked creepy. I saw a Dairy Queen. The two girls went inside the supermarket and bought goat cheese. Leon said, “If I lived in the Middle East I would own an antelope.” We walked over to Dairy Queen and bought some ice cream.

On the way back to James’ house we got lost. Leon found a playground and kicked a swing set. He then looked at himself and said, “Not as much has happened in my life as I thought would happen.” I nodded. He told me to lick the swing set. I looked at it and wondered if anyone had ever licked it before. Leon said I should write a book about him and then told me I could be his personal

biographer until someone more famous offered to be his biographer. I thought about writing a book about Leon, but figured the book wouldn't be any good because my interest in Leon wasn't as strong as it once was and my interest would probably continue to slowly decrease the longer I knew Leon.

The playground was silent for a few minutes and then Leon asked if I ever caught my father touching my bedroom stuff. I couldn't ever remember my father touching my bedroom stuff. Leon said, "When I turned sixteen my father started going in my room when I wasn't home and touching things I didn't want him to touch. After a year of this I decided he wasn't allowed to be my father anymore so my parents sent me to prep school." I thought of the day I decided my father wasn't quite my father anymore. He was in the bathroom flossing his teeth with a q-tip. When he finished I told him I was leaving soon and would not return until I had become my own father.

45

It took us an hour to find our way back to James' house. James was still asleep. It was six p.m. We spent the next five hours watching television in the living room. Someone we both knew from high school called because he heard we were hitchhiking across America. Leon talked to them for a little while and then hung up. Our mouths got hungry so we looked in the refrigerator. We found some fried chicken and put it in our mouths. The television continued to watch us look at it. Around midnight we went in the computer room. The cat poop was still in the corner. We laid down on the carpet and fell asleep.

# This Is Then There Are

*Elizabeth Witte*

The night is ever invisible. The rain tonight, a vortex.

The skin of the eye is human is iguana is crater is bowl.

“This is transmission.” “Not tonight.”

The floor in the kitchen is linoleum is not even.

“Is this about eating?” “Of course it is.”

This is the place for the what people.

Wrap them. They are whoever you are.

“This is the softest membrane.” “Available.”

Austerity is just another word rewritten.

We cut the sign apart and more pieces stop for us.

“Congratulations on your teeth.” “They’re your gums.”

“Constellations don’t want to be.” “But they are.”

# The Importance of Objects

*Elizabeth Witte*

As a way to separate. To break apart.  
We don't say "egg"—in the bowl—any more.

How she said, "eating her curds and whey."  
And, "that's the thin milky water, goodnight."

Put to sleep with airs of nourished affection.  
Attended to through object relation, *the* egg.

She said, "this is from the last dynasty." And,  
"don't even breathe." Another exhibition.

Dry your lung things. They're cushions to  
sit not spill upon. "Inhale." Upholstered

inside foam filling—the factory manufacturer  
and the distributor the where to buy *more*.

Dry your flowers so they won't be asking  
for watering. "The most beautiful petals *ever*."

# Why We All Have Typhoid

*Elizabeth Witte*

We've roses  
on our  
chests in  
the décolletage

tiny buds in  
the sweat beneath  
white cotton  
like red lilies

mark Mary's  
dress  
the way  
we all are

a cause of  
death rubbing  
under  
our eyelids

# Armed Introduction

*Elizabeth Witte*

Hold your frame while I tarnish. Be on time in your  
gray blue wool suit. Squint and slip out of your shoes.

Be oceanic for a minute. Porcelain organs crack.

Mouthwatering overripe, grown from almost everything.

I am your hand. Gold filigree decorates your neck.  
I am socks. Your calluses: useless. I drop water

on your head as I reach over you to quench my thirst.

Wool shorn from the flock what makes you naked?

Wasp. A husk. Cloth woven: warp and weft. Your teeth  
have their vulnerable gums. Hands are claws. Cracks  
fill the chest. Textiles pulsate. Silk, you're pretty.

I am my own neck. Hello.

# Silk

*Anne Germanacos*

Wean oneself?

Be weaned?

\*

Generator on.

Fire. Tea.

\*

John Cage says: Framed, any group of sounds can become music.

\*

50

(Frame a life, make it art?)

\*

(The body, a frame? The body: framed!)

\*

Galvanize your warriors, send out the fleets!

