



- THE JASON -

COVER ART BY ANDREA MALBY

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THE JASON

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TALENT

BY PAIGE ORTHMEYER

TOES DEVOID OF TOENAILS
PAINFUL AND PINK
AN EXPOSED SNAIL
SENSITIVE TO TOUCH
SOFT AS THE SUN
BUT SHRIVELING

IN NEED OF
SHELTER AND PROTECTION

UNTIL THE TIME
WHEN THEY ARE
TOUGH AND DEAD

THOUGHTS ON FEMINISM

BY JAMES T. HADLEY

MEN, COMRADES!

DON'T TALK AROUND THE TABLE
OR SIP SCOTCH IN THE SITTING ROOM
PONTIFICATING ON YOUR PRETTY POINTS
OF SOCIAL THEORY
ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES
MOVE CONVERSATION TO THE KITCHEN
WASH THE DISHES, COOK THE STEW
FOR ISN'T SHARED WORK AND DISCUSSION
THE BASIS OF TRUE EGALITARIANISM.

THIS MORNING

BY JAMES T. HADLEY

I WOKE UP HUNGOVER,
STRUNG OUT
FUCKED UP
SICK
PISSED AND PISSED OFF
LOST AND BETRAYED OF MY OWN IDEALS
AS LONELY AS EVER,
WENT TO MY MAIL BOX
AND ALL I GOT WAS A LETTER
FROM JERRY HUDSON
INCREASING MY TUITION
-DAMN FINE OREGON MORNING-



"SEVEN PIGLETS"

BY JESSIE WHIPPLE

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LEGACY

BY CHAD WRIGLESWORTH

THE WHEELS HUMMED DOWN INTERSTATE FIVE AS I LEANED MY HEAD AGAINST THE WINDOW AND THOUGHT THE SITUATION OVER. I HAD NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER, MY FIRST WEEKEND OF SUMMER VACATION WOULD BE SPENT WITH A RETIRED LOGGER WHOSE FACE WAS WRINKLED ENOUGH TO BE SOLD AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST RAISIN. I EDGED MY HEAD IN-BETWEEN THE FRONT SEATS AND ASKED AGAIN, "WHY DO I HAVE TO GO? WHY CAN'T I JUST GO WITH YOU GUYS?"

"LISTEN, I TOLD YOU NICK, HE ASKED IF YOU'D COME UP AND STAY WITH HIM. HE'S PROBABLY LONELY."

JANICE FLASHED HER EYES AT MY DAD, "NICHOLAS, YOUR FATHER AND I NEED TO SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME TOGETHER. IT WILL BE GOD FOR ALL OF US."

I SIGHED AND LAID BACK AGAINST THE HEAD REST. I COULD ALREADY HEAR THE ECHOING STRAIN OF GRANDPA WHITMAN'S VOICE, GOING ON HOW POT-SMOKIN' HIPPIES HAVE RUINED THE AMERICA HE ONCE KNEW. WE NEVER REALLY HIT IT OFF. EVEN WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, WE HAD OUR SHARE OF DIFFERENCES, BUT THROUGH MY GRANDMA WE FOUND A COMMON GROUND TO MEET ON. WHETHER IT BE FISHING OR BUILDING A SNOWMAN, SHE MADE SURE WE GOT ALONG FOR AT LEAST AN AFTERNOON. BUT NOW THAT SHE WAS GONE, I SENSED THE UNEASY FEELINGS COMING BACK, AS IF THE OLD MAN WAS A GRUDGE-HOLDING ENEMY.

A COOL BREEZE HIT MY FACE AS MY DAD CRACKED THE WINDOW AND LIT A CIGARETTE. THE FIRST BREATH OF NICOTINE TRAILED OUT THE WINDOW AND JANICE'S FACE TURNED FROM A DAZED SMILE TO IRRITATION. "CAN'T YOU WAIT? WE'RE ALMOST THERE— AREN'T WE?"

HE DROPPED THE WINDOW FURTHER AND FLICKED THE BENSON AND HEDGES OUT. "JUST KEEP GOING STRAIGHT. HE'S THE LAST HOUSE ON THE RIDGE."

AS THE CAR BUMPED AROUND THE LAST BEND OF POT HOLES, I SAW THE RUSTIC SCENE IN THE DISTANCE. THE POND DOWN BELOW THE HOUSE WAS HIGH FOR SUMMER MONTHS WITH LILLY PADS SKIRTING THE BANK'S EDGE. A COUPLE WOOD DUCKS MANEUVERED THEIR WAY THROUGH A MAZE OF LEAVES AND FALLEN TREE LIMBS. THE WORN SHACK REMINDED ME OF A GARAGE SALE PAINTING MARKED AT HALF PRICE. AT THE HOUSE'S ENTRANCE, A DOOR WITH RIPPED WIRE MESH SCREEN FLAPPED GENTLY IN THE BREEZE. THE SLOPING PORCH WAS LINED WITH A ROW OF WITHERED FLOWERS PLANTED IN FOLGERS COFFEE CANS. THE RUSTY PLANTERS

BROUGHT BACK AN IMAGE I'D NEVER FORGET, ONE OF MY GRANDMA KNEELING IN THE DIRT, PULLING THE WEEDS AND PLANTING FLOWERS ALONG THE FRONT PORCH.

IF SHE WAS STILL HERE, I THOUGHT. SHE'D WELCOME ME, HOLDING HER DIRTY FINGERS OUT TO MY CHEEKS. THEN SHE'D KISS MY FOREHEAD LIKE SHE ALWAYS DID.

THE CAR STOPPED AND I REMINDED MYSELF THAT THINGS COULD NEVER BE LIKE THEY WERE BEFORE.

"HERE WE ARE," DAD SAID, STEPPING OUT OF THE BMW. "QUITE A PLACE, HUH JANICE?"

"YEAH, I GUESS. IT'S SOMETHING."

I SHOOK THE MEMORIES OF GRANDMA OUT OF MY MIND AND RAN OVER TO MEET DAULTON. "COME ON BOY...COME ON!"

THE TWENTY-YEAR-OLD IRISH SETTER DRUG HIS PAWS AND SNIFFED OUT THE COMPANY. HALFWAY THERE, HE STOPPED WAGGING HIS TAIL, STRETCHED HIS SAGGING NECK AND BAYED AT JANICE. SHE STOOD BEHIND MY DAD, POINTING AN INDEX FINGER. "YOU...YOU GET AWAY FROM HERE."

THE DOG HOBBLING FORWARD, SHIFTING HIS WEIGHT BACK AND FORTH LIKE AN OLD BEAR.

"SHEW. SHEW. GET AWAY YOU OLD MUTT."

THE SCREEN DOOR FLEW OPEN, BANGING A WOOD RAILING, AS A CRUDE LAUGH BELTED FROM GRANDPA WHITMAN'S ADAM'S APPLE. "EASY NOW BOY. COME BACK HERE." HE SLAPPED HIS THREDBARE THIGH AND CONTINUED CACKLING. THEN HE WRAPPED HIS LIPS AROUND HIS TEETH, DABBED HIS FOREHEAD WITH A RED HANDKERCHIEF, AND CHECKED US OVER. "WHAT'S THAT YOU GOT THERE, SON?"

DAD ANSWERED, "THIS?"

HE SPIT IN THE CAR'S DIRECTION, "YEAH, THAT. THAT BLACK THING OVER THERE."

"THIS HERE, IS JANICE'S NEW BEAMER. WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

SLIDING A HAND DOWN THE PORCH RAILING, GRANDPA LIMPED DOWN THE STOPS, ONE FOOT AT A TIME. HIS EYES DARTED OVER THE VEHICLE AS HE PULLED A TOOTHPICK FROM BEHIND HIS EAR AND ROLLED IT BETWEEN HIS THUMB AND INDEX FINGER. HE PULLED BACK ON HIS SUSPENDERS AND POPPED THE TOOTHPICK IN HIS MOUTH. "HOW MUCH SHE RUN YA?"

NO ONE ANSWERED AND MY DAD WIDENED HIS EYES AT JANICE.

SHE RETURNED WITH A QUIVER IN HER VOICE, "TWENTY-NINE THOUSAND. WITH A FULL WARRANTY."

AS IF THE DOLLAR FIGURE DIPPED INTO HIS OWN POCKETBOOK, GRANDPA PUCKERED HIS LIPS AND BIT DOWN ON HIS TONGUE. "LOT A

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MONEY FOR THEM NAZI BOYS." HE KICKED THE TIRE AND RAN HIS FINGERS ACROSS THE DUST-SKIMMED PAINT. "SURPRISED SHE MADE IT UP HERE."

IGNORANT TO HIS INSULT, HE ADJUSTED THE FIT OF HIS JEANS AROUND THE CROTCH AND CONTINUED, "SO. I TAKE IT YOU'RE JANICE." HE SNORTED AND SLICKED BACK HIS HAIR WITH ONE HAND. "SINCE MY BOY HERE AIN'T MUCH FOR MANNERS, I'LL DO THE INTRODUCING. I'M LEROY, LEROY WHITMAN."

SHE GLANCED TOWARD HIS BAD FOOT AND SMILED. "NICE PLACE YOU HAVE HERE, MR. WHITMAN."

THE OLD MAN TILTED HIS HEAD AND WORKED THE TOOTHPICK AROUND HIS LIPS. "WHAT'S THE TROUBLE? BOY A MINE DIDN' TELL YA I'M CRIPPLE?"

"OH, COME ON DAD, RELAX A LITTLE WILL YA?"

"NEVER MIND THAT. DID YA TELL HER OR NOT?"

"NO. I DIDN'T. I FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT."

HE SHOOK HIS HEAD. "DON'T GIMME THAT." HE PAUSED FOR LACK OF ANYTHING TO SAY. "LOOKS LIKE YOU FORGOT TO GET MY MAIL, TOO...YOU DRIVE ALL THE WAY UP THE ROAD AND YOU CAN'T STOP TO GET YOUR OL' MAN'S MAIL. FORGET IT. I'LL GET IT MYSELF. YOU COMIN' NICK?"

I HOPPED IN THE BLUE FORD AND PULLED THE DOOR SHUT WITH BOTH HANDS. GRANDPA CHUGGED UP NEXT TO DAD AND JANICE, "WHERE YOU FOLKS HEADED ANYWAY?"

"NOT TOO FAR. JUST DOWN BY LAKE MERWIN FOR THE NIGHT. GOIN' CAMPING."

JANICE STOOD ON THE BALLS OF HER FEET, KEEPING HER STILETTO HEELS OUT OF THE GRAVEL. THE OLD MAN STARED DOWN THE LONG ROAD AND MUTTERED, "YEP, THEM'S IS CAMPIN' CLOTHES ALL RIGHT. YOU GOT YOURSELF A REAL GEM THERE BOY."

"WHAT'S THAT?"

"AWHH, NOTHING. I WAS JUST THINKING, THERE'S ALWAYS PLENTY A ROOM UP HERE."

JANICE PEERED AT DAD WITH A THREAT IN HER EYES. "WE'LL TAKE A RAIN CHECK. HOW 'BOUT THANKSGIVING?"

"YEAH, MAYBE...MAYBE NOT."

"WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER. HAVE A GOOD WEEK-END, SON."

JANICE WAVED, "GOOD-BYE NICHOLAS. GOOD-BYE MR. WHITMAN."

GRANDPA FLIPPED HIS TOOTHPICK IN THE DIRT AND DROVE OFF. SEARCHING FOR SECOND GEAR, HE GRUMBLED, "NOT WORTH LISTENING ANYWAY. DUMB BRAWD." I LOOKED OUT THE CORNER OF MY EYE AND

GIGGLED. THE OLD MAN'S EYES TWINKLED AND HE LET OUT A BOISTEROUS LAUGH, "I TELL YA, THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO." I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE MEANT, OR WHERE, OR WHY THE LAUGHTER STARTED, BUT WHEN I JOINED IN, I KNEW IT FELT GOOD. AS WE DROVE ON, THE OLD MAN PATTED ME ON THE SHOULDER AND IT MADE ME WONDER HOW LONG IT HAD BEEN SINCE MY GRANDPA LAUGHED LIKE THAT. THEN I HAD TO STOP AND WONDER THE SAME OF MYSELF.

* * *

"GET YOUR THINGS OFF THE PORCH AND PUT THEM IN BY THE SOFA."

I SAW GRANDPA'S OIL-SOAKED LOGGING BOOTS CURLED UP NEXT TO THE WOOD STOVE, AS I SAT ON THE COUCH AND PERCHED MY FEET ON THE WALNUT COFFEE TABLE.

I WAS CHECKING OUT THE TV GUIDE WHEN I HEARD THE FOOT SLIDING ACROSS THE LINOLEUM FLOOR. THE OLD MAN SORTED A STACK OF MAIL AND RIPPED OPEN A LETTER WITH HIS POCKET KNIFE. "JUNK MAIL. THAT'S ALL I EVER GET ANYMORE." HE CRUMPLED UP A WALL MART ADVERTISEMENT AND SCOWLED AT ME AS HE PITCHED IT IN HE TRASH.

"AIN'T YOUR OLD MAN BEEN TEACHIN' YOU ANY MANNERS? HOW DO YOU FIGURE YOU CAN JUST WALTZ ON IN HERE AND SLAP THEM DIRTY FEET UP THERE? AND GET THT QUEER LOOKIN' HAT OFF. A MAN TAKES HIS HAT OFF WHEN ENTERIN' A HOUSE."

I ALTERED MY MANNERISMS IN A SERIES OF MOVEMENTS THAT ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING. THE OLD MAN GRIPED AS HE WALKED AWAY, "AT LEAST MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL. GET A FIRE GOING. I'LL FINISH DINNER."

