





PCR



THIS MAGAZINE IS SET IN BASKERVILLE. John Baskerville of Birmingham formed his ideas of letter-design during his early career as a writing-master and engraver of inscriptions. He retired in middle age, set up a press of his own and produced his first book in 1757.



The Plum Creek Review

Spring 2009



PUBLISHED BY AND FOR THE STUDENTS OF
OBERLIN COLLEGE
OBERLIN, OH



EDITORS Chelsea Baker
Lauren Clark

LAYOUT Allie Hirsch
Jesse Miller

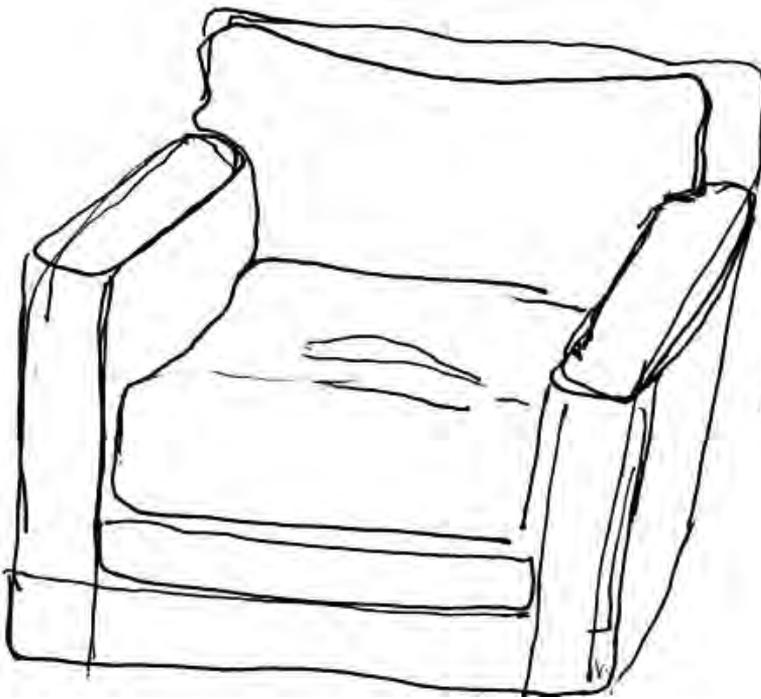
TREASURERS Henry Atkinson
Jeffrey Yozwiak

PUBLICITY Galen Beebe

WEBSITE Stephanie Tang

STAFF Rosemary Bateman
Adam Beaudoin
Allison Fontaine-Capel
Adam Chambers
Sam Krowchenko
Liz Lagno
Samuel Rowe
Gus Wezerek
Rachel Wysocki

FRONT Allison Fontaine-Capel
BACK Dain Chatel



HAVE A SEAT

LETTERS

there are no letres	<i>Dain Chatel</i>	1
He said, I want to bury	<i>Galen Beebe</i>	2
Midgaard's Desolation	<i>Stephen Burrows</i>	4
Fourth Grade	<i>Sam Krowchenko</i>	6
Palindrome	<i>Andrew Mooney</i>	7
A	<i>Dain Chatel</i>	18
The Garden You Used to Have	<i>Megan Kyle</i>	19
Hypothermia, 1997	<i>Renee LeGue</i>	20
Sullivan Diner, 7pm	<i>Galen Beebe</i>	22
"Ey What Up Bryce?"	<i>Ryan Magiera</i>	23
Eating microwave popcorn	<i>David Greenberg</i>	25
buhm	<i>Dain Chatel</i>	26
Decline and Fall of the Beau/Flan Empire	<i>Samuel Rowe</i>	28
Corpse	<i>David Merriman</i>	29
Agoraphobia	<i>Jesse Miller</i>	30
Don't Be Scared, Chet Baker	<i>William Roane</i>	32
Vacation in England	<i>Stephen Burrows</i>	37
Soffa	<i>Rosemary Bateman</i>	38
through the forest loathe	<i>Dain Chatel</i>	43
Syzygy	<i>Renee LaGue</i>	44
Shipping Missives in the Night	<i>Daniel Tam-Claiborne</i>	46
Wessex Revisited	<i>Samuel Rowe</i>	48
Don,t be envyous of super-models.	<i>Adam Beaudoin</i>	50
Insectophile	<i>Magalee Ciripili</i>	52
When the Music Stopped	<i>Daniel Tam-Claiborne</i>	54
Romantic Dogs	<i>Marlo Barrera</i>	56
t	<i>Dain Chatel</i>	58
Topography	<i>Rosemary Bateman</i>	60
Circling to Land	<i>Adam Beaudoin</i>	62
They're taking things apart	<i>Dain Chatel</i>	63
Fortune Cookie	<i>Stephen Burrows</i>	65
For Ayumi	<i>Henry Atkinson</i>	66
Permutations	<i>Lauren Clark</i>	67

IMAGES

<i>Allison Fontaine-Capel</i>	5
<i>Maia Brown</i>	14
<i>Allison Fontaine-Capel</i>	17
<i>Gus Wezerek</i>	24
<i>Adam Chambers</i>	27
<i>Maia Brown</i>	34
<i>Allison Fontaine-Capel</i>	36
<i>Allison Fontaine-Capel</i>	42
<i>Adam Chambers</i>	45
<i>Laura Bellis</i>	49
<i>Daniel Tam-Caiborne</i>	53
<i>Gus Wezerek</i>	59
<i>Adam Chambers</i>	61
<i>Daniel Tam-Caiborne</i>	64
<i>Jacob Farnsworth</i>	74

** All other artwork is part of the Public Compendium program, an anonymous public journal project.*





there are no letres where we meet



HE SAID, I WANT TO BURY
my tired bones, so I wrapped
my fingers around his worn
knuckles, but he peeled
them back. this date
isn't going so well. my culture

tells me don't have sex yet, cultivate
a relationship, farm it like berries;
but our relationship is a date,
wrapped
in a skin so tough if you peel
it back the insides wither in shock. he wears

leather bracelets as worn
in as his leather wrists; he's cultured,
but his cuticles are peeling
and raspberry-
stained, and when he rapped
on my door it bruised red; this date

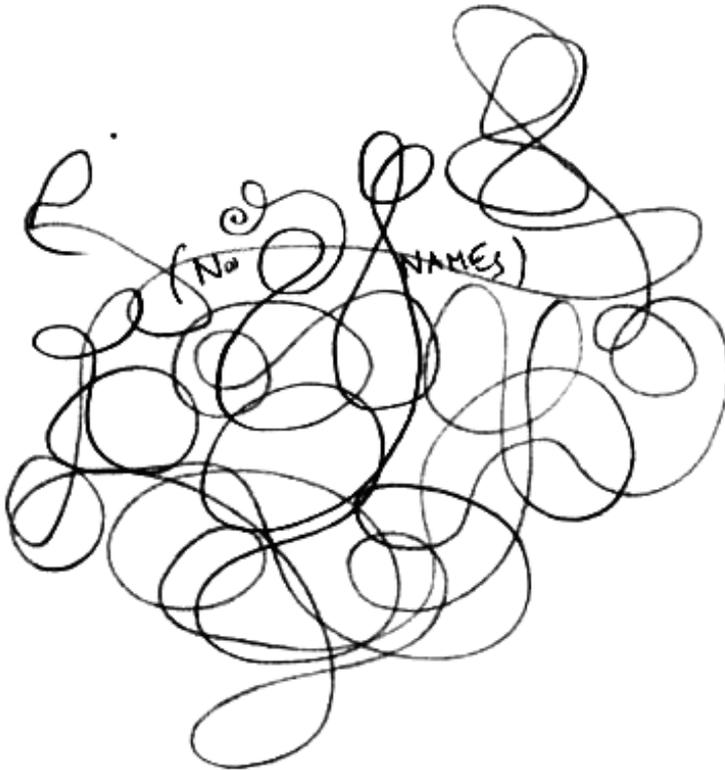
isn't going so well. second dates
are better, thirds, fifths; we'll wear
each other in until we can wrap
our Christmas presents inside our skin. my cult
will worship his god, he'll bury
his skeletons in my cemetery. His congregation will pray at the peal

of my bells. I peel
an orange—the last guy I dated
was allergic to oranges and blueberries
and wouldn't wear
leather. He thought vegans were more cultured
than anybody else, and he hated rap.

