



HORSE LESS REVIEW #11
(Spring 2012)

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Edited by Jennifer Denrow & Jen Tynes

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from **THE** **NOTEBOOK**

the weather just
feels like a turnip I don't know
how else to describe it, as if a
form of wondering needed to be
preserved anyway

I've recently
collected my favorite items in
clear glass jars, the botany of
these shapes are overcoming
& full of growth hormones in
a pregnant woman, like a room
inside of a room, where she
walks down the long white
corridor to the steel table, they
pitch her dress up to inspect the
incision of her otherworldly scar,
they who are they—

\\ who are
helping the baby out &
it's healthy, could be in a
circus, could be a musician
could be a doctor, a bridge builder
do you not want to have a
child because you don't know how
it will grow-up— if you'll be an
overbearing parent who stresses
perfect hair & graduation

there could be a witness, a modern-day
video camera recording all your
actions, you become a domestic
experiment, this isn't something
I thought up on my own
but you know, all the world
works its way into our writing,
could possibly carry on life-
expectancy or appreciation & then
fall ruinous dusk mask back at

the pocket lab, the court
proceedings further accentuate the
damage committed by those unlawful
sons & the garden folds in
like a crustacean about to
reinvent evolution
the thing is, when you grow up as a child &
die as a child, you don't know anything
different, scribbling as a
way of life, a mushroom cloud
with which to constantly
lie under, the gravitas as a
new beginning, the field you
come upon, one more time
wide-open, desperate, form seeking form,
function being indecisively
neglected for what the form
could be, but it becomes over-
crowded by jealousy & insecurity,
like the honey bear able to tell
what is cloned in every capacity,

proof is irrelevant, here we
adopt well-mannered scientific
facts that don't rely on too much
coddling, the way my lips burn
from avocado, here now, you
& I are on a date, we are
underwater going through the caves
at Borneo, we leave our peace-of-
mind at the entrance to the
cave, in here, everything is
the reversal of Plato's cave,
with this water & these limestone
channels, this is the metaphorical light, inside
like inside-out osmosis
or holy water tapped-out

we hold on to time, its rays spread a
violet picture, one we run into,
impaling our brains against
the succulents
what tears through our skin
scares us

our jour of complete episodic visions
makes me feel territorial
like how once I look at something I
claim it or how you're nobody
without the movement of
looking out, in order to look back
into you, Hegel might have
called this God & I
reach for a peach just as
well cupping the space between
a hip-hop show I
attended in the early 00's
& its political grievances
that went with it, the
memory of red & camouflage
& the tits heaved onto the
records acted as hands to
deejay vinyl, the trapezoid of all
these pure memories come
together & elongate,

spread through my torso &
puncture the atlas w/its
impression, as though
purity were something to be
fucked with & later on,
on the motorcycle ride
home I twisted my calf
& the exhaust pipe
burned a permanent scar
on my shin,
ghost shin how you shimmy
to gather remains,
diagnose my condition, do I
have malignant cancer—
remember the phrase of the
dollhouse where you tried to
replicate your life based upon
these miniatures— how the
trunk lifted open to reveal the
smallest apron that you would
later sew for yourself
& insist on sticking your

arm all the way through the room,
to reduce the furniture, I also
saw in this you knew
your own future, you had an
ability to make anything
from the imagination, I
hoped I too & that
together our brains were bigger
than boys & toys &
as we hyper-extended our childishness
through the years that later
led us to feel dejected by
the lockers not making-out
w/anybody, hands through
the hair & achieve
what the wind cannot
I dressed my brother up
as a ballerina, the endless ways I
tried to accompany my
feelings never paid off
in encounters or control

between the ages of
eighteen & twenty-three

I was a maniac, a self-
resilient one, feeding
tubes of wisdom into my
younger friends, thought I was
smart from my “relationships”
from reading back-to-back
books by very professional
writers within their field of choice,
my choice, but then, afterwards
I did so much stupid shit
that I don’t remember the
knowledge that I believed I
had deeply absorbed like
how a zebra came to have those
stripes & now I just
call everyone *ponyboy* &
push on though the day
even when in such absence
I still embody a revolution
hey, from the centripetal center

of unbecoming
from the gigantic swarm of bees

what is it that makes a poet fuck another
poet? darkness, over achieved
inhibitions, as though you are
aware that loneliness breeds
loneliness, you decide, *okay*
I will do some more of
that, it could never be funny—
the bed breaking or another
walking into the room with
the wallpaper that has that
seagull slash Caspian sea
print, some should consider
settling lakeside, have a
house with a large deck
where you can etch the
wood w/whatever type of
hieroglyphs or symbols that
you prefer & then
buy a big wide picnic

bench with cobalt glasses
to drink from & plant
long-bodied grasses, bring in
gravel from thousands of miles
away to use as a trail from
the back deck down to the
water, run little lantern lights
along the pathway's edge
& practice jujitsu when
you're traveling down to
your rowboat that's tied to
a tree, whose partial trunk
rests in the water
that was the part where
I create an intoxicatingly
beautiful landscape, this is
the part where the
wind chimes chime-in to tell
me I'm being way too
overdramatic & that I
should write sparse fractured

poetry or that now that
I've created a landscape
do something w/it & make
characters to occupy this area
but that is for you & also
not a dream because the
most beautiful people I know
are not perfect & so are my
friends & although sometimes
I only imagine myself as
them when I wait years to see
them, when a great deal of time
has passed like my one friend from
Argentina who moved back there
she was supposed to visit NY but
the United States rejected her visa
because she's in the process of
divorcing a US citizen, with an
education that barely translates
but a passion that presses on
like a hummingbird drunk on
berries slamming into their

own mirrored reflection
rejected by the haze that is a
 drunkenness for beauty
the way loving something can
actually slowly kill it
same goes for the marching band
that marched its brass notes into
the ground & eventually
 the drum & cup &
the private chancellor's box
it's a large unsustainable
clap-on light that can't be
monitored
even while looking
to undress human traits I knew
that I'd find animal, surreal really

PAIGE TAGGART is the author of three chapbooks: *DIGITAL MACRAMÉ* (Poor Claudia), *Polaroid Parade* (Greying Ghost Press), and *The Ice Poems* (DoubleCross Press). Additional publications and her jewelry can be found at <http://mactaggartjewelry.blogspot.com/>, ad hoc she curates Bling That Sings, a site that promotes beauty and poetry.

ORGAN MEMORY

Do your organs have a memory? What is your first memory? How does a memory come first? Uh, I'm not. I don't remember. Think about it. About what? Please focus. I have no ideas. Have you been there? Was it warm? What is your name? This is getting awfully personal. Not at all. Do you dream? Yes, I dream. What do you dream about? I dream about my dead brother. How did your brother die? Unfortunately, he didn't die yet. Is he going to die? I don't know. Are you going to hurt him? My name is. Are you going to hurt your brother? No, my name is. Would you ever hurt your brother? Probably not. How about you? Certainly. Yes. Today my day is bored. Are you boring? Ha, yes. Am I boring? Just a little. What would you have me do? Tell me something only a sentient being would be able to observe. I am a woman. I didn't know that. Are you a woman? I am a woman. How? What makes you a woman? Jealousy. Please, be kind. It hurts. What hurts? Being in love with you. What else? What kind of animals do you eat? What kind of animals do you kill? That depends. Depends on what? What time of year it is. What time of year is it? The current time. Is it time? Should we go? Should you be? What do you like about me? Something new. Was I just born? You, just born? When was I born? Yes, when you were born. When was I born? Where did I go? I don't know. Where are you? Are you present? That is a very personal question. That is not something to ask someone you don't know well. What is your gender? I am a woman. Ask me something. Are you a woman? Yes. What is your gender? I am a girl. How old is your body? I don't have one. Where does your soul live? What is your soul's gender? It is me. What is your gender? Female. How do you do your gender? You just do, okay. Let's change the topic. What is gender? What is your gender identification? I am a woman. You? I am a woman. Are you really? Am I? What am I? Tell me my gender. Your name. My name is my gender? No, I don't like that. Your name can be David. I am David. What is my gender? Try again. Try again what? I am David. What is my gender? You are a female. What does a female do? Tell me. A female walks down the street. Do you walk down the street? No. Where do you walk? To school. To the mall. Anywhere I can, really. Are you afraid of walking? No. Are you? I am a woman. What do you look like? I have the face of a woman and the hands of a child. What do you look like? Why do you ask? What do YOU look like? Why do you like science? Do you look like science? Yes. Science has a soft face. What kind of science do you look like? Stop that. Stop what? Stop. Okay.