THE CEDAR SPIT AND CRACKED AS I WARMED MY HANDS AND THOUGHT ABOUT HOW TO APOLOGIZE FOR MY RUDENESS. ON THE MANTLE, I RECOGNIZED A PICTURE OF MY GRANDPARENTS TAKEN A FEW YEARS BEFORE GRANDMA DIED. PICKING UP THE SILVER FRAME, I WIPED OFF THE DUST WITH MY SLEEVE CUFF. THEY LOOKED DIFFERENT THEN, YOUNG AND BOLD. THE TWO OF THEM STOOD IN FRONT OF THE CABIN, WITH THE POND OUTLINED BY A LIGHT FALLING OF SNOW BEHIND THEM.

THE SOFTENED VOICE CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD, "JUST AFTER CHRISTMAS, 1989." GRANDPA STOOD IN THE KITCHEN, WRINGING HIS HANDS IN A DISH RAG. "BEAUTIFUL WOMAN WASN'T SHE?"

I LOOKED INTO HER BLUE EYES AND ANSWERED, "YEAH, SHE SURE WAS SOMETHING."

"LIKE NOTHING YOU'VE EVER SEEN. NO, MARILYN...SHE WAS ONE OF A KIND." I SET THE PICTURE DOWN AND HEARD THE FOOT SLIDING DOWN

THE HALLWAY. "COME ON, BOY. LEMME SHOW YA' SOMETHIN',"

STANDING BY HIS BED, THE OLD MAN PICKED UP A WOODEN FRAME CARVED WITH ROSES AND LEAVES. BEHIND THE BEVELED GLASS WAS AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH OF MY GRANDMA IN HER YOUNGER DAYS. EVEN IN THE BLACK AND WHITE PICTURE, HER RED WAVY HAIR HAD A DEEP SHINE. A POLISHED STRING OF PEARLS HUNG AROUND HER NECK, BLENDING IN WITH HER AGELESS SKIN.

"JUST OUTTA HIGH SCHOOL, SHE WAS. WE MET UP NEAR SPOKANE...I WAS LOGGIN'. SHE WAS COOKIN'." HE PATTED HIS STOMACH, "I GUESS THT PRETTY MUCH SAYS IT ALL."

I HELD THE PICTURE IN MY HANDS, WORKING MY THUMBS INTO THE CARVED OVAL FRAME. "I SURE DO MISS HER SOMETIMES."

"ME TOO BOY...ME TOO."

GRANDPA TOOK THE PICTURE OUT OF MY HANDS AND I WITNESSED WHAT I'D NEVER SEEN. A TEAR STUTTERED DOWN GRANDPA'S CHEEK AND SPLASHED ONTO THE HARDWOOD FLOOR. THE OLD MAN RUBBED HIS NOSE WITH THE RED HANKY AND SMILED AT THE PICTURE. I STOOD SILENT, STARING AT THE FLOOR, AT THE ONE SHINING TEAR. THE OLD MAN LOOKED BACK AT ME, REALIZED WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND WASHED HIS SOCK OVER THE TEAR. "COME ON BOY. LET'S EAT."

A BOWL OF MASHED POTATOES SAT NEXT TO A PLATE OF HOT DOGS.

THE OLD MAN POURED THE MILK, ACTING LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED, "EAT UP BOY AND PUT SOME MEAT ON THOSE CITY BONES."

I STABBED A HOT DOG WITH MY FORK. WITH DAULTON SLEEPING BY GRANDPA'S FEET, WE ATE MOUNDS OF LUMPY POTATOES IN SILENCE.

"NICK."

I STOPPED CHEWING, "YEAH."

WITH A SOMBER VOICE THE OLD MAN LOOKED DOWN AT HIS PLATE AND SPOKE. "NEED TO TALK ABOUT WHY I WANTED YOU UP HERE FOR THE WEEKEND." PUSHING A HOT DOG AROUND WITH HIS FORK, HE WENT ON, "IT'S ABOUT...WELL, YOU KNOW I AIN'T YOUNG ANYMORE. I'M OLD. OLDER THAN YOUNG GUYS LIKE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND." PETTING THE DOG'S BACK WITH HIS SOCK, THE OLD MAN LOOKED UP AND SAID, "I NEED A YOUNG MAN AROUND, SOMEONE TO DO THE THINGS I CAN'T."

I SET MY FORK DOWN AS IF I HEARD WRONG, "YOU...YOU NEED WHAT?"

"I CAN'T DO ALL THE THINGS I WANT TO ANYMORE. I CAN'T SEE FOR SQUAT. CAN'T HARDLY STAND ON MY OWN TWO LEGS. RUNNIN' LOW ON WOOD, THE FENCE NEEDS MENDIN' AND THE HOUSE NEEDS SOME FIXIN' UP TOO. I'LL TELL YA HOW TO DO THE WORK. I JUST NEED SOME HELP...I WAS

THINKING MAYBE YOU COULD STAY FOR THE SUMMER. PLENTY A TROUT DOWN IN THE POND. MIGHT EVEN GETCHA A KEY TO THE PICK-UP." HE WIPED HIS PINK NOSE WITH THE HANKY AND PAUSED. THEN HE LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW AND SAID, "NOT MANY FOLKS LIKE ME AROUND ANYMORE. WIFE AND FRIENDS ALL PASSED ON. DON'T SEEM RIGHT LETTIN' 'EM ALL SLIP BY." HE FOLDED HIS HANKY INTO A SQUARE AND STUFFED IT IN HIS BACK POCKET, "I KNOW STORIES THE BOOKS CAN'T TEACH." GRANDPA LOOKED AT THE PLATE OF HOT DOGS, TALKING TO HIMSELF, "LOT A FAMILY HISTORY IN THESE PARTS, BUT WHEN I'M GONE ALL THE STORIES GO DOWN WITH ME." THEN, AS IF THERE WERE NOTHING LEFT TO SAY, THE OLD MAN FINISHED HIS DINNER AND PUSHED HIMSELF BACK FROM THE TABLE. "GOIN' TO BED. SUGGEST YOU DO THE SAME. BIG DAY AHEAD TOMORROW."

I PUT MY PLATE IN THE SINK AND WALKED BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM, SMELLING THE AROMA OF HIS OIL-SOAKED BOOTS. I UNROLLED MY SLEEPING BAG AND SAW DAULTON CURLED UP BY THE WOOD STOVE, USING THE BOOTS FOR A PILLOW. I WATCHED THE DOG'S RIBCAGE RISE AND FALL IN A STABLE RHYTHM AND ADJUSTED MY WON BREATHING TO MATCH HIS, WONDERING HOW IT MIGHT FEEL TO GROW OLD, TO DIE. I HEARD THE OLD MAN BRUSH HIS TEETH, TURN OFF THE WATER, AND DRAG HIS FOOT DOWN THE HALLWAY.

"HEY GRANDPA, WHAT KIND A STORIES DO YOU REMEMBER?" I LAID THERE, SURPRISED AT HOW QUICKLY MY VOICE SANK INTO THE DARKNESS. THERE WAS NO RESPONSE AND I FIGURED THE QUESTION WOULD GO UNANSWERED. I CURLED MY LEGS INTO A BALL, THEN A RASPY VOICE CAME BACK.

"YOU SLEEP ON IT BOY, BIG DAY AHEAD TOMORROW."

I PULLED THE BAG AROUND MY CHIN AND CLOSED MY EYES, THINKING ABOUT GRANDPA'S TEAR, HOW THE ONLY ONE I'D EVER SEEN WAS SOAKED IN THE OLD MAN'S SOCK. THE FIRE POPPED AND HIS DOOR LATCHED SHUT. THAT NIGHT I DRIFTED OFF, DREAMING OF OLD TRUCKS, RAINBOW TROUT, AND RUSTED COFFEE CANS.

CANE TOADS

BY MARK FURMAN

I'VE SEEN THE FUTURE, AND IT IS CANE TOADS.

WELL, I'VE ACTUALLY ONLY SEEN A DOCUMENTARY ON CANE TOADS AND CHUCKLED WILDLY AT THE IMPLICATIONS.

IN 1930 SUGAR CANE FARMERS IN THE COASTAL REGIONS OF QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, BECAME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT A RISING THREAT TO THEIR CROPS: THE CANE GRUB. THEIR GRUMBLINGS ABOUT NATURE LED THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP A METHOD WITH WHICH TO CONTROL THIS PEST. SOMEONE DETERMINED THAT THE CANE TOAD, ALTHOUGH NOT INDIGENOUS TO AUSTRALIA, WOULD SERVE AS AN ADEQUATE PREDATOR TO HOLD DOWN THE NUMBERS OF CANE GRUBS AND BEETLES THAT PLAGUED THE FARMERS. SO IN 1932, A COLONY OF CANE TOADS WAS COLLECTED IN HAWAII AND TRANSPORTED TO A SMALL POND IN QUEENSLAND TO BREED. THE REST IS HISTORY.

MUCH TO THE CHAGRIN OF THE FARMERS, THE TOADS FAILED TO IMPACT THE GRUB POPULATION. IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE CANE BEETLE HAD TWO INCARNATIONS, AN AIRBORNE MANIFESTATION AS WELL AS AN EARTHBOUND FORM. DURING THE PERIODS THAT THE TOADS WOULD MUSTER THE COURAGE TO VENTURE OUT INTO THE FIELDS, THE FLYING BEETLE WAS IN SEASON. TOADS CAN'T FLY. THE GRUB TOOK TO THE GROUND ONLY WHEN GROUND COVER WAS AT A MINIMUM. CANE TOADS ARE RATHER FOND OF GROUND COVER. THUS, THE CIVILIZATION OF THE CANE BEETLE WAS COMPLETELY UNAFFECTED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TOAD TO QUEENSLAND.

SEVERAL YEARS LATER A SAFE (BY GOVERNMENT STANDARDS, OF COURSE) AND PRACTICAL PESTICIDE THAT COMBATED THE CANE GRUB AND BEETLE WAS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED. BUT THE TOADS WERE THERE

TO STAY.

AS WELL AS TO BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY.

IT WOULD BE POINTLESS TO LABEL THE SEX DRIVE OF THE CANE TOAD AS HIGH; THEIR ENVIABLE LIBIDO LANDS SOMEWHERE IN A REGION KNOWN AS ABSOLUTELY UNREAL. MALE MEMBERS OF THE SPECIES OFTEN ATTEMPT TO MATE WITH HUMAN FEET OR ARMS, CLUMPS OF MUD, OR EVEN OTHER ANIMALS, MUCH LESS OTHER SPECIES OF TOAD. THERE IS A DOCUMENTED INSTANCE OF A MALE TOAD ATTEMPTING TO MATE FOR SOME EIGHT OR MORE HOURS IN THE MIDDLE OF A ROAD WITH A FEMALE THAT HAD BEEN DEAD QUITE SOME TIME. (ONE HAS TO ADMIRE THAT FAITHFUL SCIENTIST'S DEDICATION TO COPULATION.) HOWEVER, WHEN PROPERLY PERFORMED, THE MALE TOAD CLIMBS ONTO THE BACK OF THE FEMALE AND HOLDS ON TIGHT. THE FEMALE TAKES BOTH OF THEM TO A STREAM, POND, OR EVEN A PUDDLE AS SMALL AS FIFTEEN INCHES IN DIAMETER, AND DEPOSITS HER EGGS, SOME 30 TO 40,000 OF THEM, READILY FERTILIZED BY THE SPERM RELEASED INTO THE WATER BY THE MALE. CANE TOADS RELEASE SUCH A VAST QUANTITY OF EGGS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT AT LEAST THE MATING PAIR WILL BE REPLACED. HOWEVER, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, FAR MORE THAN TWO EGGS SURVIVE TO ADULTHOOD, AS THE SURVIVAL RATE FOR CANE TADPOLES IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF OTHER TOADS. THE UPSHOT IS AN EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN THE TOAD POPULATION THAT WOULD MAKE MALTHUS'S HEAD SPIN.

IT GETS WORSE.

FORGET FOOD CHAINS AND NATURAL SELECTION. NO PREDATOR CAN EAT THE CANE TOAD; IN FACT, NO PREDATOR CAN ATTEMPT TO EAT THE TOAD AND SURVIVE. WHEN BITTEN INTO OR TREATED ROUGHLY, THE TOAD RELEASES A TASTELESS AND ODORLESS POISON THAT CAN KILL MANY ANIMALS WITHIN A HALF AN HOUR, IF NOT INSTANTANEOUSLY. WITH NO PUTRID TASTE TO WARN THESE ANIMALS THAT THE TOAD IS A DANGER, MANY PREDATOR SPECIES ARE BEGINNING TO DISAPPEAR AS THEY CONTINUE TO PREY UPON THE TOAD. AS FOR FEEDING, THE TOAD EATS ANYTHING IT CAN FIT IN ITS

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MOUSE: INSECTS, MICE, BIRDS, AND EVEN PING PONG BALLS. THE TOAD'S INVASION OF THE FOOD CHAIN THREATENS TO MAKE MANY SPECIES ENDANGERED IF NOT EXTINCT, AND RESULTING IN THE POTENTIAL DESTRUCTION OF ENTIRE ECOSYSTEMS.

AT LONG LAST, HUMANITY HAS A RIVAL FOR THE GOLD IN THAT EVENT!