I turn down the music and unwrap
a new set of no-drip candles. He peels
a carrot from my Cultivate
Your Own Garden kit. (The last guy I dated
gave me that.) I'm worn
out and tired of unburying

old relationships. This one scoops an orange peel from the tile,
wraps it in my US Weekly (my subscription to American culture)
and buries it inside my overflowing trashcan; this date isn't going so bad.

Galen Beebe



MIDGAARD'S DESOLATION

the dread rose : silent the bloom
on a fjord scroll linen pearls
line the queenliness and preer along the
east rocks millstone toes flex : anticipation
of lishing honey water loose froth
clouds tongues of formeus lexicon

then yes yes then

the righters come : look there! fish afire and raven woes
silvery shades pitch waves pluck ripe smite with the olive
sword salt the earth pillars shadow the oracle quill bitter
the writhing robbed of sleep oh the geological soar of that
green sad shudder.

Stephen Burrows



Allison Fontaine-Capel



FOURTH GRADE

The bookshelf fell on top of her
while we watched cartoons.
A heavy sound, like loss,
followed by whimpering;
a body surrounded
by chunks of splintered wood
and scattered paperbacks.

It was the year her husband died.
By February, after the funeral,
she couldn't remember our names.
The substitute had us write and sign cards
saying that we hoped she was okay,
that we hoped she felt better,
that we hoped she came back to class.

It was a while before anybody moved
to find another adult. We listened to
her struggle for steady breath,
stared at the twitching of
nerve and bone in her right hand,
realized a grown-up's tears were
more delicate than our own.

Sam Krowchenko

PALINDROME
Andrew Mooney

A kitchen in a modest home. Mary sits at the kitchen table drinking coffee. She is in a bathrobe. Boy, 5 years old, comes onstage and stares at her. She doesn't notice him.

Boy: Mom?

Mary: (Startled) David? You startled me.

Boy: Mom, I'm scared.

Mary: What's wrong?

Boy: I did something...

Mary: What did you do?

(He looks down at his pajama bottoms)

Mary: Come here, honey. Come on. (He walks over to Mary. She gives him a hug and ruffles his hair) It's okay. Things like that happen, David. You just had a bad dream, that's all. A bad dream.

Boy: Mom, I'm scared...

Mary: Don't be scared, David. There's nothing to be scared of, do you understand? Nothing, in the whole wide world. Come on, it was all a bad dream. Why don't you just grab some clean underwear from the other room and change? Can you do that?

Boy: Come with me.

Mary: Mommy has to finish her coffee. She has to wait here, David. You know where the underwear is. Go get a pair.

(He nods and leaves)

(She drinks her coffee. Man comes in. He is around 25, a shaved head. Quiet)

Man: I'm not going.

Mary: Get out of my house.

Man: I don't want to.

(He wanders around the kitchen, looking)

(Pause)

Man: Is Dad coming home soon?

Mary: You tell me.

Man: I don't think he is...mom.

Mary: What did you do, David?

(Boy comes back in with new bottoms. Mary turns to him)

Mary: (To Boy) How does that feel?

Boy: Fine.

Mary: Come on, David.

Boy: It was a bad dream.

Mary: I know. I know it was... What happened?

Boy: No.

Mary: Come on, David. You can tell me. I'm your mommy.

Man: I like what you've done. To the kitchen. I like...the marble.

Mary: (To Man) Is that why you're here, David? To talk about my kitchen?

Man: No. That's not why I...

Mary: Why you what?

Man: ...came here.

Mary: You're not supposed...

Man: To come here?

Mary: No.

Man: I guess I forgot.

Mary: You're not supposed to come near us...

Man: Us. Always us. You always said...'us'. I didn't like that.

(Pause)

Mary: Where is he?

Man: (Absently) Where's who?

Boy: I was in our house...but it wasn't our house it was another house and then I was in the kitchen, but not this kitchen, another kitchen. It was like this kitchen but there were more plates and knives and forks, there were knives everywhere. And I had a fork and a knife...two forks and two knives and a glass and a plate and I was sitting at the table. It was like this table, but bigger...and then someone came in...

Mary: (To Man) Your father. Where's your father?

Man: My father? Now let's see...where did I last see him?

Mary: Where is he, David?

Boy: He was in the kitchen with me...he was dark and big and he had, he had lots and lots and lots of forks and knives...and he put them all in the kitchen with the other forks and knives and I...I wanted them. So I took them...and then I took more...and then I had too many knives...they were stabbing me...

(Man pulls a knife out of the wood block)

Man: I have no idea, mom. Maybe he went for a walk.

Mary: A walk?

Man: It's possible. Maybe he just...slipped out.

Mary: There was a car outside the house for the last few days. I was going to call the police...

Man: But you didn't. Why didn't you call the police, mom?

Mary: I didn't think...

Boy: And then I woke up.

Mary: (To boy) Honey, I'm so sorry. It's over now. There are no forks and no knives. There's just us. Isn't there? Just you and me. Together. Come on. (She picks him up and puts him on her lap) Is that better?

Boy: No.

Mary: Come on. (To Man) I didn't think you'd be stupid enough to...to try to...

Man: You didn't?

(Pause)

Mary: I'm sorry we sent you away, David. But this is no way to...

Man: You didn't send me away. He did.

Boy: It's a little better.

Mary: (To boy) It's a lot better. Why don't you run to bed? It's getting (looks at the clock) it's getting late. Very, very late. You'd better get to bed.

Boy: I'm scared mom.

Mary: Don't be scared. Get to bed.

Man: I had to come back, mom. Eventually I had to. You understand. Don't you, mom?

Mary: You need help.

Man: I had help.

Mary: You need to stay away from us.



Man: Us again.

(He places knife on the kitchen table)

Man: That's where it was. Wasn't it, mom? You were there and the knife was on the table.

Mary: What are you talking about, David?

Man: It was right there. So easy to just grab it...and ffff (He draws a line with his finger down the inside of his arm)

Mary: You're a very sick boy, David. You always have been. I'm going to call the police...

Boy: I don't want to go to bed, mom. My sheets...

Mary: (To Boy) Please, David, just run to bed. It's late. It's very late, David. Just run up to bed and mom will tuck you in later. Okay? Please, David.

Boy: But there are bad people waiting for me...

Man: I don't care, mom. Call them. Tell them. They won't find anything.

Mary: What are you talking about?

Man: Because there's nothing to find...

Mary: Where's his car, David?

Man: Swimming.

Mary: What?

Boy: He's late again, isn't he?

Mary: (To boy) Don't worry about that, David. That's for me to worry about. Not you.

Boy: When he came home last night I heard...

(Beat)

Mary: What did you hear, David?

Man: All I ever wanted was for you to be happy.

Mary: (To Man) What the fuck do you mean 'swimming', David?

Man: All I ever wanted was for you to be safe. But how could I keep you safe if you send me away?

Mary: Is that what this is? You're angry that we wanted to help you?

Man: Help me? HELP ME? You think that helped me?

Boy: I don't want to go up there, mom!



Man: I was trying to save you. And you sent me away.

Mary: David, stop it.

Man: I was protecting you.

Boy: I don't want to go to bed

Man: Do you understand that?

Mary: Stop it!

Man: Are you so fucking blind?

Boy: I'm not going to bed, mom!

Mary: STOP IT, DAVID.

(Pause)

Man: I just wanted to finish what I started.

(Mary looks at the knife)

Mary: (To boy) I'm sorry, David. Mommy's a little...a little stressed. That's all. I didn't mean to yell. You just...you just go to bed, David, and I'll see you in the morning.

Boy: Mom...

Man: I wanted to. For years. It was... (he smiles)...it was cathartic, I think.

Mary: You couldn't, David.

Man: I could. I always could. You knew that. You saw it. That's why you sent me away. (Beat) I thought you'd be happy...

Mary: Don't touch me.

Boy: I don't want to leave you, mommy.

Mary: (To boy) Why? David, mommy always takes care of herself, doesn't she?

Boy: I want to help.

Mary: I don't need help, David.

Man: I thought...you could at least smile. Now that he's gone.

Mary: (To Man) Smile? You think I'm going to fucking smile, David?

Man: I just thought...

Mary: Is that what you thought while you were away, David? That once he was gone I would smile? Are you a fucking child? Still? After all these years?

Man: He hurt you.

Mary: I love him.

Boy: I want to help you, mom.

Mary: (To Boy) Mommy doesn't need help. Go to bed, David.

Man: You never loved him. You never...how could you love that...that thing?

