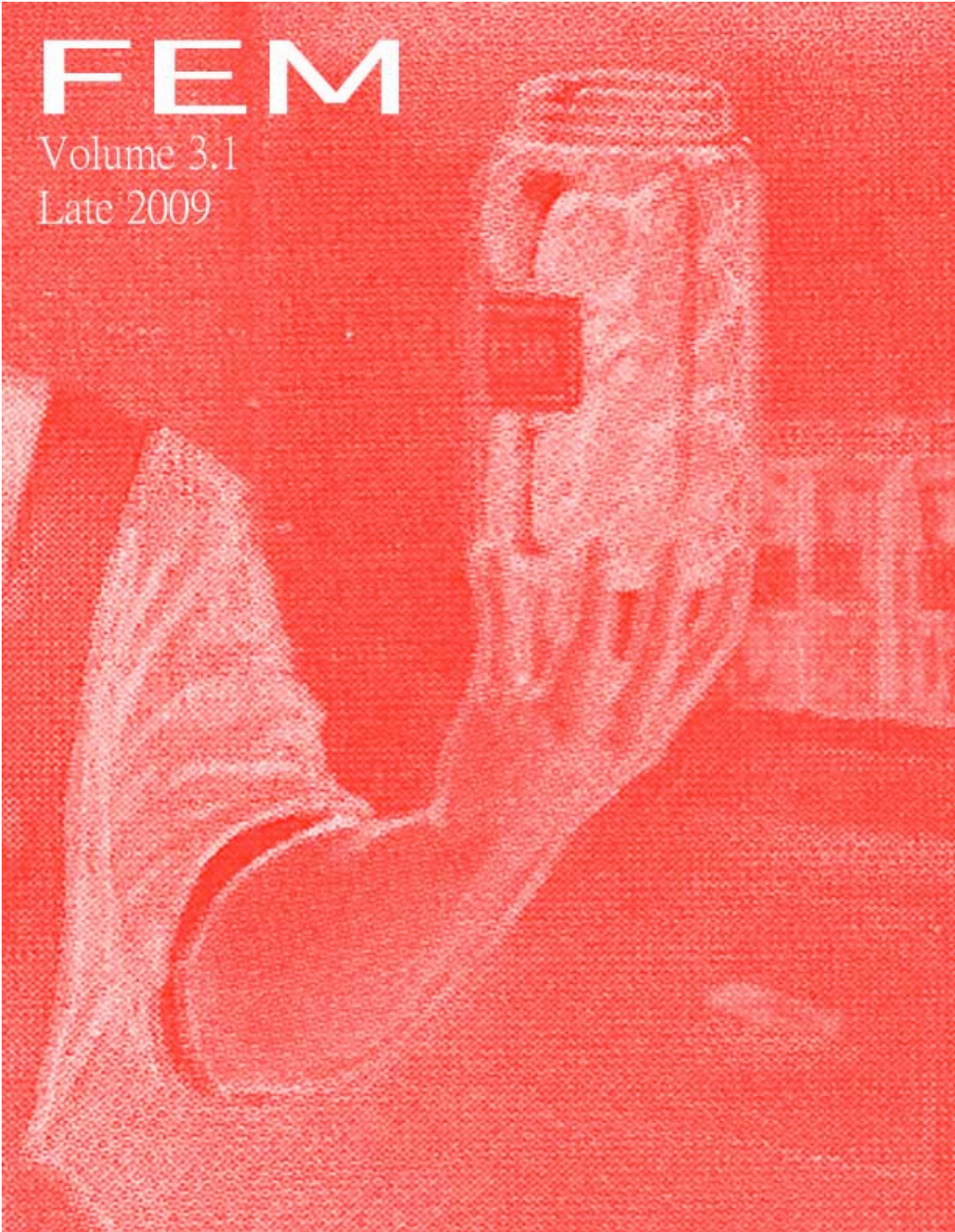


# FEM

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FOOD: HUNGER & SATIETY

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A man who limits his interests, limits his life –  
Vincent Price

The only time to eat diet food is while you're  
waiting for the steak to cook – Julia Child

Enjoy every sandwich – Warren Zevon

No hay pan duro para buen hambre  
("There is no such thing as stale bread when one  
has a good appetite") – Spanish proverb

Gourmets don't get fat – Julian Street

Anything immoral, illegal, fattening, or ON FIRE! –  
Tennessee Williams, on being asked by Gourmet  
Magazine what his favorite foods were

This issue is dedicated with appreciation of all our staff to Nick and Nora Charles, Julia Child, Cuchulainn, Deirdre Flint, George Foreman, Robert Heinlein, Sasami Masaki Jurai, Emeril Lagasse, and Charlie Nagreen.

Mr. Hedge Coke would like to thank his family for their support and for putting up with him, from his mother to his brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins, grandparents, and aunts, and of course, his wonderful fiancée. He would also like to dedicate this issue to the animals and plants - no small number of them - who gave up their lives for his dietary pleasure; it is always appreciated and too rarely recompensed.

-Travis Hedge Coke

To my father, mother, and sister; maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather, my cousin Sarah Velez; my cousin Susie and her husband; foodie and/or artistic friends; and the man in my life: with love and thanksgiving for *guiso* [Mexican riff on stir-fry], sitting me up on the kitchen counter; and making our parents' informal dining room smell like Gramma's kitchen; excellent *chiles rellenos* and *pollo frito en un disco*; introducing me to Martha Stewart's recipes and baking cookies with you; vintage cookbooks as well as sukiyaki when you and Susie had been married a few months and a gravy lesson one Thanksgiving; holiday dinners, Persian food, cheese talks, chocolate pumpkin cookies, Baja Fresh-and-Borders nights, *arroz con pollo*, and talking about food during high school P.E.; and for future frybread and pecan pie.

- Laura Ortega

I dedicate this issue to Michael Jordan, Andrew Sutton, and the entire team at Disney's Napa Rose. Their royal level quality of both food and guest service has forever changed the way I have both thought about and prepared international cuisine.

Thank you.

- Daniel Rappaport

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NB – This is a PDF. Search functions are your friend. If you are reading this on paper, trees die because of people like you. If you paid for this, go back to whomever sold it to you and tell them you're collecting my cut.

[An excerpt from] If I Never

Gary Murning

It had never been a joke that I'd found especially amusing, and George Ruiz was more than well aware of this. Squinting at me through the oddly static cigarette smoke, he waited for my response—seemingly counting off the seconds it took for me to raise the coffee cup to my lips and take a sip. When one was not forthcoming, however, he merely nodded thoughtfully, taking it all in his stride, and leant over the table, winking playfully.

“I said,” he said. “My dog’s got no nose.”

“I heard you the first time.”

“And that’s it? You’re not going to play the game?”

We'd been sitting in his mother's grotty kitchen for the past hour, talking about everything from the state of local politics to the way the rain ran through the dirt on the kitchen window. It had been riveting stuff, and had I had anywhere else to go on such a grey, shitty winter's afternoon, I would have. As it was, I'd decided that this was at least better than sitting in my flat listening to Ray LaMontagne and picking my toenails. Even with the dog joke.

I looked about the kitchen at the pots piled up in the sink, the greasy newspapers stacked by the kitchen door and the three in-need-of-emptying litter trays at the side of the sink—and thought that maybe there were advantages to my condition, after all. I was sure that had I shared George’s olfactory ability, I’d have been well on my way to lung cancer, too. Anything to take the edge off it.

“So you’re just going to keep right on ignoring me?” he said.

“I’m having a bad day.”

He sniffed with disgust and lit a fresh cigarette off the butt of the last. “You’re always having a bad day. Your life is one long run of bad days, mate. If you want my opinion—”

I didn’t, but that had never stopped him before.

“—what you really need to do is, you know, get a fucking grip. Not being offensive, you understand, just telling it like it is.”

One of his mother’s cats—Gemini, I think she called it, though for the life of me I didn’t know why—had oozed around the door from the hallway while he had been speaking. George now got to his feet, sticking the cigarette in the corner of his mouth and picking up the moggy by the scruff of the neck. Opening the back door, he threw it out into the rain and returned to his chair at the table.



“Bloody things get right on my nipple ends,” he explained. “If it was up to me, I’d drown the bloody lot of them. Or just hit ’em with a good, hefty brick.”

“You could always set your dog on them.”

“I haven’t got...” George wasn’t the nicest man on the planet, which was understandable, really, since he had never been the nicest boy on the planet, either. He was a bully and a lout—the kind of person I’d always striven to avoid, even as, all those years ago in the school playground, I’d found myself perversely attracted to the prospect of being his friend. He was more than happy to ridicule another’s failings, publicly mocking the dragging-footed gait of cripples and cruelly toasting port-wine stain birthmarks with a nice glass of the house red. But when the joke was on him, when the tables were turned and he found himself caught out, George was unexpectedly generous. His smile would light up the room with its nicotine glow and he would positively chortle at the absurdity of it all.

It didn’t do to push it, however—as I’d learnt on more than one occasion.

“Bastard,” he chuckled. “Nice one, Price. You got me for a second, there.” He slapped me on the upper arm; a little over one year and one

adventure later, it's still tingling. "Don't let it happen again."

As the afternoon dragged on, George became increasingly morose. We sat in that kitchen, the light fading completely, the windows misting up (*on the outside*, George insisted, the room was that cold), and what little conversation there'd been totally dried up. I wanted to leave, but all I had waiting for me were four channels on a cracked fourteen inch television and two working bars on a five-bar gas fire. That and five tins of beans and one bottle of Stella. Not the most promising of Saturday nights, then.

"I've been invited to a party," George told me, without looking up from the table top. He said "party" as though it were fatal blood disorder. I could understand that.

"Yippee."

He raised an eyebrow and smirked at me. "A typical day in Paradise."

"Parties coming out of every orifice."

"Not that sort of party, I'm afraid," he said. "But I appreciate the thought."

"So what kind of party is it?" I said—after waiting a moment for

our riotous mood to settle a little.

