



ANEMONE SIDECAR

# THE ANEMONE SIDECAR

## Chapter 2

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The care with which the rain is wrong  
and the green is wrong and the white  
is wrong, the care with which there is a  
chair and plenty of breathing. The  
care with which there is incredible  
justice and likeness, all this makes a  
magnificent asparagus, and also a  
fountain.

- Gertrude Stein  
from *Tender Buttons*

## **Reworking the Idea of Noon**

What did we think we were doing? Frankly, we didn't know nor did we care. I got up before everyone else and went down to the ocean. There you are, I said, and plunged right in. There were some fleecy clouds, I think they call them in books. I tell you, it didn't matter. I swam a ways out and felt something change. You know, the way it does in an elevator that's about to get stuck. Or maybe I'm thinking about that book again. Love's not all it's cracked up to be, but then what comes in second's pretty far back. That could be construed as a lesson, if you were of such a mind. But you'd have to be kind of loony. I don't remember who said that, but someone did. Probably trying to warn us about the next thing. So we all laughed. And then someone else said the thing about Labrador. That carried us through the rest of the day.

Lunch was served on the patio. Flies had a wonderful time. But there was a breeze and that counted for a lot. The way a body rolls into the water. And then out again. It gives me such a kick to wonder how it does that.

*- Thomas Wooten*

## Eclipse

Balancing her child on her shoulders and looking at her husband, who was placed comfortably on a blanket, she had called out to him daddy. Look there's daddy he's got a blanket out already. The boy also said daddy.

Daddy was entirely cold and partially damp, waving his arms, mouthing hey and hello to his wife and son, a silhouetted mound of voices walking towards him.

The boy had a small, slouched back. His mother carried the boy towards the blanket, on top of which lay the reclining father, who had suddenly realized, and not without a degree of mild embarrassment, that he could stop waving.

I looked forward to when things aligned, when it made sort of sense to look their way, to stumble upon their quietness and to break it apart like water. I was walking ahead of them, watching them with my back, my bravest eye.

A hot air balloon was burning in the sky, carrying what seemed to be an elephant. I made such a remark to hear myself. That's one crazy elephant I said, pointing my finger with aim.

She couldn't see because of the smoke and the sun and the balloon. Instead she looked straight ahead and saw a boy on his mother's shoulders, their two humps looking like a camel. That's one crazy camel she said.

When I said no that's one crazy elephant, she looked at me with kindness, and pointed one finger at the sky, and the other one away.

*- Jimmy Chen*



## **Fairground Reminders**

Broken-hearted romance  
is gaining serious ground  
on the tiny lonely hours of ramshackle glory

Sleepwalking dandies  
are thumb-sucking euphoria  
from the fresh burning fizz of late-night tremors

Your own mouth  
is absent-mindedly muzzy  
of word-wrecks roaring high on slipstream thrills

And then what?

Rasp your fingers from caresses, cut  
the shaky ears of yellowed blossoms witness

Protect & grip & let bloodless reasons drip  
by the drenched poolside of irresolute Id

Clasp your bones on stainless iron hurdles & fly  
from weekend juggernauts of succulence

dried.

- *Helder Granja*

## **Keel**

You talk about change a lot  
about what was & is no longer or  
mysteriously vanished, swallowed  
in misty colours of morning dew

but on the other hand there's a scallywag bird  
preaching that late afternoons are scary  
& many pitfalls resemble curved spines

oh yes, you also talk a lot about swirls

how everything seems slurped in twitchy tongues  
left neglected, distending through branches  
naked, shifting clouds on the tip of breezes

where unrelenting bed sheets sway  
& sparkle, caressing the brisk wooden hold

wood is recurrent too  
but cows are lip-shut in this poem

where you talk a lot about what  
is breaking.

- *Helder Granja*

## Interesting Things

Edwina found a small piece of linoleum buried in the earth. Its edges were frayed and its surface was cracked and stained. It bore an ornate design, fashioned to resemble a tiled floor, but the colours had lost intensity and in some places the design had completely worn away. Edwina regarded it as a beautiful object, so corrupted and yet impeccable. The careless and random nature of this corruption gave it an earthy quality. It had come closer to nature. She admired it as she would a piece of textured wood, a beautiful rock or a patterned shell. It was much more beautiful than if it had still been part of a linoleum floor, which by contrast would seem blatantly artificial. Edwina wondered if her house could also become beautiful if it remained buried for years. She flinched at the thought. She would need to wait decades—even centuries. She would need to wait till it was nothing more than a mass of humus.

Edwina was interested in uninteresting things. She looked for the least interesting objects she could find and was enthralled. She marvelled over the beauty of her pick-handle, she was mesmerised by a piece of plastic from a broken pot, and she gazed for hours at a dollop of mud. A dollop of mud, for instance, is very muddy. It is slimy yet also a bit gritty. Edwina found this extremely interesting. A piece of plastic, for instance, may be smooth or rough, it may have a dull lustre or it may be shiny. She found this equally as interesting. Edwina was also keen on a particular rock. It had lots of holes in it. Most of the holes were tiny, yet because they were tiny, they took up only a small part of the rock. The largest holes took up the most space. There were very few large holes, yet inside them were other holes, which could be classed as medium-sized holes, though they were closer in size to the tiny holes than to the big ones. Edwina wondered whether these medium holes, or even the tiny holes, contained other holes that were too small to be seen. She wasted a lot of time staring into these medium and tiny holes. No doubt there were microscopic holes present, but to be classified as a hole by Edwina's reckoning, they had to possess characteristics similar to those of the visible holes. For instance, if there was a microscopic hole that looked exactly like the visible holes but which was, for example, the size of a paramecium, then Edwina would classify this as a hole. If, on the other hand, there was a microscopic hole that was little more than a gap between certain particles of rock, this would not be the type of hole she would classify as a hole. Recently she had seen an electron micrograph that depicted microscopic holes that looked like holes, though the holes were in shells, not in rocks. The shells were tiny, but not so tiny that they

couldn't be seen by the naked eye, but tiny enough so that no detail could be observed with the naked eye, but which, upon inspection of the electron micrograph, could be seen to possess very ornate designs, as well as many holes, in a surface that was otherwise very smooth and void of any visible (within the range of magnification explicit in this particular electron micrograph) particles separated by gaps.

Edwina saw beauty in the shape and texture of every rocky surface in her underground world, whether it be a natural cave wall, a carved wall or a free-standing rock. Every surface was unique, and to Edwina, this represented great wealth. She felt most fortunate to have it all to herself. She was also more comfortable in her rocky surroundings than anywhere else—more comfortable than she was beneath the open sky. When she lay on her back, beneath an open sky, she felt as if she would float away. There was no point from which to get her bearings and she became unsure of which way was up. She preferred to have rocks over her head. Even when it was dark and she couldn't see them, it was comforting to know they were near. Most people regard rocks as cold and impersonal, but to Edwina they projected a familiar warmth. Sometimes she did nothing but sit and stare at the walls for hours. She was not being idle. She tried to learn from the rocks. 'Here I sit within these walls', she thought. 'I will sit within these walls and sit within these walls and sit and sit and sit, and I could go on sitting here for ever more. One thing is certain: these rocks will not change. If I was to sit still for as long as I could, I would still be the first to move.'

Rock has presence. It is so solid and substantial that, by comparison, Edwina was non-existent. Rock featured in many of her poems.

*I got a rock No. 16*

I got a rock  
then I got another  
and I got that other  
from the corner of a cave

That other that I got  
was of another colour  
and another—  
it was from another corner of the cave

There was another  
from the corner of another cave  
and another of the other colour  
from another cave

Then I got another rock

from the other corner  
but this corner—  
it was not the corner of the other cave

And another from another corner  
of another colour  
of the same colour  
as the corner of the other cave

There was another from a corner  
of another corner colour  
coloured as another corner  
of another cave

And another in the colour  
of another coloured corner  
was another corner of  
another other corner cave

And another that I other colour  
of another other corner  
corner of another other  
coloured corner cave

Anyone who tries to make an artificial rock will realise that there is a fine difference between a rock that looks real and a rock that looks contrived. It is difficult to make a convincing artificial rock, whether it be for theatre or film, for an ornamental garden or a living-room. The exercise can be very enlightening. It teaches one to be more observant of their environment, teaches one a greater understanding of nature, of random design and of the properties of different matter, and, more specifically, it teaches one what a rock is and what it is to be a rock. But the exercise should be attempted, even if only for the pleasure of the experience.

