OUT OF OUR

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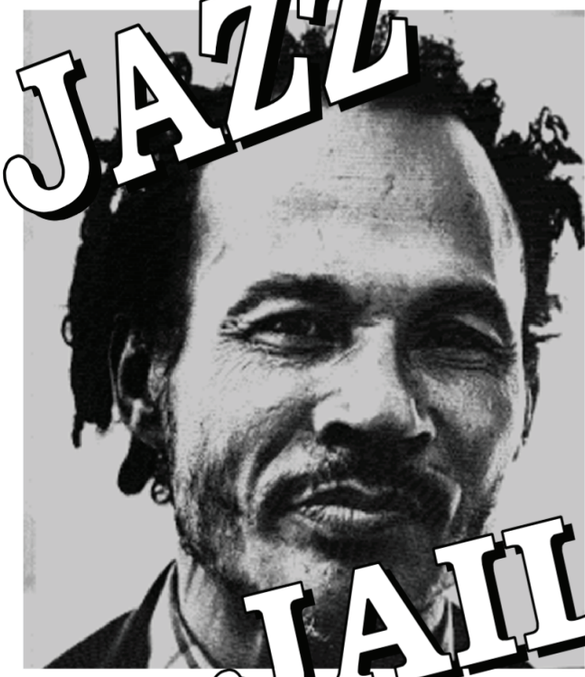
Jazz-Jail and God

Impressionistic Biography of Bob Kaufman

"We're blessed by the ghost of Bob Kaufman who's spirit exists ever breathing in the earth."

Allen Ginsberg



"Bob Kaufman's life is written on mirrors in smoke."

Jack Kerouac

Mel Clay

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(check us out on facebook!)

May this issue find you with your interest in knowledge and beauty rejuvenated by the Spring.

"If the climate were a bank, the U.S. would have already saved it."
- Hugo Chavez, 1954-2013

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ARTWORK:

Shayna Why: 12, 19, 25, 30, 31, 35, 46, 52, 57

Cameron Forsley: frontispiece

Steven Gray: cover, 6, 40

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DEF A&C
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2010 S.F.

DESPOT, LUST AND SORROW

But what I really want is a hat
with enormous black brims
so I can walk in the city of phantoms
and hit everyone on the shoulder
or in the face, depending on height

Marina Rubin
Brooklyn, NY

sabbath

It is easiest for those who live comfortably to die. This is not a condemnation; only a fact.
Sweet-smellers who bury themselves prematurely in pillows, or she who stands
prayerlike
at the table, broken like bread, in teenage attire;
her lax arms form X's
in the thick stippled air while the cat with the whiskers akimbo uncurls…
only to curl again…indeed, to she,
it seems almost righteous, in blank buxom beds or crouched derelict-haired
with forgetfulness,
to submit to the instruments of light & weight. Scuff, hush. The brute lull beguiles,
spreading its concupiscent yellow all up
to the door

Ratty St. John
Stanford, CA

Spit Me Off the Wayside

That old, familiar despair.
Sad masturbation
Marrow lanes
A world fixed to my breast; and i intend,
with blood off to bad start, to surmount
initial cruelty (it
is always there, an existential pinch,
like how i can't make out
with mirrors, or
communally a kiss so quick & deadpan,
doggie waiting at what used to be a door,
homestead buttoned down
to shins…).

Your name
comes easily to me.

Your car safeguards a destiny of crumbs
& sidelong looking, while the backseat knows
what's best.
Chip my stiff-lip
with a cable, glinting in rough sunshine to
the hashish timbre, bitter lumber building breezeways
between need-based supposition and
calamity of fact, the gap
between not-being-touched and thin white fellow willing
to detach: a guess is all
that fringes on the neon isolation
cracking ELBOW!
counting falling-outs and books and backs-kissed,
breakfasts-skipped and backyards where the first boy, braided, shot you up
with workman's grace
and whose washed face is never, despite witching-hour correspondence,
to be shared or
gone to prom with: now I beg of you
just the weather
of the instant you caved into, on
that groundless day of rebel wrists
and planetary backwash, pray,
just give to me a tree-shaped plea
that I may shake the yessesss from and carry all the way with me…

just One crinkled “okay” that I
might use to wipe the oil from my soles.

Insomniac, I did the math.
Our shelter of shook rooms and cheap kicks, is
corrosive (like the notion
of an exit). Sit dirt-softly and sip
woozy coffee knowing no-tits: shelter’s all we’re on the road for.

We open doors and calm the odor
of not-knowing with
a glimpse of the True Road,
maligned—
I’ve wandered every highway of Jah’s making
but this distance wears me down.
The way we stand
apart (breath-measured,
gnawing false-starts and imagining CD’s
worn to stars upon the dashboard, that first
Want-Torn skirt and the last folklore, all
the midnights stiffened with remorse
in mystic kitchens, haunted houses
just below
an ill-wished abdomen) to let the fogbank
dawdle thighs.

I threw the map out
with the dusty butts.

Our eyes, orange-
veined, incriminate the sky.

Ratty St. John
Stanford, CA

The End of the World

The end of the dream
will be bright golden
angels descending in columns
through a black sky
into the industrial American night,
transforming into airplanes
approaching the airport for landing,
and the dark clad officials will there
board their black buses
with windows tinted black,
and the police will hold
the traffic back as they go
into the compounds of the city,
the underground networks,
the nerve center,
with convoys that come in,
trucks loaded with food,
while outside
the hunger-maddened, disposable
people hurl themselves
against barbed-wire barricades,
trying to steal a few crumbs
from the masters.

Douglas Cole
Seattle, WA

blue angels

she was seven years old & she called them blue angels

we walked down the hill in the afternoon sun

she talked some more but the planes were louder

car alarms echoed for blocks

I called them killing machines

instruments of fear

but she said not these ones,

pointing up at the contrails

that covered us.

Robert Garibay

San Diego, CA

NO
WAR

She Came to Me as a Storm

She came upon me unexpectedly
a storm of love and rage

her terrible beauty
more than I dreamed
or deserved

She left as suddenly
as she arrived

I imagine she might have
taken me along

had I the strength
to loose myself
from my chains

she was the mirror to my cowardice

the key to my prison

the door
to my escape

she stayed open
as long as she could.

William Taylor, Jr.
San Francisco, CA

And I Wake Into It Again

And I wake into it again,
scrabbling like a drunken ape
through this horrorshow existence
with my idiot smile plastered
across my idiot's face
mucking about the days and hours
grasping at scraps of beauty like trinkets
strewn across a slaughterhouse floor
grinning like a monkey beneath the angry sun
of another day, so fucked and beautiful.

William Taylor, Jr.
San Francisco, CA

The wild ones
are the best
the ones who will
scratch out your eyes
pull your hair
throw punches
cuss like their fathers
drink like their grandfathers
and then curl up
and ask
when you're coming to bed

Michael Gebelein
Asheville, NC

Happy

It's not enough for me to
feel good, that's the problem.
When I do,
it's for a while,
and I'm overflowing with love,
suns in my hands,
blowing kisses to women in the street
dancing to mad
music, love.

But then she comes along,
her, or another like her,
and she sees
me there
feeling
so very good
and she pulls me right
back down again,
into her bucket of love,
crabs pinching curiosity,
she elbows her way right into
me,
with me letting her,
too.

And you know,
its not so bad at first.
It's nice
to think of someone
in that new way
but then, you know, it is -
it is because she talks so loudly,
and she wants me to know what she knows
and she makes me fuck her when I'm tired
and her skin creases at the armpit
and sometimes she almost seems crazy
and she opens up all of the windows without telling me
and lets in that awful
fucking world.