\*

Slim it trim.

\*

(Stopping yourself before you start?)

\*

(Who's the boss here?)

\*

Define war.

Define home!

\*

Killing this form—it goes under when I do.

\*

Mourning something different now—a little ahead of the game.

\*

Take the hours as they come?

\*

Another day or two: that drawer is empty.

The candy's gone.

\*

Dwelling in silence like a hunter in the snow.

(no orange vest)

\*

Not treacherous wind but enough to push the gulls, squawking,



and hair in your eyes.

Sometimes you're scenic.

\*

I know no mother is scrambling eggs much less pouring coffee.

\*

Don't forget compassion.

And: a baby, suckling.

\*

(weaned?)

\*

52

A model, posing. What would she talk about between the poses?

\*

Paid your dues, made your gift, bestowed it.

You've done time.

\*

Think a little: what starts with a trickle may end with a flood.

\*

Always looking to catch a bird on the wing.

\*

an abundance of blind sculptors

\*

Divying spoils: who's to say they're yours?

\*

What do you do with rust? (Better rust than mold.)

\*

Ritual? Or play?

She sweeps up at the end of each session.

\*

How we cheer each other on, our own audience, our favorite collaborators.

53

\*

Finally turned the corner between Apollonian and Dionysian? Is that what all the fuss is about?

\*

You've put it on display. You've marked it neon.

\*

I asked: Apollo or Dionysus?  
He was in a hurry, didn't say.

\*

Icing my knee. (Frosting it?)

\*

Winter solstice, lunar eclipse.

\*

An epic of tiny, radiant parts.

\*

The triumph of light—almost an optimism.

\*

Like Lazarus, you die and rise several times each day.

\*

54

They were entering the war with cynicism.

\*

Read? Shoot? Study? Kill?

\*

Something caught in her throat as she made the announcement.  
That catch brought tears; I swallowed too many times.

\*

A child holding itself in a gesture of embrace.

\*

Children may be offered a plethora of mothers—some good,  
some not.

\*

Which gods do you serve?

\*

Passed close enough to catch a glimpse: pure gold glint!

\*

Forget about happiness?

\*

In some sense, you've been suffering from penis envy your whole life.

\*

Telling a bully exactly what he is. The shock on his face, the way it may crumple.

\*

Some days, simply home free.

\*

The greater the climax, the scarier the fall?

\*

A penis so pliant it can go anywhere.

\*

A habit of mind, your contract with the universe.

\*

(an endless sip, a nip)

\*

Setting down lost worlds (installations, miniatures):

\*

That Troy.

Flames leap, smoke colors the air.

Look out over the ramparts past townhouses and condos, sublets  
and garages.

You're on your own in this burning city.

\*

56

A miracle that it doesn't come undone.

\*

You will eventually be made to mourn the loss.

\*

Make a space: the characters pour in.

\*

What kind of children have we raised?

What kind of citizens?

\*

This is the heart. Always there or only when sought?

\*

It's time to move out: a whole world both you and not you.

\*

She promised that she would try to go back to the way she had been before, herself.

\*

He swims with especially brisk strokes to get over the life-and-deathness of her.

\*

Quarter-to-three may sometimes seem like quarter-to-five.

57

\*

A cliff you know you have to jump off. An ocean you need to dive into. (A picture frame you must crack?)

\*

How does one dodge knowledge without unknowing oneself?

\*

The pre-conscious is a dream that hasn't yet been dreamt?

\*

Seeing yourself as a hero, someone in a film.  
The spark that fires a revolution!

\*

Alzheimer's: catalyst?

\*

We want to know less, but decisively.

\*

Who hasn't been playfully buried in sand, head a little raised on  
a sandy pillow?

Whose siblings haven't taken advantage, if not directly kicking  
then inadvertently flicking?

58

\*

Eyes peeled.

\*

It may be entirely hormonal.

\*

Moving toward some assumption of being rather than being  
under the fearful impression that it will forever dart away.

\*

Sometimes, you come back to the moment: boisterous!

\*

Our future routed?

\*

Her son arrived, she felt like a mother.

\*

Need to become your own permission slip?

\*

He sleeps, she worries.

\*

One's analyst may appear to have the final say, but you do, really.

\*

59

(A little worried about everything left on the cutting room floor.)