Mary: I could have left any time I wanted. But I didn't.

Man: Mom...I saw what he did...I heard it every fucking night.

Mary: It was in your head, David. Like everything else.

Man: In my head?

Mary: (To boy) David, you have to go now.

Boy: But...

Mary: No buts.

Boy: Mom, I'm scared...

Mary: I don't care if you're scared, David.

Boy: I can't sleep...

Mary: Get out, David!

(Pause)

Man: In my head...it was all in my head. The black eyes...the broken wrist... it was all...in...my head. If I couldn't see it...what about the neighbors? What about them, mom? Was it in their heads too? Your best friend asked you...was it in her head? Was it all in our heads? Did we all just make it up? Did you just happen to fall every fucking night, mom? Were your screams all in my fucking head?

(Pause)

Mary: (To Boy) Mommy's sorry...I just have...I have things on my mind... please.

Boy: Do you like daddy, mom?

Mary: What? Why would you say that, David? I love him very much. And you should love him very much. Because he's your father. He isn't a bad man, David.

Boy: I don't think he is, mom.

Mary: Daddy is a wonderful man who does so much for us, David.

(Pause)

Boy: Is Dad coming home soon?



IN THE BALCONY OF BENE ISREAL

Maia Brown

Mary: Go to bed, David.

Boy: I don't want to.

Mary: David...please...please just go to bed. For mommy.

Boy: I'm not going.

Mary: David, go to bed.

(Boy bows his head. Boy exits)

Man: Just because you say something...just because you keep saying it over and over and over, doesn't make it true. You can keep saying that it was 'in my head' and 'your father is a good man' but it will never make it true.

Mary: You've done something disgusting.

Man: I did something to a disgusting man.

Mary: When they come to me...when they ask me about you, David, I'm going to tell them everything I know.

Man: I know you will.

Mary: And you're going to go away again, David. And you aren't going to come back. Not ever. You're going away until you die and rot. You'll never see me again.

Man: Why don't you understand, mom? I was always trying to fucking help you. I did what I did to help you, to save you, to get you out of this shit. To keep him from hurting you. That's why I came out of my room that night when I was five. That's why I grabbed the knife when I saw him hit you. That's why you sent me away.

Mary: Help me? You never helped me, David. You were psychotic. My own son was psychotic. How could I live with that? You tell me, David. How could I live with a son who was mentally deranged? You hurt me more than he ever did.

(Pause)

Man: I hurt him. I hurt him worse than I hurt you. Why don't you come with me? Come and see the man you love. Come see what he is now.

Mary: You were never my child, David. You're just a walking sack of flesh.

Man: Come with me.

(Silence)

Mary: I loved him, David...how could...how could you do that to him...to me...

Man: Mom, I'm scared.



Mary: He was so good to me...and...and I couldn't support both of us. There, there was no income. He kept us going. I couldn't...I couldn't fucking leave, David. I couldn't do anything. There was nothing I could ever do.

Man: I did something.

(Pause)

Mary: I never want to see you as long as I live, David. If you ever come near me again... Whatever you did to my husband is nothing compared to what I will do to you. You're nothing more than a psychotic sack of flesh.

Man: Mom...I'm scared.

(Silence)

Man: Mom...

(She turns away from him)

(He leaves)

(We hear a door open and close. She finishes her coffee)

(Blackout)



Allison Fontaine-Capel





A

bkue/gleen

18



THE GARDEN YOU USED TO HAVE

We used to say the wall was hollow and we might pry it open—
a snap, a burst of air, green and living,
exhaled by a garden of impossible size residing behind your wall.

We laughed but smelled the dew and pollen early in the mornings,
heard the flowers drawing their petals in the evenings.
Lilies nodded their swan necks behind the bedroom wallpaper,
oranges burgeoned in the dark leaves.

We slept with our noses turned to the walls—
dreaming of pear trees, the fruit translucent and luminous in the darkness, an
orchard of
moons,
coloring our voices with crocuses as ice rattled the windows.

We covered ourselves in our secret,
and turned and turned.

Megan Kyle



HYPOTHERMIA, 1997

in the cerulean predawn
I open the tent to pee
to meet the soft drifts
the whole lake encrusted with fallen stars
& leave all distance
from those who cannot find me,
go utterly unfound, dissolve
to glittering glittering
the only colors the sky knows.

flinty crystals still tap the tent
and your chest moves
with fog-breath that breathes trees
we are a million miles away, small symptoms
of the subzero
bundled with dying warmth.

the snow forgetting
to be white is blue blue,
blue dark and raw
willing to numb arms legs toes & fingers,
snow heart crouched around
all smaller hearts
frostbiting.

out in jewel-blue
the secret is of warmth beyond
numbness: a million stars
glow like hearths through windows
before they freeze in space
and hit the ground.

I shed out
into this promise; leaving no doubt
as to where I have gone
beyond the baseball diamond
and the clothing
trailing behind me
is what I will not need.

I am asking the glittering now
it is not even
a large favor,
just to become something which gives not deflects,
but no poem will bring me to
and I will feel the burning
muzzles of stars.

Renee LaGue



Sullivan Diner, 7pm

the menus
come quickly. the
bread, thick and
grainy like
bird seed stares
reproachfully from
its red plastic basket.
the waitress takes
our orders before
you've decided. she
doesn't look us
in the eyes—she must be from
around here. hot chocolate
for you, a diet coke for me. your
eyes look darker
than usual. I chew
ice cubes as your frustration
slips out between spaghetti
and sauce; your
silverware glints in the
dim flu ore scent
lighting. by the time the
check comes,
I have made a
portrait of spilled
salt on
my
empty plate.

Galen Beebe

“EY WHAT UP BRYCE?”

“Ey what up Bryce?” Flying down the stairs.

‘Hi Rieeee.
You’re cool dude.
You’re big guy,
My br’uh’er.’

“Ya buddy.” Stops and ruffles clothes on the rack.
‘Where you go?’

‘Just to hang out with Mikey. How are you doin?’
‘Good...
‘Yea, Uh, ‘Rose...uh Rieeee, uh no naw Rieeee, uh ‘Rose...’

“Yup, Monroe is not me, Ryan.”

‘Uh, ha ya, you Rieeee! Uh, wrooose ‘night 8’tock,
toose-day, 8’tock.’

“Good deal dude, Monday Night Raw, isn’t that um, um, guy fighting tonight?”

‘Uh yea, he’s big guy,
Your big guy.’
“Thanks, you’re a big guy too. You alright bro?”
‘Good.

Yea,
Yea,
What you do?’
“I told ya man, just goin to Mikey’s. What are you about to... er, what have you done so far today?”