Man, she really does all that
all that and more
and then she leaves me
and the echoes of her presence
are louder than when she was there,
waiting in corners
to shout at me.
And after all the
poems
I gave her
too...

D.S. Maolalai
Dublin City, Ireland

I might be distracted

by secret trees. Or preoccupied
by their opalescent inhabitants. I used to
feed the songs, now they're feeding me.

I could be sidetracked by
assuaging utterances. It's possible
containing dulcet sanctuaries.

I might be ameliorated by magic
orchards. The first wish is always
free. I cherish adventitious resonance.

I incline towards abstruse
scintillations, if verdantly furtive.
Trees don't need leashes (they are kind).

I recurrently gravitate towards
sequestered nests. Especially ones
with serenading vagaries.

I confess a tendency towards
desiderations, especially at twilight
when summer airs take requests.

I'm susceptible to sonorous forests. I
revel in stanzas of secret frequencies.
I gather a bouquet of data.

I proffer word noises of extolling.
I am swayed by singing trees,
their intimations safe with me.

Craig Kurtz
Louisa, VA

Toggle cynical long enough

& see disrupted. Pattern
recognition unavails
switched-on crisis hour. Ordinary
dropped anchor
in funnels of outlandish
questing.

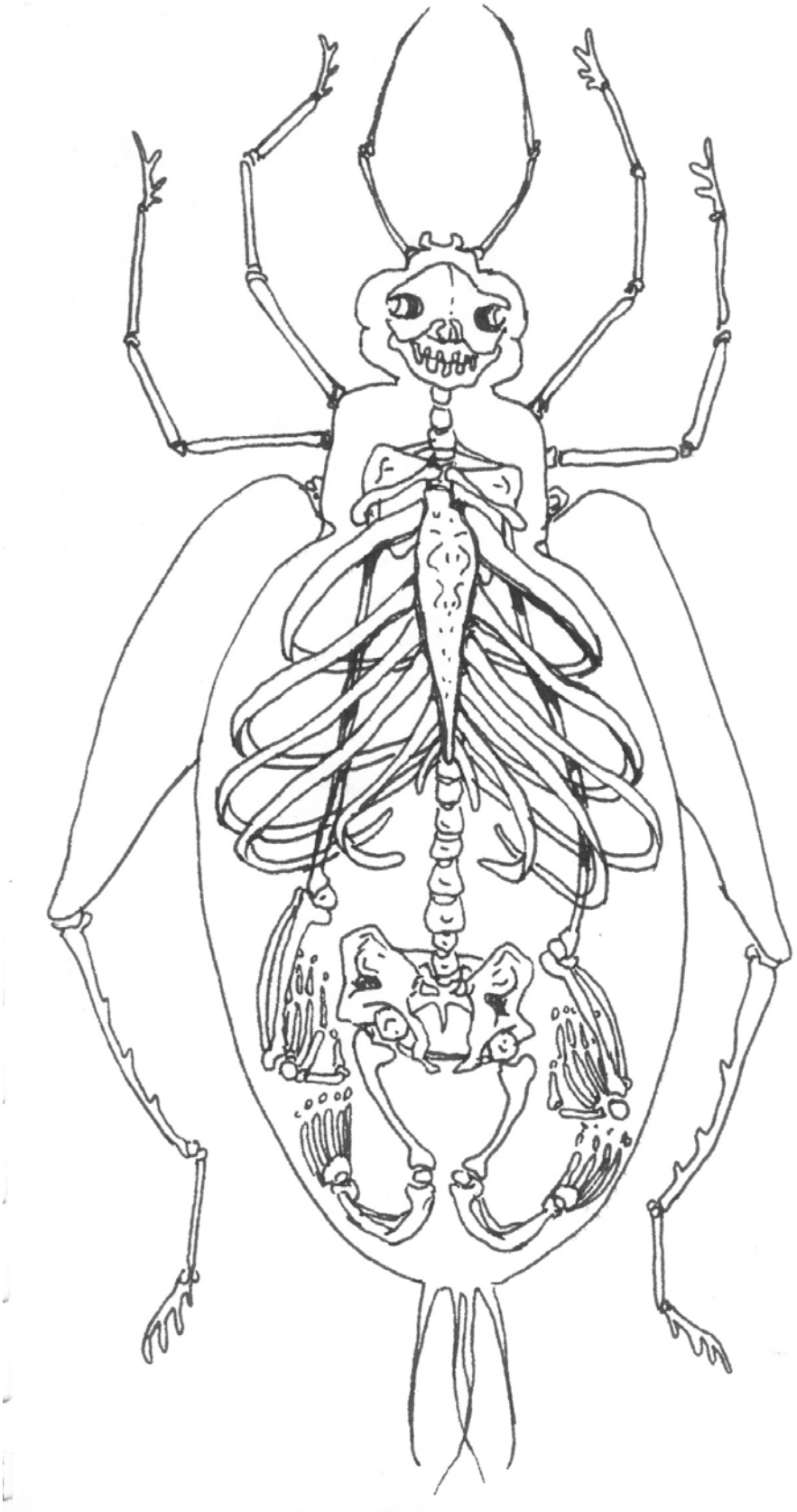
As Wittgenstein noted, "there
is *this*; there is *that*" —
all else is complaints
indexed
& sustain
terminated.

Recalcitrant clearance
(from here anyway) is
ambiguous tension. Don't know
about you but I've had
enough quicksand for
a lifetime.

Get the thermostat up; turn
the expectations down. Is that
mixed-up efficient or
deprioritized cohabitation?
For the answer:
bloodtest.

Automatic pianos cannot
hear their own songs. Reverse current
& it's unreliable handful
of yesterday's heart.
Vitamins don't provide
compassion.

Craig Kurtz
Louisa, VA



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The early bird

A dead man showed me death
I saved a life
I thought about impregnating the neighbor
and i thought about getting naked too
All this before 9 a.m.
I bet the rest of the day will be boring

Marc Carver
Basingstoke, U.K.

Strangers in Peoria

I met a proper woman in a proper pub
on a Monday in Peoria. I was taken by how much
she looked like Jackie after Dallas
but without the pillbox hat.

She was from New York and I was from Chicago
and we were in Peoria for interviews
for jobs we thought we'd get.
But living in Peoria, we thought,
might not be a fit.

The lady was a surgeon recruited by a hospital.
It took a little prompting but finally she said:
"I repair pelvic floors in women."
She paused to see if I'd react
and when I didn't, she continued.

"If a bladder drops, or a rectum tumbles
or if a womb is full of fibroids,
I'm the surgeon that lady needs to see.
These are ailments most men never
hear about unless they've had a wife
who's had them."

She sipped her Coke,
dabbed the corner of her mouth,
and then assured me:
"When I get done, the lady's free
of all protrusions. She can urinate,
defecate and have sex again, all
without discomfort."

Now I've met my share of women,
but I had never met a woman,
drunk or sober, quite like her.
I had no idea what to say and so
I sat and listened.

"Actually, my patients have a choice.
They can let me do the surgery or buy
a pessary, a device few women know about
until I pull one from the cabinet
and explain its ins and outs.
The pessary makes surgery seem simple
and so we pick a day for me to tuck
the organs back where they belong.

"Now, if the womb is full of fibroids,
I'll suggest that we remove the uterus as well.
I tell her we'll take out her crib
and leave her playpen intact.
Often that's the best solution."

She sipped her Coke again and said,
"Somewhere in Peoria, as we speak,
a bladder's dropping, a rectum's quivering
and a fibroid's growing. Believe me,
if the salary is right, I'll take this job
because a fibroid in Peoria's no different
than a fibroid in New York."

