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drydream
Scott Ferry

i wake up one morning with my mental cereal
in the fridge and my milk in the cupboard
my penis holds up my glasses
my eyes gauze in prayer
i have already begun to slip
worms in mouths and tongues on hooks
the arrhythmias have foretold it all along
if i flip it along the purkinje fibers
the heart becomes an insular sun
don't forget to clean up
the semen on the catastrophes
i haven't even cum yet and i'm already asleep
so the changes have begun crow crawl on
vinyl and thelonius twinkles through the
tinkle i don't reason this is a slack-kneed prophecy
that this is a foreskin lantern of lost gods
i can't shake the rubbertongue
can't breathe without cost can't dance
without rubbing some nipple can't wash
this electric fence with holy hoses and yes
when i wake i am a lobster in an egret suit
with a case of dildos and a jesus bicycle
i can't ride either so this must be
another broken river regurgitating
milk-bloated sirens all their eyes
coins

He Says
Eleanor Karinthy

He says
Let's get naked
And do ketamine
While we fuck

You're bleeding
So you spread
A moss-green blanket
On the couch

He dreams
Of decadent abandon
Watching you
Undress, obey

You get on top
Dip the spoon in the bag
Hold it up
To his nose

The crystals sparkle
In your head
Drip down
The back of your throat

He is a wave
Beneath you
You're fucking
The sea itself

Rolling and roiling
In your depths
(And when you tell him so,
He only laughs)

You come up for air
Open your eyes
The city glitters
In the windowpane

He will say "please"
When he takes off
The condom, later
And you won't protest

You're high
On his desire,
His need,
However false

This sea may
Swallow you
It's time to
Learn to swim

Clinging
John Tustin

Clinging to your bogus patriotism
and your antique religion:
your misguided and blind acceptance of
– and deference to –
the family,
as if they are a connection of lily pads
leading from shore to paradisaical shore.

Each false feeling, every comfortable untruth
sinking you deeper into your complacent morass.

You redesign your mind in orange florescence
and knock down all the load-bearing walls
for the sake of aesthetics.

There you are,
clinging to the life raft of sentiment.
There you are,
clinging to the clods of misguided duty.
There you are,
shining a torch into the already well-lit corners.
There you are,
behind the barbed wire
of blanketed rage and human frailty;
of human stupidity and human pride.

With the subtlety of a rhinoceros,
charging to the foot of the volcano
then standing fast;
painting little acrylic islands
on fingernails that have never felt dirt underneath.
The lava escapes the volcano,
down the other side,
rushing down toward all you know.

As you pretend standing guard,
all of your life and love is devoured
in the flame and the spew and the ash;
in the vitriolic spume much like that
which constantly emerges
from your own dumb and insatiable,
platitude-filled,
execrable mouth.

Nong Kai Train
John Gartland

An old Bangkok hand,
was drinking with me
on the Nong Kai train.
“Same old story, I’m afraid,
‘Don’t ever rent a room without
a spy-hole and a chain, my friend.
The girl says she’ll get more to smoke,
and calls someone, then gets the door,
they burst into your hotel room,
she’s gone, and now you’re ransom bait
for crooked cop extortionists
that work out of their station
in Thong Lo.
Your wrists are cut from
handcuffs, for a while, but ...

The girl? ... sold you out
to stay out of jail, probably.
None of them want to go back
to the monkey house, certainly.

In the station, as cops pocketed
my cash, and checked my cards,
I recognized the officer in charge
as one of my ex-graduates
from TLAK University. He’d been one
of the few with any English skills.
Guess the family business never will be
sexy as the drug trade in a uniform.”

He laughed aloud, as the night blew in,
and the fields rushed by,
and I’d rate that as a major high,
that night on the Nong Kai train.

“I got off with a less than crippling bribe.
He wouldn’t want the TLAK Alumni
tribe at their bullshit banquets,
hearing he’s corrupt. But, after all,
why else do people join the police?”

Never, never rent a room without
a spyhole and a chain.
Sounds like a comic opera song
or some virginal refrain;
or the cool night breeze
he’s shooting
on the Nong Kai train.

“You bear the wounds of handcuffs
for a while, but ...
that gut-paranoia never goes,
ammoniac fear that whips you sober.
Could be a social paradigm in there,
who knows? For students of police states.”

The steward brought more drinks;
and the night was far from over;
with a sweet breeze off the ricelands,
as the night blew in,
and the fields rushed by;
and we rode, with the immortals,
on the night train to Nong Kai.

basic cable
PJ Grollet

I walked the clothes dryer repair guy through the living room and we both stood transfixed before the TV show my dad watched on basic cable. alternating scenes

flashed across the screen: three gorgeous women, classy women, in different bedrooms, laying on beds in various stages of undress—lacy negligees and panties. the same

nude man walked into each room. his huge uncircumcised dick engorged, he approached the women and the sexual encounters cycled through until climax—the women's faces and

breasts covered in cum. the camera then panned to a priest with curly black hair who stood inside one of the rooms. dressed in cassock and clerical collar, he smiled into the camera with

sinister intent before the show cut to commercial. “damn, what are you watching, pop?” I asked. “just a dumb soap opera that takes place at the Vatican,” he said. I showed the repair guy to the dryer

and hurried back to watch some more. the program resumed. in the next scene a woman snuck up behind a man and bashed him over the head with a handle of vodka. she wailed on the guy until his head came undone.