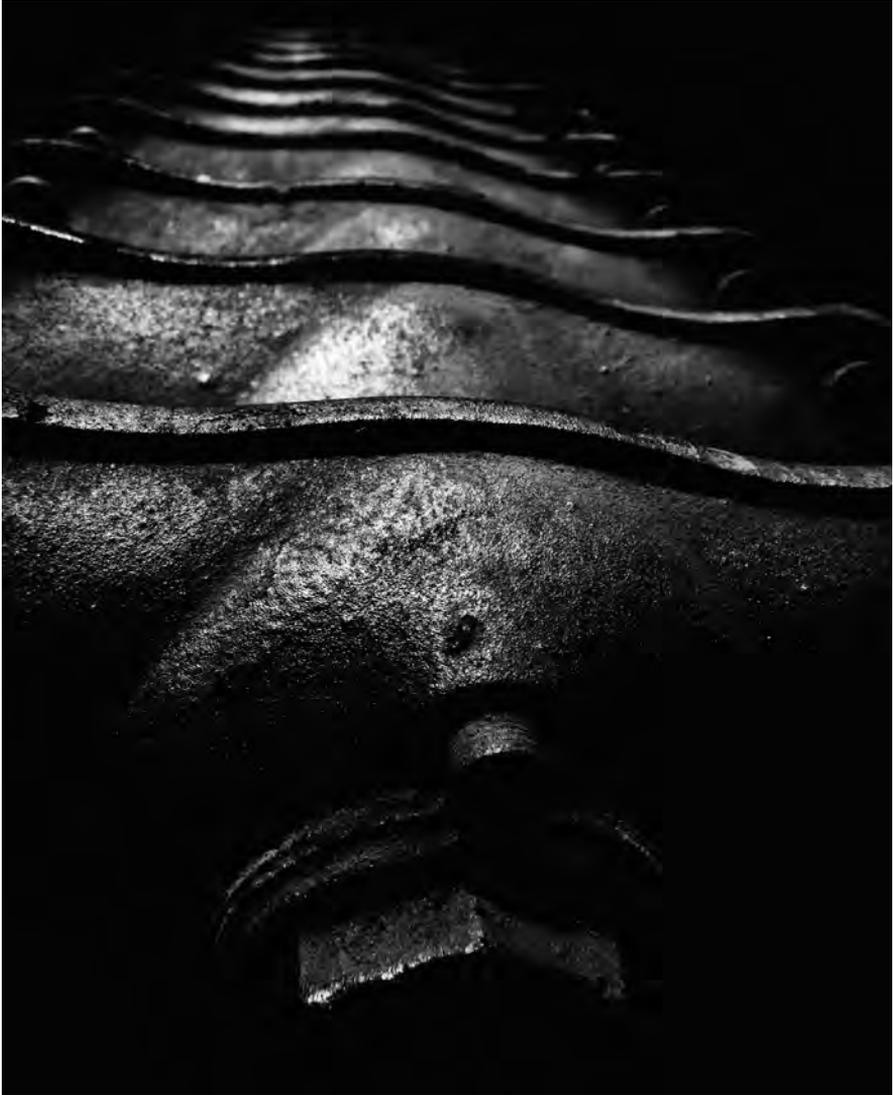
‘Yea, I eeet, uh I dreecem, I go to uh Blue ‘nd he come ‘side ‘nd he say uh
‘you’re cool guy’ ‘nd Don do juh juh juh. Ha ha, Don... Don, ‘Rose uh me,
Bryce, go psshhhhh. Catch uh ball, ‘nd uh uh MOM she talk talk talk, ha ha.
She uh she ‘Bryce, 8’tock!’ nd’ I uh ‘oh, mom... kay I 8’tock’ she, ha ha.
‘You’re cool guy.
‘Where you go?’

“Mikey’s,” Proceeds toward door.

‘Bye.’

Ryan Magiera





Gus Wezerek

EATING MICROWAVE POPCORN
sure can
get you feeling
like
no one
will ever think of you
again

David Greenberg





buhm

buhm

buhm

buhm



buhm

buhm



buhm (green) (violet)



Adam Chambers



DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BEAU/FLAN EMPIRE

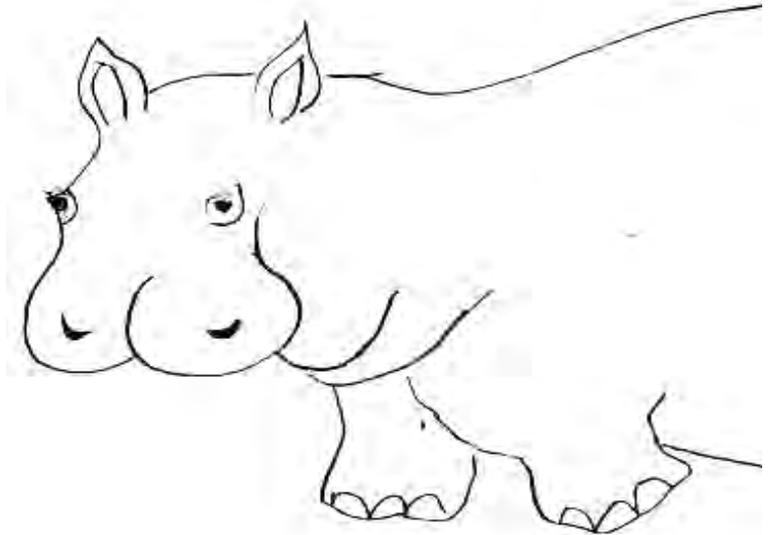
Shall I compare thee?
To the Lady of Kerplop?
To April is the cruelest
Season of mists and mellow
Two-handed injun?
To a plumber's dray?

Wrench, please: the signifiers are broken.
I could go on all day
Without saying anything.
Shining days were, and we watched, watched
Words skim like silvery fishes,
Darting and flashing, saturating.
Now all is chattering festoon:
The dimming of the lights.
The end of language.

I—thee
I thee wed I thee bed I bed head thee I—

Where are you?

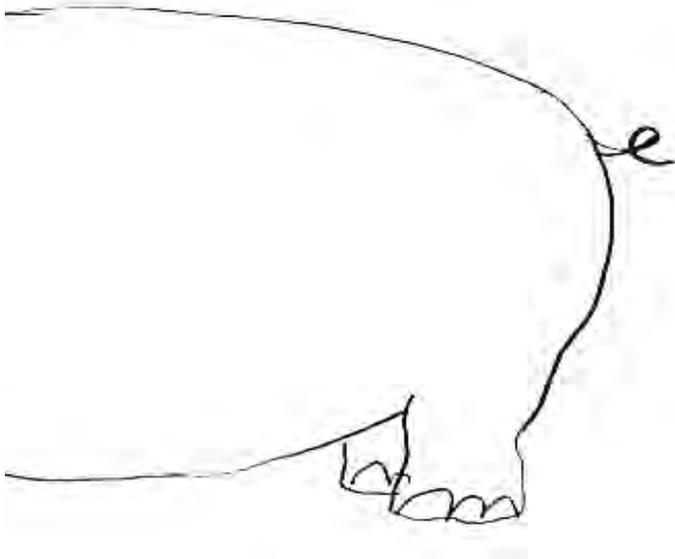
Samuel Rowe



CORPSE

We've always believed intention could possess it,
having no intention itself. In the Pietà
by Michelangelo, it is not the mother
who kindles our small pity. It is the body itself.
We mistake our desire to hold the body
with the body's desire to be held.
By intuition we predict the movement of corpses.
We are spooked a little by mannequins,
puppets—they parody our end. But we are brave
among the dead, and for this we believe
the dead are brave and should be honored.

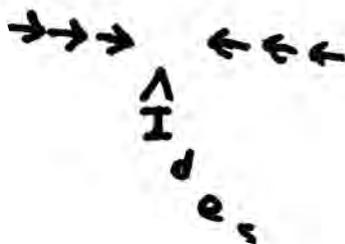
David Merriman



AGORAPHOBIA

Will I go out today? Will I go out
today? Will I
go out?

A fear of the marketplace
consumes me such
that I cannot.
Already I picture the bowed, wornwet faces
as they stab me
with their ides.



COME, IT IS A GOOD MONTH.

But I say, NO YOU BRUTE, IT IS NOT
A GOOD MONTH FOR MAYING
NOR FOR MARCHING
NOR IS IT AN ESPECIALLY GOOD DAY FOR DYING
IN A CROWD.

You disagree,
respectfully,
always the polite one.

I grumble. I mumble.

WHAT? you say.

OH NOTHING. IT WAS THE IDES.
I CAN'T GET THEM OUT
FROM UNDER
MY FLOOR.

I..D....E.....S

Perplexed, we bang around
like a bunch of baboons
or a few...a couple really.
Like the one you saw, bloodbrown and hairy
at the zoo just the other day. The one you showed me
in the picture. I use my shoe.

DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU? you ask
TO ALWAYS BE STUCK IN HERE LIKE THIS.

LIKE WHAT? IDES JUST AS WELL BE HERE AS

I JUST THOUGHT, you said, then stopped.

WHAT?

OH NOTHING.

NOTHING?

NOTHING.



Why did you grab my arm? I wondered when you grabbed my arm.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I asked.

THE WORLD, you began to expound, IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, FILLED WITH MANY
WONDERFUL THINGS. HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO GET ANY BRILLIANT IDES IF
YOU ARE ALWAYS LOCKED AWAY IN THIS ONE ROOM WINDOWLESS APARTMENT?

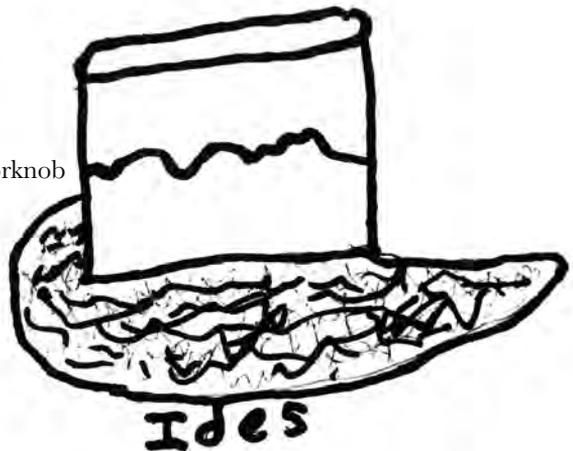
UNARM ME SIR, I said, though your speech was disarming.