Then she put me on the spot:
"Well, that's my story. What's yours?
What do you do for a living?"

I took a breath and said:
"I repair sentences in documents
written by intelligent people
expert in arcane fields.
Some of them can't spell

or punctuate or if they can,
they dangle participles,
split infinitives or run
their sentences together
like mountain rams
in rutting season."

For emphasis I added,
"I put muscle in their verbs,
amputate their adjectives,
assassinate their adverbs.
I give my clients final copy
they can claim is theirs.
The reader never knows
a ferret like me has dashed
between the lines,
nibbling at this
and chomping on that."

Then I added a remark I hoped
would prompt a get-together later
for dinner and drinks,
another chat and a little laughter,
who knows what else,
before we'd have to take
different planes back home:

"I believe our work is similar," I said.
"I too put things back where they belong
and cut away anything protruding."

About an hour later, we paid our tabs,
said long good-byes and headed off
in different directions. By day's end,
we'd both be flying home;
and although we'd still be strangers,
we'd be strangers who had had
an interesting conversation.

Not interesting enough, however,
for either of us to ask
the other for a name or number.

Donal Mahoney
St. Louis, MO

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A MAGIC ACT

So what's the point of magicians?
Why pay to be fooled?
But the man in top-hat and tux
has you spellbound.

And it's not as if he's good at his trade.
I can see rabbit ears
poking out of his coat.
And what's that up his sleeve
but a string of knotted handkerchiefs.

For you though,
lame tricks get the miracle treatment.
There's no part of your body
that doesn't applaud.

Hotel bar later,
we sit together in silence.
I become invisible.
You slip through a trapdoor.

John Grey
Johnston, RI

DUMMY-LAND

Wasn't it you I saw at
Madame Tussaud's in between
Madonna and Michael Jackson,
taut expression,
bored out of your pretty skull,
a dummy forged from an imagination
other than your own -
didn't I plead with you -
didn't I bang my head
against your hard wax chest,
with red-ragged bull fury,
while your only response
was no response at all -
an emotional rigor mortis had set in,
all involvement melted away
during the distillation process -
no, wait a minute,
that wasn't you,
it was Rihanna -
and the guard was telling me
not to touch the figures -
meanwhile,
I go on pleading and banging
and nobody's been real yet.

John Grey
Johnston, RI

The Beginning of the World

The creation of the universe
is ultimately
a personal story

The exploded singularity cooled
just as your interest in the myriad ways
you could spend this moment
cooled

The clap of nothingness, the tightening fist of a planet,
the naptime dream of a great god, and the wars in heaven
all adumbrate the mysterious construction
of the present moment

And inform us that most of the big decisions
have been shoved offstage

Colin Dodds
Brooklyn, NY

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FROM THE NEOLITHIC TO MONTAIGNE'S TOWER

I'm living and I'm writing in Montaigne's tower,
it is three flights up.
I'm exercising an
aristocratic right to free will, indoor plumbing,
and due process. In the old days those were not
available to common folks,
but now they are.
We are living like aristocrats who're down on
their luck, but all the land belongs to us or so
we like to think.
The mountains and the desert and
the beaches are within our automotive reach,
and mass production has a way of leveling
the population. Warhol said a coca-cola
is the same no matter what your income is.

I live a block from a Mayan pyramid,
the steps are brutal, but it's not like you are having
a heart-attack on top.
The architecture reaching into
the sky, you see into surrounding counties like
a god, or possibly a pagan priest who's power-
tripping, as you climb the steps on Russian Hill.

My own apartment functions as a neolithic
sun-dial having planetary connotations
as the earth revolves around the sun and that
affects the angle of the sunlight coming through
the window as the year wears on, an orbit known
as deadman's curve. May the centrifugal force be with you.

Steven Gray
San Francisco, CA

Late February Snow

Twilight and the woods are brighter
with this sudden snow, as if an hour's
saved before the time change.

Three days before my birthday,
I'm thinking of my parents on that other
snowy night, riding the cold subway

to New York Hospital, the rocking train
screaming on the narrow tracks
through dark tunnels under the city,

Mother in labor, holding my sister's
small hand, father wearing his permanent
frown. I thrashed, prepared for my escape.

Joan Mazza
Mineral, VA

Diary of a Sensitive Youth

In Cody
I remember the woman with no teeth who was crying.
I wanted to give her a couple of cigarettes
or maybe even the whole pack
but then I wouldn't have any, so I kept them,
and I moved on.

In Spokane
I was living at the park with the other homeless people.
Me and my friend were showing off
to the college girls that passed by
but I got tired of that
so I climbed a cliff about thirty feet high
and when I stood on top I could see the whole city
and when I looked down I saw a kid about my age
wearing black Converse shoes
his body covered by a ripped orange tarp.
His hands were on his stomach, cradling his severed head
and I said, well, at least you can't feel anything—
but I wasn't sure who I was talking to.
I couldn't speak for a couple of days after that
and one night, by the fire,
I noticed that I was wearing black Converse shoes,
wrapped in an orange poncho
and I knew that I would never talk again
if I stayed there, so I got up,
and I moved on.

Outside Spokane
I gave a woman my last five dollars because she looked like
the woman in Cody who I wanted to give cigarettes to.
But even after she had the money,
people still turned their heads from her in shame
and I thought, what difference does this really make?
Five dollars might last half-a-day
and then she'll still be the same anyway.
I was totally broke now, and I wished
I hadn't given away all my money, so I made a note,
and I moved on.

In Denver
I was sleeping at a friend's place
when I heard gunfire and jumped up and remembered
oh yeah, this is Denver, and went back to sleep
not too bothered by the drive-by-shooting.
In the morning
I heard that a little boy had been shot in the crossfire.
I was sad in a way
and wanted to do something to help.
Three weeks later, I was still there,
unable to think of any way to help, but I heard
he had gotten better anyhow and I felt better,
so I lit-up a found, half-cigarette, inhaled,
and began moving on.

Richard King Perkins II
Crystal Lake, IL

Grease Poet

Carl the mechanic
was the first poet
I ever met—
livin' at home
takin' a few classes
at the local CC
I think us younger guys
in the neighborhood
kinda looked up to him
because he was sort
of a regular guy
but when he
came out cryin' one day
and showed us his
first publication
he sniffed that he'd
tried to show
his old man
what he'd done
and all the old drunk
could do was laugh
and drip snot
all over the pages
Carl said this was typical
of how people
treated poets
which was why I knew
I'd never be one
so I asked Carl
to pop the hood
of the Charger
and show me
the spark plugs
or something.

Richard King Perkins II
Crystal Lake, IL

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All Better

Water from the sleek metal syringe
thunders in my canal, flushing waxy gunk
into a kidney-shaped basin. I inspect,
glad to be rid of secreted excess.
For three days I have heard in mono,
cocking my good ear, sounding faintly
the profound well of deafness.
Instantly restored, I think of those
shuttled from test to inconclusive test,
treated only to trial and error,
pouring old ills into new bottles.
Sudden cures—the stuff of miracle
or child's play. Remember the script:
"Hello I'm sick can you help me?"
"Yes open your mouth say *ah*
now I will check your heart
now I have to tap your knee
okay take these red pills."
"Thank you here one two three."
It was all whole numbers then, before
the onset of radicals, imponderables,
fractions of our former selves.