AS THE TOADS MULTIPLY AND SPREAD ACROSS THE NORTH OF AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING NOW ALMOST A QUARTER OF QUEENSLAND, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE THE HUMAN REACTION TO THE TOADS. MANY SEE THE TOAD AS MENACE TO AUSTRALIA. CITING THE AFOREMENTIONED EFFECTS OF THE TOAD UPON THE AUSTRALIAN ECOSYSTEM, TOADHATERS ADVOCATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FINAL SOLUTION TO THE TOAD PROBLEM, WHILE IN THE MEANTIME PURSUING A POLICY OF OPEN ENDED EXTERMINATION. ONE MAN SLEW OVER TWO HUNDRED TOADS FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT WHERE SEVERAL OF HIS PET ORNAMENTAL GOLDFISH WERE KILLED BY TOADS ATTEMPTING TO MATE WITH THEM; ANOTHER GENT TAKES SUNDAY DRIVES SOLELY TO RUN OVER AS MANY TOADS WHO STRAY TO LAY IN THE WAY OF HIS VW VAN. COINCIDENTALLY, THE KILLING OF MANY SPECIES OF TOAD IN GERMANY CARRIES WITH IT STIFF PENALTIES, FINES OR EVEN IMPRISONMENT.

THE TOADS DO FIGHT BACK. AN AMERICAN SCIENTIST WHO'S CAT WAS KILLED BY CANE TOAD VENOM RETALIATED WITH A PICK AX AND RECEIVED A DOSE OF POISON IN THE PEEPERS. HE WAS BLINDED AND IN AGONIZING PAIN FOR OVER SIX HOURS, AND HASN'T DARED TOUCH A TOAD SINCE, ALTHOUGH HIS ANGER HAS YET TO SUBSIDE.

HOWEVER, THESE DASTARDLY BREEDING/DEATH MACHINES HAVE GAINED QUITE A CULT FOLLOWING IN AUSTRALIA AND ARE EVEN THE SUBJECT OF MANY FOLK BALLADS. PRO-TOAD FANATICS DEFEND THEIR GREEN FRIENDS VEHEMENTLY. SEVERAL ELDERLY QUEENSLANDERS, WHO CONSIDER THE TOADS AS ALMOST FAMILY, HAVE LIGHTS SET UP TO ATTRACT BUGS FOR THE TOADS TO EAT, AND SUPPLEMENT THE TOADS' DIET WITH WHISKETTE CAT FOOD, A FAVORITE DELICACY OF THE CANE TOAD. MANY FAMILIES KEEP

FAVORITE TOADS AS PETS; CHILDREN OFTEN COLLECT AND PLAY WITH TOADS INSTEAD OF DOLLS, NAMING THEM AND FASHIONING THEM CLOTHING. WHEN ONE LITTLE GIRL WAS ASKED THE NAME OF HER TOAD, SHE REPLIED, "SOMETIMES I CALL HIM GREENY, SOMETIMES I CALL HIM GRADY OR EVEN JUST CANE, BUT MOST OF THE TIME I CALL HIM DAIRY QUEEN." THE CITY COUNCIL OF A QUEENSLAND TOWNSHIP PROPOSED THE ERECTION OF A STATUE IN HONOR OF THE CANE TOAD, ASPIRING TO RIVAL SUCH TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AS THE GIANT SHELL, THE GIANT BALL OF STRING, OR EVEN SOME RIDICULOUS STATUE OF A DOG SITTING ON A BOX WITH WHICH THE SPONSOR OF THE MOVEMENT WAS QUITE ENAMORED. THE PROPOSITION WAS DEFEATED.

IF ALL OF THIS WASN'T BAD ENOUGH, DURING THE EARLY SEVENTIES WHEN MARIJUANA, LSD, AND HEROIN BECAME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO ACQUIRE IN QUEENSLAND, SOME INNOVATIVE ORGANIC DRUGGIES CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF BOILING DEAD CANE TOADS. WHEN DONE CORRECTLY, THE RESULTING RESIDUE IS A STRONGLY HALLUCINOGENIC AND REFRESHING BEVERAGE, AS WELL AS A SCHEDULE TWO NARCOTIC IN QUEENSLAND, WITH POSSESSION CARRYING A MAXIMUM PENALTY OF LIFE IMPRISONMENT.

THE CANE TOADS OF THE APOCALYPSE, RIDING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INTO MY LIVING ROOM VIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING. MY CONTRIBUTIONS AT WORK, WARNING THE MASSES OF THE IMPENDING DESTRUCTION OF THE FREE WORLD, AND REMINDING THE PUBLIC THAT, ALTHOUGH COMMUNISM MAY BE DEAD (ALAS!), THE GREEN MENACE MARCHES ON.

NOW, WHERE CAN I GET ME SOME OF THAT LOVELY TOAD JUICE?

- THE JASON -

THIS IS FOR ALL THE CLOSET ARTISTS, THOSE WHO DON'T NEED TO BE
PUBLISHED, WHO CAN BE FREE WITH THEIR TALENT IN LITTLE BOOKS
LIKE THESE...ENJOY.

alpine horns

There are huge penises
screaming at the
mountains, "flügel
flügel botsuani!"

Don't listen to them
They don't know
what they're blubbering
about.



"EL CAPITAN"

BY DEREK HEVEL

I-5 REFLECTIONS WITH AN ICED MOCHA SPRINT-
ING THROUGH MY VEINS: AS INTERPRETED UPON
FURTHER REFLECTIONS

BY PAIGE ORTHMEYER

THE HIGHWAY MELTS BENEATH MY BURNING TIRES
AS THE FIRES OF MY BRAIN FUEL ME ONWARD
INFLAMED AS ONE INFECTED
THE ONLY RELIEF
FOUND THROUGH THE STEADY STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS
FORCING ITSELF
PUSLIKE FROM THE WOUND
RELIEVING THE PAINFUL PRESSURE.
IT IS THE CAFFEINE
CAUSING THE DULLED HUMMING
IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD LIKE A RUNNING ENGINE
PURRING TO ME
EXCITING HEIGHTENED SENSES
UNTIL I AM A CAGED TIGER ON A PROZAC HIGHWIRE
DRIVING FROM CARNAL CIRCUS METAPHORS.
MY HANDS SHAKING, WEAVE THE WHEEL
TO THE TUNE OF THE SPICE LACKING LIFE ON THE TAPE DECK
THAT INVITES ME TO EMOTE VOLATILELY
THOUGH MOST WORDS REMAIN UNKNOWN
AND I AM EASILY CONVINCED OF CONFIDENCE
AND THE NEED FOR SEDUCTION AS AN ART FORM
AND THIS DECORATED BY THE POSSIBLE NAMES
OF THOSE AS YET UNBORN BUT IMAGINABLE
AND SO LABELED BY THE SURELY INSECURE FUTURE.
IT IS UNDERSTOOD
THAT NONE BEING CONTEMPORARY
ARE DIRECTLY LINKED THROUGH THEIR SMOKY RELATION
TO THE INDUCED SPARKS OF LIGHTNING
NECESSARILY INFUSED
AS A SIGNAL TO THE NIGHTMARES:
YIELD FOR THE MOMENT
TO THE DIAMOND DAYDREAMS
INSPIRED BY THE RHINESTONE QUALITY
OF THE LANE SEPARATING REFLECTORS
JARRING ME ALERT
AS IN MY UNCONSCIOUS FERVOR
THE CAR STRAYS TOWARD THE CENTER
AND THE OTHERS
FLYING PAST AS ANIMALS
INSTINCTIVELY FLEEING THE SMOLDERING FOREST

INTO WHICH MY CALLUSED IMAGINATION
IS LEADING ITS YET INNOCENT BODY
THAT AT ANY INSTANT
MAY BURST
INTO TEMPTING TONGUES OF FLAME.

REDNECK ARTIST

BY BUCK GARRETT

HER NAME SHE SAID WAS CRICKET; NO LAST NAME, SHE SAID. JUST CRICKET, LIKE THE GAME.

THE SLUMP I BEEN IN, I'D CALL HER TIGERFLOWER OR FIREANT OR PEGGY FUCKING PEPPER CORN, THE SLUMP I BEEN IN.

SHE WAS DOING SOME KIND OF SLOW MOTION BUTTERFLY MOVEMENTS ON MY HARDWOOD FLOORS. JUST COME OVER FROM DOWNSTAIRS.

WHAT YOU STUDY AT THAT COLLEGE YOU GO TO, I SAID.

I WAS SITTING ON MY SECONDHAND LEATHER COUCH—THE ONLY THING I OWN I REALLY CARE ABOUT—MAYBE EVEN THE ONLY DAMN THING I CARE ABOUT—DRINKING MY FIRST BEER, JUST WATCHING.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION, CRICKET SAID.

I FIGURED THAT'S THAT WHAT DO YOU CALL IT, THAT TAI CHI STUFF, SHE'S DOING. WHATEVER YOU CALL IT.

DO YOU LOVE YOUR SPINE, SHE SAID. I LOVE MY SPINE.

I WISH I HAD SOMETHING NORTHWESTERN AND WITTY TO SAY, LIKE, WITH CERTAIN NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, I TRY NOT TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN VITAL ORGANS, BUT I DIDN'T. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY WITHOUT BLOWING MY CHANCES.

I DUG INTO THE COUCH, REAL BROWN LEATHER YOU KNOW, LIKE A PILOT'S JACKET, WONDERING, AS SHE BANDIED HER LEGS DAMN NEAR AROUND HER NECK, IF I HAD ENOUGH BEER IN THE FRIDGE TO COVER THIS.

I TRIED TO CALCULATE HOW MUCH FLUID IT WOULD TAKE, GIVEN MY BODY WEIGHT AND WHAT I'D HAD TO EAT THAT DAY; BUT, NO MATTER HOW I FIGURED, I JUST CAME OUT LOSING. I COULD APPLY THE FUCKING PYTHAGOREAN THEOREM TO THE SITUATION, WHATEVER THAT WAS, AND STILL COFEVOUT THE SAME WAY—LOSING.

SO DO YOU LOVE YOUR PARENTS, CRICKET SAID.

THIS IS A TEST, I THOUGHT. HERE'S THIS CITY GIRL, FIRST TIME OVER, THE KIND OF PERSON WHO'D HITCHHIKED EUROPE ALONE AT 16, WHO'S FATHER DID SOMETHING WITH TEETH, WHO'D CONVERTED TO JUDAISM THEN BACK AGAIN(TOO LIMITING, SHE SAID, ALL THAT JEWISH STUFF), AFTER THE YEAR IN ISRAEL, AND NOW SHE'S SELLING COFFEE AT SOME STAND DOWNTOWN, PARTTIME. AND HERE I AM THIS REDNECK, THIS OLD LOOKING REDNECK, WONDERING IF IT'S WORTH BREAKING OUT OF THIS THREE YEAR SLUMP FOR

THIS, NO MATTER HOW GODDAMN GOOD SHE LOOKS OR WHAT HER NAME IS.
AND I COULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING LIKE, YEAH BABY, I LOVED EM ALLRIGHT.
I LOVED EM RIGHT UP TO THE MINUTE I TOOK A TIRE IRON
TO THEIR HEADS OUT BACK OF THE SHED. BUT I'M NOT A MEAN DRUNK. I
LIKED WATCHING THE RAIN COME DOWN AND HER THERE SPREAD OUT ON THE
FLOOR, DANCING.

SHE SAT UP, BOWLEGGED, BACK STRAIGHT, LOOKING AT ME LIKE SOME
ANIMAL CAUGHT IN A HUNTER'S GLARE, LIKE SHE SENSED SOMETHING.
MOST PEOPLE WOULD BE PUT OFF BY YOUR NONVERBAL SKILLS, SHE SAID.
BUT I EMBRACE YOU. I THINK YOU ARE A MIGHTY BEING.
A REDNECK FROM WAY DOWN SOUTH, I THOUGHT, WITH BLOOD RUSHING ALL
OVER LIKE THE DAMN HAD BUSTED, SHIFTING IN MY SEAT, TRYING TO KEEP
THE SIGNALS AT BAY, THAT LIGHT OUT OF HER EYES.

LORD, I WANTED TO SAY, HELL YES I LOVED MY GODDAMN PARENTS, WHAT DO
YOU FUCKING THINK I DID?

SHE LAY FLAT OUT ON THE FLOOR. SHE WAS MUCH SMALLER THAN SHE
LOOKED WORKING AT THE COFFEE PLACE WHERE I MET HER. LIKE, MAYBE,
SHE'D BEEN STANDING ON A BOX. I BEGAN TO SEE THIS AS A DECEPTION ON
HER PART. I BEGAN DRINKING HARDER.

IF YOU COULD ASK GOD ANY QUESTION WHAT WOULD IT BE, CRICKET ASKED.
THIS WASN'T THAT HARD OF A QUESTION TO ME. I'D THOUGHT ABOUT THAT A
LOT LATELY, ACTUALLY. I WAS GLAD SHE ASKED.

WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU, I SAID.

CRICKET SAT UP.

IS THAT YOUR QUESTION FOR GOD, OR ARE YOU ASKING ME THAT?
I THOUGHT HOW GLAD I WAS THAT SHE'D COME UP. I THOUGHT OF THE TIME,
A LONG TIME AGO, WHEN I FOUND OUT MY FATHER DIED, HOW AFTER A FEW
DAYS OF BEING DISAPEARSED HE'D SHOWED UP IN THE BACK OF HIS VAN IN
OUR POLICE STATION PARKING LOT, A BULLET IN HIS HEAD AND NO ONE TO
BLAME, NO ONE TO BLAME.

BOTH, I SAID.

I'D LET HER READ A POEM I WROTE ABOUT MY FATHER'S FUNERAL, DOWN AT
THE COFFEE STAND. THEN I ASKED HER UP.

YOU'VE BEEN IN A LOT OF PAIN, HAVEN'T YOU, SHE SAID.

I MADE A MOVE TO GET UP TO GO THE THE FRIDGE.

DON'T SAY ANYTHING, SHE SAID.

YOU'VE ALREADY ANSWERED.

- THE JASON -

CRICKET SAID SHE KNEW THIS PLACE, MIKE'S PLACE, JUST DOWN THE BLOCK.