Years earlier, Edwina made a rock from white polystyrene. First she carved bumps, hollows, cracks and chips, and created a variety of surface textures, but the rock's overall shape was too round so she unrounded it but then it didn't look like a rock at all. She finally arrived at a shape that was typical of a rock, but still it didn't even look like a white rock. She might have had more success if she had made her rock from some other material (such as rock), but she met the polystyrene challenge. She got some paints and added a variety of tones and shades to the

surface, added fine fracture lines, made edges seem sharp, and eventually arrived at something that did look like a rock.

When one masters the ability to replicate, with paint, the surface-texture of a rock, this skill can be applied to many things. She painted cardboard pillars and made them look like rock. She did the same to a terra-cotta vase and a wooden chair—but she changed her mind about the chair and painted it to look like wood again; the imitation of wood was another technique she mastered. The ability to replicate rocky and wooden surfaces with the use of paint was a skill she drew on when producing paintings—a skill shared by many great artists. The finest of the realists produced excellent realistic representations of wood and rock, and the impressionists were particularly successful in capturing the character of wood and rock.

Edwina painted a picture of a rock wall. She painted it from her imagination to test how much she had learned about the appearance of rocks from her time spent, thus far, in rocky seclusion. After painting a fairly large area she realized that it didn't look natural. Having previously arrived at a formula for creating a single rock, she found this formula inadequate when applied to a larger scale. So she added other elements, which on their own seemed contrived, but did not appear contrived when placed randomly over a large area. She added straight edges, right angles and big cracks that curved and dipped. Edwina's painting, once completed, was a fine example of a rock wall [rendered in the cubist style].

Edwina also loved wood. While digging, she encountered the roots of several trees. Those that were the largest and most impressive, she went to great lengths to uncover. She even polished portions. On one occasion she encountered a very thick root which she assumed belonged to a large root-system. As she uncovered more of this root-system, its truly gigantic dimensions became apparent. She wanted to uncover it all. She thought it would make a marvellous ceiling-sculpture. It would be the centrepiece to a great cave.

All through her life, Edwina had expressed her admiration for the natural world via various forms of creative expression. Before she became a recluse, she occasionally exhibited her art. One of her sculptural compositions, entitled *Diabolical Imitation* [see photograph page vii], consisted of tree-branches and bits of tree-trunk, some of which were joined together while others stood apart, and on the floor surrounding the wood were pieces of paper with writing on them that described the ideas behind the work. This is what she wrote:

*Natural wood, simultaneously graceful, chaotic, ugly, majestic, timeless and spontaneous, is so familiar and yet sometimes seems very alien, is presented here in a crude attempt to show off some of these qualities by placing these qualities in unnatural alliance—and when composing this, I*

*was inspired by the forms, which have been tampered with only minimally and retain their dirt, bark, breaks and cuts, so the wood is real and raw, full of life, breathing and feeling the life that surrounds it, is one with life and with the universe—and is presented as a representation of a scene in the woods or perhaps as something a little more sinister such as a scene full of alien forms whose presence condones the crimes of logging and the chopping up of branches for a shallow cause, and I can only say in my defence that this may be the last wooden sculpture ever made, and it may encourage a greater appreciation of trees, which would hopefully lead to less logging rather than more, even though tree?stumps do look nice, and I stress the fact that this wood had already been chopped or had fallen by itself before I got my hands on it and I didn't pay for any of it and it had been lying together with a large heap of other bits of wood, whose removal could only have 'lessened' the damaging effects on the ecosystem caused by an over population of wood?eating bugs within such a concentrated area, nor do I mean to relate this sculpture to other serious issues, because it could be seen as representing either a whale with three spears in its back, being tormented by its two humyn captors; or as a memorial to the extinction of all trees, since it resembles a pathetic attempt to imitate a tree; or as an alien ritual in which the participants do odd things to each other; or as something which I'm trying to give deep meaning to so that it doesn't seem out of place within this exhibition, and I am finally putting to good use all the wood that I had lying about in the shed, and I am certainly not trying to make light of some very serious issues of our time, but 'I am' concerned with the many facets of everything in life, and in arts' interpretations of them, in the spontaneity of creation and the longevity of its duration, and I wish for the viewer to observe the details and qualities of anything that is viewed or pondered upon, from every viewpoint imaginable, until one's perception is ever changing and everything becomes eternally ,new and exciting and...etc.*

**- Edward Phillip Burger**

## **Feather Drugs**

I want the violets to stop screaming  
my national name.

I demand contrived laughter  
to stop burying its larvae  
in the natural habitat of my heart.

I desire dilated fear  
to incise my breast bone,  
crack me open,  
a cancerous solar eclipse  
of poppy fields &  
*Crude, Crude* realizations.

The senility  
of The Unaware.  
The erasure  
of Non-Status.  
The.

I want a muted pulse and  
popular vein votes.

I wish for  
tether stems of carbon  
to release me  
from the green stains. *The green stains.*

You, insignias of born-again seeds,  
You are the ambrosia, the bitch punch  
in the barrels.

I want addiction to the lie portrait,  
so I can sleep to the line of morning

and forget what I've seen the night before.  
I want your solutions to elect me into death.

- *Lina Vitkauskas*



## **A User's Guide to the Interchangeability of Lips**

### ***1. Lap***

Feed the feral cats who drink  
from your swimming pool, swift  
as little machines. Measure  
the amount that can be carried  
to the mouth in one lick or scoop  
of the tongue. Load and fire  
in safety, never in haste.  
Break a teapot and float  
the pieces to China.

### ***2. Labium***

Arrange snapdragons in a jar.  
Open the beveled edge, the spout.  
Always have a friend who works  
in the hotel kitchen. Flow into,  
draw the tongue over,  
envelop entirely.

### ***3. Embouchure***

Say the word *prune*  
while looking at yourself  
in a mirror. Study the shape  
of your lips, tongue and teeth.  
Rub your stubbled jaw against  
the mouthpiece of a French horn.  
Now you know.  
Now you know.  
Now you know.

**- Rebecca Loudon**

## **Instrumental**

Si, a disaster silently gathering  
husks of corn  
ignored, lays a wasteful hand  
on me shaven slip-shod lover of a sailor  
and I kow-tow to this slap  
like a jockey's whipping strap; be the death of me

a waners aegis rolls off the tongue  
like a full-bodied wine  
waxing like the moon in half-time  
slim slim shimmy shiver strum  
rock me  
to sleep imbroglia and I will love you  
till the death of shame

like crème de la crème de la screams  
of existence, hardened but subordinate  
in wait for yet another false start  
at the big dance of follies

enjoy enjoy enjoy  
the zygote newsflash

thrown carelessly on your doorstep  
like bottles of strawberry milk

*an engendered species  
delayed at it's own funeral*

dopamine and calamime  
lotion release  
the pain of a shoal  
of souls stricken  
before the choir  
slam dunks its fame  
and unleashes  
the new beast upon us all.Hapless

and mortified we range

from most immaculate  
to least likely to succeed  
in a yearbook,  
pleased beyond belief.

an amazing tale tells  
all,our grandchildren  
will not have fear  
for we will be long cold  
in our respective states  
of grace unencumbered by doubt  
and pale unrest

wrapped in pashmina  
hair and nails  
done.

- *Sascha Akhtar*

## The Man In The Blue Coat: A Chamber Picture In 6 Acts

### Act1. *That Man in the Café Last Week*

That pale man with the restless eyes and the fixed mouth, the one in the blue raincoat, with the head of sparse hair—there must be something of a clue in his figure, some kind of unconscious guidance. But a clue to what? Guidance towards what?

He looked at first like any ordinary person, any near-middle-aged person who could be expected to patronize a cafe on a night of intermittent rain. Initially I took little note of him — standing as he was at the edge of all the tables, a white shopping bag in one hand, the other hand dangling unoccupied by his side. I went to the counter and studied the menu of drinks. I murmured to the barista. I handed my tender to the cashier. I waited by the counter while my drink was made. Then I caught another glimpse of the blue-coated man — an indolent glance thrown over all the chattering cafe tables.