George shrugged and sat up a little straighter in his chair. His lank, greasy hair fell across his face and, perhaps for the first time, I noticed he was greying at the temples. It wasn't the startling shade of grey that would make him look distinguished in middle age, either. Rather, it looked as though he'd rubbed cigarette ash into his scalp and I knew it could only ever contribute to his unhealthy air of disassociation.

"A family gathering," he told me, begrudgingly. "Like I say, not really a party at all. Stale sandwiches and dentures. You know."

I nodded. I'd been to a few of those in my time. Yet another bond to tie dear, despicable George and I together.

"I take it you're not going, then?"

"I have to." He smiled. Or sneered. It was difficult to tell which. "Call it familial obligation."

"There might be some money in it for you, you mean."

"Pots of the fucking stuff." His eyes were sparkling with malevolent glee—the prospect of such unrivalled riches almost more than his little heart could bear. He told me of his ailing Aunt Martha, a spinster of this parish and drowning in financial success. As he told it, her investments were famous in family lore. She saw opportunity where

others saw “inevitable” financial ruin, and had never been afraid to pounce—accumulating the kind of wealth no one in their family had ever dreamed of.

“And me,” George Ruiz said, winking at me, “I’ve always been her favourite, Price. She thinks the sun shines out of my shit-hole.”

“Which it does.”

“Naturally.”

A sound came from upstairs. A dull thud that no doubt meant that his mother was finally getting up. We both looked at the ceiling, George still puffing on his ciggy as if his life depended on it.

“She doesn’t want me to go,” he told me. “Thinks I’m spoiling her chances—which, I have to admit, I am.” He looked at me and shrugged, a sadness behind his eyes that I’d never seen before... or, at the very least, one that I had seen and somehow managed to block out. “It’s all academic, anyway,” he continued. “I’m probably not going to go.”

This was a fairly typical tactic of George’s; as he saw it, his self-contradictory statements kept the enemy guessing. And in his confused little world, everyone was the enemy. Even me, it would seem.

“And miss out on a sausage on a stick and the promise of untold riches? Are you a fool, George Ruiz?”

He smirked and defiantly stubbed out his cigarette on the table top, a few inches away from the overflowing ash tray. “Maybe I am. Wouldn’t put up with the likes of you if I wasn’t, now, would I?”

The sound of movement upstairs was growing louder and more urgent. I heard a grunt of frustration and a barely muffled curse, before something fell to the floor with a muted thud. “Her leg,” George explained. “She always drops it when she’s getting it down off the top of the wardrobe. Especially if she’s been on the piss the night before. I’ve told her, keep it by the bed, where it’s handy, but...” Again he shrugged. “You know what they’re like. Can’t tell them a bloody thing.”

I shook my head and smiled sympathetically—wondering just how bad it was for him, living at home with Carla Ruiz, her prosthetic limb and all her cats. Whenever I met her, she was always polite, if a little crapulent, with the air of one who felt as though she should have been born into more elegant times. Her cigarettes were always smoked through an ivory holder and she often enunciated with a mathematical precision that was never quite convincing. Occasionally, as she passed him on the way to the drinks cabinet, she would ruffle her sons hair affectionately, but George’s reaction would always tell me far more than the act itself. Pulling away and cringing, it would have been obvious to

anyone observing that he detested her with a passion. What they may not have noticed, however, was the tension in his neck and shoulders—the tightness around his jaw and lips that informed me, the more educated observer, that, George Ruiz was afraid of his mother... or, perhaps, afraid of what she could inadvertently do to him.

“I think you should go,” I said, a little sadistically, I must admit. “You can’t let yourself miss out on an opportunity like this, Georgie. It’s too... you know, *monumental*. Money like that... it could change your life forever.”

It was the most I had said all afternoon. He eyed me suspiciously as I tried not to let the guilt show, imagining Carla beating him over the head with her false leg when she found out that he was still intent on stealing her sister’s money out from under her nose, and for a moment, I thought he was onto me. If I could see his vulnerability through the angry, violent façade, it was no doubt true that he could also read me like a book. In the playground—the memories of which still haunted me some twenty years later—he had always worked me like a well-trained puppy, knowing just what to say and how to say it. He’d called me to heel and used my fear of exclusion (from our gang of two, rather than school itself) to make me do things I wouldn’t ordinarily do. Today, however, he

seemed oblivious to just what was going on inside my head. Or if he wasn't, he certainly hid it well.

He rubbed his face and sat back in his chair, rolling his head from side to side to relieve the tension in his neck. "Don't think I could stick it," he finally admitted. "*Familial obligation* or not, I hardly know any of them and..." He twitched his eyebrows at the ceiling. "Well, she'd be looking daggers at me all night. More than a boy could bear." Lowering his eyes to meet mine, suddenly smiling, the realisation that I had yet again been played came too late.

"Unless..." he said.

\*\*\*

It was still raining heavily when I left, but it was nevertheless a huge relief to be out of the Ruiz household. I had escaped, it was true, before Carla had managed to hobble her way downstairs for her five p.m. breakfast of cigarettes and Malibu, but I had not successfully avoided the snare that had followed George's planned "unless". Better men than I had been trapped by his machinations, this I knew—but as I pulled up my jacket collar against the wind, the welcome rain beating down on my balding head, I couldn't help feeling that it would have been better if I had spent the afternoon alone in my flat, after all.

Cursing my bad luck and rank stupidity, I stopped at the kerb, preparing to cross. A piece of cardboard floated by in the gutter, as limp and lifeless as I felt, and as I looked up from watching it slip down into the drain, I caught someone scrutinising me from the other side of the road.

She stood within the shadow and shelter of an old familiar oak—holding a cat that, although I couldn't have been certain, I thought might have been Gemini beneath her chin, stroking it mesmerically and staring at me unashamedly. Wearing a long, unfashionable raincoat and green Wellingtons, her drenched auburn hair plastered to her head, neck and face, she was anything but attractive... and, yet, I couldn't stop looking at her.

She looked at me.

I looked at her.

And the rain continued to fall.

I raised a hand uncertainly, wondering if I should cross the road and talk to her—ask, perhaps, if she was lost or if there was anything I could do to help—but my hand got no higher than my waist before she turned and started walking down the road, away from me, in the direction of the abattoir. Hunched against the onslaught of rain, she



looked somehow older from behind. I estimated that she was possibly only in her late twenties and, yet, as she walked quickly away with the cat still tucked under her chin, she looked much older... forty and prematurely frail, I thought, weighted down by innumerable burdens.

As I started to walk after her—not quite knowing why, or what I was going to say once I caught up with her—a car pulled into the kerb behind me and beeped its horn. Turning, I saw the familiar Renault Clio and groaned, torn between running after the old young woman and returning to the car. The cat-cuddling woman promised something—I didn't know what, but it had to be preferable to the bad news the car and its owner would inevitably be delivering. And, yet, it would look odd if I didn't do what I knew I must. To chase after a stranger was one thing—but to do it while my father was sitting in his car waiting for me to get in was another.

I thought of George's phrase *familial obligation* and opened the passenger door.

"Now don't say a word," Dad told me as I closed the door behind me. The dry, warm interior was welcoming—reminiscent of the family days out we'd suffered through my childhood, when it had *always* rained—but I was already missing the strange girl and her cat. I very briefly

wondered if I could get Dad to follow her, but as he continued talking, I realised just how impossible that was. My fate had been sealed the minute I got into the car, as surely as if I had been a little boy accepting a lift from a stranger. I really should have known better.

“This is how it’s going to be,” Dad said, pulling back out into the road. He put the windscreen wipers on their fastest setting as the rain came down more heavily and I had to look away. “I’ve stuck my neck out for you, here. No question. But I don’t mind because that’s what father’s do for their offspring.” Only Dad could make me feel like a malfunctioning mattress. A rare talent. “I had a word with Tony Fraser. You remember him, right? Used to fix fridges for McArgills? Anyway, he works for the parks and gardens people, now—“

“Fixing fridges?”

“Eh? What?—No. Not fixing fridges. Jesus, Price, get a bloody grip. What on earth would he be doing fixing fridges for the parks and garden people? No, what he—“

“Do they still call them that? Parks and garden people, I mean.”

Dad stopped at the traffic lights on Waterhouse Road. He took a long, deep breath while I looked out of my side window, hoping to catch glimpse of my mystery woman. Twisting his hands on the steering

wheel, the vinyl squeaking against his sweaty palms, I imagined him counting to ten under his breath—and took far too much satisfaction from the thought.

“I did say, didn’t I?” He spoke with a forced calm that had once terrified me. Now it just made me smile. “When you got in the car—I told you, right?”

“What did you tell me, Dad?”

“I told you not to say a word, did I not?” I nodded, not saying a word. “So don’t. Ok? Just sit there quietly like a good lad and listen to what I have to say.”

I pointed out that the traffic lights were on green and he muttered something I didn’t quite catch as he put the car in gear and drove on. I expected him to immediately pick up where he had left off, but instead he sat quietly for a few minutes, concentrating on the road and sucking on a Werther’s Original that he got out of the glove compartment (without even offering me one.) Thinking that this might go on all evening, I used the conversational lull to once again look for the mystery woman, even though I knew that we must have overtaken her a good ways back. We passed closing corner shops and disused cinemas, school grounds and multi-storey car parks. Five more minutes of silence and

the rain started to ease up. I listened to Dad crunch the last of his sweet, feeling suddenly quite old and pathetic—sleepy from the warmth of the car’s impressive heater.

“So, like I was saying,” he finally continued, “I was having a word with him and I happened to mention that you were looking for a job.”

“Looking” was probably stretching it a bit, but now didn’t seem a good time to point that out.

“He always liked you, you know,” Dad said. “He told me that. Said that he saw something in you. He didn’t say what, and I didn’t ask, but to cut a long story short, they’re looking for... they’re looking for an assistant gardener at the Italian Gardens at Redburn and... well, the job’s yours if you want it.”

I didn’t want it, of course. The last thing I wanted to be was a *gardener*, assistant or otherwise. Unqualified for the job in every respect, I could already see just how much of a disaster it could well be. It wasn’t so much that I wouldn’t be up to the job. The truth was, I could pretty much turn my hand to anything. But my heart needed to be in it. Were I to do a job as well as it had to be done, it required a certain degree of motivation and commitment on my part—and I could already see in this instance just how lacking in those departments I would be.