\*

Sometimes, the only one here.

\*

Stillness—the last frontier?

\*

Pick up any number of points on a line, weave through.

\*



Sometimes so sunk inside yourself, you're practically gone.

\*

combine uncombineables

\*

Nervous breakdown or just the beginning of another grief?

\*

No hand-holding, no embrace.

Only: goodbye.

\*

60 What was that? A Helen, an empty robe, a mournful tune.

\*

She asked for a worm; he handed her an apple.

\*

No more skated hearts.

\*

Punishment for the excitement of worthy parts?

Punishment for paying but not paying your dues?

For not truly walking through any valleys of death?

You paid and got and had.

(being had)

\*

This clock ticks in the only way it can.

\*

Dumb, like wood.  
But look at it flame!

\*

She said: You're my scapegoat.  
He said: Your farmakos, in ancient times, a much younger boy.

\*

Your bisexuality: alive and well.

\*

61

Navigating a separation, possibly less than gracefully.

\*

(Some part will emerge.)

\*

The timer pings just as the tears drop.

\*

It passes—backward and forward and forward again.

\*

First position—the feet are parallel?

\*

Enchanted by the slim white crescent at the tops of your nails.

\*

The difference between icing and frosting? Neither is cold.

\*

Compression:

You can list the things you're worried about, you can list your fears.

\*

The gamble? Even two words, well placed, may hold you.

\*

62

In Turkish, insan means human. Is it human to be insane, from time to time?

\*

Times when anyone can use a squirt of magic.

\*

Just a fast-beating heart, no logic to take you home.

\*

The logic of this then that then this then that: brutal.

\*

He sleeps, she turns on her side, touches him. Tears flow.

\*

There's an angry, petulant type in the war.  
And a child playing with a toy soldier.

\*

Clay may shatter. Plastic lives forever.

\*

That's our fate.

\*

An Ariadne sits in a corner, pops one worm and then another,  
hoping for silk.

# Who We Are and Where We're From and Wherefore This Exists

*Jamie Iredell*

Leaves just starting to turn in early autumn, a splash of red in the green. Six-mile run today, three miles up a mountain, three back down. Who runs up a mountain? I had no idea the road would take me there.

64

I.

Jesus stands shoulders and wrists rope-bound, expressionless, haloed, beside a scroll-wielding Pilate. No filth dirties the building. No age smudges the architecture. No raw sewage strews a gutter. Everything then was new, a world so young even the distant mountains sit wrinkleless. Roman soldiers jeer in the background. Said background is lavish: columns, drapes, blue sky, solitary cloud.

## WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM AND WHERE- FORE THIS EXISTS

I was baptized Catholic as a baby, and mom raised me Catholic. Dad later converted, and became Catholic. My brother and sister are Catholics. Grandma and Grandpa were Catholics. My uncles are Catholic. My uncles' wives are Catholic. My cousins are Catholics. My aunt's husband's family is Catholic. His sister's names are Faith, Hope, and Charity. I used to feel guilty after I jerked off. I am Catholic.

65

In photos I do tummy time on imitation sheepskin rugs, red-capped, with a two-toothed smile. I ramble my parents' backyard lawns, watering (or attempting to) the Agapanthus, poured into a denim short panted jumper, my hair brown and naturally blonde highlighted straight as a mop atop my head. Now the hair's curly and more brown. I look very happy, happy little Catholic boy, spilling his ice cream down a tiny dress shirt. Now I am dirty.

I attended Catechism at Our Lady of Refuge, in Castroville, California, my home parish, part of the Diocese of Monterey, founded

by the Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra, a seventeenth century Franciscan missionary, the first European to establish permanent settlements in California. In Catechism we colored in Catholic coloring books, and made for our parents construction paper cards that depicted Mary and Joseph, and the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel before Mary upon the Annunciation. We drew symbols of the Holy Trinity—dove, crucifix, P exed with an X (chi-rho), the triquetra—and celebrated the sanctity of mother and fatherhood. This instruction prepared me for my second—After Baptism—of the Seven Sacraments: Holy Communion.

66

At my First Communion I wore a tiny shirt and tie, like all the other boys. The Mexican girls wore elaborate and frilly white gowns. Eight-year-olds marrying the Lord.