Beholden
C. Renee Kiser

Joke is
on him...

Added me to his collection
crooked cabinet, another shot glass
I vowed to forget his erection
and his clown shoe up my tiny ass
Sold me a smile and a fantasy
Every laugh so calculated
But I went hunting for a story
Served my heart, so he ate it

Now I don't blame a dog
for being a dog, lessons tethered
But a dog can't beat a wolf
He'll be sorry he ever endeavored
Took the bait and seemed convinced
that he raped me of my sanity
Joke is — a poet's born unhinged
to report the punchline of society

(walk the dog or wear the collar...)

zig zag reality, how long can we
drown in self-deception, open
the doors of perception... and we
(wolves) accept and howl, beholden

Cheers to the hungry, lost dogs
I hope you find a home, *you know*
I hope you get a good bath —
Get shined up one day *and glow*
I used to be a lost dog in gloom
but I've been a wolf for a while,
returning my hunger to the moon
I don't beg and I hunt *with style*

Office After-Hours ~ Paige Johnson

Once the microphones have wilted,
their laser targets disarmed dotless,
we lower from stuffy leather seats
to dusty floorboards and bean bags.

Matches kiss candle wicks
above blood-red mahogany,
splattering the wall with mauve
shadows for a friendly séance:
a meetup with old acquaintances
and enemies young enough
to find mutable, moldable.

The crinkle of ketamine tablets
from pop-out rounds, the dig
of your long, pale fingers into
the abyss of your sable suit
jacket, always arouses me.

The rush starts in my heart
and heads south, like the
cells in my aorta are home-
ward bound cars on the
Autobahn: opal speedsters.

Nobody's as slick as you, though.
And I don't mean the Brylcreem
part in your auburn locks or the
starlit twinkle off your bezel head.
But the fluidity with which you pass
one tablet from tray to tongue,
from yours to mine like waves
jostling a buoy back and forth.

The taste should be TV static,
cherry-peppermint La Croix,
but I only notice your cinnamon
tin sweetness and toothpaste.
What should overwhelm me is
the gaggy smell of baby powder
and Rx glove oxidation from the
blister pack, but I only notice your
cool water cologne, lint-rolled lapels,
their bursts of veranda-flower breeze.

If we keep our eyes squinted,
the room should transform
soon: from bookshelves,
storage blocks, and
egg carton foam
soundproofing
to volcanic sunsets
from rice-paper windows,
the exhilaration of entrapment
in closed convenience stores, and
wall-carpeted step-down trip caves
that trump ski lodges in cocoa coziness.

If we keep our fingers threaded
while our mouths fill with moon water,
we won't feel so ashamed when the soggy
rocks dribble out. Lunar larvae, you've dubbed it.
"Debris of the cerebellum that alter balance, took
away your natural lightness, springy space boots."

We reclaim it all in one ring around the midnight sun.

achilles heel heart
Rob Plath

some say the twenty-four ribs
protect the heart
i say the heart is an achilles heel
always a target
pierced no matter the armor
even when opening & closing alone
in a small room
i say the twenty-four ribs is a terminal
where the heart awaits the final blade
& the rungs of arched bone
become a fighting cage at last
for worms to war over red shreds

the final makeover
Rob Plath

one day death
will give you
a makeover
death will
scalp you
peel yr face off
unravel yr shape
like a mummy
striptease
tossing the dumb
rubber suit
to panting worms
leaving you to
look stunning
in all 206 bones
a bright brainless
skull smiling
w/ the same sun
before you were
born shining
thru yr ribs

Pissing on a Wall
Joseph Farley

The words seem to come out right,
but dry up too soon
when the sun hits the bricks in the alley.

All that's left is the odor
of something you can no longer see
and may not want to.

The stream as it came out
felt so much more than it was.
That's okay. You left your scent.

Dogs will remember your passing
longer than people will.
They will follow you along the street,

tails wagging and tongues hanging out,
begging for more of what's inside you
to be spilled out for their noses to enjoy,

much more appreciative than the critics
who never salivated
while reading your work.

Bottomless Brunch
Damon Hubbs

she pulls on her ugliest tights
the ones with the splatters & drips
she wears every Sunday for bottomless brunch

& mutters something
about how I spend all my free time
writing poetry

I don't like the way free time & poetry
sound rolling around together in her mouth
but it's Sunday & I don't want to fight

so I keep at it
as she waves & heads out for mimosas
or whatever it is they're drinking these days

later, after I finish a poem
& she returns flushed with late morning cocktails
the tights are a little less ugly

& her ass looks like a million bucks.
I plunge into the bottomless brunch
like a man who hasn't eaten in days.

Glory Hole

Herman P. Triplegood

I looked through the glory hole.
I saw a pearly bone eruption.