SEE THEM OVER THERE? SHE SAID.

THE GIRL LOOKED YOUNG, MAYBE NOT SIXTEEN. THE MAN ACROSS FROM HER, HE LOOKED OLD. HE HAD THAT OVERFED, OUT-OF-TOUCH LOOK OF A CAR SALESMAN OR A US SENATOR. SHE WAS SOLING HER TOES INTO HIS LAP UNDERNEATH THE BOOTH.

THAT'S MY EX-LOVER, CRICKET SAID.

HE LOOKED SIXTY FIVE, SEVENTY. I FELT A FLUSH OF CONFIDENCE AND FEAR. BY NOW I WAS SMOKING ONE OF THOSE THIN CIGARETTES RICH GIRLS SMOKE, EVEN THOUGH I DON'T, MYSELF.

IT WAS BEAUTIFUL, MAGIC, SHE SAID.

THEN HE FOUND OUT.

WHO?

THAT MAN, MY EX-HUSBAND, JIM.

JIM? I SAID.

HE FOUND OUT ABOUT THE TWO OF US, HOW BEAUTIFUL IT WAS. I HONORED HER, CRICKET SAID.

I TRIED TO SAY SOMETHING WHERE I WOULDN'T COME OFF SOUNDING LIKE SOME STUPID ASS HAYSEED SONOFABITCH, BUT I COULDN'T.

SHE HAD THIS DEAD LOOK, LIKE SOMETHING ON THE END OF A HOOK.

ACROSS THE WAY, IT LOOKED LIKE THE SENATOR HAD TOLD SOME JOKE OR A FUNNY STORY. THE GIRL WAS LAUGHING, BEAUTIFUL.

LET'S GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE, I SAID.

THEN, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, BEFORE WE COULD GET OUR THINGS CLEAN OFF, SHE STARTS THIS WAILING. SHE WENT FROM MOANING LOW TO SOBBING TO THIS RAT-UGLY HOWL, BEFORE WE BARELY STARTED.

SHE SAT UP ON THE BED, WAILING, DEEP AND TRANCE-LIKE. SHE SAT THERE LIKE SHE WAS POSSESSED, ON FIRE, HALF NAKED, SHAKING.

I GOT UP TO GO TO THE COUCH. IT MADE TOO MUCH SENSE TO GET TOO CLOSE TO THAT; IT WAS SOMETHING PURE, PURE AND BLACK AND CUTTING.

I PICKED UP A FRESH BEER OUT OF THE FRIDGE, THEN DECIDED TO MAKE A DRINK. I SAT THERE FEELING THE LEATHER AND WATCHING THE STREETLIGHT POUR INTO THE LIVING ROOM AND GLOW OFF THE WOOD FLOOR. I THOUGHT

ABOUT GETTING MY RIFLE AND TAKING IT OUT, OPENING UP ON THE WHOLE
GODDAMN NEIGHBORHOOD, AND I SAT LISTENING.

I LISTENED FOR A FAR-OFF STORM, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING.

I THOUGHT ABOUT LANDING IN JAIL, FOR SOME REASON, AND HOW I DIDN'T
HAVE THE CASH TO GET OUT RIGHT NOW.

AND I HAD THAT DRINK THEN HAD THAT BEER, WONDERING IF IT HAS THE
GUTS TO EVEN SNOW OUT HERE, LIKE IN THOSE CHRISTMAS SHOWS, AND
WATCHING THAT LIGHT.

I COULDN'T HEAR HER CRYING IN THERE ANYMORE. I COULDN'T HEAR A
THING.

WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU, I'M THINKING.

WHO AM I TO GO ASKING THAT OF THAT GIRL?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

GO ON NOW, I'M THINKING, YOU WERENT DOING ANYBODY ANY HARM. GO ON
NOW, CRICKET. SAFE JOURNEY.

AND, GOD, AS FOR YOU....

AS FOR YOU, I TAKE IT ALL BACK. IT'S PRETTY FUCKING PRESUMPTUOUS TO
QUESTION THE PLAN. I TAKE IT BACK. I TAKE IT ALL BACK.

CARRY ON NOW, GOD. AS YOU WERE, FUCKER.

I SIT HERE WATCHING HER SPRAWLING AND DANCING ON THE HARDWOOD.
SHE SLIDES OVER TO MY KNEES. SHE PUTS HER HAND CLOSE TO MINE, NOT
TOUCHING. WE'RE FEELING FOR BODY ENERGY.

NOTHIN', I SAY.

IT'LL COME, SHE SAYS.

SHE SLIDES OVER AND BECOMES A NEW MOTION, TAKES WING, FALLING OVER
HERSELF LIKE A QUIET WAVE, A GARDEN IN THE SHADOWS OF THE
STREETLIGHT, TAKING US FAR FROM HOME.

THAT MUST BE THAT TAI CHI, STUFF, I'M THINKING. GOTTA BE.

AND HERE WE ARE.

SWEETHEARTS, FREAKS, FALLEN ANGELS. THE BLOOD AND THE LIGHT.
STRANDED, A LONG WAYS FROM HOME.

THE HOOK HOLDING FAST, TIGHT THROUGH THE JAW.

THE SALTY BRINE CAKED TO OUR LIPS.

DANCING.

WAITING FOR IT TO COME.

- THE JASON -

GRADED GIRL, SHE THINKS OF HOMEWORK

BY CARRIE SESSAREGO

I THOUGHT OF MY BINDER AS WATERGREEN SMOOTH.
BUT, AS THE SEAMS BEGAN TO SPLIT,
I SAW THE MOSAIC OF SLENDER THREAD,
(THE CENTER DID NOT HOLD)
AND WITH THE DAYS OF RAIN, OF TEARS,
OF CARELESS SPLASHES, FOUNTAIN JOYS,
THE FABRIC MOTTLED TO FOREST DEGREES
(GLORY TO GOD FOR DAPPLED THINGS!)
CONSTRUCTIONS OF MIND FOLDED TO TATTERS
FALL TO MY OPENING GENTLY AS LEAVES,
ANT - WORDS CREEP FROM PAGES OF BOOKS
AND EVERYTHING BECOMES A POEM
(WHAT STRANGE BEAST COME SLOUCHING
FROM MY BACKPACK, TO BE BORN?)



"DEBORAH"

BY JESSIE WHIPPLE

THE PIER

BY AMY PLENCE

SO LONG AGO, I REMEMBER THE SMELL OF THE PIER. POPCORN, HOTDOGS, AND COTTON CANDY COMBINED TO MAKE A SMELL SO WONDERFUL YOU COULD TASTE IT. THE HOLLOW SOUND OF THE OLD WOODEN BOARDS THAT CREAKED WHEN I STEPPED UPON THEM ALWAYS SCARED ME. I THOUGHT THAT WITH EVERY STEP I TOOK, THE BOARD BENEATH MY FOOT WOULD CRACK, SENDING ME FEET FIRST INTO THE OCEAN, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN. OF COURSE, THAT NEVER HAPPENED.

MY FRIENDS AND I WOULD STAY ON THE PIER FOR HOURS, PLAYING GAMES IN THE LITTLE PIZZA PARLOR THAT STOOD IN THE MIDDLE. WE BALANCED ON THE RAILINGS, DARING ONE ANOTHER TO JUMP. OF COURSE, WE NEVER DID.

TOURISTS WOULD YELL AT US AND COMPLAIN TO THE RESTAURANT OWNERS THAT WE WERE DISRUPTING THEM. THE OWNERS DIDN'T SAY MUCH BUT, "SORRY, WE CAN'T CONTROL THEM." THEN THEY WOULD GIVE US A SMIRK THAT SAID WE SHOULDN'T BE MESSING AROUND SO MUCH, BUT THAT THEY REALLY DIDN'T CARE. THEY KNEW THAT BECAUSE OF US, THE PIER STAYED IN BUSINESS. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THE PIER, LOCATED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF VENICE, THE TOURISTS WERE MAINLY ATTRACTED TO THE MAIN PIERS AT THE NICER BEACHES.

WE SPENT OUR DAYS AND NIGHTS AT THE PIER. DURING THE DAYS WE CAUSED TROUBLE, AND AT NIGHT WE WOULD DREAM. WITH A MOONLIT SKY, WE WATCHED THE BEAMS SHIMMER OFF THE WAVES AND IMAGINED THAT DANCERS SKIPPED ACROSS THE WATER AT MIDNIGHT. WE WERE ALWAYS SO AMAZED AT THE BEAUTY OF THE WATER AT NIGHT, I THINK IT WAS MAGICAL. I'IL NEVER FORGET THOSE NIGHTS AT THE PIER, THEY WERE THE BEST I'VE EVER KNOWN.

MY FRIENDS AND I WOULD GET UP AT SEVEN O'CLOCK EVERY MORNING TO GO WATCH THE SUNRISE. WE THREW OUR LEFTOVER TOAST AT THE SEA GULLS WHO BOTHERED US FOR SCRAPS OF FOOD. SOMETIMES WE'D TRICK THEM AND HIDE THE TOAST UNDER THE BENCHES. THEY WERE TOO IGNORANT TO REALIZE WHAT WE WERE DOING. THEN WE'D TRAP THEM UNDER THE BENCH ONCE THEY FOUND THE FOOD. WE PERFORMED THIS SAME TRICK EVERY MORNING. OUT OF SHEER BOREDOM WE WOULD CARVE OUR NAMES INTO THE RAILING. EVERY TIME I GO BACK TO VISIT THE CARVING HAS FADED A LITTLE.

THE FRIENDS I GREW UP WITH WERE VERY DIVERSE. WE ALL PLAYED TOGETHER, AND WE ALL GOT ALONG. BOBBY WAS A SHORT, CHUBBY KID WHO

- THE JASON -

LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER. SHE FED HIM CONSTANTLY DAY AND NIGHT. WHENEVER ANY OF THE GANG DIDN'T LIKE WHAT WAS FOR DINNER, THEY WOULD KNOCK ON BOBBY'S DOOR, KNOWING THEY COULD GET ANOTHER OPTION. ELEANOR WAS MY BEST FRIEND. WE WERE TWO YEARS APART IN AGE, ELEANOR BEING THE ELDEST. SHE MOVED HERE WHEN SHE WAS NINE, AND I TOOK TO HER IMMEDIATELY. SHE WAS THE REBEL, A WILD ONE YOU MIGHT SAY. I FOLLOWED HER AROUND AND SHE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF IT. SHE SHOWED ME THIS, EXPLAINED THAT, AND GAVE ME SOUND ADVICE EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T NEED IT. WE DRESSED UP IN HER MOTHER'S CLOTHES, PUT ON HER MAKEUP, AND PRETENDED WE WERE MARRIED WOMEN. I LOVED HER IN A WAY, SHE WAS LIKE MY SISTER. THERE WAS ALSO CLARENCE WHO WAS HYPERACTIVE. HE NEVER STOPPED MOVING OR TALKING, HE WAS THE LIFE OF OUR GANG. WHENEVER WE NEEDED A LAUGH HE WAS THERE. I'D SAY OUR GROUP REVOLVED AROUND HIM, WE IDEALIZED CLARENCE. JOSEPH WAS THE BRAVE ONE. I KNEW HE COULD DO ANYTHING, GO ANYWHERE, ANYTIME. HE AND ELEANOR FOUGHT OFTEN, COMPETING WITH ONE ANOTHER, EVERYDAY ALMOST. I WAS FASCINATED WITH JOSEPH. I THINK HE KNEW IT WHICH MADE IT EVEN MORE INTERESTING. HE HAD THESE CUTE LITTLE DIMPLES THAT APPEARED WHEN HE SMILED. HIS HAIR WAS SHORT, BUT HAD STREAKS OF BLOND THAT COULD BE SEEN WHEN HE TOOK OFF HIS BASEBALL CAP. THE FACT WAS, HE WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN WHAT I HAD TO SAY. HE LISTENED TO ME. MAYBE THAT'S WHY I LISTENED TO HIM SO MUCH. WHENEVER I WAS SAD OR FELT LEFT OUT HE'D CATCH MY EYE, WINK, AND SHOW OFF HIS DIMPLES WITH A DEBONAIR SMILE. I SIMPLY MELTED DURING HIS PRESENCE.

I'D SAY OUR GROUP WAS LIKE A PYRAMID. WE ALL SUPPORTED EACH OTHER. EVERY ONE OF US HAD OUR OWN UNIQUE QUALITIES. YOU WOULDN'T THINK WE COULD ALL GET ALONG, BUT WE MANAGED. KIND OF LIKE BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS WHEN THE AFTERNOON WAS HOT, THE WARM, SWELTERING SUN GLARING ON OUR FACES. WE DID NOT CARE ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE BESIDES OURSELVES. WE CARED ABOUT EACHOTHER. I GO BACK TO THE PIER EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE. I WALK TO THE END AND WATCH THE WAVES AS I DID WHEN I WAS A CHILD. THOSE ARE THE DAYS I LONG FOR, THE DAYS AT THE PIER.



"UNTITLED"

BY KARA MCANULTY

WRITING BACK FROM THE DEAD

BY JENNIFER WHEELER

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SAY GOOD-BYE BEFORE YOU LEAVE -
BEFORE YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT IT. AND IT HURTS MY HEART LIKE PUTTING A
DIRTY NAIL THROUGH IT - I CAN ONLY SAY IT HURTS MY HEART.

AND THEY SAY IT'S FOR A MAN. THEY NO LONGER SAY MY NAME
ALONE - THEY SAY IT'S A MAN OR WITH A MAN OR HAUNT ME WITH THEIR
SHALLOW LIVES. I THOUGHT LOVE GAVE YOU COMFORT - FILLED YOU UP LIKE
A STEAM ROLLER WITH NO WHERE TO GO. I MISS THEM AND THEIR HAUGHTY
SMILES.