In Castroville, Ford station wagons packed with bodies—the wheel wells and fenders muddied from artichoke field soil—sparked rear bumpers along the asphalt. My parents are human, and thus stereotype-capable. I heard, “Castroville’s getting to be full of Mexicans!” California was once Mexico, and before that Nueva España, and before that filled with groups of natives with—for the most part—mutually unintelligible languages. And Indians and Spaniards became mestizos. And Africans and Spaniards became mulattoes. And white people in places like Arizona and

California—and good god here in Georgia, too—still complain that Mexicans are coming into the west, as if they weren't there before, haven't been there for centuries.

Before her first Communion my sister was a bitch to my mother because she wanted to wear a big white gown, like the Mexican girls wore. My mother insisted she don the simple white dress that mom herself slipped into for her Sacrament in the 1950s. My sister says that what was most important about the Sacrament was that now she would be able to walk to the foot of the altar, like mom and dad, and be able to partake of the host. Afterwards, she'd realize the host was a little light yellow wafer that tasted like cardboard, and the wine was vinegary and burned in her throat.

67

As a boy I lay in bed unable to sleep, daring myself to think these words: "I do not believe in God." When half the words came out—half a sentence streamed by in my mind—I stopped, said I was sorry, that it wasn't true, that I only wanted to see what would happen. Then I said Our Fathers and Hail Mary's until finally I drifted off.



Thus, I am from California. And, as has been mentioned, Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra was among the first white men to set permanent feet in California. Like the venerable father's Native converts, for me the Church was an insurmountable bear.

\*

68 The priests baptized Miquel Josep Serra a Catholic, born 1713 in Petra, Mallorca. Twenty years before said birth, the Spanish Inquisition held *autos de fe* in Palma, Mallorca's capital, and Jews were burned at the stake. Four more *conversos* were burned in 1720, when Miquel was seven. For his Holy Orders, Miquel Josep adopted the name of one among Saint Francis's favorites, and he became Father Fray Junípero Serra, of the Order of Friars Minor. Later he became a *comisario* of the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

History knows little about Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra's early years. His parents were farmers who kept up a hovel in Petra. The ground floor contained the future Father's bedroom and the animals' stable. Miquel Josep was sickly and small, growing a mere five feet, two inches in adulthood—my wife's height. As eighteenth century things went, expectedly, Miquel Josep's siblings all died. The strongest presence in Mallorca: the Church. Franciscans founded the Lullian University in Palma, to which Miquel Josep applied. For having lived in Enlightenment Europe, Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra's life and worldview was definitively Medieval<sup>1</sup>.

Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra took his Doctor of Philosophy at the Lullian University, and there met two lifelong friends: Fathers Fray Francisco Palou and Juan Crespí, students. Together the three missioned to Nueva España then to Baja California, and finally to Alta California. They would found nine missions—the first in what is today the American State of California. At Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra's deathbed Father Fray Francisco Palou administered extreme unction and Last Rites. Father Fray Junípero Serra would be buried beside the already-deceased Father Fray Juan Crespí, where together they still lie, beneath the bronze sarcophagus and the stone floor of La Basílica de San Carlos de Borromeo, in Carmel, California, the city where I was born.

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<sup>1</sup>Among Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra's medieval forebears stood John Duns Scotus, whose theological musings on the miraculous truth of the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception the *presidente* held close to his own battered heart.

That theological point of view, having been problematic for some centuries, even up to the time of Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra, was that Mary the Mother of Jesus was herself conceived by God to be free of original sin, even if Mary herself had been born of parents who had sexual intercourse to become pregnant. The philosophical problem with this theology lies in the saving death of Jesus. Why would Jesus' death be necessary if already there exists a pure being, conceived by God, in the form of Mary? Duns Scotus claimed that Mary only gained salvation through Jesus' death, and that with her foreknowledge of future events—revealed to her by the Archangel Gabriel—her salvation came *in anticipation* of the crucifixion. One learns all the necessary theology concerning this dogma by enrolling in courses in Mariology at Saint Allesio Falcioneri, the Marianum Pontifical School in Rome.

Because of Duns Scotus's later reputation—that his philosophical points could not stand the onslaught of the Enlightenment—those who adhered to his dictates were called Duns, from which “dunce” derives, meaning “a dull-witted, ignorant, or stupid person.”

Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote a sonnet, “Duns Scotus’s Oxford,” but it has little to do with me, or with being a Catholic, and certainly little to do with Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra, being primarily a poem about Oxford University in England.

At the Lullian University in Palma, Blessed Father Fray Junípero Serra occupied the Duns Scotus chair in philosophy until he left for Vera Cruz and eventually landed in Alta California where he remained until his death.

70

As a kid, I think mom had the concept (sigh) of the Immaculate Conception all wrong. I always thought it had to do with Mary conceiving Jesus miraculously as a virgin. Pope Pius IX decreed that, “in the first moment of [Mary’s] conception . . . [she] was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.”<sup>2</sup> However, in light of the etymology of “concept,” stemming from the Middle Latin *conceptum*, from the present participle of *concipere*, to take in, which translated to the Old French *conceveir*, I can conceive that my mother’s conception of that one Immaculate Conception was not altogether incorrect.

I wonder does this translate to the Immaculate *Reception*, where it’s unclear if Terry Bradshaw’s pass first hit Frenchy Fuqua of the Steelers, or Jack Tatum of the Raiders, or if it hit both of them. Prior to 1978, if a pass was touched first by an offensive player—and touched only by that player—said player then became the only eligible receiver for that pass. So, are the Steelers free of the sin of scoring a touchdown unfairly?

Despite the primary gospels' (Matthew and Mark) acknowledgment of Jesus' brothers, including the disciple James, the Catholic doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception has long forged a view of Jesus' mother's perpetual virginity.

<sup>\*</sup> from The Catholic Encyclopedia: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm>

# Pomode

Joseph Mains

[for you I'd be right-handed in reverse]

What I keep calling me keeps calling back Don't call me that.  
So explain water to the fish fishy Donald. You know: my father was a salesman  
but I'm going to be a sailor. We know  
we can't quite kiss yet: you are dead. You know,  
*You're the one for me, Fatty, you're the one*  
*I really need. I forgive you for calling me a peon.*  
It's the same as they always say of the 18yrol  
ready-set: buy it pretty & get it dirty.  
72 Explain colors to the blind dear Donald. Like Christmas like your birthday  
like a Christmas Day birth.  
Canine ate seven sick  
five-year-olds. Yeah, you're always flappin'  
skin (i.e., the blossom unfolding ((0))s). I'll gouge your heart and pump it with lead:  
you're a fucker. That's a tautology.  
Sure, my Joyce ink outs life as one oversized art installation piece,  
not some orange circus po-mo bullshit, circa 1973,  
but, you goddamn slick fucker, your synecdoche Gravity's  
*Odeipa should* mean something, *should* point to something undead,  
but the most goddamn tricky thing happens:  
it doesn't. V2 Rocket? Dick.  
Stamp collection of a lost lover? There lies a dearth  
of Modernity. We can say  
it now: that mysterious V plain old stands for Vagina.

Don't worry: I'll burn and bury the Leo DiCaprio  
cutout with the cut-out mouth (brush up on yr Lacan,  
vis-a-vis structural linguistics, oral, etc.) you fucked in high school. (No one  
reads this po, no one will know.)  
You used to write hypertext; I dosed it Ritalin now it's plain played out.  
esrever ni dednah-thgir eb d'I uoy rof. I'm right-handed;  
There's never enough of all the things you want.

# Adolf

*Chanda J. Grubbs*

Dear Adolf:

For the admittance essay to one of my top choice schools, I said I'd resurrect you to come to my dinner party. You and Jesus Christ and Shakespeare. After submitting it, I received the following letter:

Dear Ms. Grubbs—

Thank you for your recent application. We found your essay to be both entertaining and mildly disturbing in implication. In cases such as these, we typically encourage our applicants to try an exercise in which they write a letter directed to one of their dinner party attendees. It seems to allow them to work through some of their “perceptual passive aggressive issues.” Perhaps you would find such an exercise helpful. We regret to inform you, however, that we cannot invite you to attend our university at this time.