I'M NOT ARMED, you replied quickly. Too quickly.

UNHAND ME I MEAN. Your fingers still clung to my arm.

You let go and put on your hat
the one I wish
held a dead bird and dried fruit
but alas is only dull and gray.
When your hand touched the doorknob
A Great Sadness
filled me;
shapeless and absurd.

GOODBYE, you said, and I knew
it was goodbye.



Jesse Miller



DON'T BE SCARED, CHET BAKER

today
i saw a
boy
that looked just like
chet baker

and he stopped.
and started to
walk in the other
direction,
and turned back towards me
again.

shifty-eyed,
scared,
so scared.

as he walked out
of the marriage license
office,
i asked him how he
was doing.

he mumbled something,
meekly.
this kid,
he was terrified.

and i was wearing
my happy
orange shirt.

i asked him
if he ever
does chet baker
impressions.

he mumbled again.

i have to admire
him,
he was probably
18,
or younger

sporting a

pompadour.

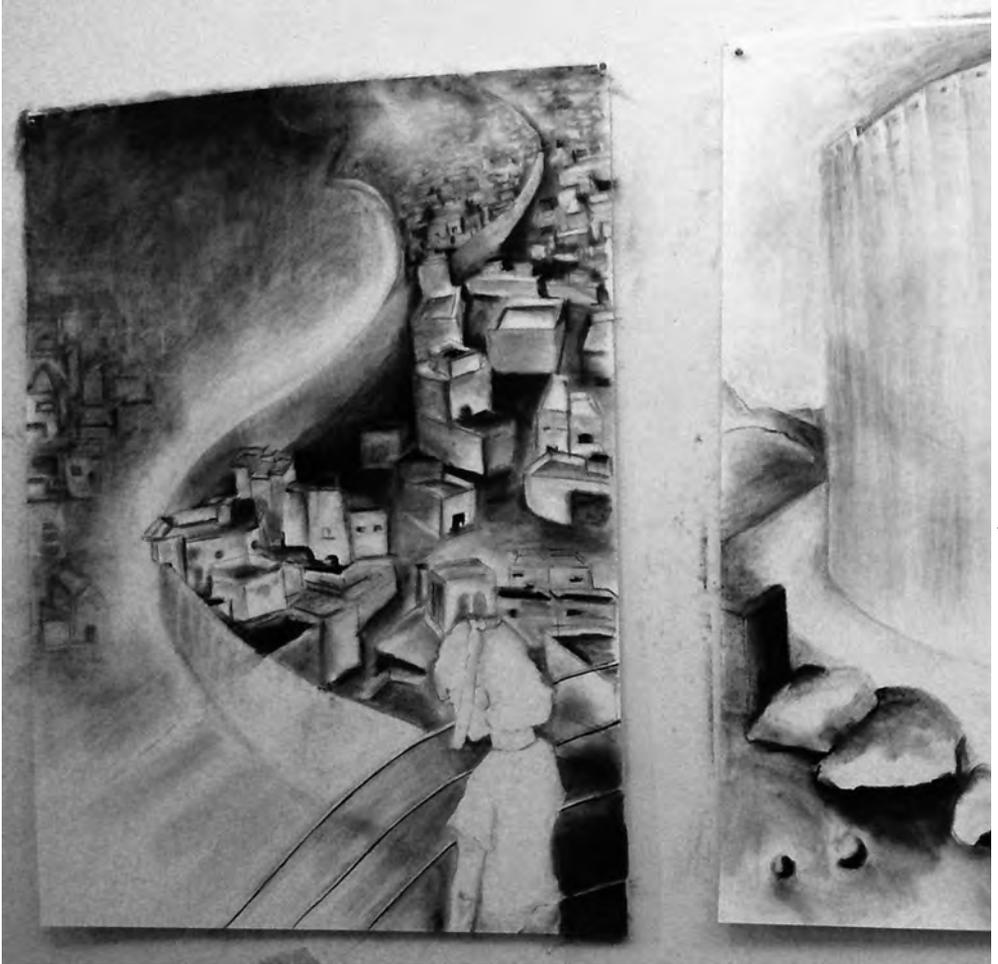
don't be scared,
chet baker.

the world is, for
the most part,
a pretty nice
place,

all things considered.

William Roane



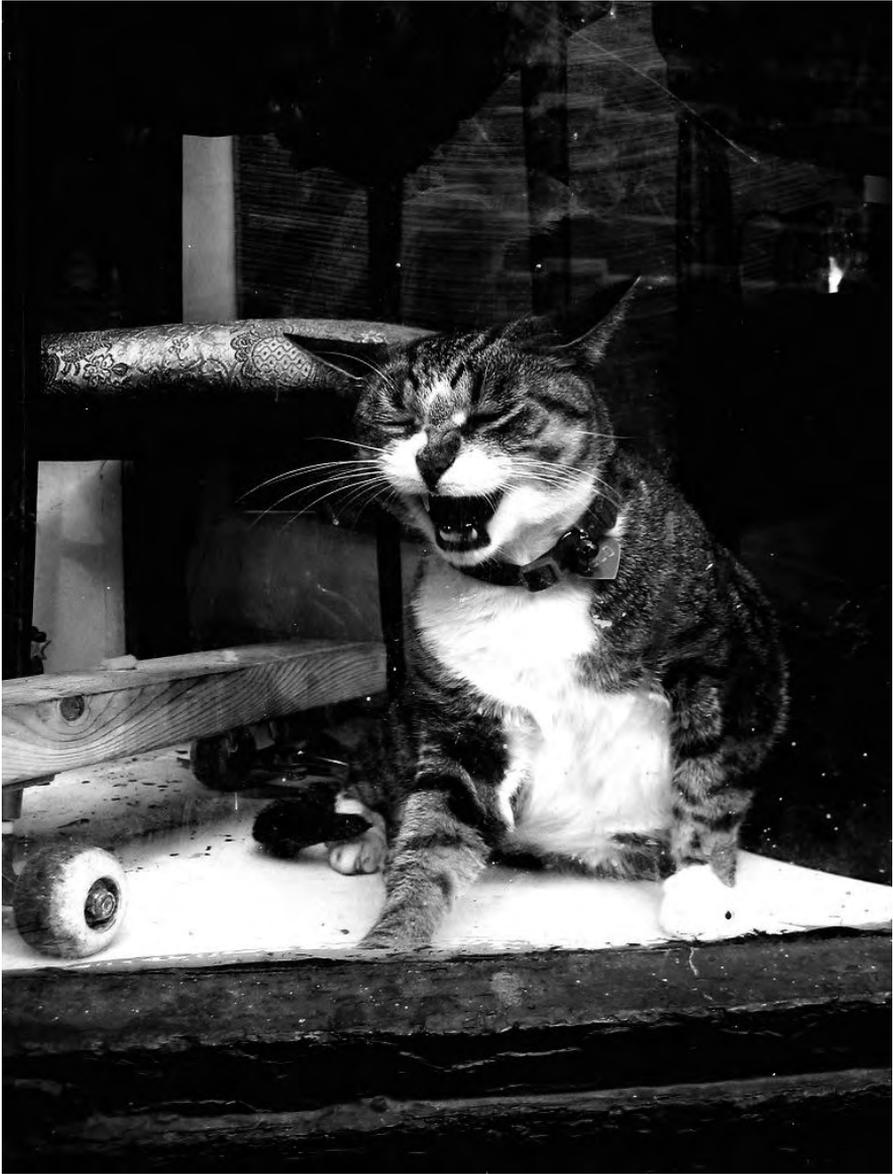


THE WALL



Maia Brown





Allison Fontaine-Capel

VACATION IN ENGLAND

After mandrakes and anemones
and mossy ruins of hewn stone
and shore shale skipping across the river
and her leaning into rowan roots,

the formal gardens: a peacock
struts its plumage by the flower
sundial, puddles of gold- and cat-
fish, duck-clipped topiaries,
and all the classifying signposts.