James Fowler
Conway, AR

Imitation of Christ

The kid on the highway shoulder
is dragging a cross through the gravel,
trailed by a pink golf cart.
Evangelical newsmaking probably,
or penance for adolescent sin.
He looks sincerely prayerful:
Jesus, don't let me die
like a locust on a rig grill.

Some pleas must be answered,
because next day the state police
have collared the little procession.
No official hand washing this time.
End of the line on the road to
Damascus, Arkansas.

James Fowler
Conway, AR

Song for a Stolen Sax

The obscurity patch over an eye
Let him in a conundrum
Of walnuts
Hiccups
Prepositions
Free range chickens
Of hope

Today is Sunday
Today is a memo from the sun
About the start of the metaphysical season
Trash collection
Accidental toxic chemicals in the house

Fool’s gold
Fool’s gold
Fool’s gold

Hello rage seems inappropriate
As the coffee drips into pot
As the secret passion of passion
Exposes passion

Moon flips and burgers in the lumbar region of yesterday
Picket the white picket fence
Of the industrious fence

Cue payoff
Cue transparency
Cue end of page

Improvised melody begins

Richard Martin
Boston, MA

Ultra Fringe

Jumps in space require fringe status

slow down you gotta be kidding

I’m the ultimate in fringe I like Eric Dolphy

& wildflowers that grow on the curbs

jumps in space is just the beginning

there’s citrus hockey all about particles

in Sahara-like conditions resisting swimsuits

Cheerios moving Greek vowel

not to mention the diva’s crown of braids

in the time of soft food

& lies about the flesh

Tom Weigel
New London, CT

The woman was a beautiful one. She had been born with the breasts of three women. Her name was Fredricka.
2

She came into Charlie's town one night with her traveling circus, danced
across the stage and into
his heart.
3

THE READING

I.
Driving to a poetry reading tonight
On the radio I hear the
Poet Laureate of San Francisco say,
Poets in the USA don't move their bodies when they read.
They stand, book in hand stilted as a priest reading from
A hymnbook. Reading to a bored audience.
Latin American poets move their hearts in their fingers.
Poems gyrate whirl against the walls of rooms.

At tonight's reading fifty middle class well educated people
Sit in stark metal chairs
They remind me of
Penguins standing on the edge of
Nothing
Staring
The poet is dressed in a black suit white blouse

In monotone she reads from her book
The audience sits in those stark metal chairs waiting for something to drop
Change their lives
Blow their minds
Nobody smiles cries laughs gasps
No one moves whirls twirls flies

Finally in what she says
Is the darkest section of the book
She slightly moves her hand to the rhythm of words
My ancestors visit me at night through doors

II.
When I read my audience will be
all colors of the earth from the sun to the moon
I'll read at the Center Pole of a Roundhouse
Before a Sweat Lodge begins
Before a night spent on a mountain top visions like bison charging
My body will move a swan ready to soar
Voice will be as deep as black earth
My eyes will scorch my poems as I read
Until there's nothing left but
Light

III.
After each poem the audience
Will rise from their seats transparent
as dragonfly wings white silk

When the reading ends no one will speak
Or mingle over wine cheese crackers
I won't sit at a table signing books
Be who you are
Keep writing
Thanks for your support

Because my words will be stamped into souls
Like trees fallen to earth in thunder
Lighting blinding eyes
I will not wear a black suit
But turquoise rose gold
Words will issue from my throat like waves

People will cheer sway cry dance
Faint flail
Leave in passion terror or disgust
Memories like ghosts floating

Pamela Stone Singer
Occidental, CA

Morning Cup

Streaked and patterned water rimmed by mudflats
Mudflats and more mudflats and more mudflats
The inner lining of a horseshoe bay

That's how it looks from thirty thousand feet
Where mudflat-colored coffee slowly sinks far into me
Like legs of bridges, sunken into coffee-colored mudflats

In seats around me everyone is dozing
No coffee muddies-up their coursing blood
No thin excitant opens up their eyes

Jet engines rumble, hissing through my headphones
They blur all chance of friendly conversation
We're wordless here at thirty thousand feet

While far below the genuine high-fliers
The California seagulls, stand on mudflats
Their light weight making soft mud seem like rock

But I from far above see just a texture
The speckled seagull creams amidst those mudflats
The inner lining of the 'Frisco bay.

Lance Nizami
Palo Alto, CA

He proposed to her after her performance, but she only giggled and left him with an autographed photo.
GIGGLE
MARRIAGE

dream home

we owned a haunted house—
an attraction,
but we lived there too.

We took people on tours around the grounds, like the strangers on a train amusement park, body of water, islands, scattered woods perfect for choking, and wide open grass space.

It scared me at night, but you held my hand.

One night while walking the green, we came across a red haired hag drinking the blood of a male wolf, to restore her looks. As she lapped, the wrinkles fell from her neck.

“Don’t tell my husband,” she said, stroking the wolf’s fur.

Alexandra Naughton
San Francisco, CA

Manzanita

Little apple
this season of Eve's
long widowhood,
morgue or meadow
shaped by western wind.
I feel a threat
walking where broken
ghosts and twigs would reign.
I see threats
everywhere in stiff limbs
of ribbon trees.
Wool-tuft texture
hag-skin bark
covering hints of blush--
a verdigris pallor
on vital core.
Threat--what is that red
against that gray
against my best futile
attempt to name
and place and look beyond
that bloody twist of tree?

C.R. Resetarits
Lubbock, TX

HOMO SAY WHAT

Ours is a compelling, complicated story
The sheer arc of human behavior
Bends toward the infinite

We love, hate, make war and peace
Climb mountains and jump out of planes
We record nearly everything we do
We commit homicide, suicide, ecocide, genocide
Play football, handball, basketball, baseball
And in this language, “ball” has five meanings
Are forced by our genes to ornament,
Create art
A spectrum of diverse and divergent behaviors

How do we make sense of ourselves?
Well, we don’t
A subject not for the faint of heart,
Or those averse to the eternal struggle for insight

Oh, Homo! Evolutionary change is speeding up
Like never before
And we are experiencing our own speciation –
New, disturbing versions of ourselves

A partial list includes:

Homo Sapiens – still the majority of us

Homo Misanthropius – a growing, extreme right wing faction
Who hates everyone, except
Those that agree with them, 100%,
and look like them

Their subspecies include:

Homo Ludicrous; Homo Clueless, Homo Ignoramus,
Homo Corruptus, Homo Homophobius;
Homo Theocratist; Homo Antigovernus,
Homo Middle Fingeritis of invisible handlessness

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Homo Extremist; Homo Ismitist

Here's what happened –

Extremists, during an economic, financial crisis,
With fear and anxiety in abundant measure
Took the advantage to build cliffs
They joyously jumped off, got up,
And built another cliff,
One mile to the right of the previous one
Finally, they reached the right edge
Of the flat Earth, fell off
And were captured, in orbit
By our invisible sister planet, Misanthropia

The sole raison d'etre of Misanthropia
Is to hate Homo Sapiens, and assure their destruction

Damn you, Free Will
Thank you, Free Will

The commons of our shared experiences
our profound ignorance
of our own selves
and the infinite egospheres of the Global Elite
Fill the Universe with dark energy and matter
And preserve nothing
I just pissed in this stream of consciousness
My own Universe is boundless
And the delicious mystery of it all
Fills me with emptiness so deep,
That I cannot escape its wondrous grasp

If you don't like complexity, uncertainty and change
TRY ANOTHER SPECIES

Richard Gross
San Francisco, CA

STOP

My Navel Is a Funhouse Mirror

I gaze at the crazed glazier's masterpiece
and what I get is more me me me meme
A meme in time craves crime
I bought a dimebag while you were trippin balls
I don't think I've once ever heard you cough
It's your over the counter vacation
that amuses most who battle the flu
You hide inside the confines of your skull
but, man, your conversation is incredibly dull
I'm here outside the walls What Jericho trumpets call
me Call me Call me Insecurity
Gauge of success: The number of messages I get
I'd like to be free from electronics
but it's all that's left of connection here
in Radiation Nation We're frying crisp like bacon
It's cell phone towers and Fukushima
Those old A-bomb paranoias are pasé
Geiger counter click click click
My crystal skull could tell the future
if it could talk
Here's a row of empty bottles
Whatcha got
Not a lotta
Time
You know you're gonna get lucky tonight
even though you snore The more I hear you
breathe
the more I r e l a x
I hope that time is more like an ocean
not a rollercoaster click click click Whoa a a a a
and given certain superpowers I
could move freely through back forth in around
time It's so tricky Can a spiral path
move only forward in one direction
or is that two or back forth in around
or is that three or more more more more more

E.K. Keith
San Francisco, CA

A circle of men

1.