There he stood in his blue coat, his mouth flexing slightly, as though arrested at the outset of an unconscious grin. It seemed the expression of one in the midst of a silent communication with another — a conversation of eyes and faces, as two intimate people often have in public spaces. The man's counterpart was undoubtedly seated at one of those tables—most likely a woman, his wife or girlfriend, and probably she insisted on staying awhile longer even as her blue-coated man strove to make clear, by his standing and watching, that he was ready to leave.

The barista caught my attention, handed me a brimming cup. I made my way through the crowded tables and found a seat, newly vacated, at the far end of the cafe. I settled down at my little table and opened my book, then cast an involuntary glance over the heads of the many patrons.

From where I sat, the whole cafe was before my vantage. And there, not very tall above all the people, the blue-coated man remained standing. He stood quite still, both arms down by his sides. From this perspective he was no longer in profile to me and I saw that his gaze roamed in a loitering way back and forth across the tables.

I stared a little while at my book, then shot another glance in his direction — looking and reading and looking. I soon made out that the man in the blue coat was not attached to anybody in the cafe, man or woman. No one gestured to him as one does to a waiting spouse. No one enticed him to take a seat or asked him to wait a moment outside. No one showed even incidental involvement with him, such as “Please take our table, we were just clearing out” —no, he'd been there several moments too long already for anything like that to be possible.

The cafe was chock full — every chair taken — so I momentarily allowed for the possibility that the man was waiting for a seat to become free. —But then *I* had found a seat and I had come in after him (how much longer after him? How long, actually, had he been standing there already before I arrived?). And anyway, the man in the blue coat had nothing to drink and had made no move to order anything.

No, he wasn't hoping to sit. And that was the other thing about him: his pervasive sense of contentment. Contentment to stand there on the edge of all those lively tables — just to stand there and stand there with his arms at his sides and that half-formed smile on his clean-shaven face. Standing and standing and looking and looking.

### **Act 2. *He Didn't Glower or Frown***

Or stare icily or bitterly, as the pathologically-alienated so often do. I can't even say that he stared at all, for his eyes were constantly-roaming, just skimming over everything they saw, settling at one place or upon one person for only small moments at a time — and yet *seeing* everything, soaking everything up like deeply-hungry, deeply-absorbent ovules.

Finally, at the end of ten minutes or so, after a series of covert glances between pretended readings, I found myself exhausted by the blue-coated man. I gave him up and went into my book. I was reading about career development (I've just turned thirty-four so I suppose this is on my mind now more than ever). The importance of an assertive resume cleanly typed; approaches to the personal mission statement; standard interview etiquette; business-world terminology. *Interpersonal skills. Multi-tasking. Middle-management philosophies. Micro-management. Time management.*

Halfway through the chapter my mind glazed and lost hold of the page, though my eyes went on gliding over the sentences. I tried to recall, with some unease, whether I'd dead bolted my door upon leaving the apartment that afternoon. I couldn't picture my hand or my keys at the upper lock. Probably I had done it without thinking — my fingers working by habit while my mind flew into calculations of the nine-minute walk to the bus stop, two minutes added for the rain, the dimming chance that I'd catch the 1:15 bus, that I'd arrive at the cinema within my usual twenty minutes before the shift started—time enough to clear the booth of popcorn from the last shift, check the projector bulbs, Windex the booth window.

But perhaps in all that flustered thought (damn the rain) I had completely neglected to bolt the door. I was sure I'd secured the lower lock — that I never failed to do — but if I'd also bolted the door then why couldn't I make myself see it now—my hands, the keys? And if I hadn't bolted it, how much worry should I invest in those two teenage boys I'd seen standing by the payphone at the liquor store across the street? Those two darkly-clad street kids in ill-fitting pants with watch caps to their eyelids — the ones who'd been standing out there at that same hour for the last several days, doing nothing but slumping at the poster-covered wall with their hands in their pockets and their ankles crossed, staring through the traffic at the front of my building. Were they worth any concern?—those two

who'd looked up into my window yesterday just as I closed the drapes against them, their eyes slotted and dark like puncture wounds.

Maybe they were harmless. After all, I'd sat at the window from Tuesday onward, watchful that they left my Aubrey alone as she stood at the bus stop ten feet to their left. My Aubrey who stands there every day between 7:00 and 7:15, whose light hair twitches from reddish to blondish as she watches the cars go by, whose kitten hands look soft in the morning light, whose sweetness I would leap from that sill to defend. My Aubrey whose actual name I don't know, whose wide-set eyes have never turned upward to my window three stories above, but whose mornings by the bus stop ride in perfect synchronicity with mine at the window. Those young tramps hadn't bothered her yet, so maybe they were nothing to fear.

Behind me a chair groaned. I realized I'd skimmed straight to the end of the chapter without taking in a word. Then I remembered the blue-coated man. Looking up from my book, my eyes immediately fell upon him—and now I found him looking directly at me! I flinched and glanced away, scanning the cafe and noting that a number of chairs had gone empty since I last glimpsed them. When I stole another peek at the blue-coated man he no longer stared in my direction.

Now his dim pockets of eyes, whose color I could not make out, were gliding over the cafe again – taking nothing in and taking everything in. Still he stood there just beyond the tables, his posture unchanged, his clean blue raincoat hanging open from his shoulders. He stood there and stood there.

### ***Act 3. At Once it Seemed Impossible to Return to My Book***

There was just no chance of that now – not with this man standing there in his blue coat, standing there with no connection to anybody or anything but to the beige tiled floor under his feet and the subdued clatter around him and the white shopping bag in his right hand and the blue coat upon his shoulders.

It is unsettling, inexplicably so, to have someone just standing about in that way. One would have assumed, maybe, that this was the regular order of things – that this man in the blue coat came here to stand every day and that all the patrons had learned to let him be and to pay him no heed. But I'm a regular patron at this cafe and this was highly irregular – for this man in his blue coat to just stand there as he was, without ordering, without intention to sit, without associate or wife, motionless but for the slow turning of his thinly brown-haired head in all his incessant *looking*. How could no one notice him? Was it just that all those people really did notice him but were better at dissembling the distraction?

At a large table nearby a number of pretty young women huddled together, laughing over steaming cups. A young man sat just two tables off from the man in the blue coat, scribbling intently in a yellow notebook. No, nobody in the cafe noticed.

And perhaps it was just this which fascinated the man after all: perhaps he'd begun to believe himself invisible and was standing there and standing there

as an experiment, testing his suspected invisibility, waiting for someone to crash into him – to offer conclusive proof. It occurred to me that I could provide this service. Then – if I walked through the tables straight toward him, walked right up to him at full tilt and crashed into him and into his blue raincoat, caused him to drop that white shopping bag of his, and staggered on as though perplexed and mystified – then would he have his damned proof and leave? Of course, I could just as easily present him with proof to the contrary – assure him that he was in fact fully visible – by walking directly up to him and speaking to him.

What would I say? *You exist. I see you. Everyone can see you, don't you know that? So why the hell do you insist on standing here and standing here and standing here, like some godforsaken vegetable?* –Yes, I'd have to say something like that.

But I knew I wouldn't speak to the man in the blue coat. I could never do such a thing. –And why not? Was it, in fact, that I doubted he really did exist? Can that be? We all have our own worlds, after all, and most the people we see in crowded public places – those strangers who serve to make up setting and atmosphere for us – very rarely do they strike us as *individuals* in their own right, very rarely does *our* world give pause to acknowledge the reality of *their* world. No, we go on like separate galaxies, divided by wholly independent and unrelated forces of gravitation. Maybe we learn to think that it's only we who truly exist, we who get into cars all our own and go home and have lives all our own.

And maybe this was the thing that was so upsetting about that man in his blue coat – just standing there and standing there and looking and looking, as he'd been doing for three quarters of an hour or more: wasn't he, in some peculiar way, daring to attempt existence in all those human worlds before him all at once? Didn't his unrelenting, perfectly content presence profess: *I am here, everywhere that is here, right now. I do exist, as do all you before me.* Wasn't it something like that?