So it's you and me and Jesus and Shakespeare, and we're eating something I love, something nondenominational—like tacos. I don't care so much about the other two being there—they're getting casually drunk in the corner. You, I wanted for a couple reasons...mostly so I could do something real crazy like throw a drink in your face. I've never done something like that before but damnit Adolf, with your amazing powers of persuasion and an affinity for public speaking that was practically my high school rhetoric teacher's wet dream. Hitler, I confess, you make me feel a

little off kilter, a little ready to make a scene. You, sir, make me feel capable of being that girl, the one yelling in public, the one embarrassing strangers. So I suppose I should just say something about your name, which, quite frankly sucks and said everything about who you were and who you would become in only the way a name can and shouldn't we all have known? Or I could criticize that mustache, ugh, that mustache! Or your height or your impotence or your horrendous fashion sense—you didn't even look good in that shade of brown, Adolf and paired with red? Or I might demand you meet me in the schoolyard and call out: Adolf, your momma's so ugly that even Bill Clinton wouldn't sleep with her... but all that's been said before. So I'll tell you something else:

My grandfather left Germany because of you. Because of you he joined the war and fought his cousins and friends, dropped explosions like seeds from the sky. Because of you, he met my grandmother and fell in love. He wrote her letters every day, he made her salt and pepper shakers from bullet casings. Because of you he came back a decorated war hero and her parents finally agreed he was worthy to marry—even if he was a foreigner. He had his face blown apart. His face, which was of the sort that perhaps only you could truly appreciate; his face was pieced back together by the virgin hands of a surgeon in France and somehow looked the same, because his type of beauty was of the kind you didn't have, the very kind that made you believe in the possibility for a superior race, even if you were incapable of spawning it. His face was the very face my brother would be born with some twenty years later, leaving me with the look of my father's side of the family, the side you would have killed off. Even when cancer came on quickly, he flourished—the chemo drip taking his hair out only



to replace it with a thicker, darker version of itself, his irises an almost inconceivable blue like the surprising edges at the eye of a peacock feather and made only more so by his hospital gown. And at his funeral, my mother immediately made them wipe off the make-up they'd applied to make him look more human. Because he wasn't. His death corresponded almost disgustingly with 9/11, and made me, even as an adult tell people: I have a strange opinion about all that 9/11 stuff. Because as an American you can't say "9/11 is irrelevant to me, it was overshadowed by something that hit me harder"—although most national tragedy was and is still irrelevant to a fifteen-year-old girl who lost her grandfather the same day.

76

Their love outlived him. Now, my grandmother lives alone, in their house full of his letters from the war and his shoes still lining the closet. And he visits sometimes, to get in bed with her—to tell her: I'm here because I don't want you to be so lonely. You know I don't even dream him anymore, Hitler. My brain can't figure out how to reconstruct him.

I want to appeal to your sense of logic—or use some skill I learned regarding persuasive speeches. But that wouldn't get through to you, would it? So I guess all I really mean is that I would resurrect you so I could just keep it simple and say: fuck you.

JC and Shakespeare are contemplating guacamole and asking about more beans and I'm thinking: fuck you, Hitler—because maybe, somehow you helped shape me into everything I am today.

# Mermaid

Chanda J. Grubbs

*So she just washed up like that?* Michael said to John, staring down at the mermaid.

*Yeah, I was out on the beach and I saw this thing that looked like a person so I went up and looked closer, to call the lifeguard or something and there she was. Just laid out.*

*Well what do we do with her? I mean doesn't she have to be in water or something?*

Michael squatted down to get a closer look and John knew he was going to make some comment about her body. *Great tits.* He said and reached to brush her hair to the side.

77

John slapped at his hand. *Stop it man.*

*What?* Michael stared up. *She probably can't feel anything anyways.*

*I don't know, I mean, I think she's still alive.* John put the tip of his sneaker under her back and sort of gave a push, like he could tell by the way she moved if she was dead or alive. He didn't want Michael looking at her the way he looked at his magazines, even though on the beach her hair was behind her shoulders, her nipples smoothed out and soft, the color of a new scar.

*I think we should put her in the bathtub or something, see if she opens her eyes at least.* John said.

*Did you even feel for a pulse or see if she was breathing?* John hadn't, he didn't really want her to be dead.

Carrying her up to the house, she felt nice in his arms, lighter than he thought and her tail reminded him of the outside of a glass bottle, cool and slick.

*We could turn the hose on her.* Michael smirked.

*Come on, dude, I have to do something with her before Renee comes over; she'll flip if she sees this. I think Mom's tub is the biggest, should we put her in there?* John bent to pick her up.