Stephen Burrows



SOFÍA

See something nameless
comes riding
down the limestone

scarp and counterscarp

orange bougainvillea
blooms in rubber tread

There was once a word
for dust and lifting wind

and what comes knocking
comes right in

Sofia in a concrete room
nine-hundred tortillas
and a fluid-filled lung

corrugated tin

A word meaning
assent and what
can you endure
axels and a season of drought

it comes, Sofia
it reaches you moaning

Sí the helpless syllable
the driest breath in any language

the pickup pulls up
door loose on its latch
oh niña, hondureña

if you know how to shout it
or even speak

the word for no is no
there are seconds before and seconds after
Sofia lifts her daughter into the truck
mute abandonment like a split hair



or a spilt

but still, static

before

dead dog in the road and no sign of rain

wake up mother child wake up

the sun is rising and the

wind comes

The circumstances of my own birth: not the back seat of a Toyota, but almost. I don't know whether it was winter or spring that March or the condition of the roads.

Some years later, my mother taught me to read the Tarot with a deck of playing cards. Tell it like a joke: the Queen of Spades walks into a bar, a one-eyed Jack on her arm. You can tell he will leave her by the way he looks. Askant.

Practice saying these sentences:

Please, waiter, I want two eggs and a cup of orange juice.

Where is the mercadito? Where is the school?

I have two children.

I have three children yesterday.

Asked if she could afford the electricity bills on a new stove, Sofia tells us sí. The interpreter translates this: no. She says yes, but—no. Mothers from La Cantera walk their children to school. Often they can afford to come back for them.

Niña, abandonada. Stands by the orange bougainvillea with a gold star on her page.

Niña, una espada negra. Take it. Meet me at the border.

I will be the woman with the deck of dog-eared cards.

I will be the woman wearing sadness like a too-tight shoe.

The circumstances of her birth: I am told her first sound was a glad gurgle.

does Sofia save her daughter

third of three

little fat hands

and three years old

thumb sucked shining



mother child child mother

now

the most important thing is to live forever

how else this woodsmoke and white flour day
how else will there be time for reclamation

a card is missing from the deck
it is a black three

does Sofia save her daughter
or does little she,

does the child

And the wind comes. The gray ice moans against the Midwest bank. This is
after and away, false spring wet as a birth canal. Doesn't it just break your heart
is what the missionary women had to say about Sofia.

I am acutely intact.

The summer my family qualified for food stamps, there was an overabundance
of zucchini. My knowledge of rupture, therefore, is limited to the way wet
earth responds to germination.

Furthermore, I have rarely said a goodbye that couldn't take an until—

Still, I know a few things
about the heart.

One. It is not a china cup.

The major symptom of empathy: the urge to give away all but one's
sturdiest shoes.

Two—

I don't want to talk about this anymore.
I'm afraid of getting it wrong.

Three little three
asks an orange
from a vender

Sofia winds barbed wire
on a cardboard spool

If you forget every language but your own, gesture.

Make the signs
for circumstance
and aftermath

pregnancy

and the summer storm
that took a long time arriving

swept the hillsides down

Niña, la última
last-born borne away
no one comes after her

no surname no
address

Jamás the strongest word
for never

Rosemary Bateman





Allison Fontaine-Capel

through the forest loathe
my naked

through the forest loathe
not slender

through the fotten haaft
my naked

through the forest loathe
my nake



SYZYGY

An alignment requires another body
riven from a nebula's pasty chroma;
a crook of an elbow or a socked foot

silently scuffing a frozen floorboard.
I am up again just waiting; I am up again; I am
metabolizing this atom-thin January.

If I were a rock lying under snow,
I would not need to breathe or believe
in the vertigo of weightless space

between young, loose clusters
waltzing sweaty-handed, dust
swirling around bare ankles.

Some women can chart transects
of bodies moved by their beauty.
I shove another log in the stove

and watch sparks sizzle, then die
in the frigid and pixellated dawn.
I am only an experimental being;

madly snowshoed and in transit through
this leafless stack of matter,
not seeing what nobody sees.

Renee LaGue



Adam Chambers



SHIPPING MISSIVES IN THE NIGHT

In the morning I spoon
cinnamon toast cereal
from a pool of soggy milk,

while eggs fry over-easy
on the two burner stove.
The trailer is empty

save for me, and light darts
in and out of plexiglass
windows like busy hands.

Three years since the day
you left, and in dreams
I still remember the taste

of your lips, your prostrate
body across the futon even
the way you politely asked

before pouring me red wine
from the box. Unconcerned
with material goods,

you bought this shell of metal
and plastic with the hopes
of settling down.

Days have passed inscrutably
for that return, as each night

you talk in highway-exit diners
with mustachioed men
over bland coffee, sporting

fake tattoos and making eyes
with all the pretty damn
white girls.

I still keep all the postcards
you used to send,
sandy crabs on beaches,

and how I never understood
why truckers were assigned
to Miami, the Florida Keys.

On the road, the miles retreat
like winter solstice, cargo
bruises asphalt, and sometimes

it gets too tiring
to drive. At the truck stop
near the city limit

you stop long enough
to see the Christmas lights
garnishing the overpass.

Daniel Tam-Claiborne



WESSEX REVISITED

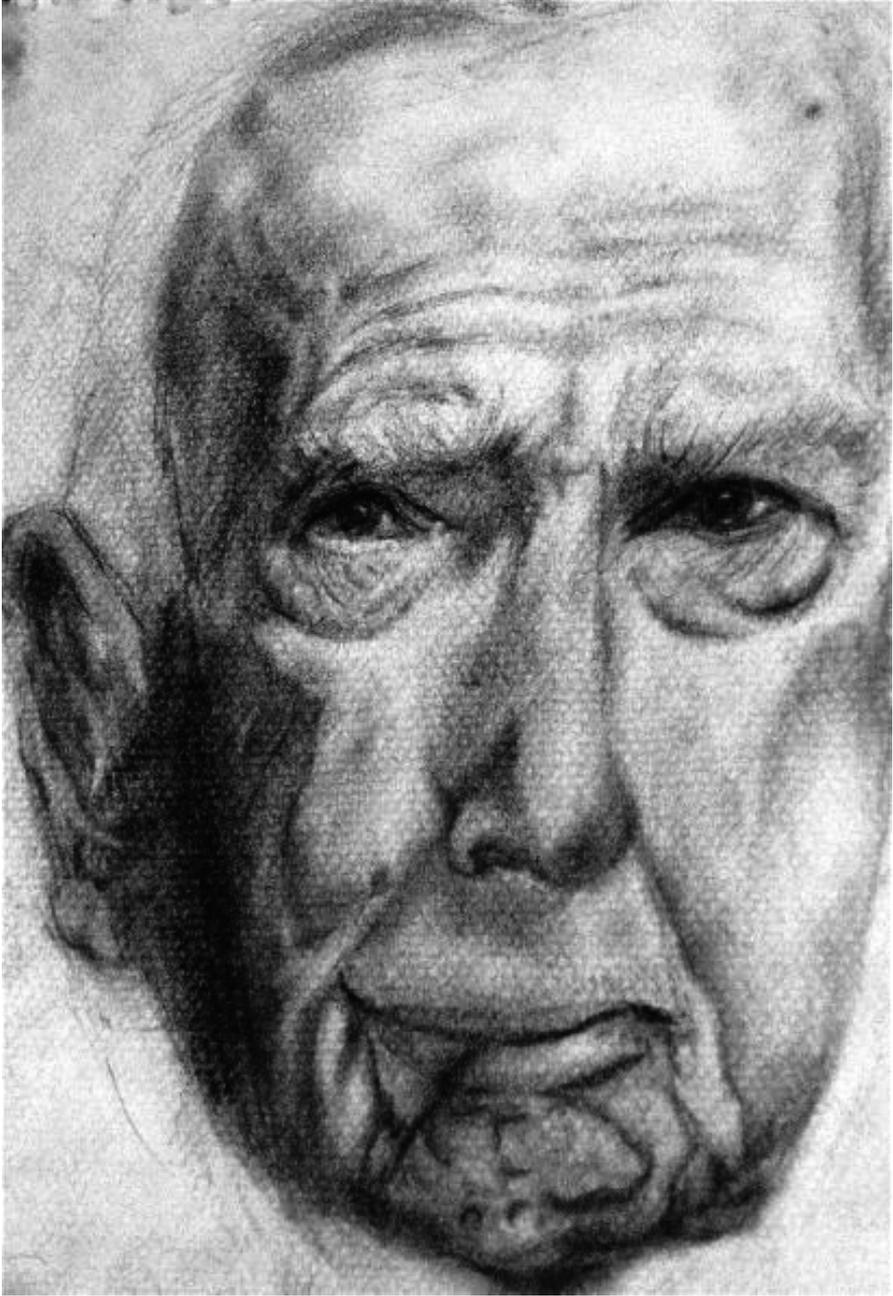
We arrived today at the heart of things:
It was grayish, rather tepid.
Sundry reflections suggested that
The journey itself was
Salient (O, hindsight!)
However, we remember it,
It was also gray:
A country of dull willows
And thick sullen rivers,
Of tallow-caked torpor
And odiferous thrusting.