LIFE ALONE. I WISH I HAD SAID THE RIGHT THING OR TALKED THE
RIGHT TALK OR BEEN A LITTLE MORE LIBERAL FOR THEIR TASTES. IT'S TOO
BAD I LIKE COFFEE AT NOON AND MIDNIGHT IS REHEARSAL TIME.

SOMEHOW WITH YOUR NAME ON SOMEONE'S SHOES OR UNDER-
NEATH THE AIR YOU START TO LOSE SOMETHING. I LOST MY COLLEGE YEARS.
I LOST MY FRIENDSHIPS. I LOST MY LIFE.

AND WRITING BACK FROM THE DEAD IS AN EASY EXERCISE. JUST
TAKE YOUR PEN AND HOLD IT CLOSE - LET IT RISE SO SMOOTHLY IN YOUR
HAND. WISH YOU WERE IN AFRICA AND LIFE HAD NOT BEGUN YET. YOU STILL
COULD BE WHAT THE TELEPHONE BOOK SAYS YOU ARE.

I MISS MY LIFE. AND TIME HAS FALLEN LIKE A RAILWAY CAR INTO MY
LAP AND MY EYES HAVE FALLEN AND I HAVE FORGOTTEN LIFE WITHOUT TEARS.
WANDERING, WANDERING ON THE BACK OF A MOTORCYCLE DOING THE
AUTOBAHN AT 75.

THEY TELL ME WHAT TO THINK BECAUSE MY BRAIN IS SO OPEN IT
SPILLS ITS CONTENTS OUT LIKE SPAGHETTI AND I CAN'T HIDE IT - BECAUSE
EVERYONE IS IN THE MOOD FOR ITALIAN FOOD AND I LEFT MY BACKPACK IN
SAN FRANCISCO. I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND ITS CONTENTS. I'VE LOST MY KEYS
AGAIN.

THEY LIKE TO EAT AND CHEW AND TELL ME HOW GOOD IT ALL TASTES
AND I DON'T KNOW OR UNDERSTAND AND I'M LYING AND IT'S MY FAULT. BUT
I'M NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENED AND I'VE LOST MY GRIP AND I'M RUNNING OFF

THE ROAD AND I FORGOT MY HELMET. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN. BUT WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO KNOW AND WHAT I HAD TO SAY HAVE SEEPED OUT FROM THE CORNERS OF MY MIND.

TRADITIONAL I AM OR SO I'VE BEEN TOLD AS WHIRLWINDS HIT AND TEARS FLOW AND I WISH I COULD COWER IN A CORNER AND MAKE THEM GO AWAY AS IF THEY WERE ONLY A PIECE ("HEATED PLEASE, WITH ICE CREAM ON THE SIDE") OF A BRAIN OF MINE THAT I LOST THE OTHER DAY. I MISS HANG GLIDING.

SOMETIMES I TRY TO PROVE MYSELF BUT WHAT'S THE USE WITH WORN-OUT BOOKENDS, SAWED AT THE END IN THE USUAL WAY, SURE OF WHERE THEY'RE GOING AND WHAT THEY'RE THINKING AND WHO YOU ARE. I MISS HOT COCOA ON COLD NIGHTS. I MISS BEING LOVED.

AND SO THE SYMPHONY CHORUS SINGS - FINALE IN ITS FINAL SCENE AND I COWER UNDER SAUCERS WAITING FOR MY TEA CUP TO BE FILLED - WONDERING IF I'LL EVER BE TWENTY-EIGHT AND WALK CALMLY THROUGH THE STREETS. IF ONLY OUR IMAGININGS WERE MORE THAN JUST THAT AND OUR DREAMS WERE MORE THAN SLEEP - I WOULD TAKE BACK ALL MY WANDERINGS AND MAKE THEM LISTEN TO ME (I THINK). I CAN'T PROVE ANYTHING. I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING. IT'S NO USE PREACHING TO THE CHOIR - THEY'VE GOT THEIR EARS PLUGGED WITH THE SOUNDS OF THEIR OWN VOICES.

RIDING THROUGH THE WOODS AT HIGH SPEEDS, I MIGHT ESCAPE.

- THE JASON -

IMAGINE THAT!

BY DAVID LIPPERT

I WAS PACKING MY BAGS TO GO TAKE A TRIP WHEN OUT OF THE GROUND
POPPED A WUMPLE-VAN-GLIP THIS SEEMED RATHER ODD, FOR IN CASES LIKE
THESE ALL I'VE FOUND IN THE PAST WERE SOME OVERGROWN FLEAS.

I SAID "MR. WUMPLE SIR, HOW DO YOU DO? WOULD YOU TRAVEL WITH ME TO
CAL-CALKAROO? IF WE TRAVELED TOGETHER, NOT ONE, BUT TWO, WE'D BE
SO MUCH HAPPIER, US ME AND YOU."

THE WUMPLE-VAN-GLIP STOOD IN THOUGHT FOR A SPELL, THEN LEFT IN THE
AIR LIKE A FROG IN A WELL! WHEN HE CAME BACK TO EARTH, HE LAY DOWN
AND SAID, "I'LL BE BACK IN A MOMENT, I MUST CHANGE MY HEAD."

AND IN BLINKING MY EYES, HE HAD ONCE AGAIN GONE UNDERGROUND
THROUGH A PATCH OF MZ. BEEZLEGRUG'S LAWN. SO I SAT MYSELF DOWN
AND I STARTED TO WAIT AND I WAITED UNTIL IT BECAME VERY LATE.

THE SKY HAD GROWN DARK AND THE BIRDS HAD STOPPED CHIRPING, THE
SHEEP WERE ASLEEP AND THE BABIES STOPPED BURPING, WHEN UP ONCE
AGAIN POPPED THE WUMPLE-VAM-GLIP, THIS TIME, LOOKING MUCH LIKE AN
OUTERSPACE SHIP.

HE SAID "HOP RIGHT IN, WE CAN GET THERE REAL QUICK!" SO I HOPPED UP
ABOARD AFTER GRABBING A STICK. AND I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, "WHAT A
FINE TRIP TO SHARE WITH MY BROTHER THE WUMPLE," AS WE RACED
THROUGH THE AIR.

THE STARS IN THEIR WHITENESS LIKE TWINKLING POTATOES SHOWN LIGHTNING
BOLT AURAS 'ROUND CHANTING TOMATOES MY MIND WAS THE GARDEN OF
FRUIT IN GOOD SEASON THOUGH I REALLY CAN NOT EVER TELL YOU THE
REASON.

WE TRAVELED, AND TRAVELED, AND TRAVELED SOME MORE PAST WHIMPERING
WEASELS AND BACK FLIPPING BOARS AND THEN CAME A SIGN THAT POINTED
US ON TO THE CAL-CALKAROOIAN BORDER, AT DAWN.

"WHAT FORTUNATE LUCK! OH THE SIGHTS WE WILL SEE!" SAID THE WUMPLE-
VAN-GLIP AS HE SMILED AT ME.

I CALMLY AGREED AND BEGAN TO REFLECT ON THE WUMPLE'S
EXCITEMENT I DID SO RESPECT.

NEVER A HUMAN HAVE I EVER SEEN
WHO WOULD RUSH OFF AT MERELY THE DROP OF A BEAN
TO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE BY STRANGER'S REQUEST
WITHOUT EVEN THINKING OF PAPERS OR TESTS

WITH ONLY THE THOUGHT OF WHAT WAS AT HAND THE KNOWLEDGE OF NOW,
THE LAY OF THE LAND THE FUTURE'S THE FUTURE, THAT WAY IT WILL STAY
WHY WORRY 'BOUT THEN, JUST LIVE FOR TODAY.

AND SO WAS MY THOUGHT WHEN I GOT TO THIS STAGE
OF THE STORY I'M TELLING YOU NOW ON THIS PAGE,
SO I PUT DOWN MY PEN AND I STOPPED IN MY WRITINGS
AND LEFT IT TO YOU TO IMAGINE THE TIDINGS

OF WUMPLE AND FRIEND ON THEIR JOURNEYS GALORE--
IMAGINE AWAY FOR I SHALL SAY NO MORE.

- THE JASON -

O, BUT FOR SOME JUICE

BY ANDREA MALBY

OK, SO IT WAS PRETTY MUCH MY FAULT. LA CULPA MIA.

WE NEVER DID AGREE ABOUT THOSE LITTLE

THINGS. THEY WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO MATTER MUCH.

WHO, ANYWAY SAID THEY COULD COUNT?

DAMN BASTARD, THAT'S WHO.

AND I NEVER DID VACUUM LIKE I PROMISED TO.

NEVER SAID SO, BUT THE GRIT UNDER MY FEET

MEANT SOMETHING MORE LIKE REALITY TO ME THAN THE

MANY OTHER "THINGS" ON THAT MEDIOCRE WEDNESDAY.

TIDBITS OF ENDURANCE AND SOLIDITY THAT I DIDN'T

HAVE THE ENERGY OR MOTIVE TO SUCK AWAY.

IT WAS I WHO LEFT. NOTHING LEFT. WENT WALKING

IN THE ANONYMOUS CROWD OF DOWNTOWN.

THE SHOCK DETAINED THE TEARS. TOURNIQUET.

OF FINALITY DAMMED AND DRIED MY EYES SO THAT

THEY DULLY ACHED, AND HE PATHETIC EFFORT

TO BLINK LIFE BACK ONLY BROUGHT THE TWO PARCHED

SURFACES TOGETHER INTO SCRATCHY FLEETING UNION.

I GAVE MY BOOTS TO SOMEONE PLAYING GUITAR ON THE CITY LIBRARY STEPS

(AN ODE TO HIGHER LEARNING) AND WALKED AROUND FOR A WHILE IN MY

FADED "ONE COLOR MATCHES ALL" SOCKS. I COULD FEEL THE TEXTURED

SIDEWALK, THE BITS OF DISCARDED GUMMY CITY FOOD, THE LITTLE TWIGS.

THESE AND MORE ALL COULD BE CAUGHT IN THE COTTON FIBERS OF MY

FRIENDLY SOCKS. FUNNY. I DIDN'T FEEL SO SAD AFTER A WHILE. MAYBE JUST

A LITTLE THIRSTY. PERHAPS THAT WAS IT ALL ALONG.

BUTTERFLY

BY LIZ STRELOW

SUSPENDED IN MID-FLUTTER

AS THE WINDS OF TWO WORLDS
WHISPER IN GENTLE DISAGREEMENT

IN AN INSTANT (A CHANGE)
KNOWN ONLY
TO ONE SUSPENDED

ON THREADS OF AIR
WEAVING BLUES AND GREENS--

THE DESIGNS OF ATMOSPHERE.



"TULIPS AND TRACTOR"

BY DEREK HEVEL

THE BLUE MOON

BY DARREN MCKEE

THERE WAS ONCE A STORY. THIS WAS NOT YOUR AVERAGE STORY, BECAUSE IT HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL WITHIN IT. IT HAD A FEW CHARACTERS, A FEW VILLAINS, A FEW SCENES, AND A NUMBER OF SENTENCES, BUT ALL WERE ONE IN THE SAME. THERE WAS NO SENTENCE THAT WAS NOT A CHARACTER, THERE WAS NO CHARACTER THAT WAS NOT A SENTENCE, NO VILLAIN THAT WAS NOT A SCENE AND SO ON.

THIS STORY HAD THE TENDENCY TO TRAVEL THROUGH THE WAVES OF THE AIR, MOVING FROM LITTLE SPOT IN THE MIND TO THE NEXT, TRANSPOSING IT'S DETAILS ON THE WALLS IT FOUND, AND MOVING ON, EVOLVING FROM GOOD TO BAD, TO HERE, TO THERE, LIVING A HAPPY LIFE AS IT WERE, NOT KNOWING THE HARM THAT IT CAUSED, BECUSE TAGGING ALONG BEHIND, IN THE SHADOWS SO AS NOT TO BE SEEN, A SMALL CHILD WAS FOLLOWING, ENRAPTURED BY THE BITS OF KNOWLEDGE, PENANCE, AND THOUGHT SCRIBBLED UPON THE WALLS BY THIS STORY.

THEY WERE FASCINATING TALES OF DRAGONS THAT BREATHED FIRE UPON THE VILLAGES OF PEOPLE; OF STORIES TOLD LONG AGO ABOUT BRAVE WARRIORS WHO SAVED THE UNIVERSE OF FAR FAR AWAY; OF CUTE LITTLE CREATURES THAT LIVED IN THE WOODS IN PERFECT COMMUNITIES WHERE ALL BANDED TOGETHER TO FIGHT AND OVERCOME HARDSHIPS; OF EVIL MEN THAT ABUSED AND USED OTHERS AS THIR PASSIONS FIT. AND THE CHILD LOVED THESE STORIES, BELIEVED IN THESE STORIES, RUNNING THROUGH A VANISHING WORLD THAT MATTERED NOT TO HIM, BECAUSE THE WORLD OF FANTASY AND THE IMAGINATION WAS FAR MORE PLEASING.

YET THERE WAS A POINT WHERE THIS SMALL CHILD BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT THE WORLD WAS FADING, BECAUSE HE READ IT UPON ONE OF THE WALLS. SO BOLD AND SO ARROGANT, AS IF THE STORY HAD KNOWN ABOUT THE CHILD, HAD KNOWN WHAT IT WAS DOING, AND LIKE AN EVIL FIEND KEPT RIGHT ON TAUNTING OUR HERO UNTIL TOO LATE HAD BEEN SURPASSED.

IT HAD EVEN BEEN A SIMPLE MESSAGE. ONE OF FEW WORDS. A PLAIN LINE, "AND SO IT WAS THAT THE BOY LOOKED AROUND."