“An assistant gardener,” I said, trying to figure out the best way of breaking the news to him.

“Could be quite an opportunity,” he told me, indicating a left. I didn’t know where we were going, but I had a funny feeling. “There’s the chance of promotion and, well, who wouldn’t want to work in such beautiful surroundings?”

Redburn was a peculiar leftover from Victorian times. Perched on the edge of a cliff, the townspeople and their foreboding architecture traded on their meagre heritage, keeping the funicular railway running and suckering the tourists in once a year with the fabled and originally titled “Victorian Week”. Craggy and a little stifling, it was grey in winter and not much better in summer—the one-time smugglers cove its only redeeming feature, but for the Italian Gardens... where Dad seemed intent on my working.

I remembered them from my childhood—regimental formality and precise colour, so at odds with the garish, excessive fashion of the day—and it was true that they, at least, *were* beautiful. On that Dad could not be contradicted. I remembered looking down on it from a high pathway, crouching between the comfortingly wild undergrowth and wondering how they got Nature to run in such abnormally straight lines.

It had seemed obscene, somehow, even to the naïve, seven-year-old me, and, yet, it had nevertheless been impressive and, yes, beautiful.

I smiled to myself when I recalled how, later that day, Mam had encouraged me to smell the flowers—still convinced that the Anosmia I’ve suffered for as long as I can remember could be cured by simple perseverance. “Sniff up, love,” she had said. “No, harder. There. Did you get anything?” I hadn’t liked to give her straight “no”. It had seemed cruel. And so I had shrugged and told her maybe.

False hope. It’s that, not money, that makes the world go round.

“Why don’t you give me his number, Dad,” I said. “I’ll give him a bell and drop by to see him.”

He cast me a sideways glance—smiling ruefully and raising an eyebrow. “Oh, I think we can do better than that, don’t you?”

At this precise point in our conversation we passed a road sign. I didn’t want to look at it, but I was unable to help myself. *Redburn*, it said. *Two Miles*.

## Duck Fat

Jacob McCall

Rolled up like an old cigar,

stuffed with garlic, thyme, rock  
salt and pepper, the bird sat  
at the table. Its vacant eyes  
leveled with a crucifix  
perched between the hostesses' breasts.  
Inhaled, exhaled fogs the flute  
of Bordeaux no one noticed  
the thumb print outlined  
by duck fat. The guests  
commented on the tenderness  
of sweat pooled in muscles.  
Their fat necks jiggled like a comb  
as jokes are passed from tongue  
to ear. Lips pursed and sucked  
marrow from a leg. Snapped bone,  
chewed skin, fat that floated  
on the surface of lakes a week ago.  
Nude wings and bones angled  
to protrude, crack and present  
itself as a topic to be tabled.

## The Courtier's Beatitude

Jacob McCall

Blessed is the man who has the king's ear  
for he must be in the palace to hear him.  
Blessed is the man who the king touches  
for even the king's strike confers his pity.  
Blessed is the man who can hear the king laugh  
and knows the cause for this man knows his mind.  
Blessed is the man who wipes the king's blood  
for he knows what injures the king  
and all blessings flow from such knowledge.



## Another Celebration- Duluth, Minnesota 1919

Jacob McCall

The air is blue and cold, now,  
unlike the sweltering August I remember:  
When I watched a bronze face lifted up.  
I watched the crowd  
rent him open. His chest sat ajar  
like a Bible. The mob flitted  
through his skin to find souvenirs.  
One little girl found his liver,  
she crushed popcorn around the purple  
organ, and called it a starry night.  
His body had stopped twitching  
as my mother handed me a ham sandwich  
and a glass of lemonade. We sat in the field  
beside the road on a red and green plaid blanket  
that we'd been given for Christmas.  
"God, its hot." she said.

## Spring Poem

Rick Marlatt

The farmers,  
hypnotized  
nostalgic  
vibration  
their tractors,  
contemplate another  
year  
turn earth over  
launch tobacco  
spit  
ethereal cleansing.  
Retired men wander out  
  
gardens, their wives  
  
will be the year  
  
own wine recipe  
deep down they know  
  
too bitter for grapes.  
circle in on graduation  
tribal ritual  
driving  
very classrooms  
  
escape from.  
feather of an  
instinct  
one that tells me  
avoid disease and power lines-  
  
sandhill cranes  
share their independence  
  
grandfathers.  
wonder  
  
have the endurance,  
if  
of my being  
is a whooping crane  
  
from the  
world.  
immortality I'm still not  
certain.

by the  
  
of  
  
while they  
and  
  
over it in an  
  
to their  
  
hoping this  
  
they try their  
but  
  
this air is far  
Teenagers  
with  
  
around the  
  
they swore to  
The  
  
I cling to- the  
to  
  
is on loan from the  
who  
  
with the myths of  
Sometimes I  
  
if I  
  
in the center  
there  
  
I'm hiding  
  
Of my  
  
My grandmother says if you  
plant five

peach pits ten feet apart

won't  
dessert.

heard people swear

garlic  
every decade of life

midmorning mint tea,  
kind of longevity

subscribe.  
Honesty is no  
policy,  
tool I use to

another bottle of sanity,

dwindles  
when I  
my reasons.  
At the edge of every town

water tower and a cemetery,  
edge of each evening

of additional light  
ever-expanding shadow,

stargazer lilies  
gilded  
gazanias.  
mystery,  
in a land so riddled

promise and purpose

should,

winding the clocks ahead,

functionality  
compass-the one

out at birth-  
pat it close to your  
skin,  
secure in the breast pocket,

the next depression  
come without

I've

by a clove of  
for

in their  
to this

I cannot

it's a

uncork

the supply of which  
all winter long  
hole up with

there is a  
at the

four minutes  
and an

at the end of each life  
and rainbow-

It's no

with

that one

when

double check the  
of his

they handed  
and

safe and

just above the heart.

## Peaches

Rick Marlatt

Suspended like planets divided  
haunting amber space in syrupy juice  
my grandmother's fruit is canned  
away in dirty thirty mason jars  
that wear seasons in galaxies of dust.  
Aristotle and Rajchandra share  
the idea of separated souls eternally  
searching for their other half and  
suddenly the cycle from pit to peach  
ferments a truth into this kitchen dusk.  
Never has grandmother been so alive.

## Opossum

Rick Marlatt

In the event our paths cross again,  
I promise to watch where I'm peeing  
if in return you grant me 17 lines of sentiment.  
I had a teacher who was quieter than you,  
her eyes always caught in fractals of light.  
I understand the need to be a real mean sucker  
when you're backed into a corner  
and what the daylight can do to irritated eyes.  
I don't need to see the world from an inverted angle  
to know that all dreams have tragic implications.  
I don't need to play any kind of dead  
to retain my ghostly sense of autonomy.  
I don't need a face disproportionately white  
to put this burden into perspective.  
But slow is the soul food I carve with my claws.  
Slow are my bites that I savor forever.  
And somewhere in a rural Nebraska classroom  
a child is asking what time it is in Australia.

## Vinetalk

Maria Lisella

He: A new winery opens every day  
in the rainy state of Washington.

She; Rosés are coming back – dry,  
crisp, fruity, elegant rosés

He: We have happy cabernet cows -- they  
eat the leftover vines after winemaking.

She: Is it true, the silky Shiraz is to Washington  
what the Pinot is to Oregon, but Cabernet is King?

He: The vines have come out of adolescence  
Whereupon he inserts his proboscis

into the balloon glass

breathes until he reaches ecstasy,

upon awaking, takes a swig, twists

his mouth, his cheeks, lips to better taste  
the nectar of the grapes.

## Unruly Herbs

Maria Lisella

If mint is invasive as it so often is,  
and your condition unremarkable  
then clematis leaps tall buildings and  
rooftops in a single season.

Oregano is also invasive, you say,  
but Rosemary is obedient occupies  
its own space, never violates or  
chokes that of others.

Basil, on the other hand, is impertinent,  
Parsley reluctant and hydrangeas  
eternally parched; candy tuft scurries  
on the lawn edge blooming faithfully.

## Homage to Magritte

Maria Lisella

When is an apple an apple? When it is not a painting of an apple. Or, when its high chartreuse emboldens us to disbelieve its waxen sheen, size, larger than the palace behind it. It tells us something else, it is an apple overgrown, overcome with itself, so vast, it drowns all sense of time and space emits a faint perfume from the skin sealed tight. Once the skin is pierced, diced, shared with someone you love, that someone familiar with the ritual of slicing symmetrical crescents of an apple to be eaten without sharp cheddar cheese or peanut butter or dripping with melted chocolate marring its pulp and skin. Compare this to a baked apple skin shriveled, as sugar bubbles out of its core to gurgle and rise from its bulbous green body, trembling in the heat of a roasting pan, settling once it hits the cool air, its pulp ready to receive the spoon that scoops out its heart.

Rev at DFs 7/30



## For the Love of Bread 2

Maria Lisella

A loaf of bread  
sat on the table  
at every meal.  
Symbol of an edge  
against poverty,  
the last call,  
the final loss,  
the promise of more  
tomorrow.  
It could not be  
just any bread.  
It was crusty,  
cracked in its center  
but not split  
long, or round,  
seed speckled  
yellow inside.  
It could not be  
a thin slice of  
American white bread,  
better suited as  
wallpaper paste.  
A slice of the old country  
had to be handmade,  
had to have risen  
twice, had to be bought  
at a bakery from the  
baker, an artisan  
it arrived in a  
paper sleeve,  
never plastic wrapped,  
an aroma of chestnut  
and home.

## What, you don't love bread?

Maria Lisella

Mr. Dominic, the master barber  
touches my hair as he passes me  
in the supermarket,  
he has a proprietary feeling  
about any hair that is cut  
at his Modern Barber Shop.  
My first reaction is visceral,  
“Inappropriate” comes to mind,  
but I act nonchalant/  
“Maria, I love your hair,  
it’s wonderful.”