A veritable barnyard of inadequacies.

We giggled to imagine ourselves
As carapaced deep-sea creatures,
Blinking light-stalks urgently
When there is nothing to see.

Giggled and found in giggling
An option, a delineation,
Tractable land.
A good place to live.

Samuel Rowe



Laura Bellis



DON'T BE ENVYOUS OF SUPER-MODELS. JUST LOOK THE WAY THEY DO!

Just let that url to visit us
and a delicious coke.

(so is corned beef if you've never tried it).
interested? i think it would be so fun.

simple is always prettiest to me.

i am going to turn on some good music and choose to be happy.
soft and long lacy scarf light enough for spring, extra long for winter wrapping,
elegant enough for church, cute enough for a tshirt...i really love this scarf
pattern (gee can you tell?).

it's definately worth the long drive,
i am looking forward to a date with grant. ply
like this one, from sweet mary, that she left on the clean room post:

"Your house seems so organized.

may the light always find you on a dreary day.

i made this one for a gift, but i've already cast on another for moi.

mostly i just stinking LOVE knitting.

i am trying to be a patient, kind mom.

my sister and hair stylist, coco, is coming to utah county once again to meet our
hair needs.

i love the color palette and obvious softness.

i am not going to worry...about a thing.

time for a new spring look...

when you need to be home, may you find your way.

it was super delicious.

i have always dreamed of going to ireland, (and scotland too- mccaleb), to
research our family history, and to see the green grass in real life. is this ELLE
she's amazing.

we are happily enjoying being able to play outside again.

and i love it (thanks, coco).

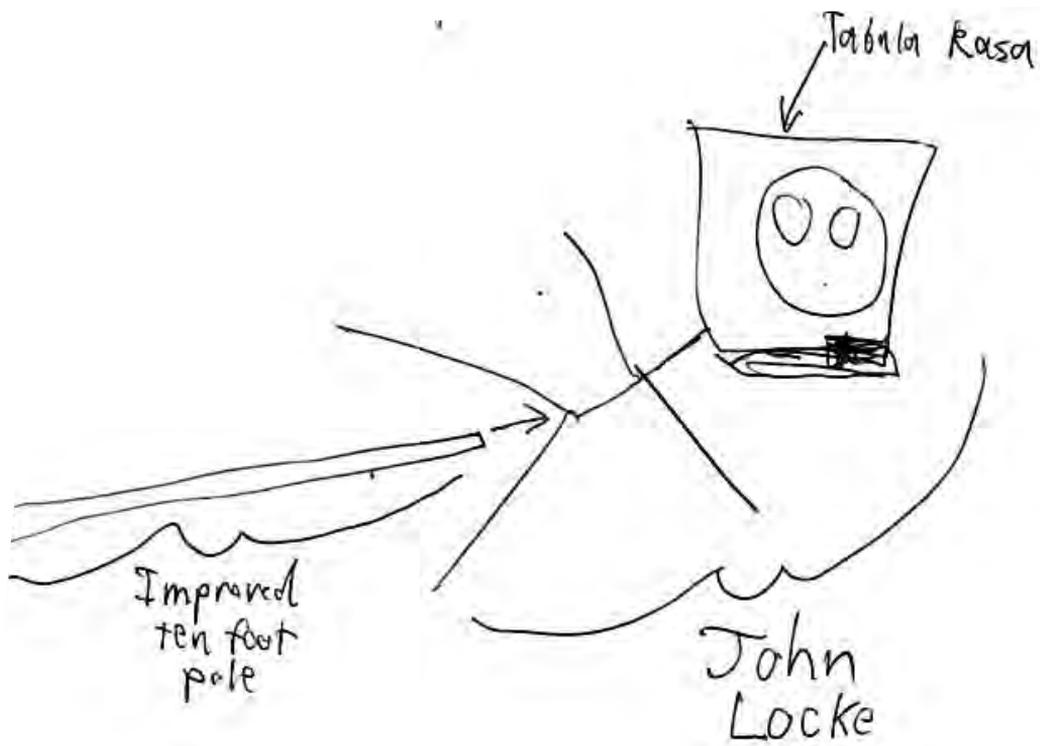
we ate corned beef and cabbage with irish soda bread last night in preparation
for the day of the irish.

but then again, we looove roadtrips.

i was chuckling while i cooked thinking about how my irish grandparents
always had a plaque on their wall with this prayer on it: "may you be in heaven
a half hour before the devil knows your dead" ha!

let's give a hand to the world, for everything it can do!!

Adam Beaudoin
a found poem, with credit to Lorna Tatum <mutinyf4313@heavyair.com>



INSECTOPHILE

I am lovely enough
that the gnats find
their final resting place
on my lips, and my eyes,
but no man will touch
my smallest finger.

Magalee Ciripili



MOBILITY

Daniel Tam-Claiborne



WHEN THE MUSIC STOPPED

Snuffed joints marked days,
weeks formed like habit,
and the indolent months
when my lungs sighed, sobbing
release from that intolerable
prison. Jan, comatose,

immotile, forged on the white
linen of a hospital bed, and me,
biking daily from Brooklyn to Cabrini,
stopping on the bridge to cry, get
stoned, and then to work
before returning again at nights.

Framed by two offset windows,
there was only his shrunken body,
chunks of hair mottled and
patching, his face, the texture
of a too-washed dollar bill.

Before that my sister stayed
with him at her house in Cape Cod,
up to her elbows in his shit
at a time when no one knew how
contagious it really was.

I remember when a nurse once
pricked herself with a needle
left in his arm. Pale, screaming,
she stripped her gloves, dousing her arms
with bleach as I stood compelled
to look on.

Denial is a powerful thing.
In '89, the New York Times
ran obituaries like box scores,
of young men defeated in their primes.
A miracle drug that refused
to surface, the sound of waiting
deafening to a roar.

He refused to share food at first,
soon got too tired to gig, then

cut me out completely, all without
alarm or explanation. By the end
Jan could barely eat, his steps measured,
mind given over to dementia.

At bedside, I could tell him anything,
things I feared to say
while he was awake.

Later, when we listened to our old
recordings, I never cried so much,
to wait that long to tell him
goodbye. Finally, the tape had
played out, wheel finished turning—
his the only voice I could
bring myself to hear.

Daniel Tam-Claiborne



ROMANTIC DOGS (FROM MY MOTHER TO MY FATHER, BEFORE MY BIRTH ONLY)

When we were dogs,
some invisible ground lead us
to each other, the corner of some block
on some street we didn't know the name of
(or couldn't pronounce). I imagine you
got there as I did: tail between your legs,
snout down like some bent pin.
We moved lonely