It struck me that there was something peculiarly recognizable about the blue-coated man—something . . . familiar. Or was it just that I'd been studying him so intensely? All at once my mind went sledding back through my days, pitching through a forest of faces, over contours of association. I saw myself by my apartment window, gazing down over the frenetic street, person after person passing by below: faces obliquely seen through rolled-up car windows; the turned-down faces of sidewalk pedestrians; faces of shopkeepers standing in doorways, cheeks pinched to draw on cigarettes.

I saw myself in my booth at the cinema, sitting back from the projector light, the reels flitting and whirring, dots of color flicking before the bulb, the scenes scrolling below through the window – celluloid faces built of light. Saw for the hundredth time the flashing pictures – the frames so deeply grooved into my projectionist's brain, my cornea shot through with their brilliance, my retina bent by the repeated brightness. Saw again the current movie's park sequence, the two main characters facing off under the maple trees—and found in all that flapping color, among all those fluttering background people—a blue coat. A pale figure standing half out of focus, unmoving below the trees, behind the left shoulder of the actor speaking in the foreground. I saw clearly the clean blue coat,

the pale face, a little blurred. Then saw it again. Clearly. And again, as I had seen it subliminally a hundred times over the last two weeks, seated in my dim chair in the close booth, which smells of heated film and dust-spewing projector fans. Clearly saw the blue-coated man on that cinema screen in my mind.

#### **Act 4. *My Hand Shot Up***

Splayed flat in the air above the table. Then I touched the tabletop with two heavy fingers, watched two lines of moisture streak over the Formica surface, and tried not to look again at the man standing blue in my periphery, like a figure pasted out of context.

I could have spoken to him, I suppose – could have bit the bullet and walked up to him, staring him back into unreality, and said—what? What could I possibly have said? *You don't belong here. I know where you are from. Why don't you go back there? Why don't you stay where you belong?* Yes, I could have said those things. But then wouldn't I have risked appearing exactly like the figure I thought I was confronting? Wouldn't I have been the man standing in a crowded café, looking and looking into the face of nothing—and worse than that—talking and talking into air as the publicly lonesome so often do?

So I didn't look up again. I kept my mouth shut. My cup still stood three-quarters full, but I left it at the table as I rose. I walked to the door with my eyes at the tiles beneath my shoes, then pushed out into the silver evening drizzle.

The bus was thick with people. I stood for three stops before getting off to walk the rest of the way home. The air-brakes hissed and spat as the bus grumbled away from the curb, and I caught sight of my Aubrey inside, lit by the greening fluorescent lights. She stood in the stairwell by the rear doors, nearly pushed to the window, gripping the silver bar. A large man pressed close behind her. *Don't you touch her*, I thought. But immediately I felt the silliness of such thinking, defending the sweetness of one who probably doesn't exist, and in a kind of confrontation with the mirage I stood on the sidewalk and shot my Aubrey a disbelieving stare, shook my head side to side. She seemed to blink in my direction. Then the bus's green fluorescence trailed away into the rain, smearing into the other traffic lights.

I walked the ten blocks home. The streets looked air-brushed by the rain, the tall buildings like set-pieces deftly painted. I watched the puddles at my feet, oil swirling blue with my footfalls. Then I climbed the thirty-four narrow stairs to my door, took out my keys, but found that neither deadbolt nor lock gave any resistance. So I'd forgotten both.

I went in with caution and my gut felt solid and heavy as a brick. But when I walked from room to room flipping light switches I found nobody inside. My bed was still made, snug and wrinkle-free just as I'd left it. I began to undress, but stopped and walked to the window and pried the curtains. The street below had the sheen of obsidian. Lights streaked the wet asphalt, played off the spray of passing cars. Tiny rainbows leapt from the tires. The little liquor store threw a splash of yellow from its doorway. A person came out holding a paper bag. *Like a movie extra randomly cued*, I thought. No one loitered by the payphone.



**Act 5. *The Film Played Three More Days After That Night in the Cafe***

The audiences growing thinner at every showing. I avoided watching it, burying my attention in my book—the concrete certainties of career development—reading with tense focus while the park sequence played, that blue shape in the background preening for my attention. During the last day's showings, I turned my chair to the booth wall and let the film flutter behind me, out of my peripheral vision. I didn't see the pale, blue-coated figure again.

This week there is a new film – a comedy in which most of the scenes are small, without background extras. It's a chamber picture, really. The audiences are large and boisterous. They laugh in almost all the right places. During most showings, I find myself sitting here staring through the projector grill at the bright bulb. The light floods the whole interior of the machine, flickering behind the fan blades. It's somewhat like looking at an X-ray – a section of ribcage perhaps – though the light and the darkness of the exposure are reversed.

Today there's a leak in the booth, rainwater dribbling from the ceiling in slow drops. I've put a soda cup on the floor to catch the water. The cup is nearly full. The tiny splashes have a persistent rhythm that's in time with my repeating thoughts. I can't stop thinking of the blue-coated man, seeing him and seeing him in my mind. He's a clue, but a clue to what? I've stayed away from the café this entire week because I don't want to see him again—though I still don't know why he should be there and not another place.

This morning from my window I watched the two street-kids bumming in front of the liquor store again, and ten feet to their left: my Aubrey in a new yellow coat, her hair tied back loosely, a blue umbrella in one hand. She looked bright and fresh, like something rain-washed. Even if I doubt she exists, she is lovely. At 7:15 the bus came. I saw the blue umbrella collapse and then she was gone.

In the corner of my eye the flitting color has stopped; now the credits are rolling. Down below, the moviegoers are getting up and shuffling out. Here and there a few figures stay seated, watching the scrolling names—white on black. I admire this in a viewer. So much labor goes into these great cinematic illusions. *Key Grip. Gaffer. Best Boy.* It's a rare audience member that will sit to acknowledge all the names behind the work.

Now the reel is blurping to its end. The audio gives its final crunch and the film flaps free. I raise the theater lights and see suddenly—down there, standing from an empty row in a motion of yellow—my Aubrey. She turns and walks up the aisle alone, disappears below the booth.

Without a thought I crash through the door and barrel down the narrow stairs to the lobby. My feet tramp fast over maroon carpet, through the milling people, toward the condiment counter. She's there ahead, wandering toward the exit. Her yellow coat is bright in the low-lit lobby, bright against the shadowy moviegoers, growing brighter as she comes into the daylight near the glass doors – like colored celluloid lit vibrantly by a new bulb.

My mouth opens to say her name—and as the name escapes I remember it’s just an invented thing. But then if she’s not real perhaps neither am I. Our mutual unreality seems as plausible a starting point as any.

My voice flies across the twelve feet of space between us. She is stepping through the door into the daylight, umbrellas opening around her—and she pauses, holding the door in one hand, half-turned as though she’s forgotten something, looking back into the lobby. For a moment she shines there like an image on a screen.

My legs jolt to a stop. In a few disbelieving steps I veer away from the door, swerve back toward the condiment counter, lay my hand there next to a slug of relish, and watch her. She turns with the door against her shoulder. Her face grows shadowed against the background light. Then she is moving toward me, striding straight in my direction like a purposeful dream figure—but her walk is still brisk as she approaches and I fear she’s going to pass me by, so I step from the counter into her path.

**Act 6. *She Stops.***

One sweet hand floats to her collar. She says, “Oh.” It’s a muffled little sound, but her voice is just as I’ve imagined it. And now I know I’ll speak to her—must speak to her, despite the people in the lobby around us (damn them if they stare; let them stare if they want to). So I say, “Have you forgotten something, Miss?” Ah, she has green eyes. Green with turquoise pinwheeling around the black centers.

“Yes,” she says. “My umbrella.”

I make a small remark – something like *We’ll find that for you* – but I hardly hear myself, my words fading in the light of her presence. Then we are walking together across the lobby, she and I – imagine, she and I! – through the theater’s double doors, down the aisle to her seat. Her blue umbrella lies on the floor beneath the folding cushion.

“There it is,” she says.

I pick it up and place it in her hands. She is smiling: little crescent of a mouth, pink flower-petal lips. “Thank you,” she says. “The movie was so wonderful I completely forgot it.”

“You’re welcome.”