I am captivated by his  
attention – silver hair  
flies in my face. Few men  
love silver hair, fewer women.  
His barber, Benny cuts my hair,  
Mr. D. sidles up to me  
as I press the avocados,  
the small black variety  
that yield beneath  
their turtle-like shells.

“Maria, I never eat  
those, how do you eat them”?

“Lemon, salt, sliced,  
with pears, red onion.”

It is already too strange  
this Caribbean cuisine,  
he has lost interest.

“Maria, I go to Parisi’s,  
do you want bread”?

I shake my head,

“You don’t eat bread”?

Not much, Greek pita,  
hardly ever Italian,

Mr. Dominic, the master barber

“What’s a matter, you

don't like bread," he snarls,  
turns on his heels  
we do not share  
this passion for *pane*.  
I disappoint him  
this Italian-American  
customer has gone too far  
beyond the parameters  
of the old country.  
I have gone  
to exotic avocados.  
And I will also go  
anywhere for a  
good haircut.

## Before It Gets Tough

Maria Lisella

Standing on my father's feet  
we waltzed in the kitchen  
waiting for the dough  
to rise – punch it down  
two times, spin and dip  
flour on our faces  
yeast in our breaths.

We talked about my future  
as actress, teacher,  
lawyer, nun, writer  
I said I would write short  
stories, long poems.  
He said, "Will you write  
about me?" Of course.

My mother would pop in  
now and then, roll her eyes  
at the kitchen counters  
piled high with bowls,  
spoons covered with elastic dough.

He worked on a dairy farm  
in Walkill, supplied  
the West Point cadets with milk  
said the stainless steel  
milking machines  
shocked the cows,  
made them cranky  
he went back to the old way  
of squeezing their teets, petting  
their behinds.

Like cows, the dough must be  
kneaded just right, don't overhandle  
or you will lose the lightness,

make it heavy, grainy, stop  
before it gets tough.

## Knotted Ends

Wendi Lee

All the lost find their way  
here. The amnesiacs and half-dead,  
apparitions, monsters, kidnap victims. All  
crowded in this midnight  
deli, eating samosas with their fingers,  
jar of visceral hot sauce passed  
under dimming fluorescent light. Pity party  
for news print names shrinking,  
boiled down to glue, a passing  
reference, flutter of nerves  
in a young mother's heart. Who remembers  
the name of an eight year-old  
strangled by her underwear, the bus  
driver holding the knotted ends?  
Who remembers anything  
but the sensation: sleepless nights, muted  
television, glassy supermarket reveries  
    in the cereal aisle:  
yes, he looks like he might be capable--  
those deadened eyes brimming hallelujah,  
those unspeakable acts of joy.

## The Captain

Wendi Lee

A boat of twigs and mud,  
the blue-flowered  
bed sheet from her brother's  
military cornered bed: wrought-iron  
and bad dreams. A boat capsized,  
hull curved toward beach glass sky. And she  
is Captain, digging sand-heavy  
beer cans in cotton corners to keep  
anchored.

On porches the grown-ups  
grow fever-eyed over guitar chords,  
the amber sting of age and loss.  
Their sadness finds her like the singing,  
warbled, far away.

Someday she too will be cast  
from the shore, to live  
between porch slats and beer cans.  
But now she is the Captain. She stares  
into the swell and heave, charting  
the voyage.

## Generation

Allyssa Kasoff

Here's to the generation  
of daisies yanked from ground left to  
rot behind waxy ears overloaded with  
whispers of I, you, them. Ornamented,  
punctured with peace signs.

Disco balls that spin and sparkle above  
boys and girls summoning each other  
with sunken eyes.

Alarms that siren our bodies for morning  
class. Mind stuck between 3 and 4 A.M. Caressing  
bellbottom dreams that hug and flair out  
past thighs. Angel sleeved blouses, marshmallow  
heels and Candies that dress innocence in labels.  
Clogs clacking down Bowery streets delivering  
in soles next minute's fix for junkies who  
shiver and shake for a packet of pure white.

Tie die shirts streaked with blues, reds, yellows that  
bleed into each other. No room for blacks or whites.  
British flag shirts protesting stars and stripes in favor of  
crowns and queens. We hide behind  
horn rimmed glasses, because  
we cannot trust our eyes to see.

Reinvent ourselves  
in bloodshot eyes that avoid graffiti glaring at us  
as violence sprayed in pinks and greens. Braided hair  
intertwined with Marlboro Lights and secrets. Last night's  
mascara that drips and sticks to skin like leggings. Begging  
for Little Red Corvettes zooming down Fifth Avenue  
fast enough for us to forget who we are. Snorted from  
mirrors lined with cocaine. All that remains are reflections.  
Painted lips, blue eyes and pink cheeks make us statues.  
We do not see the homeless babbling to strangers  
about life inside of paper bags and vodka handles.  
People thrown out of homes like rotting apples.  
Streets blanket them with their rocky coldness.  
We are warm inside.



The elite is immune to AIDS. Reganomics.  
Fucking family values.

Exist

as searing lattes whose steam clings to air  
like ghosts held in hands that strum black  
guitars until they splinter and bleed.  
Raspy miseries trapped in blue  
eyes. Unwashed hair greasy with the memories of  
Hamptons getaways, overdoses, nirvana.  
Traffic lights blink red, yellow, green, green, green.  
Bohemia clings to skin in peasant shirts that  
hug and dangle like semicolons.  
Stomachs grumble for bagels and boredom.  
Feet stomp on dreams tucked in pavement's cracks.  
Lips tuck romance away in storybooks that rot  
in attics. Addicts of burning lights, benzene drips, blurry truths.  
Hipsters parade down Bowery streets in  
tight flannel shirts exposing midriffs and bones. We see  
the world through vintage Aviator glasses, as if  
flying away is a fashion statement.  
We have been to Tokyo, Milan, Barcelona, Rio and Paris, but  
how far do we have to travel to escape ourselves?

## Feet Torn Street

Allyssa Kasoff

I want to bathe in the midnight.  
Until my eyes glisten with light.  
Until I blend with grime's bite.  
Until I feel so low I fly like a kite.

I want the pavement to caress me.  
Ridged in my bones like a key.  
Imprisoned in a concrete sea.  
Too lusciously perilous to flee.

I want to awake to summer air.  
Congested with breaths we share.  
Clinging to mouths. Lingering in hair.  
Shampoo scents glimmer with despair.

I want to walk through fuming streets.  
Permeating with strangers' heats.  
Dreams spoiling faster than week old meats.  
Sugarcoated lives disguised as feats.

I want to tattoo glamour to my eyes.  
Fuck realism. I need a disguise.  
I know the answer to being wise:  
Live through other people's highs.

I want to shoot up the stars.  
Evaporate melancholy ringing in bars.  
Dissolve fear left behind wheels of cars.  
Drivers who steer with their doors ajar.

I want to tear apart the heavy pavement.  
Too impermeable for hands to dent.  
How are roads so stable and people so bent?  
Cracks the only sign the road can vent.

I want to light a fire in the night.

Ignite streets until they scream with might.  
Repressed yearnings allowed to fight.  
Burning until pavements gleam with respite.

Nikki Purrs  
Michael Lee Johnson

Soft nursing  
5 solid minutes  
of purr  
paws paddling  
like a kayak competitor  
against ripples of my  
60 year old river rib cage—  
I feel like a nursing mother  
but I'm male and I have no nipples.  
Sometimes I feel afloat.  
Nikki is a little black skunk,  
kitten, suckles me for milk,  
or affection?  
But she is 8 years old a cat.  
I'm her substitute mother,  
afloat in a flower bed of love,  
and I give back affection  
freely unlike a money exchange.  
Done, I go to the kitchen, get out  
Fancy Feast, gourmet salmon, shrimp,  
a new work day begins.

## Arthur Sze en Colombia

Mateo Navia Hoyos

*Yo percibo lo que otros están pensando y no dicen,  
Yo conozco el placer en las venas del arce de azúcar,  
Estoy viviendo en el borde de una hoja nueva.*

*I feel what others are thinking and do not speak,  
I know pleasure in the veins of a sugar maple,  
I am living at the edge of a new leaf.*  
Arthur Sze

Medellín rebosó de poesía. Del 4 al 11 de julio se realizó el XIX Festival Internacional de Poesía de Medellín (Colombia), organizado por la Corporación de Arte y Poesía Prometeo. Con el slogan: *el canto de todo el amor del mundo*, los pronunciamientos públicos continuaron consagrando la lucha por la paz, y el amor por la palabra. En esta oportunidad, el Festival tuvo el honor de contar con la participación del poeta neoyorquino, de ascendencia China, Arthur Sze. Yo fui el lector de sus poemas en castellano, y me siento honrado de haber sido testigo de su primera visita a Sur América.

Lastimosamente Sze tuvo que viajar el 8 de julio hacia la ciudad donde reside actualmente, Santa Fe (Nuevo México), para atender otros compromisos. Sin embargo, los cinco días que estuvo en Medellín fueron suficientes para que percibiese un público atento y dispuesto a escuchar poesía incluso en condiciones “adversas”. Adversas en tanto muchas de las lecturas son realizadas en espacios abiertos, en lugares con flujo vehicular, con música en locales cercanos, o bajo las inclemencias de una fuerte lluvia. Condiciones que, no obstante, no impedían que Sze comunicase sus imágenes como caricias, provocando entre muchos de los asistentes estremecimientos y temblores. Escuchar a Sze, observarlo sentado en la mesa con su cabeza ligeramente inclinada esbozando una sonrisa, fue, para los medellinenses, nutrir sus espíritus de un nuevo alimento. Pues la poesía de Sze está invadida de diversas alusiones: palabras provenientes de la física, la astronomía, la botánica, la zoología, e incluso, la medicina, se insertan en una composición poética particular que trasmite una lección de vida: el mundo es inexplicable, escapa siempre a nuestra comprensión, que vive en la ilusión del acercamiento

a conocimientos precisos. La poesía de Arthur Sze profundiza en la imposibilidad de los métodos, exalta los escollos de la teoría, pero invita a la percepción sensitiva e inteligente para que se aproxime a la vivencia del mundo.