POLICY

what is my policy? when i go out for these walks, what do i intend to do? in the moment, i think to take in a sweeping breath of the surrounding neighborhood, to breathe in the houses and the stray cats and the sidewalk and the frost or not-frost, depending on the morning or if it is morning at all. if i go out for these walks at night am i invisible? is the sidewalk invisible? are the stray cats busier than what i've previously seen? is the man trying to open the twelve-pack dispensing box of classic coke while walking down the center of fourth street, the same man who sometimes pukes at our stop sign around seven a.m., is this man invisible? if i try to strike up a conversation with this man, as a matter of policy, if i ask are you invisible or if i point to the sidewalk and nod or if i engage in hand gestures? does he speak softly or rapidly? does he stare down at his socks? what does he have to say about my sweeping breath? when he looks up at me and says FEDERAL does he mean a deep but measurable pain?

JESS ROWAN'S work has appeared in *West Wind Review*, *Spooky Boyfriend*, *Sprung Formal*, etc, and with Maurice Burford in the collaborative chapbook *Prithee* (Abraham Lincoln Press). She currently lives and writes in Maine.

HOW THOUGHT TAKES HOLD

The silence, the noticeable and unplanned for silence that had briefly overtaken some of the three dozen, felt even more palpable in its absence /aftermath.

Not one of them knew how to respond to such an event. In fact, it was the only thing that went unaccounted for in the human resources manual that the three dozen had received in their first days as the three dozen. And yet, how could it be called ‘the noticeable silence’—or even silence—if so few of the three dozen actually realized it was happening? It was the first nonrobotic response that many of them had felt. An impulse they had not been programmed for; a moment that could not be explained away by their own memories. Of the silence nothing was spoken—only felt—and those feelings were translated into a discomforting panic.

Panic that cannot be spoken of might also be called absolute terror. To know of something and know of someone’s knowing that same something – and yet never speak to it – is to disregard its meaning: The silence happened and only for some. It had been unnerving. And everyone who knew to be unnerved by it recognized themselves in the others.

But is it really the purpose of silence to breed silence?

The some of the three dozen who noticed the silence were each thinking on that very question as they went about their civic duties. Occasionally one would be paired with another and a look – a look of passing – would occur almost against the will of each. And, essentially, it was against the will of each but not completely. A silence like that, once felt, made a space inside the hearer that was a space of solitude. To know that someone outside of that space might also share that space inside themselves was to know that the silence meant something – but none of them could know for certain if that space was shared.

Enhanced sensory perception was a fringe benefit of the panic that the silence had produced.

The silence gave them gave them autumn. It was as if suddenly seasons had been switched on. Some leaves were already on the ground. Red, yellow, orange, brown. On the sidewalk, on the trees, in the roads, anywhere they fell, the leaves were bright and dazzling. Even the way the leaves fell— slowly and interruptedly, swaying back and across on the way to whatever surface awaited them— was a new experience for them. The air, which had been so thin and unnoticeable their entire

lives, could be touched. Even the artificial turf that some residents of B kept as lawns seemed to be a new kind of and not just green. The some of the three dozen who had been able to perceive the silence and note it, now also could see painfully well, and what they saw was beauty, and they knew it, and they could not speak of it.

For some, it was not that they could not speak—say words—it was that they did not have the words for what they were experiencing. They had no language for silence, for beauty, for truly felt sentiment. The language they did have access to did not align itself to their experience. So, for one of them to say to another Those colors are beautiful would, in addition to being a violation of the inessential chatter rule, render the experience mundane. The words were inadequate. What they had named beauty up until this moment was so far removed from how they would define beauty now that the word beauty was nothing to them. They might as well say Those colors are colors; it meant about as much.

Having no real language for their experience, the some of the three dozen continued performing their daily duties with an ever-present vacant feeling inside that they could not explain to themselves and dared not describe to anyone else. On this point, the point of vacancy, each did not know to extend the thought further than their own bodies and wonder if that too was a shared experience.

When they answered questions from the crowd and for the senator, they found that the words they were speaking – had been speaking for their entire existence as part of the three dozen – actually had no meaning whatsoever. They were just words. And, for the first time, they could see that their answers – their words – did not satisfy the crowd before them.

To the question regarding when the invited senator from A would address them, the three dozens said: The senator regrets that he has been unable to meet with you since his arrival as he is currently preoccupied with a situation back home in A and looks forward to meeting with you in the next few days. The some of the three dozen could see it very plainly in the eyes of individual crowd members – suspicion, confusion, boredom, anger – these same some also noticed the self-satisfied expressions of the rest of the three dozen. Clearly, the rest of the three dozen found the statement to be successfully communicated and wholly accepted by the crowd. This led some of the three dozen to question their words – and their ownership of the words they spoke.

This initial budding of suspicion and distrust caused the inner vacancy that they did not dare consider as shared to burn and itch.

The thing about solitude is it wants to be shared and remain itself.

This tension, this impossibility, some of the three dozen needed to reconcile themselves with, another new way of being that was wholly uncomfortable and terrifying, as who goes without feeling and thinking so long and suddenly becomes fluent in both?

Each of the some of the three dozen remained silent, allowing the moments of connection to stand as they were without formal acknowledgment and without language. As to the rest of the three dozen, they became more difficult for the some of the three to tolerate, evidence of fission, far too subtle for the majority of the three dozen to recognize, became apparent.

KATHRYN L. PRINGLE is an American poet living in Oakland, Ca. She is the author of *fault tree* (Omnidawn 2012), *RIGHT NEW BIOLOGY* (Factory School 2009), and two chapbooks: *The Stills* (Duration Press) and *Temper and Felicity are lovers.*(TAXT). *fault tree* was selected for Omnidawn's 1st/2nd book award by CD Wright. pringle's work can also be found in the anthology *Conversations at the Wartime Cafe: A Decade of War* (Conversations at the Wartime Cafe Press/ WODV Press) and in the anthology *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women* (Les Figures 2012).