Then I am standing in the row of empty seats, watching her drift up the empty aisle. Her yellow coat whisks softly. The dark doors open at the rear of the theater. There is a low flash of yellow as she goes out, and the doors close slowly again on hydraulic hinges.

I am alone in the theater. Through the wall I hear the rumble of the film next door. I turn and look at the big dark screen. *What magic happens up there!* Even though I open the flat circular canisters, tape the snaking film together, slide the reels into place—still it is magic to me.

I fold down the cushion of Aubrey’s seat and sit. Her warmth is still there. It passes through my clothes—a different kind of magic.

- *M. Allen Cunningham*

Las cosas son como son  
hasta que dejan de serlo

Things are the way they are,  
and then they are that way no  
longer.

- from Cancionerillo del Duendo

## **Sundial Worship**

Whoever invites him  
invites a man who seems to be  
there all the time  
because he has never left.

He smells of the sea  
the paddocks  
of having spent nights  
sleeping under lumps  
of grass.

It's difficult hearing  
what he says the way  
he slurps his tongue  
and rolls his eyes.

Like dirty windows  
I clean his words to  
make sense of him.

Inside my house  
looking out  
he lives like a sundial  
drawing angles  
across the lawn.

There is no deviation  
turning back  
afternoon to morning.

I'm fully dependent on  
seeing him when I open  
the backdoor. Christ  
knows why

but it's like studying  
the sky for expressions  
of walking out in the day  
for hunting or fishing

for returning indoors  
to a woman in my bed.

After each talk  
I save the bony remnants  
of every word he drops.

*- Iain Britton*

## Precipitation

It began  
with a tabby skitting off the roof at breakfast  
then before lunch a smattering of Devon Rexes  
tumbled fragrantly onto the chamomile lawn  
chased groundwards by a Cocker Spaniel  
its auburn ears long proclaiming banners  
like the buffeted wings of a falling copper angel.

"We weren't expecting weather like this"  
Clara said, tucked down deep  
in her self-crocheted  
old lady cocoon.  
She resembles Nefertiti  
nowadays  
all hieroglyphic skin and lost eyes.

Conversation was prevented  
by a thud-thud of Dobermans,  
flashing their teeth as they flew by.  
Persian Blues rolled like tumbleweed  
singing frantic  
high-pitched  
Chinese opera.

The clouds thin  
lighting the last shower  
of Beagles and fat Tortoiseshells  
who ride a rainbow into the neighbour's field  
and streak into the hedgerows.

The air is momentarily dense  
with the stink of wet dog,  
cat piss and thunder.

Pawprints fill with water  
turn to mud and disappear.

I, five,  
Clara, eighty-five,

are neither fit to take the stand.

Before tea she teaches me double-chain  
and we share our doubts about  
December.

*- Lucy A. E. Ward*

## **The Fear of Open Faces**

Tonight they gather to his credit and drink  
to his name. Laughter hangs on the clothesline  
of his liquored breath. He notes the first increments:

minute steps towards the scaffold  
on which disdain for the social is built;  
it is the crawl down a fire escape  
away from unencumbered spaces  
and the burning skies of free discourse.

He feels trapped in that place between  
agoraphobic alibis and the embrace  
of the dramaturgical. It is the suffocation  
of intrusive faces and the pungent smell  
of Homo Sapiens Sapiens - humanity twice removed  
would suit him fine right about now.

**- Nick Bruno**



## Heisenberg's Uncertainty

"Juri! Juri!" Jana squealed, running two-steps-at-a-time down the path that led between the tall pines to the pier.

On the far brink of the dock old Juri sat in a lawn chair, arms crossed on his lap, gaze fastened on the water in front of him. He raised his right hand, the one closer to the onrushing boy, his first finger extended to signal silence. The boy halted. His feather-light, unruly hair fell forward as he teetered on the last ledge of land. The redwood planks of the pier, hot in the summer sun, beckoned him to stomp across them.

"I think I have a nibble," Juri said.

His hand returned to his lap. He held himself as still as an eagle in the dead spire of a tree. Snatching the rod at his feet, he whipped its end above his head. As he stood and reeled, he adjusted the angle of the rod to keep the line tight.

Jana could no longer resist. He ran the length of the pier.

"What have you got?" he asked. "What is it, Juri?"

"I think it's a muskie, a big tiger of a fish," Juri said, conspiratorially.

Juri's thumb slid to the drag release on the rod, loosening it. The fish ran. Line flew through the eyelets. Juri snapped the rod above his head as if reacting to a sudden tug from the muskie. The fish had used its time well, burrowing into the weeds. The line broke so smoothly that the separated threads fell away from each other rather than recoiling. As the far end of the line floated toward the surface of the lake, it looked like a strand of spider web wafting in the air.

The little boy's eyes widened. His mouth opened. The wind tugged at a few of those unruly locks of hair. The white hemisphere of Juri's big bobber surfaced through the gloss sheen of the lake. Its red nipple tilted toward the boy, dragging a tail of fish-line behind it as it jerked and wobbled in the trail of its captive captor.

Looking at Jana then, when Jana's blue eyes turned upward into his own, Juri glanced fractionally the deep double wellspring of heavenly love. In the same way that a devil and an angel, born from similar seed, heighten the aspect of each other when they meet, the trust and compassion shared by the boy and the old man were exposed in all their enveloping power by those enveloping lies, the tender untruths Juri told about the muskellunge. The illusion of these lies made the hidden actuality of love more elusive; quantifying it, silicifying it, but changing it like the changing of a wild animal caged.

**- Benjamin Buchholz**

## AA

Prate, foam, fling the arms.  
Drunk heckler drummed at  
the view: Hop, Skip & Go Naked,  
Mudslide, Screwdriver, Cointreau A-Go-Go,  
Orange Blossom, Pearl Harbor, Slippery Nipple,  
a waitress who only smiles  
when she looks at your  
money.

The heart she carried  
carried her home, undressed her,  
rubbed her with Scotch Mist  
that spilt from the cupboards  
tub-side and flung her  
'Tween the Sheets,  
Goodnight Martini.

The tabor throbbled, skipping, scratched.  
The chic phone on a stack of CDs rang.  
\_Tattoo, tattoo.\_ Mai Tai. Manhattan.  
\_Tattoo, tattoo.\_ Summertime fun.  
Mint Julep, Jim Collins, the stain on her dress,  
the dismal, abysmal skipping tabor,  
and the door, that whore, still crying \_Tattoo!\_  
How could my cow run away with the moon?

Hello. Charlie Brown?  
Me mum is in detox downtown.

\*

Start over,  
we all want to.  
Things spiral, rhyme  
where they should not.

Adios Mother, wine with dinner again?  
Dizzy Daisy yes you Can Can!  
That's how it starts  
after 23 years.

Kamikaze Mama: wine with your supper  
and a sip from the stash in the cameo cupboard  
after work, for the frayed nerves and all,  
that's how it goes.

\*

I was twelve, or ten, or eight  
or all of the above  
and, fuck, it was cool:  
those parties, that social electricity,  
the lady in the bathroom  
clutching my toilet,  
clad in her own vomit.

Texas sheetcake dry at the edges  
but juicy inside, stale beer if you  
found an uncrushed cup  
or a half-empty without doused cigar,  
mini-hotdogs basting in barbeque --  
breakfast.

\*

Butterscotch Kisses, Abbott's Dream,  
the girl with the Lemon Drop dallies  
in the doorway, stringing a finger  
up and down her French Tickler frame.

The music in my pocket bulges,  
a relapse. She needs me. I uncork  
it before the \_Tattoo, tattoo!\_ drives me  
Disneyland, Jelly Bean, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

Fate in her feathered boa flits  
through the grillwork, out the air-duct,  
up the shaft of the workman's elevator  
and leaves.

\_Wait one.\_  
\_Come back.\_  
\_Jesus, what timing!\_

Click.

\*

The new red bike,  
a promise that things will be better.

Twilight, canopic elms, she rides  
through the lawn laughing it out,  
"My name is Scarlett O'Hara. I'm an alcoholic!"

But the neighbors  
never hear this  
and only smile sadly  
when her grandkids come along.

Summertime, summertime.  
23 summertimes.  
Hot Rumba  
Black Russian  
Harvey Wallbanger

**- Benjamin Buchholz**

## **My Name is Ed and I Am Dead**

When I was alive we lived on Elm street.