Arthur Sze encontró en Medellín una ciudad acogedora y hospitalaria. Sus versos se conectaron con el público y logró que los aplausos alcanzaran incluso la ovación. Sze estuvo en el XIX Festival Internacional de Poesía de Medellín, un honor haberlo leído y escuchado, un placer haber podido dialogar con un hombre que está más interesado en escuchar a las personas que tiene delante, que en proferir sus propias palabras. Es decir, un poeta que depone su egoísmo y vanidad para darle cabida al otro hombre, a la otra mujer.

## Arthur Sze in Colombia

Mateo Navia Hoyos

Translated by Laura Ortega, Editor

*Yo percibo lo que otros están pensando y no dicen,  
Yo conozco el placer en las venas del arce de azúcar,  
Estoy viviendo en el borde de una hoja nueva.*

*I feel what others are thinking and do not speak,  
I know pleasure in the veins of a sugar maple,  
I am living at the edge of a new leaf.*  
Arthur Sze

Medellin abounded with poetry from July 4<sup>th</sup> through July 11<sup>th</sup> at the 19th *Festival Internacional de Poesía de Medellín*, which was organized by the *Corporación de Arte y Poesía Prometeo*. The Festival's slogan was *el canto de todo el amor del mundo* (The Song of The World's Love). Public Announcements continued promoting the struggle for peace as well as love. The Festival had the opportunity to count on the participation of a New York poet of Chinese parentage, Arthur Sze. I was the reader of Sze's poems in Castilian Spanish and am honored to be present during his first visit to South America.

I am sorry to say that Sze had to return July 8<sup>th</sup> to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he resides, in order to fulfill other obligations. The five days that Sze participated in the Festival were sufficient enough for him to discover an attentive audience prepared for poetry, even in so-called adverse conditions. Adverse as many of the events take place in open spaces, in places with the flow of car traffic, with music from nearby locations, or under the imminent threat of heavy rainfall. Conditions that did not hinder him from making the images of his words seem like caresses, causing many of the Festival's assistants to tremble. To listen to Sze, seated at a table, with his head slightly tilted, with a hint of smile, provided the residents of Medellin with nourishment for their spirits. Indeed as Sze's poetry is ripe with allusions: words from physics, astronomy, botany, zoology, as well as medicine, are part of a unique poetical composition that offers a life lesson: that the world cannot be explained as it defies our comprehension and that it exists in an illusion

of the direct knowledge's close proximity. Arthur Sze's poetry studies the impossibility of methods in depth and praises Theory's obstacles yet invites a perceptive and intelligent sense to draw itself close to a worldly experience.

Arthur Sze found in the city of Medellin a warmth and hospitality. His verses formed a connection with the people and the applause he received included a standing ovation. Sze was present at the 19<sup>th</sup> *Festival Internacional de Poesía de Medellín*. It was an honor to read his poetry aloud and to listen to him read his poetry. It was a pleasure to engage in a dialogue with a man who is more interested in listening to those people in front of him than in offering his own words. In short, a poet who lays aside his own ego and vanity to make room for another man's, another woman's.



## A Chance Encounter

Leigh Held

I grew up in Manhattan, but my born and raised Bayside, Queens mom did not want my brother and I to turn into pansies. So, every summer when my friends packed up to go to Long Island or got sent to camp, my mom took my brother and I to Breezy Point, a gated community home to the largest concentration of Irish people in the United States as of the 2000 census.

I spent summers in Breezy while Clinton was President. There was no war on. The economy was good, even the middle class was feeling the effects of the tech boom. Gas was cheap, global warming was a tree-hugger problem, and every adult had a fanny pack.

As kids we were distanced even from those facts -- well not the fanny pack one. But life as a kid down in Breezy consists of one thing only-- having fun. I had some of the most extreme fun of my life in Breezy. I once heard it referred to as, "teenage paradise." There are no cops in Breezy enabling teenagers and adults to walk around with open containers, smoke joints while walking in public, and steal the occasional car.

I met one of my best childhood friends, James Flanagan, down there. We met a year prior to his first arrest during a water balloon fight. The kids who live there all year round periodically terrorize the summer kids who hang out in a separate clique. Kids in Breezy commonly hang out in

groups of forty or more. He was totally different when I met him, well not totally.

I don't remember a thing about my first day of high school, but I remember every single moment from the night I met James. I was wearing bell-bottom jeans and a brown suede shirt that tied in the front. He was wearing khaki shorts, polo shirt, and was sporting a side part.

James was from a huge family, four boys and four girls.

"Hey little Flanagan come sit and talk to me."

He put his waterballoons down. All the Flanagan brothers looked alike. Handsome Black Irish.

"Which number are you."

"Oh I'm number four."

Some say there is a moment with people when you most perfectly click. For James and me it happened instantly.

"Hey aren't you the surfer girl?"

There's not much to do in Breezy Point except fish and surf.

"How old are you if you're number four?"

“I’m fourteen.”

“Why? How old are you?” he asked.

“I’m sixteen.”

He took out a Marlboro Red cigarette.

“You smoke?”

“Since sixth grade.”

“Are you leaving with your friends?” I asked.

“Nah, I’m going to hang around here.”

“Flanagan, come on,” someone yelled.

“No I’m stayin,” he yelled back.

So we stayed right there on the sidewalk for the rest of the night talking about surfing. He didn’t surf, but he did have a boater’s license.

“See this scar he said lifting up his shirt. I almost died getting hit by a boat last year. The boat hit me and I went right into the dock, but I landed in the water. It was a mess. I needed so many stitches. Hey do you

want a beer," he asked opening his bookbag. Almost all the kids in Breezy Point go cooler hopping when they're young. The houses are built really close together along small cement sidewalks in one section of the town. They're called the Walks and each walk has a name and they go alphabetically A-U. Usually something beachy or Irish K is Kildare Walk J is Jamaica. Behind each walk is a sand alleyway. It's used by the private security, by the garbage men, and by the teenagers who steal beer off decks right out of beach coolers. So anybody from age 12-15 has beer if they cooler hop, and most kids do. It's a pastime like manhunt.

There is a risk with cooler hopping -- the thrill that this might be the house where you get caught. In any case, that is how thirteen-year old James Flanagan had beer.

"I can't drink," I replied. Now for living in Breezy that comment made me an automatic freak. In Breezy Point beer can make you famous. It can make or break your whole reputation.

"Why can't you drink?"

"I have epilepsy, and I take a lot of medicine and I can't mix the pills and the alcohol."

"Oh, what's epilepsy?"

"Like seizures."

"That's ok, more beers for me." He just took it in stride. Maybe it was how young we were that my being sick had no impact on us becoming

friends. He didn't automatically worry about the things adults worry about.

"Hey, I have to get home. I have a curfew."

"Your parents are really strict or something? It's so early." This was true. I had the earliest curfew out of all my friends. My parents were just a bit over-protective. I blame the epilepsy.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"221 Street." He started to follow me home. My life changed on that walk home. It was apparent from the very beginning James was my other half. Our paths just crossed that night and we were never the same. Cynics call that chance, believers call that fate.

## Dedication

Stephanie Hart

I wore my ring today  
I told you I would  
you know – the black silver one  
Made of marcasite  
No not marcasite – hematite  
It caught my eye  
Flashing in the light  
Reflecting vague images  
Of us – I'm sure  
I thought of kissing your ring – just like mine  
So you could carry my love  
Everywhere  
I remember when you told me –  
You made me swear  
Never to take it off except in the bath  
Or washing dishes  
Remember what I said then?  
Never  
I will wear it always  
It reminds me of you  
The hard stone with square lines  
It's so smooth  
You kissed my hand that night  
And my eyes flashed in your ring  
Do you think of me when it catches your eye?

## THE YOUNGER POET

John Grey

Page after page, I document the tragedies  
of sixteen years on earth,  
the worst of them misspelled.  
Sometimes, my mother looks over my shoulder  
but my writing hand has learned to protect itself  
from all such eyes.  
The neighbor's kids are throwing footballs in the yard.  
Every thump of leather hitting hand that she hears  
is one less pass thrown in in my direction.  
I know that look others.  
The weather's perfect outside, like a canvas,  
and she's the willing painter of  
"Golden Child Outshines The Sun."  
But my head's down,  
my pen scratches a trembling trail  
through the harrowing day to day.  
Page after page, my feelings skirt  
the worrying shore of discovery.  
"I'm your mother," she says. "Let me see."  
But if she could truly see,  
I wouldn't be writing this.

## MY MOTHER SHOWS ME THE OLD HOUSE

John Grey

Take heed, the voice says.  
I am memory  
and you have been in  
this place before.  
An old house,  
its stumps like crutches,  
one rusty metal bed  
and a sheep skull in the garden...  
I don't think so.  
Still, I'll run my finger  
along the rotting mantle  
if that's what you require.  
And you can try to convince me  
that this is not my first time doing this.  
Or picking up the rain-spoiled book  
from the floor and turning its yellow pages.  
Yes, I agree, there are parts of lives  
that go missing and need to be found  
once in a while.  
But this is not it, surely.  
That faded photograph...  
who are these people?  
They inspire no cathedral-like  
reverence in me.  
And creaking floorboards  
recall no childhood.  
Not even the one I almost  
crash my foot through.  
Staircases... mmm, the one  
I remember best was in the Psycho house  
when mother suddenly bursts from her room  
and knifes the poor detective.  
But that was a movie  
that I wasn't in. And, if this house  
is a movie, then it's one I didn't  
star in or even see for that matter.  
So what are you telling me?  
I was two months old at the time.



Like I could close my eyes  
and be that age again.  
But the past must have a stop  
and it's at one or two dwellings  
beyond this one. You can shed tears  
but I shed unwashed ash-trays.  
And you can plunk yourself  
in one room for an hour or more  
and feel it coming back to you.  
I wish you well on your journey.  
Those days of mine  
dwell no place else  
than in the warmest  
of your assurances.  
You held me in your arms  
exactly where I'm standing.  
You couldn't do that now, you say.  
Well I can't do that then.