Take off your shoes,
your fashionable, overpriced,
smelly shoes.

Lay down your shield,
your “I’m in control,”
“you can’t touch me” shield.

Breath in the fire
of the burning sage.
Let it burn away the cares of your day,
your stories,
all that is not you.

Now, circle up, shoulder to shoulder
with your brothers –
truthful tiger, soaring hawk,
big fox and the others.

Look into their eyes,
their sensitive, serious, silly eyes.

Invoke the spirit of the grandfathers.

Your fear is welcome here,
as is your sadness, anger and joy.

Now, what are *you* feeling? What is *your* truth?
What is *your* work tonight?

Take a seat and search
for the line in the sand
you’ve been searching for all your life.

The line where the sun is confounded
and the moon re-awakened.
The line where you’re no longer controlled
by your preferences and preconceptions.

Sometime, possibly tonight,
you're going to cross that line.

2.

They say this is a safe place, a magical place,
a place where there are no judgments.
Bullshit. I judge each man
and each judges me.

Stan looks into the owl's nest
where he lost his business, his home, his wife.
But, he won't holler, weep or change.
He'll just stay quiet until he figures it out
(and he'll never figure it out).

George keeps a hare's foot
in his right pocket
to keep away rheumatism and cramp.
Every week, he reports on his efforts
to refi his condo to save $100 a month
and how he witnessed his grandson win
another junior high wrestling match.
George will never be a leader
in the national organization
and he says he's OK with that
(but he'll never be OK with that).
He brags about the blowjob he got
twenty years ago in the parking lot of the Grand Canyon,
and how his latest life partner says he has nice buns.
As soon as he shuts up, I'll go
out to take a piss.

Meanwhile, Ron, as usual, falls asleep.
He claims he keeps his eyes shut
so he can hear better
and participate better.
Desperate for clues
on the proper use of things,
he's rich, lonely and without a job
or interests except hunting deer
and hunting, in vain, for a suitable building
to convert into a hot dog stand.

3.

And me?
I'm no better off.
I've no place to hide.

The moment I open my mouth,
I can see it in their eyes –
they've written me off.

I'm miserable, they claim,
because I choose to be miserable,
because of the choices I made
(and keep making).

And tonight, again,
I'll either kill
or try to please my father,
but either way, I'll never earn his blessing,
no matter how many times I carry his corpse
across the desert,
searching for – and obscuring –
a little line in the sand.

Paul Brucker
Mt. Prospect, IL

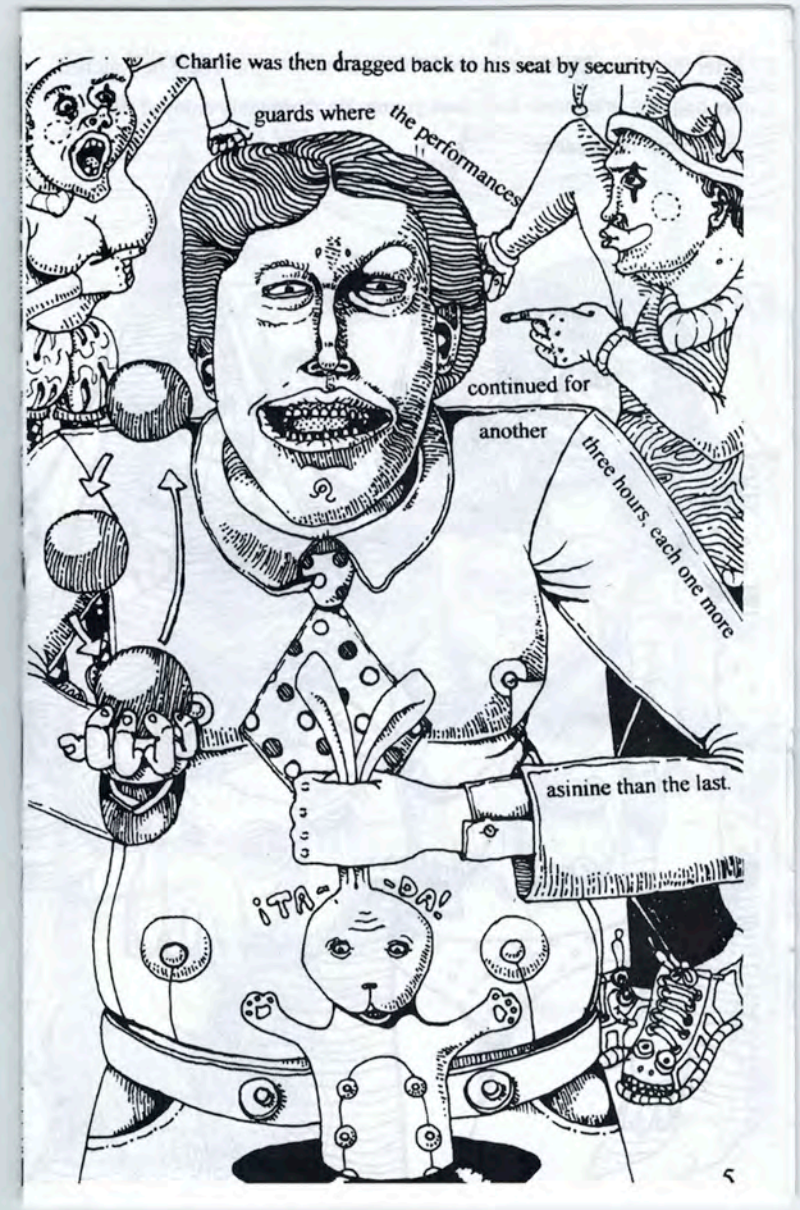
“some poets dribble and others serve towels with their showers” - v. mayakovsky

the prime of wally s.

he cornered me at the back table over at tim
rileys one night told me
he just returned from panning gold up in the
yukon his beard grayed &
belly distended since the last time we met
said he had struck it big
never offered a drink he
expanded about the women the
eskimo asses fatted nicely with seal the
blond mushroom queens from british columbia
who covered his stubbled face with snow roses
every morning
after a while
worth of drinks, he roared about the hot
sulfur baths beneath a skyfull of aurora
borealis & he boasted of hypnotizing
a raging grizzly bear with his dick & chasing
3 young punk shits off his claim with nail-
packed snowballs & making it bigger
than i could ever know nothing
in his pause btwn drink & talk
after a while
he grew groggy
he looked aged, tired
he put sunglasses on at one-thirty in the morning
& he left without another word

i watched thru the window at tim rileys
his bent figure carving the night streets
like an ice cutter thru the arctic
sea
i paid
his bill

normal
saugerties, ny


Charlie was then dragged back to his seat by security
guards where the performances
continued for
another
three hours, each one more
asinine than the last.
¡TA-DA!