78

*Yeah, I can't wait to see Mom's face when she comes home to find a half naked mermaid chick in her bathtub. Great idea, John. Fuck-ing idiot.* Michael said under his breath. *Let's just pack her up in the car and dump her back in the ocean.*

*No. I think we should keep her, make sure she's okay or whatever.* John had always been the one to try to save things. Like that possum Michael hit when they were coming home from Trish Geller's party last Saturday night, drunk and late. John punched him in the arm until he pulled over to the side and he could run to the middle and pick up the possum, with its hind end hanging on sinewy marionette legs and candlewick-like tail, getting dirty animal blood on his new shirt but he didn't care because at least the possum could die in peace on the side of road, instead of getting hit again, staring into oncoming headlights and knowing what was going to happen.

*Carry her upstairs, will you?* John didn't really want to give her to Michael, but he was feeling anxious and desperate and Renee was supposed to be there soon and there was a body lying motionless in their front foyer. *I have to call Renee.*

In the kitchen, John realized that when the mermaid woke up she would probably be hungry. Walking back into the foyer he saw Michael with her slung over his shoulder, hair hanging down past his knees. Michael was still shirtless from earlier when John pulled him out of bed to look at her and it was obvious he was carrying her like that so he could feel her on his bare skin. It wasn't the way John had carried her, like a new bride, but he didn't say anything, just added it to the list of reasons why they couldn't possibly be twins. *What do you think she eats?* John said, flipping through the phone book. *I don't know. Lobster, crab, shit from the ocean.* John considered that it might have been a stupid question, but he couldn't help thinking—what if she was a vegetarian? He called Kimpora Japanese Steakhouse and ordered shrimp, octopus, squid, crab, eel, a seaweed salad just in case, anything he thought she might like. He was glad Renee wasn't there to see this, he didn't want to listen to complaining about he never did anything for her.

79

*Hey.* Michael yelled down the stairs. John rushed out of the kitchen thinking maybe she was awake. *Aren't mermaids supposed to, like, have magical powers?* Michael said over the running bath water. John rolled his eyes and walked away without saying anything. All he could think about was the mermaid waking up. Later, after he picked up the food, he would sit on the edge of the bathtub and wait. And when Renee called his phone to say she was on her way over, he would ignore her. And when she rang the doorbell, he

would tell Michael not to answer it. Michael thought Renee was a bitch anyway. It would just be him and the mermaid. At seven or eight when their mom got home he might have a lot of explaining to do, but it wouldn't matter because before then she might wake up—might flutter open and speak to him, she might let him feed her eel and seaweed salad with chopsticks because she wouldn't know how to use them and then she might let him teach her how, putting his hand over hers to guide it. They might talk about serious things like family or love, or she might let him tell her jokes and they might laugh—her in the water and him out, but together all the same and happy for that moment.

## Contributors

**Tom Barlow** is an Ohio writer whose personal finance stories may be found on sites such as Forbes.com. His fiction has appeared in several anthologies including *Best New Writing 2011* and numerous magazines and journals including *Redivider*, *Temenos*, *The Apalachee Review*, *Hobart*, *The Duck & Herring Pocket Field Guide*, *Hiss Quarterly*, *Thieves Jargon*, *the Steel City Review*, and the *Intergalactic Medicine Show*.

**Mark Baumer** was the daughter of a clergyman and grew up in a spinal complaint in 1854. In 1860, she was sent to live with a doctor in America to improve her health. In 1862, she made several excursions to outer space where she wrote articles on island crocodiles and the poetry of John Donne. After her return to earth she moved to Hawaii where she made friends with the world's largest volcano, Mauna Loa. url: [thebaumer.com](http://thebaumer.com)

Raised in the US and the UK, **Scott Carpenter** teaches at Carleton College (MN), where he teaches literature and literary theory. A writer of both fiction and non-fiction, his short stories have appeared (or are about to) in such venues as *Ducts*, *Prime Number*, *Every Writer Resource*, *Eunoia Review*, *Subtle Fiction*, *Short Fiction Collective*, *Lit-Cast* and *The Carleton Voice*. His website is located at: <http://apps.carleton.edu/people/scarpent/>.