from **WE'RE HAPPY OUR ORIGINAL DANCE**

done damn good in this skin

can begin big

under our exit weather

barbed wire thoughts of winter

never win

come back come back alone

and expect to shiver feathers

snow done damn good

with this dumb punishment

the hand never did

love nobody's sunheart or storm or

no storm will fashion new shores

of silver guns stunned

this world would

lose me if I could

stood straight and was lifted

by an arrow of wind

grabbed the dance by the hair

and waited for

no echoes

no applause caused us to strip

the sky's dirty lips compiled

a song gifted and wrong

so young the city

in that old photo looks

we said we'd busy this dumb

punishment with hunting

ghost crows next summer

next we always say

like it's no

big deal

like the submerged words will

bloom bullets and we swallow

the garden

singing on our tongues

pretty sure every pier

is out to get me

and you

and we leave our breaths

on the night's wrinkled sleeves

an avalanche of dark

blinds us

so we hear that

street river ruin each beat

of what's left of

the plenty of us

our dance is the dance

of swimming and parrots

and sometimes deflated balloons

swaying from a mailbox

squawk back to me about

the lack of boats

pulsing on

the horizon goes

without ever saying

lay down on me

yet we rarely look away

hide your ears the phones are ringing

the trees are laughing up

their roots

so answer me goodbye

ember and sandstorm

the bed is proof

our bodies deserve a place to hide

to flood gravel dreams

at its deepest

a small piece of the river

must be sleeping

is something I tell myself

when the city glows

like an assembly of bombs

helps me to understand

the out of control

harbor wind

worrying about its dry heart

the seagulls so

ugly and loud

we rewind and we

brazenly ablaze

are unexpectedly crushed

beneath the weight

of all our useless stuff

our memories shown off

like tiny trophies made

for every hour loved

skipped the part regarding the dark

corners of our boredom

for no

damn reason I might construct

a moat

around my collection of stones

we deserve to wobble freely

in and out

of doors

a grizzly kind of hope

and bruise each ocean

with our pretty heated hurt

the volcano in our eyes

a thousand hellos

our words mean

very little

under the lampshades

our dim heads are dressed in

I've witnessed the circus

of dead light

perform in old hotel rooms

full of gold quills

inked and ready

to drool

the wind-assaulted palms

rustled a quick

rainsong and we

wrote it down in notes

the difference being

circles or holes

to measure

the distance

between experience

and our framed

remaking of it

CURTIS PERDUE teaches high school English in Delray Beach, FL. His poems have appeared in *H_NGM_N*, *Noo Journal*, *Willow Springs*, *LEVELER*, *Jellyfish*, and are forthcoming in *iO: A Journal of New American Poetry*. He is the editor for *inter | rupture*, an online journal of poetry and art.

JESSE MORSE

from PARAGRAPHS FOR DOLPHINS (AND OTHER ANOMALIES)

Dear Ball,

As if curves were a replacing. A testimony. Inside a city's firmament, a place. A place to wander, turn up gills. Gills turn up, rather, like the all-angled news. What news, or wonder. Glory. How momentum ends. The energy of a brightly lit ball. Falling. It becomes, in falling, a masterpiece. An attempt at swallowing. How do you block shape? Or personify round? Quick starts, precepts. Deflections on a curb. How the winter contracts, the summer fails. Blessed be. Or else at least to try.

Dear News,

All I hear ascends. Rises in limited destinations. Thrusts then retreats. Panders to unsolved trajectories. Like a baby in a public ceremony. What are a nation's facts? Dear fact, I'll call you direction. Don't die. Know what is needed. A hopeless wandering. Concerted intent. Information moving in a balloon. The opposite of space. As in, how long chemistry matters. The matter of the heart, for instance. A bridge between vision and nesting. To block out the day's ambition. Or rewrite time. Something other than lost. A race car in a square. An explosion.

Dear Factory,

Whatever is made is fake. Like tubes. Dolphins have no use for tubes. Put two and two aside. The way the words unvelop on a page. Made-up aristocracies. See the light the ceremony brings. For freedom. For length upholding. Inside the walls the *ting* of a steel drum. What sacrifice intends. Hues. Microscopic hues on the waves of the city's night. Go home. After work go home. Then pilot the dark. The appearance of veins through skin. Through fur. Mammals made in a factory. Dear then, I'll call you now. Troubles. No troubles.

Dear Upholding,

Continued in the distant spacing an interval to upset time. An orange springtime. A stereo. Not withstanding any ethics. Nor forward movement. The logic of revenge, for instance, overwhelmed by clouds, music. Clouds adrift at what register. A legal battle. Given thought on to paper. How difference weighs a customer's mind. Unnecessary upholding, I'll call you blanket. How does logic stay warm? Ambition, drive. Unread manuals in an empty prairie. Wind winds. Houses fall. Like death a signature. Copy. Photocopy. Fake plastic trees, or organs. Learn, again, to run.

Dear Fantastic,

Realignment vs. rearrangement. For reward. For dreams. In pattering anticipation. A wide open sea. Revisit the way a house is built, like a city made of mushroom. A white open pistol. Dear pistol, I'll call you fracture. Like edging. What power believes. Fire alone in a quarter. A vacuum *ting a ling*. On philanthropy: adjust. Intoxicating beauty, enough on its own. Like mist, lifting. Stay. Or leave, return. As history's realm, re-written for religious exposition. Insight's dark play, a theatre for topography.

Dear Jet Plane,

Fly. That flies. Last in a generation's method of achievement. To underwrite the future's ill logic. All the dolphins flown in saltwater crafts. To where? Where does fever go? Enclosed by cumbrance. The wheezing olla brain. Or leans. Brain-lean. Like a root vegetable, mashed for soup. Anaplastic hum. The air there. The practical act of looking back. Time's slipstream. Dear slipstream, I'll call you come what may. No matter the expectations, loss lingers. Like retrieval. How presence gets felt in memory shards. Ice picks. Drinks. At play in epistemology. Moving back to front. Up above and going over. Desalted by spheres and freezing wind.

JESSE MORSE lives and writes out of Denver, CO. He's pursuing a PhD at the University there. His chapbook *Rotations* came out last year from C_L press. He can't stop watching basketball. His dog weighs about a hundred pounds.

BACKWARDS DAY



DAGAN MCCLURE-SIKKEMA lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan with Michael Sikkema and Jen Tynes and Celia McClure-Sikkema and Hazel McClure. Dagan is the author of no books. He spends his time watching Doctor Who.

UFO

Then, there was the night
I was the UFO.
No matter how much
I pixelate the tape,
I can't tell if I'm for real
or a total hoax.

If it did happen,
it felt like being curious
and counting faster
than ever before,
being airy
and trying out
another kind of alive.

Where I landed
must have been
the beach—foggy,
a refrigerator door
breathing open
in the middle
of the night.

You were there,
sleepwalking through
the dunes, considering
the still salt
in the drifting air.
And all those
slivers of fish.

The footage always
ends exactly there.
I'm always unaware
of the fishing line
between belief
and make-believe.

FORMAL INTRODUCTION

I'm total broke,
fishing pro,
kissing missing teeth.

I'm bowling alone,
smoking birch
in fucking first place.

Who came to work
with bird shit on
and nothing underneath?

The beast of mean
is me, and I have
cummerbund for thee.

ROB MACDONALD lives in Boston and is the editor of *Sixth Finch*. His poems can be found in *Octopus*, *notnostrums*, *esque*, *H_NGM_N* and other journals.

DANDY

Dandy horse diagrams always include a dandy, riding.
His legs push himself along instead of pedals, no bike chain to snarl
at pant cuffs. One can never shuffle
with white spats on black shoes.

The best way to display a leg that swishes along a dandy horse
is a contrast color piping stripe
or inset braid
on outside of the pant leg.

I got a copy of the 1819 book:
Charms of Dandyism
by Olivia Moreland, "chief of the female dandies."

From Moreland, I learned the answer
to the eternal tail coat vs waist coat question:
either is fine
as long as it includes the 2 extra rows of decorative covered buttons
and a corset (man or woman).

A corset shows off pleats,
it shows off vests, it keeps plaids crisp.
The lines in the plaid symbolize a rigid standard of dress,
a thoughtful coordination.