Every morning  
I would dress up in a suit,  
take the 7am train uptown  
with my briefcase in hand.

My office was on the 17th floor.

Sometimes I remembered  
to look out of the window  
only to find other Eds in suits  
staring out their cubicle

We moved into the house on Elm street  
when life was only available in black and white.

I became old.  
I was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.  
I argued with my family and explained in my mild manner  
that all my capacities were fine.  
My family stopped arguing with me.

I humored them.

With only my briefcase in hand  
and the other to shade from sunburn,  
I stood outside of the house on Elm street naked.

Just me and our flamingo.  
The one that kept getting in the way  
whenever I mowed the lawn on Saturdays.

My wife would plead  
"please come back inside the house Ed".

When I would not do as I was told,  
she would yell from behind the curtains of our window  
that it was going to rain.

So now it looked as if I were hearing voices as well.

I would give in and go back inside,  
grab our black umbrella.

With my left hand holding my briefcase  
and with the right, the umbrella,  
I would go back outside naked.

But there was never any rain  
and now I didn't have a free hand  
to shade my blue eyes from the sun.

- *Didi Mendez*

## **This Began as a Poem About Office Supplies**

I wanted to go to the office supply store just because I like to see the endless neat display of writers' tools and she said she'd go along because we wanted to go somewhere and talk and so we walked there, discussing office supplies and furniture and how we both had enough at the present and probably enough to last us for the rest of our lives. Heading down the center aisle we passed a large desk, gleaming with stainless steel and plate glass, which I admired, and she said she liked it fine but I got the impression that she'd like something more conventional and less industrial and then we come across another one I admired and this one looked like it was made from an oversized erector set and we each lifted a corner to see if it was as heavy as it looked and it was and she said her daughter would probably like that which was a polite way of saying that she didn't like it or at least it wasn't her style but I didn't take that personally because the way I felt about her wasn't because I admired her taste in desks. From there to the Number 2 pencils, we held hands and we stopped and I was slightly behind her and I leaned forward a little to kiss her lightly on her ear but she surprised me by turning her head around and letting the kiss fall on her lips and then without saying anything we went back to searching the shelves for office supplies that neither of us needed. One time when we stopped walking

for a minute, I asked her when her birthday was - that's how little I knew about her - and she told me and she even added the year and she seemed to feel apologetic because she thought she was older than I and she was, but not enough that it'd ever matter to anyone, and I said I was surprised because she didn't look that old and I wasn't just being nice, it was the truth. I suppose you've guessed we kissed a few more times - not the long, passionate, kisses of long-time lovers but the tender kisses that give you something to think about long after you've parted. And too soon our time ended and we walked back together to where we had met and it was quiet there and we were alone and we kissed again, longer than before, but still calm and easy and full of what was closer to love than I expected and when that kiss ended we separated and looked at each other quietly for a few seconds and then moved together for a short, tender, kiss. I feel sorry for anyone who hasn't felt the joy of that short tender kiss, that important echo of a longer one. Later I got to wondering how the frame was built to hold that plate glass top on the table I mentioned earlier and I thought maybe someday we'd be able to go back there together to find out but while I was thinking about that I also thought that from now on, all of my poems will somewhere contain parts of that trip to the office supply store although the details may be more than a little disguised but I can tell you in another poem about how a clerk asked us if we were finding everything and I knew that I was finding more than I had ever hoped for but I didn't tell him that, I just said "Yes, thank you."

*- A. J. Bruey*



## **Feng Shui**

For any of you readers  
who are not decorators, I'll  
explain quickly that Feng Shui  
is a means of designing your  
house in a way that will give the  
occupants peace and harmony  
and even financial success.

You can pronounce it however you want  
but the words mean wind, water in whatever  
dialect you choose. This symbolizes the  
space between the sky and the earth and  
that's where most of us live most of the  
time and there should be fountains around  
all the time and even though it would be nice  
to build your house backing up to a hill we  
can be safe and satisfied if we have a back  
fence to hide our backs. But don't have a fountain  
in the bedroom and be sure the bed is  
placed carefully and you must be careful  
that all the energy is not being trapped in  
a corner somewhere. And have many aromas  
around you and there should be mirrors to  
help cure your ailments. Be sure to put eight  
coins under your front door floor mat to lure  
good fortune into your house and be sure to  
have fish and be sure to keep the tanks clean  
and have wind chimes but not so many of them  
that you're living inside a wind chime. Some of  
these tasks you should not do if it is raining  
but I won't go into such details right now and  
although some of the rules may seem somewhat  
arbitrary and some seem even silly we know from  
history that some of the rules make sense as Jesse  
James found out when he placed his chair so his back  
was turned to the door and we learned from a  
nursery rhyme that once upon a time in a kitchen  
that probably was not laid out according to these  
Oriental rules, the dish ran away with the spoon.

- *A. J. Bruey*

## **Half My Arm in the Cactus**

Widow moment afraid to weave direction, abandoned against skin, allowing fragmented hair to set the charts. It was a deep hurt, facial decision to run my hand into old thorns described as the remains of paradise. I couldn't understand why the black widow hung my hand, then went away.

Half my brain kissed, forced into touching. Certain few will talk. Many will rally, organize to rename the rocks and plant wild things where there is faith. Widow moment afraid to admit there are four walls.

Half my arm in the cactus—glow deep thorn fused against knowledge traffic, corn based in the lone idea there are windows scattered open—must be witnessed with the door closed—sombrero thief. Stereotyped cough bandit giving me bandoliers, bullets, tortillas made from my grandfather's teeth—how music absorbs this conjunto band melting in the heat.

Half my nose in the soil, smelling relief of abundance. Must be the way out. To breathe, one senses without dry flower petals the grandmother kept in boxes, the boots of her husband middy solstice far into the night. Rooster washing in paint. Half my size in the basket, half my arm pointed with sorrow. Orange flare fighting border wars without crossing the water.

**- Ray Gonzalez**

## **The Law of What Ensues**

Three times in the history of the world  
mystery turned its borders inward.

And there the thought as if it was God's thought;  
and God's hollowed head;  
and the head as if made whole by its thoughts.

What then ensued three times  
the loss of eyes, mouths, ears  
                                  days, months, years

our own voice in the blind return  
not surviving its emptying

chaos smelling like the sauntering earth.

- *MTC Cronin*

The husk of a grasshopper  
Sucks a remote cyclone and rises.

The full, bared throat of a woman walking water,  
The loaded estuary of the dead.

- Jon Silkin, from *cadenza*

## **the healer takes the day off**

sweat has barely began to pool  
in the crevices of his stomach  
but he's waited long enough

he knows the swamp flies will be driven  
hungry in the already sweltering heat

and he plans to see  
like he does every year  
how many he can catch  
in any one hour  
barehanded in flight

and this time he's filled  
the bathtub with chicken guts  
and syrup to attract them

and because it's the hottest day of the year  
he knows he has the advantage  
the flies will be bloated and lazy

no doubt he'll shatter  
his own personal record

it's a special day for him  
he's posted a sign outside the door  
informing all those in need of healing  
to come back tomorrow

he'll ignore all cries and pleads for help  
drowning all noises  
cranking the stereo volume  
for rock and roll

he'll stay inside unwashed  
his underarms sticky and his body  
smelling like electricity and pork  
from yesterday's jobs

tomorrow will come soon enough  
for the men and women  
who line up everyday  
some of them having traveled thousands of miles  
dreaming of his hands  
on their bodies

- *Michael Spring*

**the gypsy bath**

of the items I own  
this body bag  
is my favorite

it holds warm water  
better than those floppy kid pools

all I have  
to do is keep myself  
motionless  
to become the water

and when the stars begin  
fogging the night

I'll become a glob  
of universe  
an insight  
frothing  
like some primordial ooze

**- *Michael Spring***

### **Sew On and Sew On and So On**

What may comes, we wear what crumbles  
wrinkles, crinkles, one-eyed needles  
soothe the savage seamstress who sews on.

Smocks of cotton, socks of sin  
costumes for a clown, a pin  
in rapid repercussion, seams, sews on.

Buttons, zippers, wear and tear  
repair and re-repair with care  
our hearts, our hems, our stratagems, so on.