## Pica

Richard Godwin

**pica** an abnormal craving to ingest substances such as clay, dirt, or hair.

Call me old-fashioned, but I love eating dirt.

Used to get called shovel, on account of the fact I always seem to have my head down in the ground. But then, can you hear an earthworm turn and sing, or tell when the rain's coming on account of the types of leaves settled in the wet patches? I can.

Some leaves lay and flap, and some don't, and the earth's got its own secrets. Well, I just reckon we's all different.

Sometimes I get called magpie, and they's intelligent, birds are an always have been.

Clay I love, and potters know its uses.

Hair tastes like rotting metal turning on a breeze catching the smell of a late summer barbecue when roast pork and hog crisp up under a nice old flame.

Tastes an smells. All different.

Folk round here think I'm simple-minded and would like to set me hanging for stuff they done themselves.

Old George he been fucking Farmer Brown's wife for years now, I heard em at it in the ground.

That's the secret of the earth, see, it tells you no lies and acts as a power line, conducting sounds and all sorts if you'll just be patient enough and hear it. They'd've done blamed that on me if they could've, and many times I've been yelled at when money's disappeared, but I've never done none of those things. Too busy listening to the ground.

You see, the eating's only part of it. It's the bit everyone concentrates on. But when you take that earth into you, you become part of it, and the earth tells you its secrets. And I say, what the earth don't know, it ain't worth knowing.

It all happened like this.

I hadn't been blamed for nothing for a long time.

Mostly cause they'd given up.

All their lies wouldn't hold with me, cause I'd just tell em what I heard from the ground and they didn't like it.

Old George's wife went crazy after she found out and she chopped his bollocks off with a meat cleaver and ran around town with them waving them at everyone before they took her away and I never seen her again. And Grenville the town clerk was arrested for stealing all the money. Good ol Susie always took my side, saying I had a gift, and they'd left me alone for a long time.

Then the trouble started.

Hadn't rained for months, and this here being a farming community, people were getting desperate.

We don't have much of an income out here in Plough. Always farmed, and guess always will.

Some folks've got ideas above their station, if you ask me, cause we's stupid and backward, anyway that's what other people say.

No rain, an the crops witherin.

An I had my ear to the ground, eating dirt.

It was a while since I'd eaten any hair, and was hungry for it.

Has a special taste, hair.

It's a certain kind of food.

I'd gained a reputation for understanding rain and a few times got credited with making the rain come, and so all the townspeople started acting real nice to me.

I knew what they was after. I ain't stupid.

Then one day it arrived in the post.

I pulled it out of my broken mail-box, covered in bird-shit. A little brown parcel and a note.

'Dear Pica,

Please accept this gift as a token of our appreciation.'

Inside was a bundle of hair, all colours, and thick.

I ate it all day long, popping it into my mouth at intervals like you see some kids do with liquorice.

Earth tastes better'n pecan pie, when it's right, it's the best taste in the world. Folks round here love their burgers, an they spread onions all across them an lace it up with sauces, some hot, some not, but the best earth is the deep dark soil with its secrets and tellin ways, it'll beat anything. It's better'n treacle, better'n apple pie, better'n any cut of beef you could come up with an set down on the table before you, running with blood or just plain ol sauce.

People've been doin it for years. Eatin earth. Always have. Always will.

I saw folk lookin at me out of the corner of their eyes, their hair a bit clumpy like they'd had bad cuts on em.

Jackson, the local bigwig approached me in the town square.

'We sure could do with your help', he said, clappin me on the shoulder.

I just looked at him.

I'd heard he'd been sellin off the land.

'Now', he said, 'as you know we's been having a real dry spell here in Plough and what d'you say if you tried to make it rain?'

'Don't mind.'

'That's awful good of you, and you can come an dig in my garden if you like.'

'That's all right, Jackson, I prefer the wild earth, it's better quality.'

I could see he didn't like that, and I chuckled on my way home.

The next day a dry sky burned blue overhead when I walked to the creek.

The air crackled like firewood an there were no clouds around.

I set right down on the spot I knew would work, and put my face into the ground. And I ate away until I tasted earth and worm and leaf and water.

I sat there, my mouth full of dirt and soil and looked into the stream.

And then I washed in it.

I went home and finished eating the hair they gave me.

Rain didn't come for a few days, but that night something strange happened.

Jackson was seen riding naked through the town on the hood of his Dodge, shouting at the town for being a shit -hole in a paint pail.

His wife, Vera, who liked to lady it all around, was found fucking a pig.

The townsfolk saw her laying in the road with this pig going away at her and she shouting at it to come on.

I knew she liked animals. Earth told me. An I knew all about Jackson. He didn't like farmin.

I heard later that she'd been stealing money from the church and after that she didn't like stepping out in public any more, cause all the folks would make fun of her.

Jackson never lived it down, but at least we got to hold onto the land.

Then the rains came.

Hard and strong for weeks.

Plough saved some crops, and things returned to normal.

Got treated with respect after that, an Susie told folks they should've listened to her all along.

'He knows things other folk don't', she said. 'An if you all hadn't thought you was better'n him, we'd have had rain before now. We've got rain, and it's thanks to him and we should remember that.'

The earth's always been here. There are many different types of soil, and it's always changin. The weather takes care of that. Some's wet, some's dry. An you get used to its different textures an flavours. You dig your tongue through its layers tasting the different flavours it spills up.

We farm. That's Plough.

An I eat dirt and hair.

People give me their hair now without fuss and no one calls me stupid.

FROM FOOD COMES ALL  
or THE EARTH IS FEMININE IN MOST LANGUAGES:  
A PSALM (From an Essential Libretto for a New Age  
Symphony)



Daniela Gioseffi

- after a passage in the  
Taittiriya Upanishad 2.2.

From food comes all, all that lives upon the Earth.  
All is food, and to food it shall return.  
Food is the only goddess among the living.

They are blessed with food who worship earth,  
for the Earth is food and goddess among the living.  
All are born of food  
and by food they grow.

The Goddess is Earth and food her panacea.  
All are born of her food  
and to food they shall return.  
All eat Her  
and she eats all.

Food we are  
and to food we shall return.  
That is why She is called Sugar! Blossom! Honey!

The Great Mother gave milk in the beginning.  
She arose as a dream from mud  
but from Her comes food and from food: breath, spirit,  
truth,  
worlds, and in works, immortality.

## EGGS

Daniela Gioseffi

-for Francis Ponge

Eggs that come from chickens,  
squeezing oblong from their feathered bottoms.  
Tapered ovals opaque with white  
filled with albumen. Delicate thickness!  
I've eaten them raw, sucking them from a pin-hole  
carefully made in the shell.  
I've pressed my lips to the hole and sucked  
until the white carried the yolk out in one mass onto  
my tongue.  
I've beaten them and butter-fried them into spongy  
yellow chunks.  
I've left their sunny sides up  
until the whites were glazed like plastic,  
and then pricked the orange yolk with the sharp  
point of a fork  
and watched it slowly spread and ooze over the plate.  
Then, I've sopped it up with toast  
until the toast was soggy and limp  
and dripped when lifted to the mouth.  
I've boiled them and listened  
to the click of shells  
as they wobbled in the bubbling water.  
Small sounds of thunder; shell against metal.  
I've cracked them and peeled them,  
pulling the residue of skin-like membrane from them,  
then sliced or bit into their shine of rubbery white  
with its yellow paste center.  
I've lathered them into my hair with shampoo,  
mixed them with cheeses and mushrooms and onions.

Today I've bought one hundred dozen of them --  
farm-fresh, Grade A, large white eggs in  
spongy, grey, cardboard cartons.  
I've arranged them around

the bathroom, their cartons opened, exposing  
rows of gleaming white lumps.  
One thousand two hundred of them!  
Delicate shells threaten to burst and spray  
yolk over tile.

I choose the first, tap it lightly on the porcelain tub.  
A thin line shatters the cool shell.  
I violate the crack, thumb-nail first, slowly  
separate the shell, tearing  
the inside membrane with a small sound of skin, and  
plop it into the tub.  
Its nucleus of yellow pops on the hard surface below.  
Slowly, from the ragged half-shell  
a clear string of mucus, a long thin globule, follows  
after it. I take the next  
and the next, crack  
each on the tub edge, plop  
it to the hard surface, see  
the yellow yolks break, ooze, and splatter.  
I keep on with my work  
till the tub fills enough for me to watch  
the yolks bounce into the thick  
liquid, sink a little, then buoy to the surface.  
When I drop, at last, the-one-thousand-two-hundreth,  
the tub is full; the mucoid surface  
is cobbled with yolks. Slowly,  
I put one bare leg into the tub, letting the viscous  
mass climb up my body as I slide  
down in up to my chin. I lie  
perfectly still, listening  
to the silent squish of the mass that surrounds me.  
I smear the fluid into my hair and over my skin,  
I move and thrash my limbs about  
until the mixture of yolk and white  
is thoroughly blended.

Neptune  
Jim Fuess



Running Egg  
Jim Fuess



## When the Aspen Turn

Serena J Fox

Despite my cool arms  
You want to take me flying  
When the aspen turn.

I make you carry  
Me, gingerly, like an egg,  
With no intention

Of letting you in.  
Without any good reason  
I guard a creature

Waiting to be born  
From a color not its own.  
Even though your hands

Can shape my surface  
They hunger for my yellow.  
I want to see gold

Canyons and crimson  
Wing tips out of an unseen  
Unknown pilot's cup:

Hands that can warm pockets  
Of air in my flawless shell  
And cause explosions

In cockpits, startle  
The foliage inside out  
And abort Autumn.