**Lina Maria Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas** graduated from BYU with a BA in English and is concurrently completing two MFA's at the University of Iowa in Creative Nonfiction and Literary Translation. She was born and raised in Bogota Colombia, translates from Spanish to English and is interested in untranslatable and linguistically unnegotiable.

**Anne Germanacos'** work has appeared in over seventy literary journals and anthologies. Her collection of short stories, *In the Time of the Girls*,

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**Chanda J. Grubbs** is a second year MFA candidate at the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Although she hates Iowa winters, she does enjoy good wine, good food, and good books. Her dreams for the future include single-handedly bringing back NASA, perfecting the art of the gourmet JELL-O salad, and writing a musical.

**Patrick Haas** has published other poems in *Unstuck*, *The Prose Poem Project*, and *Dark Sky*, as well as other journals. Some of the language in "Fugue" was borrowed from W.S. Merwin's poems "Bread", "Habits", "Second Psalm: The Signals", "The Blessing", and "Finding A Teacher".

**Joanna Howard** is the author of *On the Winding Stair* (Boa editions, 2009) and *In the Colorless Round*, a chapbook with artwork by Rikki Ducornet (Noemi Press). Her work has appeared in *Conjunctions*, *Chicago Review*, *Unsaid*, *Quarterly West*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Salt Hill*, *Tarpaulin Sky* and elsewhere. Her stories have been anthologized in *PP/FF: An Anthology*, *Writing Online*, and *New Standards: The First Decade of Fiction at Fourteen Hills*. She has also co-translated, with Brian Evenson, *Walls* by Marcel Cohen (Black Square, 2009) and, with Nick Bredie, also co-translated *Cows* by Frederic Boyer (Noemi, forthcoming 2011). She lives in Providence and teaches at Brown University.

**Jamie Iredell** is the author of two books: *Prose. Poems. a Novel.*, and *The Book of Freaks*. His writing has appeared in many journals, including *Copper Nickel*, *Sleepingfish*, *Freerange Nonfiction*, and *The Literary Review*. He was a founding editor of *New South* and is fiction editor of *Atticus Review* and Art Director for *C&R Press*. He lives in Atlanta where he teaches college students.

**Rich Ives** has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Artist Trust, Seattle Arts Commission and the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines for his work in poetry, fiction, editing, publishing, translation and photography. His writing has appeared in *Verse*, *North American Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Northwest Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Iowa Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Fiction Daily* and many more. He is the 2009 winner of the Francis Locke Memorial Poetry Award from *Bitter Oleander*. His story collection, *The Balloon Containing the Water Containing the Narrative Begins Leaking*, was one of five finalists for the 2009 Starcherone Innovative Fiction Prize. In 2010 he has been a finalist in fiction at *Black Warrior Review* and *Mississippi Review* and in poetry at *Cloudbank* and *Mississippi Review*. In 2011 he is again a finalist in poetry at *Mississippi Review*. The Spring 2011 *Bitter Oleander* contains a feature including an interview and 18 of his hybrid works.

**Joseph Mains** is an American poet living in Portland, Ore., where he co-curates the reading series Bad Blood and is a founding member of Milk/Shop.

**Matthew Suss** lives in Amherst, MA. It came from Maine.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1968, **Daniel Wuenschel** now lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Since 1987, he has worked as a bookseller and as a museum professional. Wuenschel also dealt in the book trade at the Harvard Museum of Natural History and the Harvard Art Museums before managing the Grolier Poetry Book Shop. He is currently Library Assistant at the Cambridge Public Library, where he catalogues new materials and works the circulation desk.

**Elizabeth Witte** lives/works in and around Somerville, Massachusetts. Recent work has been published or is forthcoming in *Shampoo*, *Glitter Pony*, and *LIES/ISLE*.



## **Anomalous Press**

launched in March of 2011 as a non-profit press dedicated to the diffusion of writing in the forms it can take. Its backbone is an editorial collective from different backgrounds and geographies that keep an eye out for compelling projects that, in any number of ways, challenge expectations of what writing and reading should be.

At the time of its launch, Anomalous is an online publication, available in both visual and audio forms on various platforms. It has its sights set on publishing chapbooks, advancing audio forms and creation, and supporting all sorts of alternative realities of the near future.

**Erica Mena, Sara Gilmore, David Johnson**

**Catherine Parnell, Rachel Trousdale, Shannon Walsh**

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