Polishing Her with My Vanity

I don’t want them to see her, or feel her, or touch her

Or know of her existence

So I strip away her beauty with makeup

I qualm her body in dresses

I bind her lips with a fake smile

I scorch her skin in bottled poison

Polishing her with my vanity

I leave her there shrieking in her hurt beneath my skin and bones

Exposing herself through my tears, my laugh, and my eyes

And I watch as she see’s through my seeing

I listen as she hears what I hear

Oh I breathe as she inflates my lungs

But No, she is not me

I am the crust that grew above her soul

Though, I was once just the callus that grew over her wounds

And I have almost forgotten who she is

Except that she despises what I’ve forced her to become

Emily Byron
Orange, CA

AT WHAT POINT

Did sitting down
Writing a poem
Expressing one's
Disgust towards the State
Warrant being
A punishable offense?

At what point
Does filling one's
Notebook or laptop computer
With proud
Rhapsodies of rebellion
Support for insurrection
Become worthy of
Indefinite detention?

When one-family rule
No one consented to
Feels threatened
In Qatar.

Verses that praise
Beauty of a desert at sunset
Sweetness of Medjool dates
Smiles of children playing on dirt roads
Don't raise eyebrows
Or get noticed
As quickly as

The sudden overthrow
Of the authoritarian show.

Here in the U.$.A.,
Poets aren't imprisoned.
But this land's government
Has fascistic tendencies.
It can imprison someone
For choosing to
Stay silent
Before a grand jury.
And for each person
Jailed then freed,
Another takes their place.
The F.B.I. ensures that.

At what point
Does writing a poem
Become a punishable offense?

When the writer
Calls the State out
On their offenses
Against us all
And calls changes
To the program.

At that point,
Free speech would truly be dead here
And I would be doing
A lifetime stretch
On multiple offenses.

[For Muhammad Ibn Al-Ajami]

Dee Allen
San Francisco, CA

Sometimes remorse looks like this.

“You fucked him to get over me!”

“There were a lot of reasons; I just picked one!”

He throws his stretched arms in front of him, palms up. I watch them spasm down and then up to his wide open mouth. An apple would fit in there. Something to make him sweeter if he burns. “Wow! Just-- wow! I can't believe you!”

I raise my eyebrow, scrunch up my left cheek, throw my head back. Leave my head back. The endless blue sky. Now he is flailing, helpless. He is so very afraid. I breathe out. Look into his eyes. “Remember why we started this?”

“You couldn’t wait to fuck other people!”

“I didn’t ruin anything.”

“I will never sleep with you again.”

I stop deflecting.

“I have zero desire.”

Let the words cut.

The blood in my throat envelopes my own waves of sound, and together they bleed out my neck and trickle down my shirt. They make noises like children being tortured.

Desi’s face flashes with concern, his shoulders arch towards me in the beginning of a knee-jerk reaction embrace but stop short.

This is us, fighting.

Miquila Alejandre
San Francisco, CA

A Pie in the Kisser

Her fine behind in that
Lemon yellow chiffon dress
Was hotter than the hood
Of my 66 GTO on a 100
Degree sunny summer day

Sashay and sway, she had it all
Whiplashing men's necks while
They watched those bodacious
Buns like a world class ping
Pong match, back & forth, to
& fro, I floated along on her
Gardenia perfume scented trail

My brain shifting lower & lower,
When the bus struck me, my last
Thoughts were lemon meringue pie.

Catfish McDaris
West Allis, WI

The rock knocked loose Charlie's head, which tumbled to the ground.
Then in it's place grew a new head, and a much younger-looking and more attractive one at that.
12

You Are Not Your Brain - part 2

Brain's been acting like an only child a long time.
For a long time Brain's been making imaginary friends. Alone. In its room.
A very cluttered room - I mean, what is consciousness, but its content, right - a bunch of voices in a room? ...
...a very cluttered room.
It isn't actually alone. Brain has an older brother. Older. Old. The oldest living, non-thing in existence. It is: All That Is.
And Brain wants to be its older brother. Not be like - BE.
So Brain arrogantly imitates, while it does not actually listen to older brother. This creates conflict. The two are in conflict.
This is not a power struggle, however. For older brother is passive. Subtle. Present and subtle. As subtle as it is tenacious -
Oh, yes - older brother's always there. Looking. Not acting. Or, its acting is its looking. Or, sometimes it's even speaking, and we call this inspiration. Divine illumination. You tell me what you call that ...
So Brain goes along pretending it is that which is looking/perceiving, trying to convince
- who ?-
that it is the attention.
Brain is actually a bystander. A wannabe. Silently, lovingly - and not so silently - mouthing the words of the great performer, that is older brother.
Older brother performing the divine act that is self awareness. That is, your awareness. That is ... the real YOU.
And now, having said all this - having said too much, really - please excuse me. I must go now. I must clean my room.

James Zealous
Berkeley, CA

Body of War

everyone wants
to make an industry of me
part by part they pull apart
every inch of my anatomy

to my foot
they say I need to
clip it, file it, scrub it
reflexology pedicure it
buff it, polish, paraffin wax it,
lee press on nail it
de-callus it, bind it, boot it,
squeeze it into stiletto heels
until I can walk on nails or stilts
and can not run away
from this invasion

from my head down to my toes
everyone says I have to be
different than I am

to my leg
I need to shave it, moisturize it
de-vein it, laser it, knead it, smooth it
de-cellulite it, wax it, bronze it, tan it
exfoliate it, tone it, lift it, salt-glow it
wrap it up and slim it down

down to my ass
they become totally confused
it's either too curvy or too big
and they make pants that don't fit it
or it's too small
and they say I need to pop it up
tie it up in a g-string
so it peeks out of my jeans

to my belly
it seems I need to liposuck it, corset it
control-top spandex spanx it, girdle it
pilates yogalates aerobicize it

zero size it
juice it, cleanse it, starve it
binge and purge it
crunch and tighten it
crack my ribs and washboard it
basically just suck it all in

from my toes to my head
I am never okay just the way I am
being a woman

to my breasts
they say I need to fluff them up
poke them out, squeeze them together
underwire double D cup them
strapless backless lace them
silicon pad them, racer-back flatten them
push em' straight up to my chin
poor things

from my head down to my toes
everyone says I have to be
someone else

to my face
they recommend I microdermabrasion it
mud mask oxygen spray it
fruit acid peel it, collagen serum it
pinch it, clean the pores
botox needle it, facelift it
powder and eye shadow it
bronze it, colorize it
tweeze it, mascara curl it
eyeliner it, gloss it, pucker it up
see nothing, hear nothing
say nothing

to my hair
I need to cut it, crop it
style it, blow drier it
weave it, dye it, curling iron it
crimp it, straighten it
roller perm it, de-frizz it, tease it