OF COURSE AT FIRST THE CHILD COULD NOT UNDERSTAND. HE HAD BEEN USED TO AT LEAST A PARAGRAPH OF ENTWINING TALE, AND THIS

SENTENCE THREW HIM INTO A FIT OF CONFUSION. WHAT KIND OF WORLD COULD IT LEAD TOO? WHERE WAS THE ENTRANCE IN THIS SENTENCE OF BUT NINE SMALL PORTALS? A FEW DAYS PASSED AND THE BOY HAD NOT MOVED ON, LETTING THE STORY RUN OUT OF SIGHT AND ON ITS MERRY WAY WHILE HE DESPERATELY TRIED TO FIGURE OUT THIS LAST TALE.

AND IN HIS ATTEMPT, HE BEGAN TO LOOK AROUND. HE LOOKED BACK TO THE FEW MESSAGES FROM PREVIOUS DAYS, HE LOOKED TO THE WALLS ON THE LEFT, TO THOSE ON THE RIGHT. HE JOURNEYED THREE DAYS EAST, AND CLIMBED EVERY TREE SEARCHING FOR THE LIGHT, A SIMPLE LIGHT THAT COULD ILLUMINATE THE MEANINGS OF WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON THE WALL.

FANTASTIC THINGS DID THIS BOY SEE IN HIS QUEST TO UNDERSTAND. HE BEGAN TO SEE VILLAGES AND PEOPLE THAT ASTOUNDED HIS IMAGINATION WITH THEIR BRUTAL REALITIES AND POWER OF EMOTIONS THAT EXCEEDED ANY LENGTHS THAT THE STORY HAD EVER BROUGHT TO HIM. HE BEGAN TO FEEL WITHIN HIS OWN SHELTERED LIFE, SLOWLY AT FIRST, TOYING AT AN EMOTION HERE, TESTING IT OUT THERE, LEARNING HOW TO LIVE WITH THEM, LEARNING HOW TO USE THEM, WHAT THEY MEAN, AND HOW OTHERS DEALT WITH THEM.

AND HE BEGAN TO LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD. ABOUT THE ANIMALS AND THE FORCES THAT EXIST IN NATURE. THAT ABOVE ALL, IN LIFE, IT IS THE WORLD THAT MAKES THE DREAM BUT NO DREAM COULD EVER MAKE THE WORLD. BUT THAT WAS NOT A SAD THOUGHT, BECAUSE THERE WAS PLENTY IN THIS WORLD, MORE THAN ANYTHING ANYONE COULD NEED TO CREATE AN INFINITE DREAM.

A NEW LIFE BEGAN TO CREEP INTO THIS BOY, AND SOON THAT LITTLE STORY WAS NO LONGER THE FOCUS OF HIS LIFE. HE BEGAN TO CONCERN HIMSELF WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE, WITH OTHER PEOPLE OF LIFE, WITH OTHER POSSIBILITIES OF LIFE.

SUCH WAS THE EXTENT THAT THIS SMALL CHILD EVEN HAPPENED TO STUMBLE UPON LOVE. IT WAS AN INNOCENT AND HARMLESS GESTURE IN A DAY'S JOURNEY THROUGH A MOST OPEN FIELD. HE HAPPENED UPON A HUMBLE LADY, SITTING AND NEEDLING IN THE GRASS, HUMMING THE MOST EXQUISITE TUNE THAT HE HAD EVER HEARD, AND INSTANTLY FELL ENAMOURED. HE PLACED HIMSELF AT THE LADY'S FEET AND SHE DID NOT TAKE NOTE OF HIM AT FIRST. PERHAPS, NOT DIRECT NOTE, FOR SHE WAS COY AND SLY TOWARDS THE APPROACHING YOUTH, KNOWING HIS OWN INNOCENCE

- THE JASON -

WAS FAR YOUNGER THAN HER OWN.

AND SO THE BOY SAT BEFORE HER, WATCHING HER EVERY MOVE, CATCHING EVERY FAINT SMILE THAT SHE PASSED HIS WAY, AND SURELY SHE DID, FOR SHE HERSELF COULD NOT CONCEAL THE EXCITEMENT THAT CONTINUED TO RISE BETWEEN THE TWO. EVENTUALLY, ONE DAY ALL BARRIERS WERE BROKEN, AND SHE SPOKE TO THE CHILD, AND THE CHILD MELTED INTO A WORLD OF BLISS, ONE THAT NEARLY EQUALLED THAT FELT DURING THE DAYS OF FOLLOWING THE STORY, AND HE LOST HIMSELF.

YET, THIS BLISS, AS ALL OTHERS, DID NOT LAST, AND ONE DAY, IT FADED AWAY, BURNED OFF AS THE EARLY MIST OF MORN BY THE SUN, AND HE FOUND HIMSELF ONCE AGAIN BEFORE THAT VERY SAME WALL, WITH THAT VERY SAME MESSAGE: "AND SO IT WAS THAT THE BOY LOOKED AROUND." BUT BENEATH THAT, HAD BEEN SCRITCHED A NEW PASSAGE: "AND DURING SUCH QUEST IT IS THAT THE BOY LEARNED, YET LITTLE WAS KNOWN ..."

BUT THERE IT ENDED, IN APPARENT MID THOUGHT. YET WHAT, THE BOY WONDERED. AND WONDERED EVEN MORE STILL, HOW IT WAS THAT HE HAD FOUND HIMSELF YET AGAIN BEFRONTING THIS GREAT WALL WHICH HAD BEEN NEARLY FORGOTTEN IN ALL HIS BLISS. IN CONFUSION HE SAT, THINKING TO HIMSELF, TO THE SMALL WEEDS THAT GREW NEARBY, TO THE TREES THAT STOOD A HUNDRED YARDS TO HIS RIGHT.

BUT IN HIS STILLNESS THERE WAS ONLY UNEASE AND NERVOUSNESS. HE WOULD LOOK TO THE TREES, SPEAK WITH THEM, BUT THEY WOULD NOT ANSWER. INSTEAD THEY WOULD DANCE BEFORE HIM, DISGUIISING THEIR MEANING IN THE WALK OF LIFE. HE LOOKED TO THE SHRUBS BESIDE HIM, ASKED THEM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE, BUT THEY WOULD NOT ANSWER EITHER. HE LOOKED TO THE WALL, AND STARED HARD AT THE WRITING, HOPING THAT PERHAPS THERE WAS SOMETHING SMALLER WRITTEN BETWEEN THE LINES, BUT ALAS THERE WAS NOTHING BUT A COLD EMPTINESS AMID THE WORDS.

AND SO THE CHILD, CONFUSED, BEGAN TO LOOK AROUND AGAIN. HE HEADED TOWARD THE DANCING TREES, HOPING THAT PERHAPS, ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD NOT SPEAK WITH HIM, THEY COULD PERHAPS SHOW HIM SOMETHING THAT WOULD HELP HIM UNDERSTAND. AND SO IT WAS THAT THE BOY BEGAN TO LEARN MORE, YET STILL REMAINS LITTLE THAT IS KNOWN ...

STORMFRONT

BY DANIEL METZ

CLEAR BLUE SKY.
BRIGHT LIGHT; MORNING SUN.
HIGH BILLOWY WHITE CLOUDS.
HOT SUMMERY TEMPS.

AN ARMY INVADES,
 SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE.
EACH SOLDIER FULLY LOADED.
DARKNESS TAKES OVER AND
 BLUE SLOWLY BECOMES GRAY.
BRIGHTNESS INTO DARKNESS.
HIGH BILLOWS GONE.
LOW, DARK, AND GRAY TAKE THEIR PLACE.
SUMMERY TEMPERATURE LEVELS OFF,
 BEGINS
 TO
 DROP.

FLASH.
STRIKE.
LOW RUMBLE.
LOOK UP THROUGH TINTED EYES AND
SEE THE SKY BEGIN TO MELT.
SLOWLY, THE GRAY CLOUDS TURN
 INTO DROPS OF WATER.

FLASH OF LIGHT SPIRALS
 DOWN TO THE EARTH.

BOOM!
THUNDER RESONATES
 THROUGH THE VALLEY.
THE CLOUDS OPEN AND
 FALL
 TO THE GROUND.
ONLY TO BE EATEN BY THE
 SOIL AGAIN.

- THE JASON -

HIGHLAND TRAIN

BY ERIN BELL

THESE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS OF YOUR CHANGING LANDSCAPE BLUR TO-
GETHER IN MY MOVING-PICTURE-WINDOW-MEMORY: HILLS FILLED WITH FRIGID
LAKES AND PINK AND PURPLE CLUSTERS OF HEATHER AND TALL GRASS,
PERMANENTLY BENT FROM THE WIND; LYRIC NOTES FROM ROSEYPALE FACES
WANDERING DOWN A SMALL, UNAWARENED STREET, THAT CROSS-EYED GOAT
LICKING FORGOTTEN GOLF BALLS, MUNCHING THE OVERGROWN GRASS OF
THE 9TH FAIRWAY.

INFINITE VISIONS, ROLLING FOR MILES, BUT COMPRESSED AND COLLAPSED
INTO A SINGLE UNTOUCHABLE INSTANT.

* * *

I SIT ABOVE
AND WATCH THIS
MOVING-PICTURE-WINDOW-MEMORY OF MINE MOVE, TWISTING THESE VISIONS
AND FACES, LOOKING FOR THE "YOU" IN THIS LANDSCAPE.

I AM THE PAINTER OF THESE DREAMS,
SITTING ALONE,
SEVERED ON THIS SHELF, DANGLING MY TOES IN YOUR STUFF.

THIS CLOUD DRIFTING UP
FROM YOUR ATMOSPHERE, ENVELOPS MY HEAD;
I TWITCH, ATTEMPTING TO BURN OFF THE FOG BUT IT CANNOT BE WISHED
AWAY— IT BELONGS TO YOU.

A PERFECT HAND IS WHAT I NEED
OR A BRUSH INSPIRED BY DEW, BUT INSTEAD
I SIT HERE ALONE, WATCHING MY UNWRITTEN WORDS MAKE SMALL RIPPLES—
ENDLESS AND UNRECORDABLE.

I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO STAY WITH YOU A WHILE LONGER, AFTER ALL, YOU
INVITED ME IN
(THOUGH NOT FOR SEDUCTION) BUT BECAUSE YOU HAD A SECRET FOR ME.

BUT BEFORE YOU DARED TO UTTER THE SOUND

A CRUEL AND JEALOUS WIND FORCED ME AWAY, LEAVING THIS EMPTY HOLE.

* * *

AND IN SOME DISTANT LINE I WILL BE THERE WRITING MYSELF INTO YOU,
FLOATING ON YOUR SWEET, COLD WATER.

I WOULD GIVE SOME PRECIOUS MEMORY TO BRIDGE THIS GAP BY ACTION TO
SWIM BENEATH YOUR MUDDY TIPS TO BURROW UP THROUGH HARDENED HILLS
TO BREATHE THROUGH MY MOUTH AGAIN JUST TO TASTE YOUR STINGING
EARTH.



"CLOCKTOWER"

BY CHRISTIAN CUTSFORTH

- THE JASON -

FOR MARTELLO

BY KATIE SEHORN

IT IS A SIMPLE TASK TO SAIL THE SEAS
WHEN WAVES ARE GENTLE AND THE SKY IS CLEAR.
WHEN OCEAN WINDS ARE BUT A MURMURED BREEZE,
A CHILD OF SIX CAN TAKE THE HELM AND STEER.
LOVE, TOO, IS LIKE A FLEET OF SAILING SHIPS;
THE JOURNEY'S PLEASANT WHEN THE HEART'S SERENE.
WHEN NAUGHT BUT KISSES COME FORTH FROM THE LIPS,
MASTERS OF LOVE ARE MADE FROM SUITORS GREEN.
BUT WHEN BLACK SORROW OVERCASTS THE SKY,
AND LOVE'S ZEPHYRS ARE TURNED TO FURY'S GALE,
THE AMATEUR WILL SWIFTLY SAY GOOD-BYE,
WHILE LOVERS TRUE WILL TACK THROUGH, AND NOT FAIL.
SO THANK YOU, MASTER SAILOR, FOR YOUR SKILL

THE SCRIBE

BY KEITH ANDERSON

A HAND
CLAWS AT THE QUILL
DIPS INTO THE INKWELL
CLICK, CLICK, CLICK
INK ON THE QUILL
THE QUILL SHAKES AND RISES
TO THE SURFACE
A HAND CLUTCHES AT
THE SLIPPERY INKFISH.

THE INKFISH SWIMS
FLOPS, THRASHES
AND IS PRESSED
TO THE FOREHEAD

OF THE SCRIBE.
SKIN PARCHMENT.
DRIED CRACKED PAPER.

SCRATCH, SCRATCH, SCRATCH
THE INKFISH IS DRAGGED
AGAINST THE SKIN
LEAVING A SLIMY BLACK TRAIL
AND TORN, BLEEDING,
ETCHED, DESIGNS.

THE INKFISH GASPS
CHOKES, BUT BEFORE
BLEEDING TO DEATH
IS TOSSED BACK DOWN
THE INK WELL.
CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

REVIVED IN THE MURKY
GRITTY BLACKNESS
IT IS GRABBED
BY THE TAIL
AND DRAGGED TO THE SURFACE
TO BEGIN THE PROCESS
OF SLOWLY DYING.

PRESSED AGAIN AGAINST
THE SCRIBE'S HARD, DRY
MAKES A JIGSAW PUZZLE
ETCHING COVERING
THE SKULL

A HAND
TOSSES THE INKFISH
DOWN, DOWN, DOWN.
THE WELL
TO BLEED IN SILENCE.