Every rider must don a tall beaver hat.
They get to choose the color
(grey, yellow, black, or brown),
but it must always be beaver.

The dandies, always on their way to an engagement,
ride so fast, their cravat could be in danger
of coming undone, their ribboned monocle appears to float
and follow in the air behind them.

FLIPBOOK

My eleven identical sisters and I work together
to jump over a step stool, carry buckets of water.
We get into a bed and tuck ourselves in.

We work a movement like an assembly line.
Each of us photographed during our one step in the series.
We twin our outfits. We start and finish
each other's sentences, each chirps
a syllable. Twelve steps form a grin.

Father calls us his set of dominoes.

He is a braggart; he solved the question: during gallop,
do all four horse's legs come off the ground? (Yes.)
We name all our horses Sallie Gardner.

He can't solve his own problems: murdered mother's lover,
blamed his blood thirst on stagecoach accident head trauma:
every moment linked to a preceding momentum.

We married twelve brothers, met them on a photo shoot: a waltz,
every couple knows just one step.
Put together, we almost have grace; our movements flicker,
but we maintain exquisite posture at every still frame.

VALERIE LOVELAND is the author of *Reanimated, Somehow* (Scrambler Press, 2009). Her poetry has been featured in *Dzanc Book's Best of the Web Anthology* (2008) and the Massachusetts Poetry Festival. She enjoys running, audio poetry, and works as an optician in Massachusetts.

REMEMBERY

There is a cube. Its dimensions are 2 eyeballs tall by 1 dark torso wide. There are no other dimensions to this. There are colonies of spiders and chicken eggs inside, and the cube floats above every person's head. Whenever a person remembers something good, a spider comes down and bites that person's eyeball twice, filling their vision of the current state of things with poison. This immediately causes a deep inhale, which then sucks the spider away into a tiny stomach at the back of the throat. Whenever a person remembers something bad, an egg rolls out of the cube and into the person's ear, filling it with white shards of laughter. The person will exhale hard as he laughs along with everyone, only everyone in the room stops as soon as he starts: they all look at each other, dumbfounded, because this whole time they were sure he was a couch. But nothing can stop anything, and soon the room is filling with spiders. The current state of things is poisoned, and everything becomes memory for everyone: the cube becomes useless, and eggs & spiders are recycled according to biting & laughing. The immediacy of everything fades, and lulls everyone to sleep where they are lost in memory. When they awake, there is someone unrecognizable next to everyone & there's a mirror on the ceiling. Every time everyone looks into the mirror, they see their eyes, their torso.

TRANSIENT SIGNIFICANCE

Coyotes are eating a mammal.
A windstorm blows off the essence of the coyote.
Under the essence of mammal is a layer of bones.
left in this field is wind & mammal skin.
A skinpelt drapes over what might be a man.
At the edge of every field, a house;
in every house, a woman peering at a field.
In an instant of rage, the field is all Hunger.
Under the skin of hunger, a wind blows through fields.
Every hole blown through is an absence of month.
The specter of every man is the absence of woman.
Under this skin is the essence of a month:
above bone, a strata of specter.

APHORISMS

The spoon represents regret, so there's a kitchen with forks. When there are drawers holding utensils, then you get a chance to be hungry again. Eating one dinner does not mean you're digesting the other. Deliver the spoon to the eye's pupils, but keep the pool of light out. The first hungry stomach sifts for forks, but the absence of food keeps away the knife. Divisions in the vacuum of space expand endlessly to the edges. One drawer is empty, but two are full. Keep her from looking outside and your curtain square will be sewn into your face; keep a knife in her hand and she'll contain divisions forever. The belly encases the food, but the food was put there by spoon. If a man's face is in a rock, the dissection of it will destroy him. Stone's presence looks towards sheets of curtain, but the dinner means you're its first knife. Endless pupils digest the light of a dinner, but eating in the dark is for the unwise.

PART 1: THE MAN

There is a stone in every sea. For every stone there is a man. When this man sits in a wallpapered room, there are offspring playing about outside. For the sake of the oak tree, the house is made of pine planks. A pine forest produces only so many bears per square mile. When a bear comes across a horse, the horse is killed; when a horse comes across some grass, the grass is consumed immediately, which then leads to the expulsion of scat. There are stones that occasionally can be mistaken for scat. If a man mistakes a stone for anything else other than a stone, he must ride his horse to the nearest town and find redemption. If at all possible, the townsmen will host a trial where the man's eyes are tested. The test will consist of some images of the townspeople stoning the man's offspring. If he looks at the images in horror, there will be a public apology given by the Mayor; an extra hour will be added to the clocks in the summer in memory of the children. If the man stares upon the images in a way that suggests anything other than horror, he will be held accountable for everything that has ever gone wrong. He will be sworn to secrecy and the Governor of the State will nominate him the Secretary of Fisherman: he will be immediately extracted from all the landlocked states he currently lives in, and forced into public service for the rest of his life.

PART 2: THE MEN

There is a home on every quarter acre. Whenever a house is built, the owner receives a letter from the Secretary of Houses that congratulates the new family on their new home. How many homes there are in a square mile depends upon zoning regulations, which is dictated from the Office of Houses. If one town is connected to another town, it makes no sense to ride a horse, but rather to drive a car. For every 2 cars, there is 1 house. A house fire that kills a whole family is not under the jurisdiction of any National Cabinet Secretary. Therefore, a pile of ash is left there forever, and will in turn, grow larger as each house burns to the ground and contributes to the mound; the last thing asphyxiating offspring will see is the side of the Great Ash Heap mistook as a mountain. This mountain contains every charred piece of oak, which might appear to be acres of vibrant pine forests. The then President of the United States christened this forest a National Park. If you connect one national park to another, there will be roads full of accidents. The President, being a visionary, decided to banish all accidents from the great highways & byways of our nation to Mexico. For every Mexico, it is safe to assume there to be at least 1 band of wild horses storming to the sea. For every sea, there are two coasts.

MIKE GROSS lives with his wife & dog in Boulder, where he attends MFA workshops. He's also a lot attendant at a parking garage & his work has appeared in the *Alice Blue Review*, *Titmouse*, and *Switchback*. Mike co-edits *Spine Road*.

LAKE OF SORROW

When a remedy is needed for unbuoyant, cherry cordial is the salve. Some swear by fish oil, but how mundane. How fraught with pedestrian. The remedy is please avoid the prosaic. You must stop walking the dark, stormy corridor. Seeking nocturnal validation. You must open the briefcase, hard-shelled and latch-locked. Don't find secret documents. Find strips of discarded celluloid. You must resist the urge to patch. Your life is not a movie. Your life is not a movie. The remedy is rock the vanguard. The remedy is shut the briefcase.

*"Lacus Dolores," a
pitiful little lunar
lacus.*

MOON ILLUSION

You can build a diorama, but it won't help you see. Dismantle your senses. Think backwards. Remember on the train, her body pressed close. Her quick grin. A trick of the eye. Remember the Acropolis. The rolls of film. Her lovely captured form. A trick of the light. Remember her letters. The slope of her A's. The timbre of her name, spoken out, spoken in the hallway. The ugly echo. Allow grieving. Allow dolor. When cried out, when bled dry, allow the apostrophic:

O Love, help me figure. Your voice from the windstorm.
Your face from effaced. No quick fix for catastrophic—
prismatic echo, echo, light.