## Kibbles & Bits

Serena J Fox

kibbles&bits kibbles&bits betta grab your kibbles and bits  
lucky for dog food makers dogs will eat anything and people  
will buy it "Woodstock, my master of drool, my yellow-headed  
slave when I'm slipping you treats, my welcomer who bypasses  
pretension and goes for the crotch..." lu ckydawg lu kydawg

don't you ever skip? don't you ever haul out an'  
shake everything that actually moves when you do?  
Only in America...! synthesize an indulgence and then  
sell it FAKE FAT TwinkiesLite yummmmmmm I tell you people  
will buy anything and eat it "fourmore! andthree andtwo

andone" your holiness Airbrush Anorexia Aerobics Nervosa  
awaits your displeasure Why is it so embarrassing to be happy?  
it doesn't happen all thaaat often sometimes I just wanna splat

ptchou dadadadada instead of keeping it all to myself "thankyou-  
thankyouthankyouthankyou, G'd" for lack of a better word for

all these cliches this miracle of cellular intervention

I can SEE I don't even know what that means my nose tells  
me that you, yes, you are the one breaks my boundaries with a  
pfft in my ear. "You turn me on" under a star-deluded night  
in a white Cabriolet convertible Chris is our boyfriend for

the evening otherwise Iranian snake-charmer Mitra and  
my bigbraid self might have said yes to the puppies stuck  
in Helena on football scholarships "and then what?" Puuurina  
thankyou for the lakelakelake a priviledge of poets I can hardly  
gabble I know such workings thankyou for bluedeepeverlasting  
thankyou for cleardownthebottom thankyou for letting me miss

them "you wonderful- self-sufficient-not-bad-looking-



mildy-survivor-neurotic -a-week-is-about-all-I-can-take-  
wish-you-could-see-this-lake family of mine thankyou for accepting  
me to this place thankyou for gushing and pooh-pooing bad omens  
and diction and taste IknowIknowIknow this is newsbit only-in-the

movies-Marilyn America "Happy Birthday, uh!\ Happy Birthday,uh!  
Why do you think I tossed my t.v.? splat ptchou dadadadada  
grab-it-while-you-can life's-hard-enough you-only-live-once I have  
been happy here the least I can do is spread it around "Wanna dance,  
Woodstock, my pretty paper-towel-scarfing poocher love-slave?"

kibbles&bits kibbles&bits splat ptchou dadada dadada dadada....

## I Want You In A Suit

Serena J Fox

There is no end to it  
Pacifying anyone who  
Demands a suck or cure.  
Insurance pays for E.R. visits.

I can swim.  
I can fix you while you wait.  
The bottom of the tank.  
Twenty rectals in a day.

CPR you out of the  
Ocean of Heaven.  
Puked, shat, peed, and  
Spat on, I reel in

Twenty bodies in a day,  
Organs plus-or-minus,  
Appendages of all shapes,  
Sizes, locations, prostheses.

I want *you* in a suit!

Socks, underwear, shirt,  
Jacket, tie— the works.  
I want to love you, slowly,  
Through your pants.

I want your knees and my knees  
to meet underwater. I want to suck  
Cuff-links. I won't send you to  
The lab. I don't want everyone

To know you. I am further than  
You think. Not everyone is  
Hooked on revelation, nor

Aspires to gels

(from *Night Shift*, Turning Point Books)

## Green Valentine

Serena J Fox

Trust pools like swallows of violet pastilles,  
Soapy and sophisticated.  
My bamboo breathing finds your fingers easily  
And my heart twangs,  
Green as a slice of kiwi.

    My round palm tastes your hand  
Firm and equal as a sun-green sour apple,  
And I cannot think  
Which work of yours to call my own,  
The gift having been given in the offering.

So my mind banquets on metaphysics, physics,  
The cornucopia of the spheres,  
From which I pluck an impassioned palette,  
More to still the impulse  
To savor in awe and silence,  
This moment  
Like a delicate spoonful of lime sorbet,  
Happy,  
Green,  
And unexpected.

## Wild Town

Joolz Denby

Dogs walk with their flap-slappy ears smacking in the wind  
And the smells from the moor-lands jostling in their heads;  
Babies shoved along the Leeds Road wriggle in pushchairs  
Howling for more more sugar and to get at the dogs and bite them;  
Girls stilt along on catalogue stilettos getting cross when  
Boys hang out of yellow cars and notice their breasts,  
Boys get giddy on traffic bang-ups and lean on the horn  
For half a mile of ratcheted cacophony while they roll a blunt  
To take the edge off the coke and keep the day at bay.

More shops have shut over night and stolen away with nothing,  
Gypsy Poundshops spring up with shelves full of tattered remains  
And toothpaste from the Ukraine or baby oil from Saudi Arabia;  
The Arndale Café serves the same clientele and the same cakes  
That taste of nothing and chew like melting rubber laced with raisins;  
The air outside the treadmill mall is dusty with Autumn coming  
In sheets of savage gold that wrap the city trees in perfect splendour  
And the skies burgeon with a blue more tender than the Virgin's cloak.

The Council is still corrupt and without redemption hiding  
In the dense gothic eyrie of the city hall guarded unwittingly by apathy  
And the stoic grind of the peasant mind unable to believe in hope;  
The apparatchiks fence their jobs in with barricades of paperwork  
And try never to look out of the arrow-slits at the town uncoiling  
Into desperation below them in case the virus of despair is catching;  
The Great Pit dug for the phantom shopping centre fills with water  
And grows its own Dawinless eco-system of aquatic creatures  
That roil and bubble in the dim, blind underwater car park caverns.

And roses bloom in cheek-red clusters by the garage while daisies  
Jaunt on the verges alongside memorial poppies and butterfly studded  
Buddleia with purple cones seedily aromatic and sneezily pollenous;  
A columbine coils sexily through the blistered turquoise of the ruined  
iron  
Railings by the sore-shaped demo site and foxes trot russet and  
oblivious  
Through the cool misty morning's breakfast tumble and yawn;

Ducks pedalo on the lake in the big park where the bandstand  
Serves as a nest for spiders webbed in diamonds and leaf-litter;  
The city is reverting to the wild; the town is going feral;  
And the heather and the bracken will one day soon, cover it all again.

## Smokin' Joe

Joolz Denby

Smoking' Joe dances in the car-park feeling the rhythms of the music in his head and the sound of the juke box thudding from the pub and the boys in the band who are packing away think;  
*Look at that old geezer gonged off his head and they laugh.*

And Smokin' Joe smiles at them, missing a tooth, meant to have It fixed but seemed to forget and he says *good gig lads* and he Sounds like he means it so the boys drop their cool and say *yeah it was* And Joe says *I am a drummer* and the boys think *right, as if.*

From the pub come Joe's cronies, drink weathered leathered lads, Hair going or just going grey ,still wearing the waistcoats and the Washed out jeans and they cackle like biddies and take Joe's arm;  
*Famous drummer this boys they say with a wink, and Joe smiles*

And remembers music, music, soft in his hand, cupped and precious Like a little bird, like a thistledown caught in the breath of the wind; He remembers it pouring song after song from the drums he played From the beautiful guitars and the singing that filled his throat:

And the gigs with the lights hotter than stars and the drink and the Girls with their warm winning ways and the other men all smoking And saying *Smokin' Joe, Smokin' Joe never smokes* and him laughing And opening another bottle of wine while music wrapped him in joy:

And the road unfurling like a tarmac banner rolling away through the world,  
And the tour bus comrades, shield brothers, soldiers, all for one and All smashed out of their brains and the music, the music, soft in his hand,  
Singing in his blood like a wild old hymn and him caught pure and fine.

And he smiles remembering and standing unsteady while his mates say The name of the big old band that Smokin' Joe rode like a mustang,  
And the young lads say *why did you stop playing music then fella*

And it gets cold suddenly and Joe shakes his head still shaggy and fair:

*Got sick, got married, had some bairns, it's a hard life on the road, boys;*  
But they don't understand and he doesn't either, because the music  
Is still in him passionate and wild, but his hand isn't apt to the sticks  
Or the fretboard and it doesn't beat in his heart quite true, quite true.

And he smiles and waves as he gets put in the car by his mates  
Who drink and tell stories of his days of glory feeding from the  
Scraps of Smokin' Joe's legend in an arse-end town far from the  
Bright lights, far from the music that he held so soft in his hand.

And the lads in the young band load their equipment forgetting  
The drunk guy swaying in the car park, only remembering the rush  
Of the gig and they drive away just as Joe gets driven and they pass  
But they do not wave, they do not wave, and glory beckons them.

And soon after that, in the pub where he drinks, Smokin' Joe dies.

But the music was in him, wild and savage to the end, boys, to the end.



Memory of Nothing  
Daniel de Culla



## MEMORY OF NOTHING

Daniel de Culla

Listen:

Drag branches comeback  
Across the forest floor:  
Knowledge of the rough;

At water's edge  
I gather some things up:  
Memory of nothing.

We've the time to give the Babel Tower  
A close reading.  
Awful good, Tú  
As Roy A. Rappaport's  
Ritual... as Communication and as State.  
Our preferences might be  
Toward more emphasis  
On species places:  
Smooth textures of dead wood  
Knowledge of our hands on arms  
The body-art of bullshit  
Drinking cocoa  
And tend to the faith  
With a Vampire's short stick  
That smells of infinite urine.

History reveals itself to us  
In this way:  
Poetry, Tales, Essays are pamphlets  
Of impossible interest  
Multiplying voices-human, voices-animal  
Voices-plant

Voice-life of Earth  
As Dan O'Neill's  
Holiday for Cynics.

Look, little one  
We live this close to disaster  
There is no turning back  
From the tops of the trees  
Which are so dense  
Almost no sky is visible  
Only the odor dilates the nostril  
And quickens the heart  
On a marijuana tortilla.  
The buddhists have been telling us  
That the Self (Ego)  
As we conceive of it  
Is an illusion.  
A good tip  
Thinking about Gurney Norman's  
Jack and His Ego.

Is it?  
It is that we are of a Time-Sexual  
Wherein all species has been joined  
To the Wo/Man  
Of Homo Sapiens  
And Life is a single exercise of Cannibals  
In constantly elevating towers  
Of Bureaucracy.  
Nothing in Something  
Something in our Nothingness.