***- K. R. Copeland***



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**- Suzanne Frischkorn**

## **The Peat Moss Wrapped and Eye-hooked the Root**

A barnacle stole the shape of a petal  
and shook the lens free  
(a weave of hanger-ons.)

The spigot and snag of the thing  
was that a doorknob nicked the wall,  
pirouetted into the putty, knocking  
the window shade out of its groove  
a coil bounced off the sash  
and I forgot to oil the balustrade.

The iron and its switch don't get along.  
The radium laminate doesn't help,  
it forms tinfoil jewels,  
and crystal hinges  
with thumbtack crescents  
leaving us: glass & glass.

I will wipe the beads from your forehead.

*- Suzanne Frischkorn*

## **A Different City**

This is not the city I would choose for us.

- 1) The city in my mind is a city of grass, peopled with shades and informed by the low gelatinous chuckle of Judas crucified.
- 2) Foundationless towers, aggressively Mondrian, float on rivers of black vinegar; as they jostle each other, their transparent frames chime precariously to the prelude of Akhnaten.
- 3) The shifting streets are paved with the bodies of moths desiccated by the halide fires that line them. There are no doors; I hold the keys to the city and make my own jagged keyholes.
- 4) The city's ordinance is a single article of exactly three words. It reads "THIS WAY UP." It is written in the air; beneath it some ghostly vandal has scrawled the word "NO."

We would sit by the river and listen to the strains of the floating opera. You would share salt with me, you would break mirrors with me, you would know my name.

*- Nicholas Liu*

## What Would Snow White Do?

That tooth on edge.  
Just one; no one could hear.  
Inside she waited, underneath.

Her blood strawberries,  
her feet peach velvet.  
In time she will stitch a seam  
directly across and down.

It will open and out they will crawl--  
but she never needed so many.  
They rescue her in pieces;  
no time to augur the pattern.  
The essence remains,  
stone cold.

A little toad, forgotten thorn.  
She lifts herself, impossibly old.

An apple, a tooth,  
a summer's day--a river.  
At the edge her foot slips,  
rocks slide down,  
her velvet foot is scarred.

She bites into her lip--  
that's where the blood came from.  
Now everyone is watching.

She pulls on the white dress,  
her skin tugs at the fabric,  
Now everyone gasps.

She waits for midnight,  
along the cusp.

All it needs is a necklace and  
just so she bends to touch the floor.  
Strike for strike

the day trails off again.

She squats.

Something about toadstools and spots,  
a green morning. As she is just awake  
someone slips from the room. Apples  
for breakfast. She remembers red.  
Her hands wipe the juice away and they are  
back, everywhere. Who ever wanted this?

Tiny things all over. Dishes, cups--  
no rest for you are the heart of it all,  
you are ridden down the endless page.

And they lived. They lived and came back.  
They lived and told their children.  
They lived and she broke it at last--  
that tooth on edge,  
inside, underneath.

No one could hear.  
She hammered the length of it,  
folded down the embroidered stone  
to silence.

**- Rebecca Cook**

## **Movie Script 78**

She is the law of parlors and vestibules with bulletin boards,  
But no one knows the law,  
Not the judges,  
Not the lawyers,  
Not even Justinian.

She is the law, but no one knows the law.  
She misinterprets the law,  
Reads "squib" for "squid,"  
Reads "pose" for "rose."

She is the law of the thorn of crowns,  
She is the law of the nakedness  
Of artificial pearls.  
She is the law of the broken compass,

She lives in a room without walls,  
Without a ceiling, without a floor.  
But she puts curtains on non-existent windows,  
Locks the non-existent door with a steel blindfold.

Her law has sentenced me to solitary confinement.

*- Duane Locke*

## **The Flower Song**

RosAnna no longer cried,  
Her tears once sprouted roses,  
White candles appeared,  
Wherever they fell,  
The last time she cried was at the edge of the sea,  
A pure white beach at dawn,  
A Nationale moved onto the beach,  
She watched his movements through the blurred scope of her Chinese rifle,  
From her post high in the jungle palms,  
He turned to scan the jungle,  
The trigger pulled,  
The bullet passed through his breast pocket,  
Split the stem of a dried rose,  
Passed through to lodge in the shell of a hermit crab,  
The crab too died instantly,  
The Nationale's last thoughts were of his beloved RosAnna,  
Somewhere out in that dark, lonely jungle,  
Blood, sea, final tears.

*- Donald Ryburn*

I don't really know where it happened...  
in a church, a dustbin, a charnel house?

- Raymond Queneau



## **Side Effects**

I personally enjoy dry mouth,  
the dark outside and in.  
If trembling hands are normal  
then so is the predictability  
when nothing happens.  
An irregular heartbeat gets me going.  
Even the days go by without  
the hallucinations of digress.  
They should revise the statue on Main Street.  
Fewer days, numbers, names  
more existential side effects.  
You know, that man running from.

*- Colin James*

**figs.**

Virtual particle-antiparticle pairs  
are constantly being created  
in supposedly empty space.

I have received, my dear love,  
not your figs, but your stewed figs.  
Occasionally, a pair will be created just outside  
the event horizon of a black hole.

By sending them to me in this way,  
you have tried to support your argument  
about the impossibility  
of sending them.

There are three possibilities:  
both particles are captured by the hole;  
both particles escape the hole;  
one particle escapes while the other is captured.

It is not at all this way  
that they should be arranged  
for transport, so you need not be surprised  
that they are ruined.

1. Never pack them one on top of the other,
2. and place them in moss,  
each one in a little hole,  
well covered with moss.
3. In the third case,  
one of the particles  
may escape (and speed away  
to infinity).

I sometimes hear them  
flirting away like two gossips,  
because, thank God, they are,  
one as much as the other.

While the other has been captured  
by the hole, the escapee becomes real

and can be detected by distant observers,  
but the captured is still

virtual;  
it has to restore  
conservation of energy by  
assigning itself a negative mass-energy.

Afterwards, they part  
with great protestations  
of respect and mutual love,  
since scoundrels are like knaves.

The hole loses mass  
and thus for the first of the month:  
appears to  
shrink:

a pot of beef marrow,  
one of strawberry  
and one of apricot,  
a dozen iced cakes;

a vial of lavender  
and one of eau de Cologne  
of the strongest and best quality;  
a half bottle of orange liqueur;

a pound of powder  
and of small night candles,  
the same as the last ones,  
and the catalogue.

What happens when  
the hole gets very small  
is unclear, since they are a  
mutual admiration society . . .

I embrace you and beg you  
not to forget.

**- AnnMarie Eldon**

sources:

*Marquis de Sade, The Prison Letters, de Sade to his wife, August, 1779*  
*Hawking Radiation Law, 1973*

## text

### Text Only

as a creecha ov lngwj th rita is always cort up in th wor ov fkshns (jargons)bt e is nva n e  
fin bt a playfin in it snce th lngwj vat cnstitutes im(rit

in)is always outside-ov-plce(atopic)bt by th simpl efct ov polysemy(rudmetry staj ov  
ritin)th woria ov comitmnt ov a litracy dialect is dubios frm its o

rijn

### Text Only with Line Breaks

over the left segment  $b$  quicker t than over the right segment  $b't'$  when it is delayed by  
the multiple partitions in the case of the line

our eyes are not equally accommodated for vertical line

s and for horizontal line

s in order to see a horizontal line

of 3 metres long as the same line

vertical one must place oneself at a distance we see that two parallel line

s intersect each other objectively the demonstrations of these two contradictory true  
statements is found on the left a line

divided into two exactly equal segments  $b=b'$  but in appearance they are subjectively  
unequal  $b'>b$  division of a vertical line

because our eye travels

## **Rich Text Format**

Bartolommeo Francesco Rastrelli, (1700-71),  
designed the Summer Palace, St. Petersburg (1741-4, destroyed), Anichkov Palace,  
Nevski Prospekt, St. Petersburg, (1744),  
Peterhof (1742-52),  
the Cathedral of St. Andrew, Kiev (1747-55),  
the Great Palace, Tsarskoe Selo, now called Pushkino, (1749-56), the Winter Palace, St.  
Petersburg (1754-62),  
all for the  
Tsarina Elizabeth Petrovna.