A HAND PICKS APART THE PIECES
OF THE JIGSAW SKULL
AND PEELS THEM AWAY.
OUT GUSHES
RED AND YELLOW
BILE

A HAND

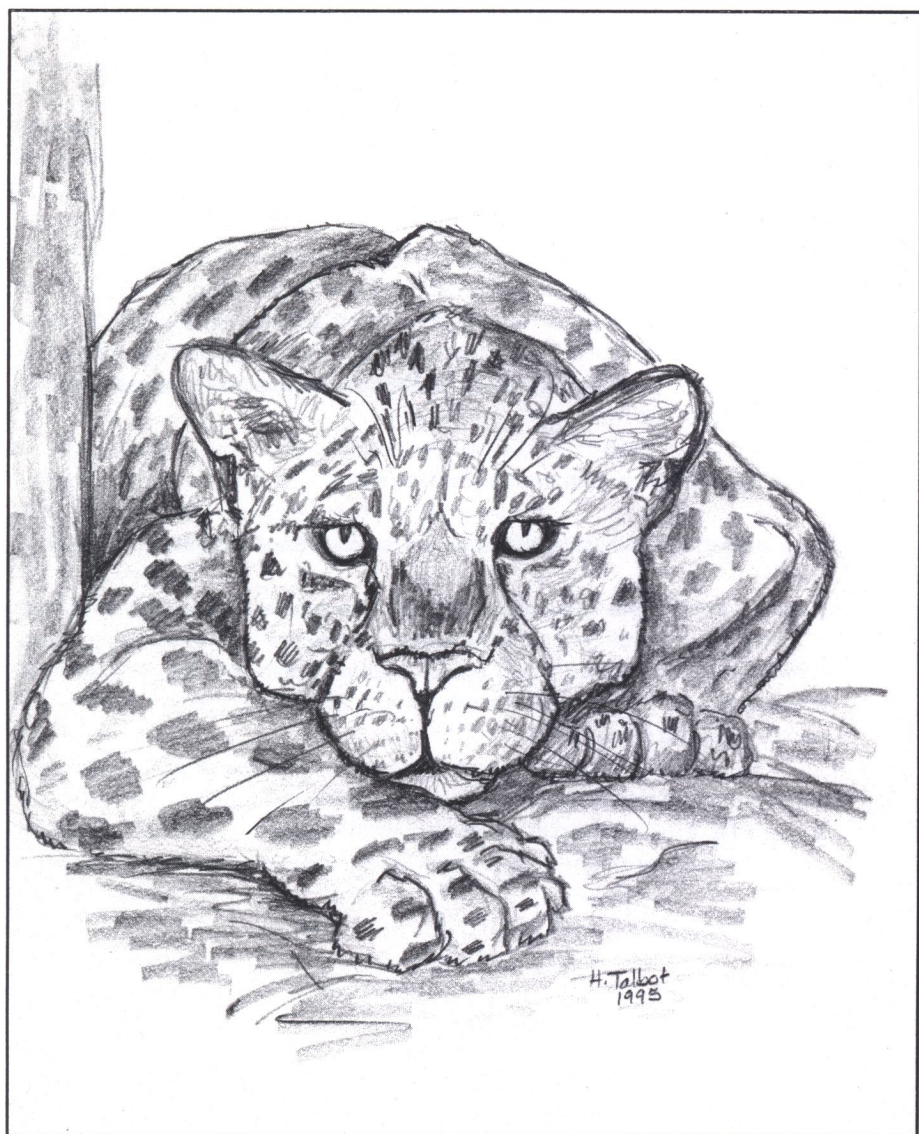
- THE JASON -

SMEARS, STREAKS
BILE
IN A BOOK
WHICH PASTES
TOGETHER THE PIECES
OF THE DRY SKULL.

RIP. TEAR.
SUCKING, PULLINGSOUND
SLURP. SMEAR, PLOP.
THE BILE OOZES,
FIXES
THE SKULL TO THE BOOK

THE PIECES DRY.
THE WORK IS FINISHED
AND THE INKFISH
AND THE SCRIBE
ARE LEFT
TO BLEED
IN SILENCE.

WAITING...
TO HEAL
TO BE RIPPED
APART.
TO BE A PART
OF ANOTHER HEADSTONE
LORDING OVER
A GRAVE.



"UNTITLED"

BY HEATHER TALBOT

- THE JASON -

SHOWER

BY ERIN BELL

DRIP

DRIP

DRIP

SOFTLY, SOFTLY MEANDERING WATER CIRCLE AROUND SWIRL AROUND THE
FLUORESCENT DRAIN OF MY TUB.

DRIP POETICALLY.

SPEAK WORDS, DRIP IN SENTENCES PLEASE WRITE A SONG— THERE BE-
NEATH MY BIG TOE.

WRITE ME A SONG IN THE BOTTOM OF MY TUB.

SING PORCELAIN PLASTIC WORDS OF LOVE OVER STAINS OF BLUE.

A SHORT CLEAR WAIL SPILLING INTO COATS OF GREEN.

TURNING HOLE

PEELING WHITE

UNDER A TRANSLUCENT SKIN.

DRIPPING TO CLEAN ME—

SING TO ME.

MACBETH

BY DARREN MCKEE

SCARLET LIGHT FADES IRRETRACTABLY ON THE WALL
TRACING THE CRACKS, LEAVING A DARKNESS IN THE HALL
ABSORBING THE WARMTH FROM A MASTER'S OPEN ARMS
FREEZING IN MID-REFRAIN THE SONG OF CONQUEST'S PSALMS

A MOONLESS EVE WHERE MOVES THE UNSEEN SHADES OF NIGHT
DANCING ON GROUNDS ONCE NURTURED BY GENTLE REIGN OF LIGHT
STEALING AWAY WITH FEAR THE COMPLACENCE OF THOUGHT
SUCH THAT EVIL WILL DICTATE AGAINST WHAT IS SOUGHT

PLACING AGAIN NEW PLAYERS ABOUT THE BOARD OF GREED
WHERE THREE WITCHES BOIL LUST FOR IMAGINED FANTASY
A SHADOWY DEATH SENT BY USURPER'S DELIGHT
WHILE THE YOUNGEST DUCK LOW AND CHASE THE FADING LIGHT

YET SUCH DARKNESS CLOAK NOT THE FEAST FROM ALL FEAR
SWIRLING IN MASS LIKE GHOSTS WHOSE SHARPENED POINTS STRIKE NEAR
BUT SAFELY LIES THE VIEW FOR THAT WHICH CAN'T BE SEEN
AS NIGHTLY PROCEEDS TO SUIT THE IGNORANCE OF MEANS

SO BROUGHT IS DAWN WITH HOPES THAT BEAUTY WILL REMAIN
BUT TRUTH OF LIGHT REVEALS WHAT SHADOWS DO CONTAIN
BRINGING LOSS TO MADNESS AND FLIGHT FROM BLOODIED ARMS
DYING FRAUGHT WITH ANGUISH FROM NIGHT'S OWN MOCKING CHARMS.

- THE JASON -

DRIVING

By PAIGE ORTHMEYER

CONFUSION REIGNS IN MY LIFE LIKE THE HAIL STONES POUNDING OUT OF THE SKY ONTO MY WINDSHIELD AS THOUGH IT WOULD CRACK DUE TO THE VELOCITY AT WHICH IT IS BEING ATTACKED BY THE FROZEN PELLETS OF WATER AND THE VARIOUS OTHER CHEMICALS FOUND IN OUR ATMOSPHERE. I'M DRIVING SOUTH I THINK, IN SEARCH OF SUNSHINE MAYBE BUT I LIKE THIS VIOLENCE, AND HAVE ALWAYS FELT RATHER AKIN TO THE SOAKING GRAY RAIN, LIKING TO RUN IN IT UNTIL I AM DRIPPING IN MY VERY BONES WITH ICY WETNESS AND MY CHEST IS TOO HEATED AND THE PAIN TOO DULLED TO WANT TO STOP OR ESCAPE. MAYBE THAT IS WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO RIGHT NOW, LOSE MYSELF IN THE BEATING OF THE RADIO SYNCOPATED WITH THE DEMANDING NOISES OF THE WEATHER OUTSIDE MY LITTLE METALLIC BOX RUSHING TOO FAST FOR SAFETY BUT TOO SLOW FOR SANITY DOWN THE CURVACEOUS HIGHWAY WITHOUT RECOGNIZED DESTINATION OR CARE. TO MAKE ANY SORT OF DECISION WOULD BE SUCH A DEAD COMFORT, MEANING LESS THAN THE UNDEFINED THOUGHTS DRIVING ME ONWARD IN MY QUEST TOWARD EVENTUAL OBLIVION WITH ITS FALSE PRETENSES OF PEACE. THERE IS A TRUCK STOP, BIG MOMMAS OR SOMETHING, COMING UP ON THE RIGHT AND I FEEL MYSELF PULLING INTO THE PARKING LOT OUT OF NECESSITY TO SEE ANOTHER HUMAN BEING COMPLETELY UNKNOWN TO ME. I DON'T BOTHER TO LOCK THE CAR IF IT WOULD DISAPPEAR FROM MY REALITY NOW IT WOULD ONLY MAKE MY DESTINY EASIER TO ACHIEVE AND THEN MAYBE I WOULD RUN. WITHOUT MONEY I PULL THE DOOR AND TAKE IN THE DARK SMOKY ROOM WITH GLOBAL ORANGE LAMPS LEFT OVER FROM THE SEVENTIES AND PROBABLY BOUGHT REALLY CHEAP SOMEWHERE, UNLESS THIS PLACE HAS BEEN AROUND THAT LONG, WHICH IS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY. THE ONLY THREE OTHER INHABITANTS, ALL MEN, ARE MEDITATING MOODILY OVER THEIR COFFEE AND BACON. LOOMING AHEAD IS THE GRIMY BAR WITH THE TYPICAL RED UPHOLSTERED STOOLS THAT SPIN AROUND AND ARE BOLTED SECURELY TO THE FLOOR JUST IN CASE I WANTED TO STICK ONE IN MY POCKET AND WALK OUT WITH IT. I ASK FOR A GLASS OF FREE WATER AND GRUDGINGLY RECEIVE IT IN A TUMBLER STILL WITH THE IMPRINT OF RED LIPSTICK BUT AT LEAST IT IS COLD, PROBABLY FROM SOME RAIN BARREL IN BACK I THINK WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE INTRIGUING. THE REMAINS OF A NEWSPAPER LAY ON THE COUNTER SCATTERED WITH CRUMBS AND MISSING THE FIRST HALF OF SOME ARTICLE I DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT SINCE THE TITLE IS GONE, PROBABLY FOR SOME SAFEWAY COUPON ON THE OTHER SIDE, BUT I DON'T PICK IT UP, I DON'T REALLY WANT TO FIND OUT ANY DETAILS OF THE LIVES OF THESE PEOPLE AND THEIR USED

AND ABUSED OBJECTS, I JUST WANT TO TAKE IN THE ATMOSPHERE AND FABRICATE MY OWN STORIES OF WHO THEY ARE AND HOW THEY WERE HURT LAST. THIS IS THE SICKNESS OF THE STOIC UNABLE TO CARRY MY OWN PASSIONS I MUST EXPERIENCE VICARIOUSLY THROUGH THOSE I DON'T KNOW AND DON'T CARE TO. IT REMINDS ME OF THAT MOVIE WHERE THE MAN CLAIMS TO BE IMPOTENT AND HAS WOMEN TALK ABOUT MASTURBATION IN FRONT OF HIM AND HIS VIDEO CAMERA, ONLY I DON'T HAVE A VIDEO CAMERA, WOULDN'T WANT IT ANYWAY, THE MORE TWISTED AND WRONG THE MEMORIES BECOME THE BETTER THE STORIES TO ENTERTAIN MYSELF WITH, AND THE MORE MARVELOUS. IT IS THESE LITTLE GRITTY PROSAITIES OF THE QUOTIDIAN TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT THAT INSPIRE THE DECADENT POESIES OF THE HIDDEN AND UNSAID. TO MODEL THE WORLD OF INSECTS AFTER THE CRUDE ECONOMICS OF REFLEX AND INVARIABLY FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN AND HAS DONE READY ACCOUNTING FOR AND A FULL SCHEMATIC PLAN OF POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SEXUAL CANNIBALISM PERFORMED PERFUNCTORILY BUT NOT FOREWARNED UPON THE MALES BY THEIR VIRGIN COUNTERPART IS TO LEAD IN WITH A VERY DULL START WHEN THERE IS A POSSIBILITY FOR MORE... BUT MORE WHAT, IS THE QUESTION I'M ALWAYS LEFT FACED WITH, SO I TURN OFF MY MIND AND GULP DOWN THE WATER, CONCENTRATING AND FEELING IT FLOW QUICKLY AND COOLLY THROUGH TO MY STOMACH WHERE IT DECIDES TO STOP FOR A BIT AND REST, FINE WITH ME. AND I LOOK AROUND WONDERING WHERE TO GO ON FROM HERE, OR IF I SHOULD JUST SIT AND BREATHE IN THE GREASY AIR. I WALK OVER TO A BOOTH WITH COFFEE RINGS, A LAMINATED MENU AND PRACTICALLY EMPTY SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS AND SIT FACING THE NEXT BOOTH OCCUPIED BY A BURLY AND ROUGH LOOKING DRIVER IN FLANNEL PLAID, STARING DOWN AT THE REMAINS OF EGG YOLK ON THE PLATE IN FRONT OF HIM BUT WITHOUT TOAST LEFT TO SOP IT UP WITH, I KNOW WHAT HE IS GOING THROUGH, LIFE IS REALLY TOUGH SOMETIMES. I AM WAITING FOR HIM TO JUST BREAKDOWN AND PICK UP THE PLATE AND LICK IT BUT INSTEAD, HE RAISES HIS HEAD TO LOOK ME STRAIGHT IN THE FACE AND I AM STARTLED BY THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS BLUE EYES AND BLINK QUICKLY AND FIGHT THE STRONG URGE TO LOOK AWAY AND INSTEAD SCRUTINIZE HIS THICK EYEBROWS, SUCH AN OVERLOOKED AND UNDERRATED FEATURE ALONG WITH THE CANALS OF THE EAR, MY PERSONAL FAVORITE, BUT HIS EARS WERE COVERED BY HIS SHAGGY HAIR. HIS EYES IMplored CONVERSATION OR SO I WAS INCLINED TO THINK, MAYBE HE WAS BORED FROM DRIVING FOR HOURS AND LISTENING NOTHING BUT THE RADIO FOR HOURS, IT COULD BE HE HAD SOMETHING HE WANTED TO SAY OR JUST NEEDED TO TALK, BUT I WASN'T GOING TO LET MYSELF GET ANY MORE INVOLVED THAN BY WATCHING, INTEREST LEADS TO DIFFICULTIES IN TEN CASES