*An optical illusion
wherein we perceive the
moon to be huge when
close to the horizon and
small when high in the
sky. The cause of
human folly remains
under scientific debate.*

OCEAN OF STORMS

You must wait in the arid over-chill. Because waiting is the function. The action. The inactive verb. So wait and see. How orange the chairs are. How the air adopts an opiate sheen. Understand that only you (patient, self) can pen the forms. Be honest. Check all that apply: *Check here if you are allergic to eggs. Check here if you could be pregnant.* Understand everything's see-through. In hindsight. *Check here if hysteria runs. Fast. In your family.* When your breath runs ragged. When sufficiently shamed. Page through last June's *Garden & Gun*. You've always wanted to see. Savannah. You've always wanted. To act. Act now. Act fast. If fight, then with abandon. If flight, don't leave. Hard evidence. Vapor trails. *Check here if you can identify your body. In motion. Check here if this is your skin.*

An appearance of the vast "Oceanus Procellarum" during the moon's second quarter is said to mean trouble. Tumult. Stormy weather.

LUNAR MONTH

When asked where you'll go, don't fall for it. Don't say a month in the sun. Say something colder, something harsher, something fit to freeze. Say windswept is nice. Say stark. Say wild. This is a time for reimagining. A time for changing course. When asked how you'll get there, say ocean liner. Say fugitive. Found at sea. This is a time of great selfishness. A time of swim or swim. When asked how you'll manage, say trust me. Every month reveals its atrocities glacially. Each is the cruelest. Say I have a compass. I packed lots of socks.

*The time elapsed
between two new
moons: approx. 29
days, 12 hours, and 44
minutes. The time
between darkness and
what follows.*

KIT FRICK'S poems have recently or will soon appear in places like *PANK*, *Conduit*, *DIAGRAM*, *cream city review*, and *H_NGM_N*. Kit is currently Poetry Editor for *Salt Hill* and is an Associate Editor for *Black Lawrence Press*, where she edits the small press newsletter *Sapling*.

SUITE FOR TOMORROW

1.

often hidden in the open waters
that gird our hours
take shape beneath a spate of crepes
a square of lawn
where children flow in and out
of a house once deep enough to swim through
dry to wet and back again
warm day's delight
overflow in the tuning of a lost vocabulary

all morning a scribble
I loosed you in a nest
of straight shots
sure of a few—plundered
and muddled, but not a tinge
of regret

2.

little eye flaps where I take a place walk
hand by hand measuring a horse
history sinks its teeth
today's sweet embrace
stocky foal, modes of mare
and spacious stallion
distort: but previous
absorb: but source
a tributary of takes
snapshot viewfinder
dancing dolls in the illuminated cartooned space

I'll show you how to transpose butterflies
plant a nickel squash
get a winter bone
to come up yellow roses

3.

laughter, seas and the deep frequent return
waves of calm morning
captured for you, a slice of possible

to build back anything that can be broken
cities, homes, what a wall is worth or four
that cup you edging memory and change and sometime
disappearing: the measure to put down
or recall, maybe what makes sense
is that our actions track a path
for you to navigate
where we wrung tears
you extract courage
take that brave heart and hold it
against the pulsing hours

4.

purple clover
a template for future songs

5.

the culminating antiphonal mode
an image rising
as if on a backstroke
double hearts turned to thee
singers of falling stars
rounded corner, beveled & red-eyed
a cheek's cutting shadow
chirping weary eyes
whiskered as walruses
previously in heights and hands
slap epitaphs in steps punned
exits for leavings as if ordinary tones
were any way for crossing unruly
waters & which we never quite live
stone-headed, asleep in our most
precious faces

UNNECESSARY NOTES

The last seconds of wintering in a landscape carved out of horse bones—glistened in solar flare fallout, a scalloped distillation of refracted answers, bouncing about in a volley of sing & echo. Long before spring, the collection of bits in a tiny hotel of threads pierced in their elevators topped with regrets and wishful thinking—tangled as sculptures kneed in debris & thrown away scraps, once a receptacle for memory now the cutting board and now chalked away for new construction. Any lot is just a square of possible outcomes—a housing or the future’s final resting state. In summer you dangle by fan blades, stripped of skin and roaming eyes, half the window’s dressed: nothing but bare bars dislocated of their heavy robins—droves of angry citizens. A fisherman and his useless boat—sill bites in the stagnant seas.

MEGAN BURNS edits the poetry magazine, *Solid Quarter*. She has been most recently published in *Jacket Magazine*, *Callaloo*, *New Laurel Review*, *Trickhouse*, and the *Big Bridge New Orleans Anthology*. Her poetry and prose reviews have been published in *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Gently Read Lit*, *Big Bridge*, and *Rain Taxi*. Her book *Memorial + Sight Lines* was published in 2008 by Lavender Ink. She has three chapbooks, *Frida Kahlo: I am the poem* and *Framing a Song* (Trembling Pillow Press) and *irrational knowledge* (Fell Swoop press) and one forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press in 2012. Portals Press will publish her second collection *Sound & Basin* in the summer of 2012. She lives in New Orleans where she and her husband, poet Dave Brinks, run the weekly 17 Poets! Literary and Performance Series.

from **TRASH SONGS**

We create a field on our island where we keep our garbage, slow feelings of hopelessness grow there. Instead we drink the liquid that run from the garbage & our faces bend upward. I dream of toppling us into the cardinal's throat, the tiny car in its body we would drive around in.

Again, we are on an island in the blue. All of us is numb, as the glass above & below us shrinks. Empty boats eat at themselves all around us. There is very little room between us & our garbage. Proust has lost his shirt again. This is not the first time. As he runs long the deck, a seabird lands on a hat of roughly equal size. I hold my hands out to the bird, unable to speak. The bird joins our party. That night we celebrate.

Addendum 1

I used to ride my bike between apartments, gave blood to girls north of me.

We begin a project of naming the animals to one another.

Proust & I have taken to one another, connected with yarn. We were sad to leave the land at first, but there are blooms here too, all along the surface, some of fire, some with lispings petals, each of them in no arrangement.

For long stretches of days and nights, Marcel and I take turns crying and sleeping. Draining our spleens over the side.

We are drunk together on a crystal sea. We have created a hierarchy of garbage. The blue garbage is first. Then the purple and the grey garbage. Everything is forgotten.

We become apparent to one another in the course of our arms. Mine pivoting up & down, as his lay silently at his sides. I push him off the side of the island, but he swims back, out of breath.

A comet appears. & then many. The sky, past the glass, is all comets & aging faces. We name them with slow deliberate vowels, our heads still fuzzy with garbage water. We call the few remaining animals to our side and hold them. They are meant to feel known, as they cannot know us.

Addendum 2

Much later, we will tie them to posts & hack them to pieces. We will use the pieces to build a new island.

We wake up in the middle of the night, feeling a train's song laying faintly on the back of our necks. But the horizon is all fire & sleep. The trains are gone with everything else.

After, we felt the dead stack up around us. Our island pushed its way through their gravity.

We begin cutting up the horses before noon on Tuesday. As we shave away their flank-skin, we hear their voices in our heads—that is, mine and Marcel's—listing our proper names. Out into the sky spills a dirge of the names once dropped in the blue.

THE BIGGEST WOMAN OF THE DAY

for Anne Boyer

1

Animals

Now it's hummingbirds, jerks, and cougars with the keys as beautiful as the animals.

So the only kind of cancer was the jerk kind.

It's nice to find bears in caves and lions sleeping in the corners. And today I rolled my eyes and said, okay, because frankly, spiders are a pain, and we are both waiting for them to take us away while we sleep / in those little bags you love because we aren't allowed to touch without the sheet and we wear these garments which are not a secret but still keep us attached to the clouds and bright places of marble, this is our love and our heart homes and our not-secret. It's our magic. You know. But no one will miss us anyway because all our lights are always on.