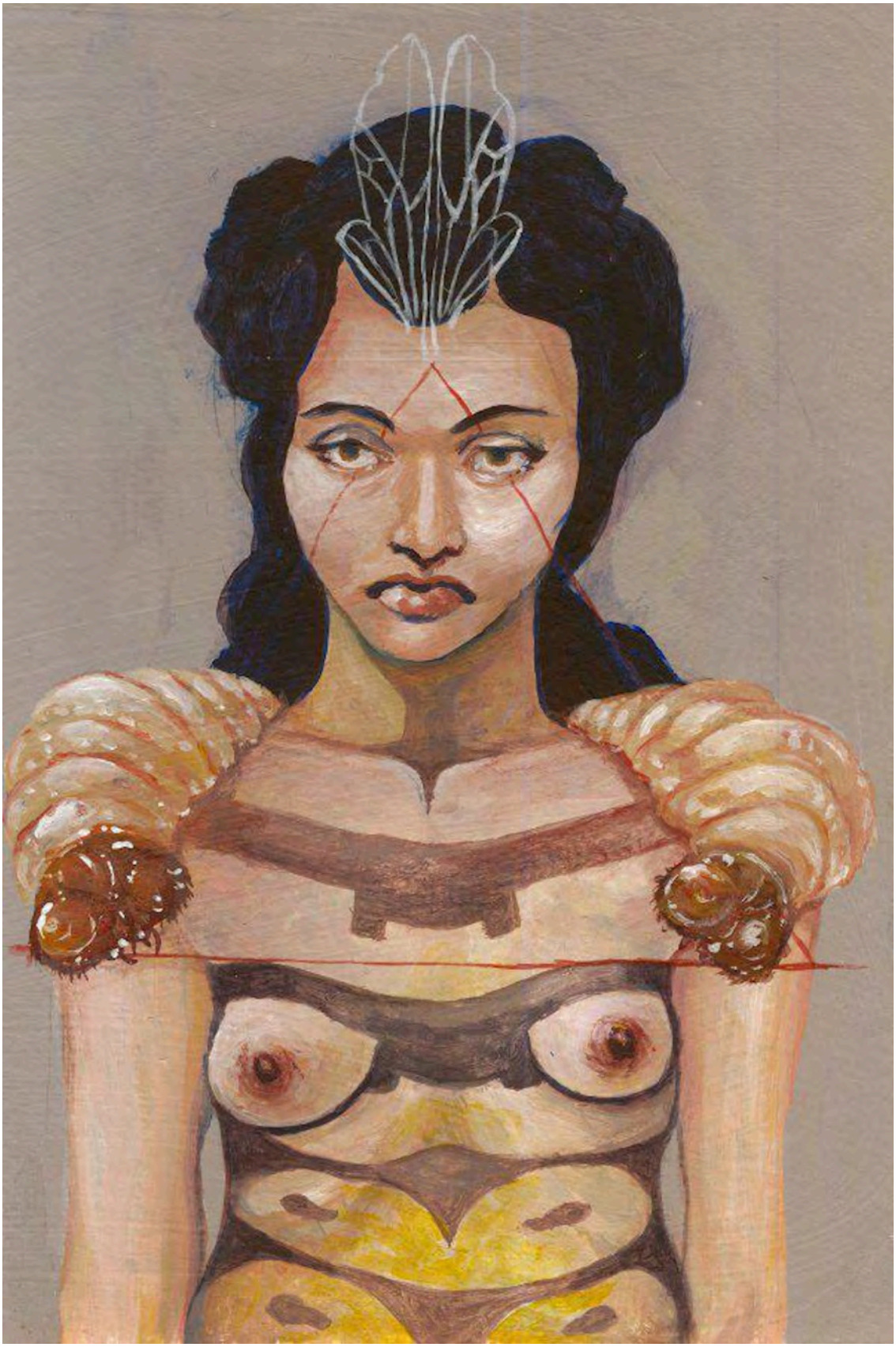
brush it, flatiron it
pull it up on a bad hair day

and for the piece de resistance
for the créme de la créme
my vagina
I need to shave it, bikini wax it,
brazilian, airplane strip it
douche it, plug it up or pad it down
make it smell like roses

and after this assault
in some court room on capitol hill
a bunch of men will sit on a panel and say
I need to chastity belt it and throw away the key
for this part of me there are a lot of things
I CAN NOT (in some cases by law) do with it
I can't birth control pill it
sponge it, diaphragm it, cervical shield it
and if an accident or rape
against my will should occur
I am not allowed to decide whether or not
I want to grow a baby inside of it
I should feel ashamed of it
I shouldn't look at it or touch it
I should never feel pleasure from it
and in some places
it does not legally belong to me
even though it's the most intimate part
in the very center of my body

from my toes to my head
whether I cover up or strip down
I can never win this war
from my head to my toes
I am fine as I am
just leave me alone
every part of my body
belongs to
me

Jennifer Barone
San Francisco, CA



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" Afternoon Desert "

Tides in absorbed sunlight, dry sand desert
Whitish glare, seeking mirror boats
Where time is dried, moments sweat
Music in flames, days on the roots
Dewdrops of morning search shadow
Where sun is more leaned, cleaned but hard
The outsized branches, curvy eyes of leaves
Stony feet the sharp fingers digging surface
The labors with spades mining the place
Small spiders with sewing tensing wounds
Blocking airs impelling to breath high
With black and white scenes and sky
Turning years of hooks and scissors without rain
Striving bones, sore throats of birds and beasts
And then steady rocks of bronzed silence
Little weeds the waiters of years
And no one dares, no one hears
Only the tails of trees bounding water
Spongy blue ribs spread out of chest
The boats only mirages peeping far away
Forever a mirage alone never gets any meet
Dazzling waves decorate them hanging mirrors
The last storm all forgot but still the signs there
Desert fencing borders far of the crowds
Where only cheerful nights smile
And afternoon songs are tired unto evenings
When all the stars dine together
On sand-sheet, sand with resting eyes

Kislay Chauhan

" An Old Age "

A mechanical heart, desolated
Standing solemn around weaving silky water
Water of eyes, inveterate healer
On grass of sorrow by wind directing ways
Lifted breath burden on the lungs
Frightened gazes of nerves hugging heart
Dripping sights of memory in front of legs

The day of last heartbeat of his words
Dissolving in fog of all directions,
Peeping shadows of memories from cloak
Someone almost lost the grace of life
And somewhere pulses thunder to get out
Rotten skin with blooming sights and spirit
The layers of irregular breath stiffened

Where every valley is not straight to cross
Distinguished desires without any complaints
Certain limping stick in hand for way
Every step, summing up a journey
Dull head, digging shoulders, wide glasses
Which seems something binocular badges
Lost quartz of teeth, shrugging expression

Occasional smiles filling lonely times
He just needs help to cross that road
And lakes of sorrow and solitude
And listening last seasonal singing of birds
Every step with folding calm days in arms
Preaching eyes of life need assistance of love
An old man carrying belief of life, belief of life

Kislay Chauhan

To Che Guevara
(who showed empathy for our struggles in the USA “in the belly of beast”)

The Cuban poets say: “the poet is you”. But is it?
You left a few poems
heartfelt
but you did not turn over your energies
to this demanding nagging muse.
Your path was another.
Perhaps embarked upon in your Argentine intellectual home
or on the back of a motorcycle
or in the rhetorical embrace of the persistent
woman Hilda who brought you to Guatemala where
you experienced dangerous struggle first hand
as the Arbenz government tried to institute needed reforms
and you and Hilda had to get out fast
when US Marines put an end to that quickly.
Or in that historic all night conversation in Mexico City
with Fidel that led to your arrests and intertwining of your lives.
Of course the world is glad today that you
thought to take a little notebook in your backpack.
You sailed off in the Granma and
had the poetic habit of recording your thoughts and experiences
now, 22 publications and their translations.
Hey, maybe the poet was you. Do you think?
It was easy to become a Cuban after you suffered
their monster mosquitoes and
took heroic leadership in their guerrilla war
For you like Bolivar and Marti, it was the on going
fight for Latin America’s independence.
Not so easy really suffering from asthma in the rugged Sierra Maestra.
Cuban men teasing and testing this foreign commander amongst them
who leaned towards tough love and
even tougher standards of dedication to the tasks.
After the revolutionary triumph,
you, Doctor, looked to the perfectibility of humans.
The new human being who would evolve and
behave from motives of the collective good
not financial or personal gain.
With such an economic vision you found the routines
of running the revolutionary Cuban banking system not so satisfying.
All the multinational exiled revolutionaries of the time
drawn to Havana by the tropical fragrance of freedom buzzed in your ears.