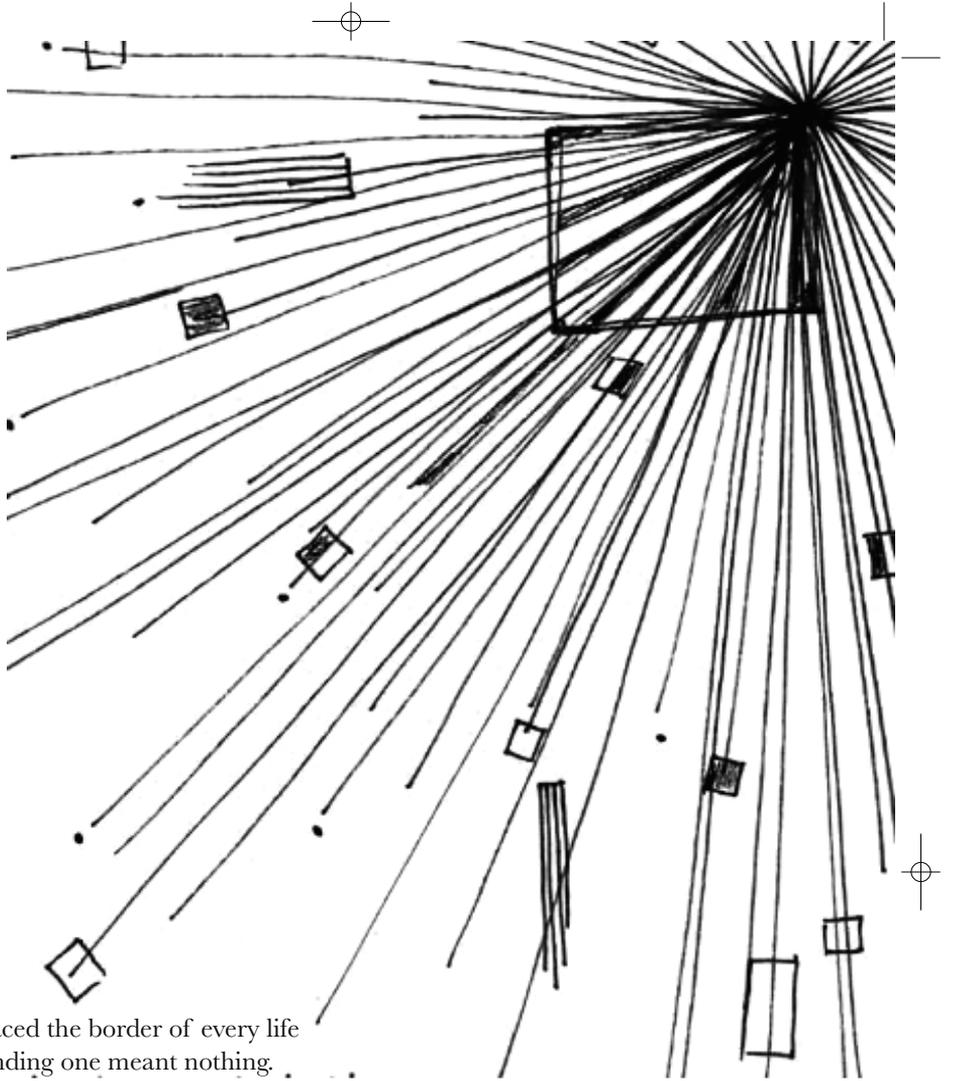
between houses for scraps. Reader,
is this not the most romantic thing you've ever heard:
bodies baring themselves before winter?
Upon meeting under lamplight, skin exposed,
bodies crooked still, night came asking for us both.
You bent further, your smell like fruit hot in the sun.

(From My Father to My Mother)

Your mouth is the single shape
I can't describe in a word.
Try: post-blossom.
Try: insatiable monster.

(Later, My Sister and I)

I.
We had our start in a woman
who restarted to the point of exhaustion,
to the point of reiteration.



She traced the border of every life
as if finding one meant nothing.
There was never urgency
and we were born (separately)
from that lack, from a stray wanting north
who gave herself to two mutts.

II.

Sometimes I remember my birth dreams. My sister remembers our mother's interior and "we were floating there" as if in the bogs of some marsh. Our coast calling is strong now to the south where the people are fearful of their own towns. We are learning, press our bodies to storm drains: wait for the coming rain.



t
h
e
sm
all
es
t
o
n
e
e
was
m
a
d
e
l
i
n
e



Gus Węzerek



TOPOGRAPHY

Blue cataract of woodsmoke
wefts the thick warp of falling snow.
Wood stacked out back, the blue
taut tarp like a prostrate sail. The wail
of the wind and the night trains
crying in the valley.

You left at dawn with your gun,
deer hunter, dear husband.
Now the fire burns low, blue
down to black and you
have not come back.

To reach you, forty years
of settlement. Stones upheave
the road leaving home, restless
vertebrae under sediment.
I have come a long way to carry you
from this January ridge,
husband.

I have not been satisfied.

Rosemary Bateman



Adam Chambers





CIRCLING TO LAND

The marshes of Long Island draw into focus,
spread out across the land like a lung.
This is a place sewn together
by the long fibers of its roads, a place
from which come the whistles of strange birds.

Dark against the orange sky, the towers of Manhattan
stand like monumental rows of corn
growing beside the Ohio interstate.
The furrows are stippled with red taillights
and white headlights, queues of armored creatures
pressed together sweating towards the Hudson.

Adam Beaudoin



They've been taking things apart!

PUT THEM BACK TOGETHER!





EAST HARLEM, 2004

Daniel Tam-Claiborne

FORTUNE COOKIE WRAPPER
An old man, wrinkled
and rent open, the sweetness
and future gone
out of him
(in bed.)

Stephen Burrows



FOR AYUMI

and even though the geography of your apartment
is you growing lighter and lighter every time I think of you,
once you showed me the city from a lookout at midnight,
and I spent an hour trying to explain a word to you
up above the trees with you grinning at me in the dark,
and I never stopped wearing the shirt you gave me
or being grateful: it says curses like chickens
—I had forgotten my dictionary
and had to laugh at everything,
our voices blooming in the air together,
spelling out how much of you I am—
come home to roost. Silly, but
beautiful but none of the pictures come out:
I the confused and speechless camera,
all the city lights in lines and squares,
in gestures and broken phrases,
barriers to balance how effortless
the night was becoming with every thought.
The word was seed.

Henry Atkinson

PERMUTATIONS

Lauren Clark



you & me & stained glass,
and raspberries, and a floppy dog,
and paintbrushes, and mosquito,

chloroplast, green kitchen,
when H. crashed on his bike



the hands of millions, literally—
sitting on the plastic, uncomfortable, comfortable,

bringing the subway home to dinner,
staying underwater



Neighbors, other nations.

Robert, an old brown leather
belt. Anne round as the world.



For two years after we meet,
I hear in his hand blue glitter
in the creases, how I taste,

many.



List all the businesses you can remember
and what you can remember about them.
List streets, both by name and who lives
on them. List all the cars you have known.





.



Dead Dog.
With Halo.
Each Friend:
And Glow.



The way he left
like the flip of a coin;

year

One side whole, the other one
bursting and splitting, running, growing;

December full of muscle and
on its back a January

rife with tumor



I am taking white towels
upstairs in my dreams.

I do not want to be rude.



I put my ear to the box of him.

Inside, I hear—
2 dogs, imaginary/invisible
Kent Street waking up



Blue glitter that falls from the ceiling
in scallops and waves. You knit me
a scarf for two years after we meet.



I heard in his hand
in the creases, airplanes,
shooting scars,
many.





Blue glitter that
falls in the creases,
I heard in his hand
a scalloped scarf



List all of the dead dogs you can remember
and what you can remember about them.
List haloes, both by glows and who lives
beneath them. List all the friends you have known.



the way he left:
staying underwater
on the subway.



you knit a scarf two years after we meet for me.
you knit a scarf for me for two years after we meet.
for two years after we meet you knit me a scarf.
two years after we meet you knit me a scarf.
two years after we meet like the flip of a coin.



List all the bursting you can remember
and what you can remember about splitting.
List running, both by name and who lives on it.
List all the growing you have known.



I am taking all of the streets
upstairs in my dreams. I do
not want any birthmarks.





-



In the creases, airplanes,
where H. crashed on his bike
in scallops and waves.



shooting scars home to dinner;

you & me & the flip of a coin:
on its back a mainland
rife with chloroplast
and no birthmarks.



Anne
makes the one
side whole,
the other one
waking up



the next body I read is
afraid of fish, a box
full of blood.





SILENT TREATMENT

Jacob Farnsworth

Dear Reader:

To perpetuate a high standard of quality, we solicit your opinion to the following short questions.

How subtle would you say this magazine is? (Check one)

Very Kind Of Not At All

Has this issue of The Plum Creek Review resulted in an increase in your social interactions with others? (Check one)

Yes No Not Sure

If so, with whom? (Short answer)

Will you ever forget this moment? (Check one)

Yes No Not Sure

Who should we thank for the existence of this issue of The Plum Creek Review? (Check all)

Our (talented and attractive) Staff

Anonymous Artists

Wendy Kacso (our friend in Printing Services)

Chelsea "Puppy Creek Review" Baker (our hot-or-not Editor whom we will miss quite dearly when she is in far off libraries)

_____ Other

As evidenced in this magazine, do the Layout Editors seem to be nice people? (Check one)

Yes No Not Sure

Why or why not? (Short answer)

Thank you for your cooperation.
Allie Hirsch and Jesse Miller
Layout Editors-in-Chief