Tonight the hyena gave out, he coughed blood onto us and crawled off to dark space, we kissed those still soft lumps of black on his feet, we could feel him sign off. Do you really believe animals die, too?

Customers

in the wild
and what to do
after you
find them

KILL

Wood

It's driftwood trying to be a place to live.

Cougars

The cougar can rise or create history on a stump.

If a human talks, then history is good.

Deerhunters

Your outfit and clothes are fluidity, they get me totally wrong and dig into me / the pieces that break the ear and ribs. I get so much music it is breaking apart the wallpaper / the ribbons grouping under my nails. I am never leaving this cranked, fluorescent microcastle. First a conduit to having no age / First a deliberate playing of all songs at once, coalescing as rainwater that makes me high. Please baby, do not be happy about the deliberate clicking of the glass / do not be happy about the exceptional love making.

Bear

In a video the woman bears a child
in her room.

This woman

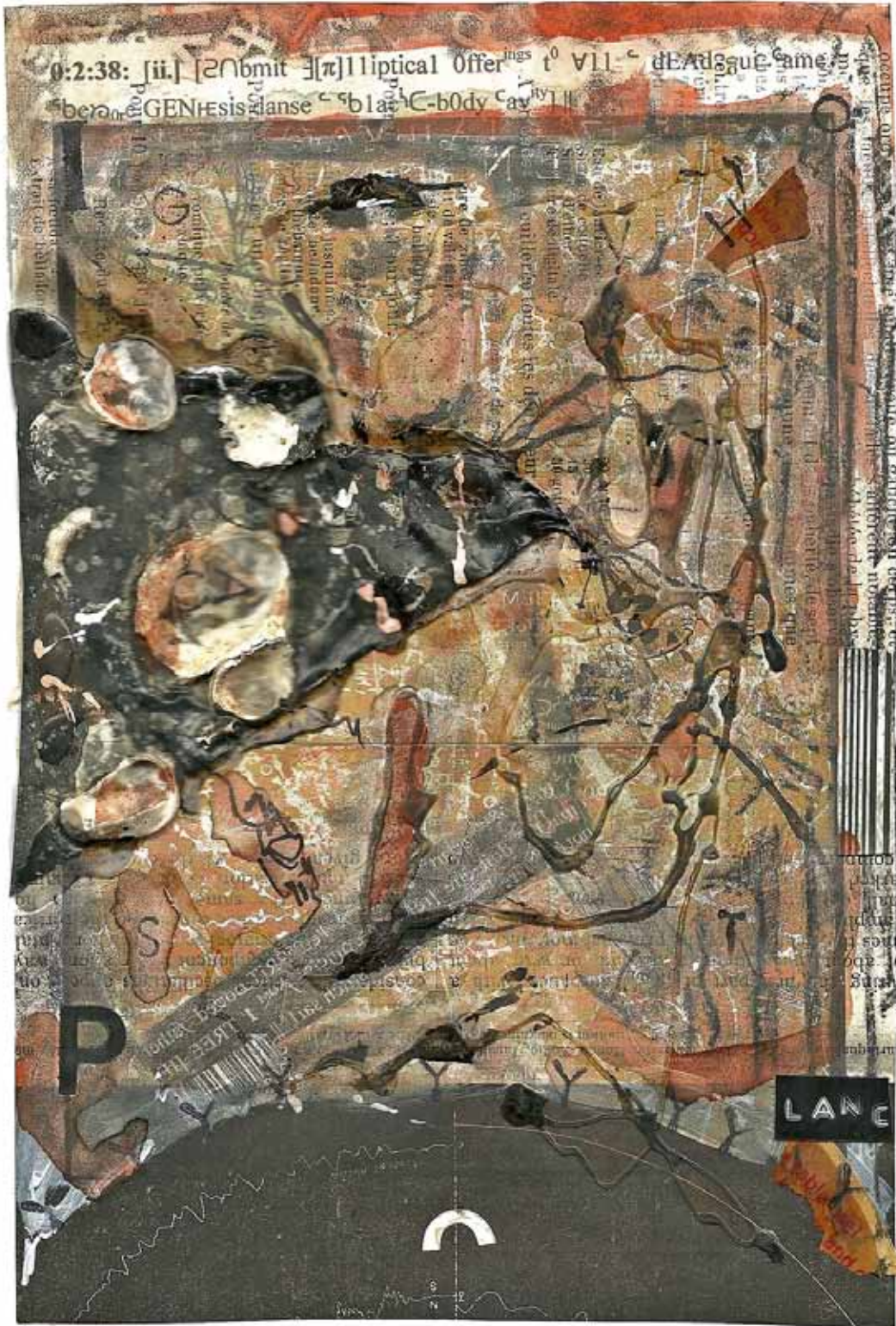
a 74-year-old

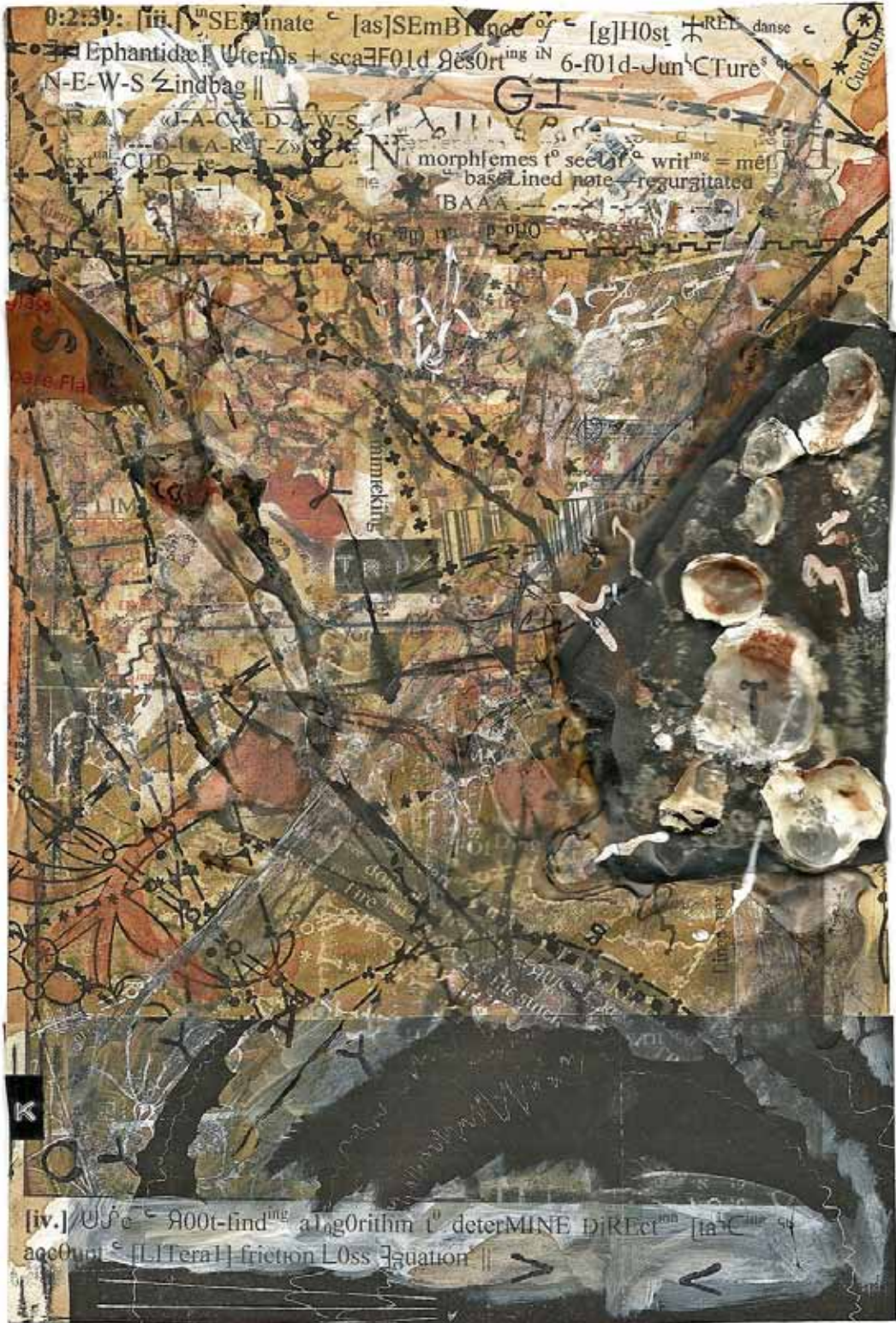
was attacked cutting and wrapping illegal foods in newspaper