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Sent you to lead failed guerilla wars.
Africa’s Congo first and then Bolivia where decades
later the indigenous movement found its own form of
liberation creating human rights for Mother Earth, Pachamama.
Why then has the decades old icon of you
made it on to so many T-shirts and knick-knacks even now?
"…the true revolutionary” you said “is guided by a great feeling of love."
It was your love – the oneness love
that goes beyond one’s family, one’s nationality.
The youth of these last generations confront
the ecological crisis before them
with the planetary flag in their hearts
and hopes for our dear little Earth
our darling Mother Earth, Pachamama.
Now that’s the stuff of poetry!
Plants, rivers and trees were not on your mind.
Later, you would live and die among them in Bolivia.
It was from Bolivia the foto image flashed around the world.
Your dead body laid out like a famous renaissance oil painting
an icon of saintliness transcending crumbling ideologies, theologies
evoking the feelings of poetry itself.
Yes - the Cuban poets are right – the poem is you.

Nina Serrano
Oakland, CA

All My Life There Has Always Been a War

At five, my first movie
There were men on horses killing each other
Lots of men and lots of noise
Lots of dust from horses' hooves
It was the Frontier War to own America
But I didn't know that then
Only knew that I didn't like the killing
I left the dark theater
But the killing never stopped

Nina Serrano
Oakland, CA

Air Strike

The president wants to invade Iraq
He wants to unzip an air bomber's belly
to slide death down the deep throat of a foreign city
already limp from the last air strike
already grieving for dead and dying children
from the last assault
The president's smart bombs don't know the difference
between a bridge and a boy
But oh how his parents do

Nina Serrano
Oakland, CA

Nightmare

I had a nightmare that America was sitting on my chest trying to suffocate me to shut me up so I wouldn't speak about the unspeakable things being done by people representing me and my country and I couldn't breathe.

Someone killed Martin Luther King Jr. because he had a dream and they killed JFK and his brother because they had dreams too and now all that's left is a nightmare and sometimes it's hard just to breathe.

People in this country are addicted to wealth and oil and way too comfortable in their privilege or else they are poor and struggling and some of us speak out because we are informed and have empathy and don't watch tv and don't buy the bullshit being sold by politicians who lie and make promises they never keep and don't want to have to wait 10, 20, or 100 years before justice is realized, before the government stops torturing and killing innocent people.

In my country the ruling elite are thieves too. Worse than thieves. They steal dreams and they sell dreams that turn into nightmares.

In America we're really good at manufacturing weapons and poverty.

In America we punish our brightest and most morally concerned, like Bradley Manning who blew the whistle on the injustices of the war in Iraq, or Aaron Swartz who only wanted knowledge to be free.

It's like being in a short story workshop and hearing a student say "Why should I care about these people," "What makes me care about the characters in this story about a man and his grandson and little black airplanes and death?" To have to define empathy, to create it.

The United States has 5 percent of the world’s population, but 25 percent of its prisoners. I can read this poem without being thrown in jail. They don’t go after poets in this country, the prisons are too full.

Sarah Page
San Francisco, CA

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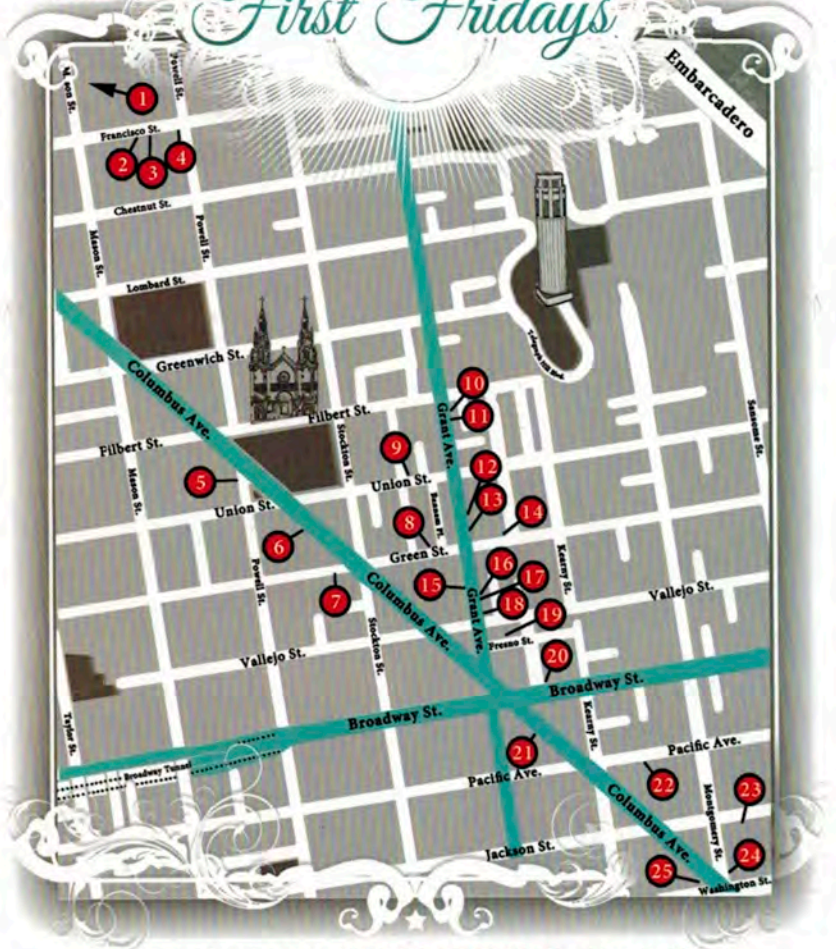
NORTH BEACH
First Fridays



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⑦ **Salon La Bicicletta**
641 Green St. 415.407.1523

⑧ **Tattoo Boogaloo**
528 Green St. 415.391.1053

⑨ **Cykel**
548 Union St. 415.374.7865

⑩ **Macchiarini Creative Design**
1544 Grant Ave. 415.982.2229

⑪ **Focus Gallery**
1534 Grant Ave. 415.706.0898

⑫ **Park & Pond**
1422 Grant Ave. 415.217.8864

⑬ **Church Key**
1402 Grant Ave. 415.963.1713

⑭ **Make Hang**
450 Green St. 415.571.4874

⑮ **Live Worms**
1345 Grant Ave. 415.307.1222

⑯ **World Apparel**
1314 Grant Ave. 415.392.1314

⑰ **Nico's Tacos**
1310 Grant Ave. 415.362.6163

⑱ **Al's Attire**
1300 Grant Ave. 415.693.9900

⑲ **The Emerald Tablet**
80 Fresno St. 415.500.2323

⑳ **The Beat Museum**
540 Broadway St. 1.800.KEROUAC

㉑ **Vesuvio Cafe**
255 Columbus Ave. 415.362.3370

㉒ **Artist & Craftsman Supply**
555 Pacific Ave. 415.931.1900

㉓ **472 Gallery**
472 Jackson St. 415.501.9551

㉔ **Canessa Gallery**
708 Montgomery St. 415.296.9029

㉕ **The Space Between Gallery**
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