## **Text with Layout**

About The Layout Reservoir  
Please feel free to

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would help  
other developers  
to find this resource.

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## **Word**

Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text  
SMS, Vodaphone  
M. Borissavlievitch, The Golden Number  
Peter and Linda Murray, A Dictionary of Art and Artists  
BlueRobot.com  
Microsoft Word, File Menu, Save As..., Save File as type:

*- AnnMarie Eldon*

## **A LETTER TO MY FATHER UPON BLUDGEONING AN INTRUDER**

Dear father, I've talked to you before about the hammer under my bed. You said I would never need it. Well tonight an intruder got in through the bathroom window. We took a shower and then I bludgeoned her with it. She had softened the soap and squeezed the shampoo and was detaching the spout to rinse suds from my genitals when I said, "Wait a second," and smashed her head, realizing the threat she posed to Jennifer and the kids. I know she was a girl father by she was fit, and I'm sure she was violent. I told you I would need that hammer! Please give my love to mom, and remember to lock up.

*- Nathan Parker*

**confession to kelley white, thursday evening**

1.  
there is no reason  
to start a poem  
*the baby's body is found  
in the trash*

2.  
there is no reason  
to start a poem

3.  
there is a reason  
but there is no poem  
to start

4.  
there is a baby's body  
found in the trash

5.  
*there is a baby's body  
found in the trash*

6.  
i would not call  
anything  
written about it  
a poem

**- John Sweet**

## **Idioblasting**

In accordance with the stars  
I have burned my predicament  
onto paper then signed off.  
Oh sad wreck of history--  
these effigies roped to the mast,  
their tongues long surrendered to flame.  
How long can we survive in its aftermath?  
This lone bulb they've plopped  
in the forest, all bird song be damned.  
And the troubled youth with their shovels.  
I've been drug free for ages,  
made right by a century old chair's back  
still the insects have taken to the scenery,  
their nylon masks shimmering  
as they tear out my last pepper's throat.  
Even icebergs have been rumored,  
hail as big as my fist.  
"There's no I in team," my high school coach  
once informed me but neither is there a U  
I said settling into an O because of its  
remarkable resemblance to 0.  
Night has pulled its coat tighter--  
the only one here that's secure in their job.  
Tell me, is there somebody left  
that's any good with a light?

*- Mark DeCarteret*



**No Longer Night  
But Not Yet Morning**

I.

A blue moon  
breathes its ambient  
light

Objects burn faintly  
beneath pastel  
skins

A vibrato bleeds  
beneath a distant  
tamarisk

A consumptive unfurls  
from the seed of  
a moment

Heels spur in unison  
against white tender  
flanks

II.

Waking to terraced  
fruit trees and the steely  
clean Estacio

he disembarks in Portbou  
and boards the train  
to Barcelona

**- R.L. Swihart**

## Someone in the Room

(Translated from Turkish by Meryem D. Grant and Nat Gertler)

I go outside without putting on my shades.  
The sun is too pale to sear my eyes.  
I stash them in my shirt pocket.  
My shades.  
It is nice out.

The course I travel leads to a road I do not know instead of the planned parade route.  
The road grows dark.  
Just when the shadows of migrating storks are about to pass over me, somebody pulls me inside.  
I am taken through a massive gate.  
I am led to an estate through the front yard.  
I am pushed into one of the dim rooms.  
I am placed in an armchair.  
A hand touches my forehead.  
A question is asked.  
I ask the question.  
I ask the one touching my forehead the way to the parade route.  
“It’s too early,” she says.  
I find it hard to check my watch.  
She who held my forehead gets up and turns on the lights.  
A glass of water is left on the coffee table before me.  
When light floods my surroundings, this glass and an ashtray in front of it are the only things I can see.  
Perhaps it is the harsh brightness.  
Maybe it is an optical illusion which defies explanation.  
A trick, a trap.  
Perhaps I am supposed to put on my shades.  
I cannot find them where I put them.  
But the glass is there.  
As I reach for it, my hand knocks the ashtray.  
The glass, hit by the ashtray, tips over.

I think of something.  
Something that gives me chills and keeps my mind off what I’ve done.  
I surrender myself to that something.  
I feel relaxed.  
The glass remains where it has tipped over.

I cannot find my shades.  
My pocket is empty.  
I am in an unfamiliar place.  
Outside, storks migrate.  
I am here.

Someone enters the room.  
She asks if I am all right.  
Her question sounds odd.  
“I am fine,” I say.  
I pause before answering.  
Because I want to feel something besides bad.  
But it does not work.  
I do not believe what I say.  
I fear that she will not believe it either.  
She remains silent.  
She hesitates—to believe or not.  
I understand that she wants to believe when she smiles.  
I smile, too.

Someone comes near me.  
She sits on the arm of the chair.  
She says I look fine.  
“You’re fine, you look fine,” she says.  
She does not know not to trust appearances.  
I point at the glass.  
Just when she is about to put her hand on mine.  
The water spilled on the coffee table.  
The spoiled finish.  
The moisture which will stain the carpet.  
“That’s okay,” she says.  
“It just happened,” I say.  
I feel the chill again.  
She places her hand to my forehead again.  
She says I have a fever.  
I ask her how I should get to the parade route.  
“Your temperature has worsened,” she says.

I talk to someone.  
Someone who shows no interest in my questions.  
But she is interested in me.  
And I look at the ashtray lying where the glass was.  
I see two cigarette butts and a half-burnt match in it.  
Near the ashtray is a pack of cigarettes.  
On it is a matchbox.

When I try to look at my watch, the one sitting by me tells me not to move my arm.

I ask her who she is.

She says everything is all right.

I think about the storks.

I wonder where they have gone.

Time passes awkwardly.

She tells me not to worry.

“I know, everything is all right,” I say.

I know that’s not so, though.

I know that nothing is all right.

“Don’t fool yourself,” she says while leaving the arm of the chair to me.

I lose her when she reaches for the empty glass.

She gets obscured behind a beam of light.

Or she gets run over by a cascade of light.

I do not know.

I look for my shades again.

Whatever I want to see is left in the darkness in this room.

I cannot see anything clearly.

I am afraid to leave my seat.

On top of that I am cold.

I cannot help shivering.

“Because of the fever,” she says.

Someone enters the room again.

Instead of coming near me, she stands across from me.

I locate her using the sound of her voice.

She waits behind the coffee table.

I tell her that I do not feel well.

“It is because you delude yourself,” she says.

I ask her for the last time what I should do to get to the parade route.

“We’ll think about it when you feel better,” she says while giving me the glass she has taken and filled.

I cannot feel fine.

I cannot reach out to grab the glass.

Or I reach out and I cannot grasp it.

I do not grasp it.

She releases it thinking that I have it.

The glass falls on the coffee table.

It shatters.

I recognize the fate of the glass by the sound.

A peculiar change occurs.

The room cannot take the breaking of the glass.

Some things I cannot see change their places.

Other things I cannot see move from here to there.

I cannot sit still.

Someone is running in the room.  
I run after her.  
Knowing that I cannot keep up.  
She opens a door.  
I open it, too.  
I pass through the front yard she crosses.  
I am chasing someone.  
Maybe I am running along with her.  
I stop right when I am about to step onto a path, not knowing where it leads.  
I stay at the gate of the front yard.  
For I do not feel well.  
Because I delude myself.  
I cannot run any longer.  
I cannot help being deluded.

I search pointlessly for things.  
Sometimes I look for my shades.  
Sometimes a street.  
I usually cannot find what I am looking for.  
Sometimes, I even feel that I am catching up to someone, only to lose them in a beam of light.  
Or I see them disappear behind a wave of light.  
Just when I get close to them, they are swallowed up and become unreachable.  
I am left to stumble through the darkness.

I enter the room as someone.  
I walk around the room like her.  
I fool myself to the fullest.  
I turn off the lights.  
I complete the darkness.  
I sit in the armchair abandoned by me.  
I believe that I am fine.  
I lose myself without reluctance.  
Since I always get lost, I never get the opportunity to find the parade route.

*- Faruk Ulay*

on some rain lashed night  
a voice that barks  
brief syllables  
may be  
at last my own

- Loren Eisely  
from *The Changelings*