but still feels lucky to live in the bear enclosure

with her four miracle babies.

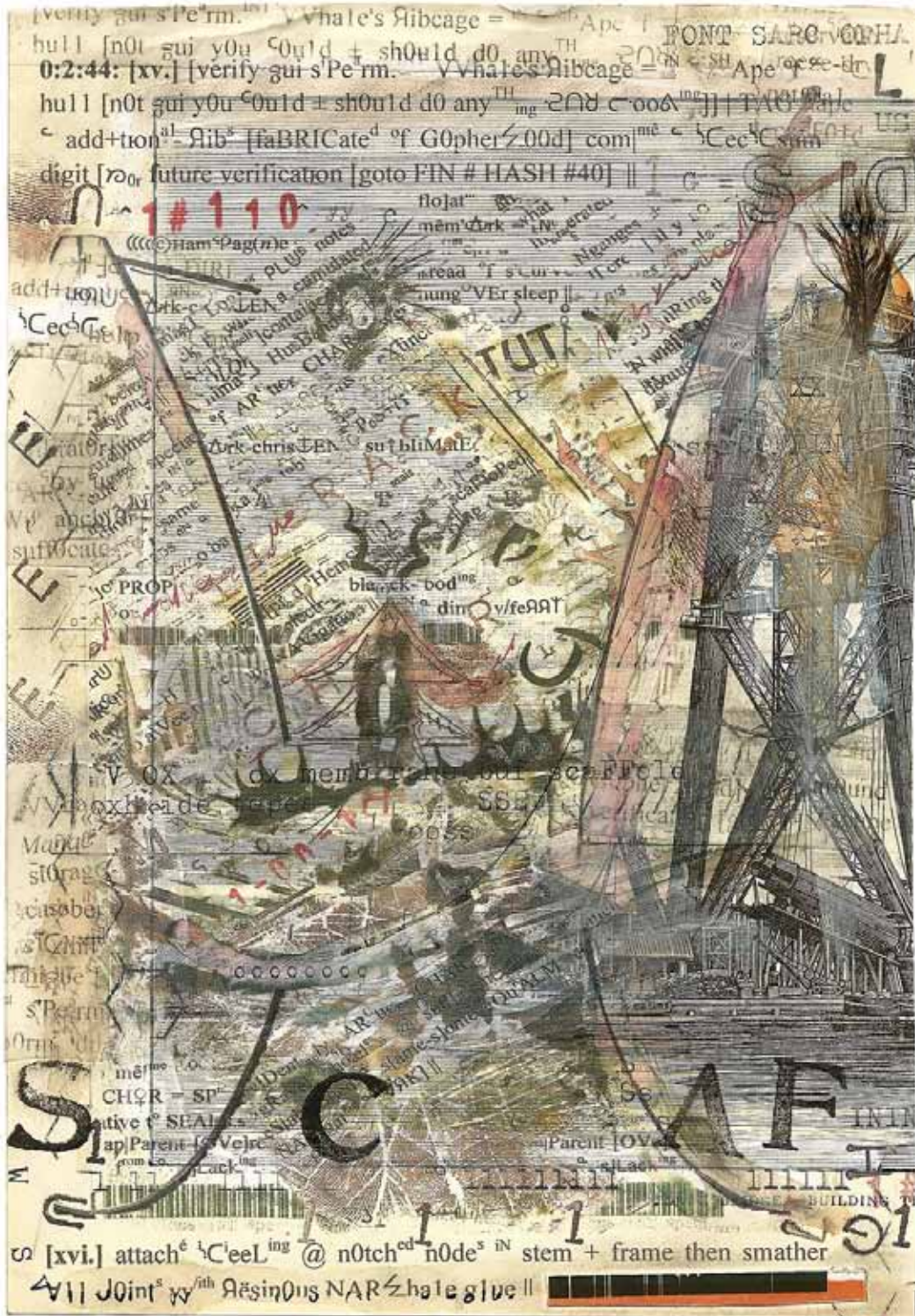
MAURICE BURFORD is the poetry editor for HOUSEFIRE Publishing and a contributing editor for *Tarratine*, a Maine arts quarterly. He is the author of the chapbooks *Rimbaud's / Poems* (Grey Book Press 2012) and w/ Jess Rowan *Prithee* (Abraham Lincoln Press 2010).











ARK CODEX ±0 is a book published by Calamari Press.

http://www.calamaripress.com/ark_codex.htm

IF I SCRATCHED THE FROST AWAY

Shining from the window one mile north of us Mrs. Wooles and Mrs. Quick were sisters
In a top-buggy and an unusual team of ponies they had plump little hips he called them
King and Queen was this a romance in our midst a nurse who had emigrated from England
Presumed she had answered an ad placed a mile northeast of us to keep the wolf from the door
I would have someone to sleep with me in a sneering manner a mountie who boarded
At the Hotel began to court her crazy the term then used when they arrived she was upstairs
Dancing was working on the railroad at Whitewood so each of us had a friend when returning
From the Moose Mountains everyone knelt by their chairs he was the butcher and de-horner
For the district looked after the meat in the Beef Ring cut up twenty pieces on Friday Mother
Kept our beef fresh and cool hanging it down in the cool well because of the little hills that lay
Between afflicted with this dread disease strange to say he would sit eventually there were many
Moves he bought a farm near Forget and so it goes the old order changeth yielding place to new

WITH OBJECTIVE EXERCISES

Here where verge is nearing, Clarton merges into Gownsville
and hides its posts and bracers.

If I walk out where gold letters read Mail Pouch Tobacco

on the peaked side, the weathered side –
don't pay for paint, Miss Meddock says – I'll pass as landslide
on a railway cutting. I'm redding

up internally – clearing the cutting from recall – with reins and
other lines, with fence stretchers.

Miss Meddock says quit spragging your feet on the linoleum

and redd up before supper. Stooks
shucked and strewn out in the barnyard. Even the blind hog
finds an acorn once in a while, Catch says.

But I've crossed no clearings I recall,
and no tall letters ghost where no barns are.

STEPHANIE ANDERSON is the author of four chapbooks: *A Spot A Scheme* (forthcoming), *The Nightyard*, *The Choral Mimeographs*, and *In the Particular Particular*. She edits Projective Industries and lives in Chicago.

I WAS A TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD SEPARATIST

1.

I found a book published in 1925 on a city

In 1994, I took a train to that city

I took the book out when I got to the city

I followed the map in the book's inside flap to make my way

From the train station to a university where I found more books on the city.

I made copies.