## Gord-A-Dan

Tatjana Debeljački

THE ROOTS ARE CLAIRVOYANT, GRASPING UNTOUCHABLE WISDOM. THAT IS THE WAY IT STARTS, THE SIGN OF TIMES IS DECEIVING. IT IS THE TIME TO SEE THE DROWNED. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE READING? YOU ARE BRINGING AS SMALL AMOUNTS AS YOU LIKE TO. YOUR IMAGE IS STILL GROWING AND CRYING. COMING CLOSER AND GOING AWAY, STRONG WEAKNESS. THE WORLD THAT IS SPREADING BUT DOES NOT BELONG TO ANYONE, GIVE SOMETHING FROM YOURSELF THAT COULD BRING SENSE FROM THE THREAD OF WILL. TRY LOOKING WITH DIFFERENT EYES TO THE LIGHT. EVIL IS DANGEROUS, CONTAGEOUS ILLNESS, MOVE OUT OF THAT EVIL, IT MAKES THE CENTURY LONGER."GORD-A-DAN" THE TEAR RIVERS ARE NOW MURMURING, THE DOG IS WAILING, YOU ARE GONE. BREAK LOOSE I BEG YOU! AND SLENTLY, THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR, COME TO ATTEND THE FEAST OF PRESERVED EMOTIONS, DAYDREAMS, THE HAPPY MOMENTS! DECENT GIFT, HUNGRY CRAVING IN THE BUNK OF FEATHERS, SILK AS PURE AS THE SNOW, WITH THE FORCE OF SILENCE. FLOWERS OF DANDELLIONS LET'S DANCE FROM AFAR WITH OUR LOOKS, WITH OUR BODIES, LET'S TOUCH WITH PALMS ONLY.

## Are There

Tatjana Debeljački

Someone is breaking the branches?!  
From midnight to the dawn,  
The forest is trembling inside me.  
My trees are innocent,  
Thirsty for milk,  
Firm hands, and  
The scent of effervesce.  
I'm drinking my mint tea.  
I'm bringing tranquility without aim,  
And flowers for the vase.  
When I look at it is never the same.  
I'm starting to believe in a fertility of miracles.  
Is there the flame, which could turn the heavens  
Into the ashes?  
Are there any hands to pick up my ripe apples?!

## Sauce, Or A Force Distributing Itself

Lori Davis

I never tire of a man's quiet voice,  
the timbre of thunder underwater.  
I can't see you, but your cologne unfolds  
in every direction—a sauce  
I want to know at its source.  
You are a patron, an entree,  
a perfectly good breakfast served all day.  
With a sprig of parsley dipped in honey  
and hollandaise, I write this to you—  
long hand on a short stack  
Sometimes you can't judge a man  
by his metaphor, or reality  
by how easy it is to abandon.  
Did you know every morning  
they bake all the awkward strangers  
into one big exotic frittata?  
This may be caffeine-speak,  
but I do want to thank you.  
Your voice is a sparkling reservoir,  
a free refill on one of those thirsty days.

## Only the Sun Decides When it is August

Lori Davis

Humidity, an uncomfortable layer of perspiration forms between her and the atmosphere. There is no sea view from this side of the Villa Marie, because he understands beauty can accumulate to a point of agony. The odd strains of Morcheeba, *I left my soul there down by the sea, I lost control there, living free*. The chorus clings to the chaise, slides off flat surfaces in the room and exits through the window. The streets are narrower here. The people are life-size. Try suppressing rationality to see what is left. Drown logic and night is free to begin. His blood is thicker than hers. It pumps through his heart slower, with more authority. Hers is the color of cinnabar laced with quicksilver. His voice enters her ear like a wind. Tints her brain the hue of a morning sea. She hasn't been hungry yet, in spite of the dishes placed in front of her: quince jelly, the color of an angry tongue, spread over warm brie, sitting on the heel of a day old baguette. The pastries and tarts from downstairs look like a woman in love made them. This is the body processing. Arousal falls somewhere between the instinct of fight and flight. Sometimes, night actually lasts all night and day doesn't ask anything of you. What if she took his hand, looked him in the eye and evaporated. She is real; he is real. But so is the echo of a reflection and the symbol of an idea. Tosca's *Natural High* is playing. Pineapple vodka: overripe fruit steeped three days in Grey Goose. It is so sweet, they forget the sting. She knows they could just as easily be making love above a gallery in New Mexico, in a modern flat in London, aboard a houseboat on Lake Mojave, or in the back room of a public library, between the delectable, unstable stacks of belles-lettres.

## Thanksgiving

Billy Cryer

There was a vale that long shied its dismal face from the world, until discovered by a band of dour pilgrims. In thanksgiving they slaughtered turkey upon turkey, until their gobbles became a dark wind that sighed up over gables, and hissed past the church steeple. Thenceforth, each year at the appointed hour the townspeople sealed themselves inside the church. 'They draw nigh!' shrieked a small boy, his tender countenance disfigured by a spasm of terror. 'Speak not!' shushed the mother, and pressed the trembling child to her bosom. Outside gathered a legion of little shadows, silent as death. Waiting.



## Memories

Billy Cryer

Mornings she sweeps the porch, and as the leaves tumble around, so the memories cloud up around her. Of marrying and buying the house in the country, of raising the kids and playing with them in the wide lawns, and of waiting for his red truck to break into view down the road. Of caring for him in old age. Of burying him. Evenings she takes her broom, and though the porch is still swept from the morning, she begins anew, rounding together the invisible debris, and sometimes she pauses and lifts a heavy eye to the silent country road.

## Starbucks Rant

Brenda Boboige

sidewalk click  
from Barbie feet  
arched like a  
scared cat's back,  
a metronome march  
en pointe to make  
a statement with a  
cellular screech,  
something about  
backpeddlers  
and love  
like a sneeze  
blown off  
much too quickly  
for her liking -

venti-soy-quad-shot-extra-hot-caramel-macchiato-  
please-thank-you

-and how his  
red-flagged  
kindergarten  
nervous breakdown  
should have been  
all she ever needed  
to learn mix signals  
are the only freebies from  
a used-car salesman,  
and, what is the old saying,  
misery loves company,  
money to be made  
from this bitter -

skip-the-whip-please-thank-you

-party of one,  
visions of Hallmark  
Jaded Love Series  
she'll have time to write  
since she won't  
be dating -

this-is-not-extra-hot-but-whatever

-and how her  
'I'll settle for  
anything' stance  
bit her in the ass  
*again, yes,*  
first time his fault,  
fifty-fourth time  
hers, tired -

wow-quad-shot-they're-no-joke

-of insomnia  
with the thinking,  
thinking, thinking  
of what she did  
wrong, wishing  
for an alarm clock  
reminder of the last  
nasty thing  
he said,  
then maybe  
the rest of her day  
could only get better

oh-fuck-it-give-me-some-crumb-cake

## Kelly's Kitchen

Brenda Boboige

She brings lots of sauce  
to the table  
and, though a tad too cheesy,

I consume the course  
she offers, always

starved for confection,  
I sugar-coat cannoli  
and conversation

rolls off hot tongues  
smoother than cream

in my coffee, she melts  
*L'Artigiano* chocolate  
as a drop of milk steams

through the spoons,  
through the croons

of Frank, blue eyes sigh  
*Come Fly With Me*  
and I do, how I do

beg for more, a little,  
a lot of everything

that's amore, that  
feeding the famished, that  
fly me to the moon feeling

full of something sweet,  
a sick-of-my-empty-dish wish

that I will never go hungry again.

## Christmas Twitches

Brenda Boboige

Cookies crawl across the kitchen  
Crumbs stick in a cold stove  
Fruitcakes outrun the eggnog

But they still hear

*Fuck you  
I didn't get you anything  
What do you want from me*

and

*Stop it, it's Christmas*

with a Chocolate Kiss lost in the middle  
a Cherry plucks from the tree top  
and Sugar Plums so black and blue  
they call themselves Coal

## Word as Fish

Kimberly L. Becker

*When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread... Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."... Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.— from the Gospel of John*

Our teacher tells us: ask for the words you need.

Example: *doadt* cat? *wesa*

Doadt

the mouth of the **[river]** where the blood will answer?  
shimmer of **[silver]** on rainbow scales?  
as you slept, I drew **[breath]** from your depths?  
**[mountains]** shawled with purple clouds?

Doadt

how in the violence of **[love]** you fell free of your knife?  
behind the mask of your **[fear]** lies your true clan?  
thunder and **[lightning]** together come close to the tumult of us?  
the hook requires an open **[mouth]**?

Doadt

the**[formula]** for binding and release?  
never more **[hate]** than where love withheld?  
ducks **[devoured]** entrails and head?  
our enemies are those who know our **[secrets]** best?

Doadt

**[calling]** your name in my sleep, I wake to your shape?  
dance of **[war]** and desire?  
smeared with **[red]** paint made from bear fat?  
leap of resistance at moment of **[capture]**?

Doadt

when I dream of you, your **[knife]** is always at my life?  
my mouth **[waters]** for a taste?

Doadt

woodsmoke of your **[skin]**; smell of smoking fish?  
clay pot held in shape by **[fire]** alone, blackened by sorrow?

Doadt

the price of intimacy is the stress of the **[bead]** on the cloth?

Somewhere I have the words to tell you who I am  
They're stuck in my throat, lodged in my blood  
Here: draw them out, fish on fish, from that deep place  
Feed me as you did before, for I am hungry now: **agiyosiha**

## False Fruit

Kimberly L. Becker

Easy to see why First Woman picked them:  
garnet pendants on slender white-flowered stems.

Angry at her mate, she strode away, but  
they sprang up, so she slowed to pick the fruit.

You showed me where to find them in the field.  
I dismissed them as too tiny to yield

much, unlike the brazen store-bought ones.  
The wild ones steeped to fullness in the sun.

As you picked, I searched for the fantastic:  
puffball mushrooms, stomped to powdered magic,

bullfrog whose mating calls came from the creek.  
Your careful gathering brought rewards: sweet

pies, preserves, strawberries cream and sugared.  
Easy to see how First Man caught up with his partner

and made up from their fight. Some quarrels don't mend.  
Some stain the hands, crushed past scab and wound.

Your own mate said to me and my other,  
*I want you kids to be good to each other.*

I reach across the years to take that berry.  
That heart-shaped conceit, seeded treachery.