With Portnoy's Complaint in my pocket,
I ejaculated into the breeze
Under a bridge
In the full light of day,
Until all of the pearl drops
Were gone with the wind.

I visited the Red Rooster
To watch the couples fuck,
And gratified myself
With piss porn in the orgy room,
When nobody else would gratify me.

I went to the gay bath house,
And standing naked in the steam
It felt on my exquisite body
Just how far the sperm can fly.

I played bukkake bingo with myself
While driving a company car
Near the surge tank
On the other side
Of Sunrise Mountain.

I planted my seeds into a graveyard
With bicycle tucked away
Hidden within the blackberry bushes.

Yes, I went to the park near the river
Next to Skinner's Butte,
And in that tiny men's bathroom in the park
I discovered a glory hole,
And when I looked through the glory hole
I saw a pearly bone eruption.

So, walking away now from the glory hole
I keep thinking...
All of this really happened, and others do it too,
And so shall I, as I always have,
Sometimes walking toward the glory hole,
Sometimes walking away.

But, always walking...
Without shame.

to boldly go
Jacklyn Henry

Captain Kirk always made me hot
and i desperately wanted him
to fuck me, just as i imagined
him fucking Mr Spock.

i wanted to be bent over
his Captain's chair,
on the bridge, *Warp speed!*
Mr Scott, warp speed!

he would whisper in my ear
as he took me, thrusting hard
and furious, whispering about
the Gorn and Tribbles, and
how i felt better than
Yeoman Rand and Nurse Chapel,
or the green girl from Orion.

we would transport down
to the surface of a strange new world,
make love in a jail cell
after they captured us.
Mr Spock would beam in to save us,
but he caught us joined together,
his eyebrow would raise,
fascinating.

and i would die in his arms, as red
shirts always die, and no one gets
between Captain Kirk and Mr Spock.

Black Heart
Kristin Garth

Could remove the onyx tinted contacts
and boys would be surprised to see the blue
irises hidden, like blonde roots you must dye
every week to keep from public view.
Carry a charcoal parasol when there
is the slightest forecast of sunbeams
on skin that goes golden everywhere
within a half an hour, it always seems.
If it all happened at once, you'd look like
some ordinary girl who bakes oatmeal
raisin cookies with fair hair pin curled tight,
a cinnamon sweet heart that will make them feel
love in lieu of fright at the black heart you hide.
You need to look as dead as you are inside.

**Do you like the music of Pete Cigar?
Ryan Quinn Flanagan**

She was young and drunk
and trying to appear cultured
when she said it.

Do you like the music of Pete Cigar?
she asked.
A tiny burp exiting her mouth
stage right.

Most embarrassing when you are trying
to steer a fifty-foot yacht up your own
puckered ass.

I told her I did.
That his music had a heavy Cuban influence.

Oh, I love Cuba!
she threw her tiny confetti hands
in the air.

So did Castro,
I say.

I think we need more wine!
she smiled.
Garcon, Garcon!
she waved her glass
in the air.

I poured us both some wine.
Killed an ant on the way back
from the bathroom.

The only thing left to do now
was to discuss the many musical merits
of Wooden Guthrie.

Impression
Damon Hubbs

after Thom Gunn's 'Expression'

for several months I've been reading
the poetry of my juniors
or maybe they're my contemporaries
it's hard to tell

who's who these days
there's so many voices
battling in best of
the beat cover bands

and there's still much talk
of Mother, the abandoner
and Daddy, the angry alcoholic
both hated equally

however
all that hatred
was confessed better
long ago.

I go to the Art Museum
though I'm not sure what it is
I'm looking for

Pop Art
doesn't pop
and Impressionism
fails to make
an impression

then I reach it, I recognize it

*I've acquired a taste
more primary than art considers proper
so I head out the emergency exit
to find a blowjob and a sandwich.*

It's So Damn Long
Donna Dallas

When night shrieks in
skirts the very edge
of my nervous system
six degrees below zero
truckstop baren
a penny for any lonely man's thoughts
who venture
in to Sally's Gas Station

I pine for the dawn
watch for skeletons lurking
in doorways
of surrounding hollowed out buildings
a great horned owl
screeches past me
attempts feebly to solve its hunger problems
or die quietly in some slovenly hovel

Bones littered about
beer bottles
needles
some old stuffed teddy bear
so worn and dirt trodden
it became its own disease
Ima die out here.....eventually
after a certain number of shooting stars
die in their blaze of glory
straight over the mountain tops
it's scrawled somewhere
under my rib cage
like a barcode

Jesus sends an angel
every so often
to give a scan check
when I feel that heat
a smile cracks my frozen face
I'll stare up at those billions of stars
every one of em named by Jesus
every one of em a fiber of this long-ass night

Look north
the mountains glare threatening
ain't no home in those hills
but I watched a few takers
locked and loaded
with knapsacks and water bottles
take the trek with stubborn praise
not one sorry sap made it back

Some stars are born to glory
some are deadass blazers
until they fade
to space dust

Ima stay right here
watch the stars drip down
dead and alive
into this gorge of Edom
brimming with agony

Set myself up
with my teddy
wait for my star to turn