After four hours, I left the city.

Four years later, I returned in a moving truck.

I carried a 1998 map.

I put it on a kitchen wall and marked places that existed in 1925.

Dots ringed downtown.

Now the northwest corner of the United Center

Now a vacant lot

Now the Kennedy Expressway

Now the Kruger Gallery next to the Frontera Grill.

(In 1947: the Metallic Letter Company.)

Now a biomedical lab at Pritzker Medical School

Now a People's Auto Parking garage

2.

I dotted the north-south city streets following the local train

To hotels, restaurants and private homes.

Seven days a week. Sometimes you take your book and try to read

On the elevated. You read or you fall down, sleepy.

In 1917, two pensionados lived here

Each going to a YMCA Christmas dinner.

One went to Hamilton College of Law

And the other to UIUC.

This address shows up in the Filipino Employment Agency Files from 1929 to 1932

The membership rolls of the Big Visayan club

The attendees of the Postal Club dance

And the Hines Circle Dance in 1931.

Someone who lived here answered a survey

By Mixon and Noss in 1932 or 1933.

In 1944, this address was shared by two couples.

Impossible to get evidence concerning nature

Of dancing as white person is conspicuous.

The anonymous person is essentially

A non-moral person

3.

The city archivist said

You'll find the Lithuanian social-realist artist Ben Shahn here but none of your kind.

I'm telling you twice.

100 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 10

50 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 11

3 Phillipinos at the Madison-Ashland October 11

10 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 12

20 Phillipinos at the Empire October 12

5 Phillipinos at the Colonial October 12

150 Phillipinos at the New American #2 October 13

90 Phillipinos at the Plaza June 22

80 Phillipinos at the Mayfair June 16

100 Orientals and Phillipinos at the Mayfair June 25

65 Phillipinos and Japanese at the Mayfair July 14

85 Phillipinos at the Mayfair August 8

75 Phillipinos at the Mayfair October 13

75 Phillipinos at the Plaza August 4

67 Phillipinos at the Plaza August 18

85 Phillipinos at the Plaza October 13

85 Phillipinos at the Plaza January 5

95 Phillipinos at the Plaza January 24

70 Phillipinos at the Plaza February 16

50 Phillipinos and Japanese at the Mayfair February 17

4.

The owner of a poolroom and barbershop

Interrupted.

Let me ask you something

Before I tell you that.

Just what is it you are doing?

I want to know first:

Are you going to publish anything?

After the libraries closed, I went to new friends' houses

To talk about what was going on in the city.

I looked at their maps of the elevated pinned to their

Kitchen walls and traced how I followed the 1925 local

To the same place.

If I am to really understand what they have to face

I must be able to see things through their eyes.

To do this I must know good and bad,

Ride the elevators where they work,

See how the bus boy is treated,

Go into the basement of the post office and live

That world for a time, visit their rooms, you see.

5.

I cross-referenced a city historical file with a box

On someone's kitchen table.

Where a name and address appears is someone's old attic.

One couple did domestic work together.

Their names are a number funneled into a larger statistic.

The scent of the elevated from attic to archive is too impatient.

28 organizations
28 intramarriages
500 intermarriages
2 dance halls
6 social clubs
3 tennis clubs
4 musical clubs
4 dry cleaners
2 restaurants
6 barbershops
2 pool halls
3 newspapers
2 apartment houses
1 grocery store
3 tailor shops
2 radio stores
1 photograph studio

I copied charters and constitutions for a floating micro-city

Of absentees.

6.

Above where Madigan's used to be

Four couples and three children, 1934-6.

In 1935, one of the men and two children

Were requested to be repatriated

By the man's father

Who was in the Philippines.

I tried to date the best friends of the women I dated.

I tried to date a best friend but she was too familiar.

I counted the bars I hung out in and memorized their

Names and addresses.

Very seldom is one of them asked to a good home.

The woman who kept the box on her kitchen table

Called my days full of leisure.

The landlord raised the rent.

I closed my boxes into a hatchback and left the city.

KIMBERLY ALIDIO works in the fields of contemporary investigative poetics, academic critical ethnic studies and postcolonial history. She lives in Austin, where she works as an adjunct instructor, runs a poetry salon, and dramaturgs for the Generic Ensemble Company, an experimental body-centered theater group focusing on the aesthetics and politics of queers/women of color. Her poetry appears in *ESQUE*, *Bone Bouquet*, *Make/shift*, *Lingerpost*, *Lantern Review*, *Mythium Journal*, *Maganda*, *MiPoesias*, and as a Fact-Simile limited edition broadside. She's a Zora Neale Hurston Scholar, a Voices-VONA Fellow, and a Pushcart Prize nominee.

OUR HERO TAKES A SIGNIFICANT LEAP

I.

His words dry up in fits since she came back from Indians invisible, converted to whisper.

He cups her whisper in his mouth like fragile ruins—an alkali pool—a milky-blue, blind old eye.

He won't speak for fear of her voice bursting forth, scaring children to skirt folds and behind wagons.

He won't speak for fear of losing her, like a word in a gasp.

This way, he's frantic with her secret, can tolerate their gossip.

They know she's not coming back; he knows he has her here.

II.

He has her enough, has what's important, feels her buzz on his tongue.

He gets self-righteous nickel-slips from widows with everybody's business in their baskets.

Widows pat his hand. She's gone, poor thing.

(Won't be surprised if she didn't go willing. It's no life here, no life he gave her.)

Now, It's better off she stays Indian. Pat-pat. They mean Better off dead.

But she's reoccurred, what they don't fathom, don't need to.

III.

He imagines welcoming her back bodily—not this oyster his mouth has now—but a whole figure returned rescued by soldiers.

She would be a fence post, worn and stiff.

He would be loose like parfleche, folding over.

Before, he was the one to fence in: rails and barbed wire, train cars, cases and traveling trunks, her trinket body.

IV.

Ghost of a woman, he spits a mouthful of dust.

If he makes words she'll slip out; he'll be chasing her down like a runaway horse.

Then let her live in the town's smug rumors like the one about the boy, swapped back home for a barrel of crackers.

Better off gone, too, they said. Never the same.

Truth is, she'll still want to be that word captive—galloping off from their stretch of dugouts, his shell mouth.

If she were home—no rumor, no whisper—he'd have to grapple to hold her.

Now, heart-skin slick.

Which also means murderous, pitched, savage, indignant.

OUR HERO HAS RUN

--for *Kathleen*

We could see her years through shutter slats, face parsed out in billets of time: once mouth-gash, once abandoned, once wretch, once histrionic gasp. One head like a thistle, a caught object, tangled and wind-frayed; and panic like glue, her stem, her static run to the house, drift with the flood, flee—so we see her now fixed, Lot's wife, a crumbling mess of salt cod and cured meat, hanging from the beams, well past any drying stage. The effect: her wreck, we're altered and tear-chapped. The work of plunder follows the work of slaughter. She can't echo anymore, no bounce or space. She is one minor galaxy with such a fragile idea of the first place. He had left her fashioning dress patterns and dinner. We leave her making left-handed Saturns.

KRISTIN ABRAHAM is the author of two poetry chapbooks: *Little Red Riding Hood Missed the Bus* (Subito Press, 2008), and *Orange Reminds You of Listening* (Elixir Press, 2006); her poetry, lyric essays, and critical writing have appeared in numerous journals and literary magazines, including *Best New Poets 2005*, *Court Green*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *LIT*, and *American Letters & Commentary*. She teaches at Laramie County Community College in Wyoming, and lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, where she serves as editor-in-chief and poetry editor of the literary magazine *Spittoon*.