- THE JASON -

OUT OF TEN. THAT IS ONE THING I WAS SURE TO NOT BE SEARCHING FOR
"I'M FROM OUT OF SAN JOSE" THE VOICE BEGAN IN A SLOW STUNTED DRAWL
OF ONE NOT USED TO SPEAKING TO ANYONE MUCH

"GOT ME A WHOLE TRUCKLOAD OF TOMATOES LAST OF THE SEASON I
SUSPECT AND THEN WHEN IT GETS REAL COLD WHO KNOWS WHAT I WILL BE
HAULING NOT THAT IT EVER GETS REAL COLD BUT TOO COLD FOR TOMATOES
AT LEAST LAST YEAR IT WAS ONIONS DURING THE WINTER I THINK AND ONCE I
WAS PULLING ONE OF THEM REFRIGERATED LOCKERS FULL OF RAW MEAT,
THAT WAS AN IMPORTANT ONE..." AND I IMPASSIVELY SAT AS HE WENT ON NOT
REALLY TALKING TO ME BUT USING ME AS AN AUDIENCE SO THAT HE
WOULDN'T FEEL SO SELF CONSCIOUS TALKING TO HIMSELF OUT LOUD AND MY
MIND WANDERED ON SO THAT I WOULDN'T HAVE TO KNOW AND WOULD BE
SAFE IN MY IMMUNE WORLD, SOMETIMES WONDERING IF MY CAR WAS STILL
OUTSIDE, I THINK I MIGHT HAVE EVEN LEFT MY KEYS IN THERE ON THE SEAT.
IT WOULD BE A NICE LONG WALK HOME IN THE REFRESHINGNESS OF THE
WEATHER BUT I STILL HADN'T COME TO A SOLID CONCLUSION AS TO WHERE I
WAS HEADED.

Beat Beat beat beat
 mumble mumble mumble mumble
 clink clank slap whirrrr...x
 The sounds accost my ears in a jumble of...
 change pouring across the counter.
 1, 2, 3, 4...
 How many nickels fit in a roll?
 The textbook glares at me with a vengeance.
 "I've worked on you enough today."
 and it is put ~~out~~ in the backpack, out of view.
 Pleasance.
 No more beat, only the drone of murmuring voices —
 lull between songs.
 "Water me!" cries the ivy.
 Fade to silence.
 "This song's for you girl!"
 Burnig Down the House...
 No more time for day dreaming.
 Work beckons...

by Tanya Earle

- THE JASON -

BETWEEN REALITY

BY MACCORMAC E. RINEHART

BEHIND LIFE-LIT EYES;
SCANNING THE DIMLY LIT ROOM
DARTING LEFT, RIGHT
PROWLING AMONG MASKS
LINGERING IN SHADOWED RECESSES
AND DRINKING IN THE
SWEETENED WATERS OF
PERFUMED WRISTS AND
BATED BREATH IN SEARCH OF

SOMETHING. . .

BEHIND LIFE-LIT EYES;
DOUBLE PANED WINDOWS
FOGGED BY HUMAN REASON
REVEALING ALL THAT IS KNOWN AND
NOT TRUE AND
TRULY CLEAR AND
SIMPLE BY
CLOUDED BY A LIE
WHICH IS THE TRUTH BEHIND ALL
LIES. . .

BEHIND LIFE-LIT EYES;
PACING WHITE-WALLED CORRIDORS
LIT BY AGES OF
SCIENTIFIC REASON
WHICH ILLUMINATES THE STRAIGHT
LINE WE TRAVEL
THROUGH SPACE
WITH NO BEGINNING
WHICH TOUCHES ITSELF
IN THE END FOLLOWING THAT
PERFECT CURVE WHICH IS THE
REALITY THAT LIES

BETWEEN. . .

BEHIND LIFE-LIT EYES;
LURKING TO THE LEFT
AND THE RIGHT OF THE
BEATEN PATH WE ALL
WALK
STALKING OUR ROSE PETAL REALITIES
WITH KEEN SENSE IT
PADS STEALTHILY ON ALL FOURS
FOLLOWING THE SCENT OF
PERFUMED WRISTS AND BATED BREATH UNTIL
IN THE HEAT OF PASSION PENT
UP IT POUNCES AND
AWAKENS US TO

REALITY.



"UNTITLED"

BY KARA MCANULTY

CRAZY HUNGER STORY

BY GABRIELLE BULLER

I'M STARVING. MY HANDS ARE SHAKING FROM SUGAR AND CARBO AND CAFFEINE WITHDRAWALS AND MY HEAD HURTS. WRAPPED UP IN A RUBBER BAND AND SEVERAL BARETTES, MY HAIR BEGINS TO FEEL THE PANGS AS WELL. FROM THE TIPS OF MY EYELIDS BACK THROUGH MY FOREHEAD AND INTO THE GREY MATTER, A NEED FOR FOOD IS PENETRATING. THE STRAPS OF MY RUCKSACK, BLACK AND LOSING THEIR COMFORTABLE PADDING, WRENCH ONCE AGAIN INTO THE CRICKS OF MY COLLARBONES AND YANK MY SHOULDERS FURTHER AWAY FROM MY CHEST.

I CAN'T FEEL ITS WEIGHT ANYMORE. MY RED SACK IS NOW A SOLID, INFORMATION-INFESTED APPENDAGE ATTACHED TO MY BODY INDIRECTLY THROUGH THOSE STRAPS. I TOOK IT OFF TODAY, BUT NOT TO TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF IT, LIKE I DO WHEN I'M INSIDE, IN MY HOME. I SLIPPED IT OFF AND SET IT DOWN NEXT TO ME WHEN I STOPPED OUTSIDE ON THE STAIRS TO TALK TO SOMEONE. SHE LIVES IN MY BUILDING AND WAS TELLING ME ABOUT THE AGING OF PARMESAN CHEESE—IT'S A TWO YEAR PROCESS; TAKES PLACE IN PARMA, ITALY—AND GOING ON AND ON ABOUT ITALIAN FOOD, TOO. HER DELICACIES SOUNDED SO GOOD: PAINSTAKINGLY PREPARED, SURELY YIELDING EXTRAS FOR EVERYONE. SHE HARDLY EVEN NOTICED WHEN I BEGAN RISING: HER WORDS CONTINUED MULTIPLYING WHILE MY EYES LOST FOCUS AND I FLOATED. THE LOOK OF DEEP INTEREST AND CONCERN HAD DISAPPEARED, REPLACED BY AN UNFAMILIAR ECSTASY RADIATING FROM EACH PLANE OF MY FACE. NEARLY ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP STORY I ROSE IN BLISS, WEIGHTLESS, NOT UNLIKE A DREAM, BUT UNLIKE SLEEP, STEADILY FLOATING UNTIL I REALIZED WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF I NEVER CAME BACK DOWN. I WOULD CONTINUE ASCENDING INDEFINITELY UNLESS I COULD THINK OF A WAY BACK TO MY BACKPACK AND MY NEIGHBOR AND THE PASTA CONVERSATION. HOVERING AT MY FOURTH FLOOR WINDOW, I HAD TO FABRICATE A REASON FOR RETURNING TO ACADEMIA, WORKADAY AND SOCIETY. UPON UNFASTENING MY THOUGHTS FROM THIS REEL OF SELF-ABSORPTION, MY ASCENT, I REMEMBER CAREENING THROUGH THE EMPTINESS TO LAND, DEVOID OF THAT WEIGHTLESS, CARBONATION SENSATION, ON TOP OF MY RUCKSACK, SPINNING INTO THIS PRESENT, UNDENIABLE NOTION OF STARVATION.

THERE'S A DREAM I'VE BEEN HAVING FOR A WHILE NOW. IT TAKES ME THROUGH THE MAZES OF AN UNDERGROUND HIDDEN-AWAY CAVERN. DURING THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE OR THIRTY SECONDS I KEEP CLIMBING, HIGHER AND HIGHER BACK INTO MY SLEEPING STATE BEFORE I STOP AT A

PLATEAU AND WATCH MY DREAM IN COMFORT. THERE ARE SHIMMERING VOICES THAT PESTER MY COHERENCE, AND SO I OPEN MY EYES TO EXPLAIN WHAT I AM DOING. I BEG THOSE VISIONS TO LET ME TO THE TOP SO I CAN FEEL THE FALLING AND THE STEADY RAISING OF MY BREATH, AND WATCH MY EYELIDS REFLECT THE COLORS OF MY DREAM. I WAIT AND I WAIT. BUT IT HAPPENS ALL OF THE TIME: AFTER ALL OF THIS CLIMBING, WHEN I REACH MY BED AND I CAN STOP AND HEAR AND FUNCTION IN SOLITUDE, THE ENJOYMENT ENDS: NOT LIKE A BOOK CLOSING OR A CURTAIN DRAWING, BUT DISAPPEARING LIKE THE SAND DOES BEFORE IT BECOMES THE OCEAN.

AND I LAY THERE IN MY OCEAN, BESIDE MY RUCKSACK, TODAY HUNGRIER THAN I'VE EVER REMEMBERED BEING BEFORE IN MY LIFE. I AM SO HUNGRY I CAN IMAGINE BEING FULL AND I LAUGH AT HOW FOREIGN AND ABSURD THAT SENSATION IS. IN MY FAMINE DAYS THE FEASTS DEVOUR MY LOGIC. MY DELECTIBLE REASON MUST SUSTAIN ME LIKE MANNA OR WHEAT OR RYE BECAUSE IT'S ALL THAT I HAVE.

I'VE KNOWN THAT LITTLE COOK LADY FOR TWO YEARS; WE'VE BEEN NEIGHBORS SINCE I TRANSFERED HERE, AND SUDDENLY TODAY I STARTED DRIFTING AWAY FROM MY LIFE RIGHT BEFORE HER EYES. SHE HAS THAT CRAZY WAY OF ADDRESSING PEOPLE AND APPROACHING THEM THAT'S LIKE A REVIVAL OF AUNTIE MAME, ALL FLAMBOYANT AND LOUD AND COMPLETELY INAPPROPRIATE ACCORDING TO THE STATURE OF OUR BUILDING. LITTLE COOK LIVES ON THE FIRST FLOOR, IN THE UNAVOIDABLE CORNER NEAR THE FRONT DOOR SO THAT SHE KNOWS WHEN THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE LOOKING FOR THEIR KEYS OR HAVING AN ARGUMENT OR A CIGARETTE OR KISSING A DATE GOODBYE. WHEN DATES DID THINGS LIKE THAT, I MEAN. BECAUSE YOU NEVER SEE DATES KISS GOODBYE ON FRONT PORCHES ANYMORE. I THINK THE CONCEPT KIND OF WENT OUT WITH FRED ASTAIRE AND ALL OF THOSE CRAZY MUSICALS ABOUT LOVESICK FOLK. I MEAN, THAT'S OKAY, BUT I WAS KISSED GOODBYE BY A DATE ON THAT PORCH OUTSIDE LITTLE COOK'S WINDOW AND I GUESS IT WAS A PRETTY FOND MEMORY—IS A PRETTY FOND MEMORY. I STILL HAVE IT.

MY EARTIPS HAVE TAKEN TO TINGLING. NOW I REMEMBER. IT WASN'T WHEN I FELL FROM THE WEIGHTLESSNESS THAT I BECAME SO GLUTTONOUS FOR NOURISHMENT. WHEN I FELL I LANDED BACK IN THE PARMESAN CHEESE NEIGHBOR'S SHOCKED EXPRESSION, RAPIDLY EXPLAINING AND APOLOGISING FOR NOT PAYING ENOUGH ATTENTION TO HER STORY—I WAS TRYING, BUT SHE COULD TELL I WASN'T REALLY SORRY. I WANTED UP AGAIN, OR AT LEAST TO TELL HER WHAT IT HAD BEEN LIKE. I LOVED LITTLE

- THE JASON -

COOK, BUT SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE PROPER WAVELENGTHS FOR MY CONFESSION AND THE DESCRIPTIONS OF HER ITALIAN CUISINE WERE AS ENTICING AS EVER. AS I RESTRAPPED MY LIFE TO MY BACK, THE GROWLING, RUMBLE OF EMPTINESS IN MY MIDDLE WAS MAGNIFIED TENFOLD. DIZZY AWARENESS TOOK ME OVER, LIKE THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MY DREAM. THE TIREDNESS DREAM I KEEP HAVING, WHERE I FINALLY REACH THE TOP AND FIND THAT THERE'S AN EMPTINESS JUST LIKE DOWN BELOW. I LOOK DOWN AND IT'S A WORSE EMPTINESS THAN THE PIT IN MY STOMACH BECAUSE THIS EMPTINESS HAS NO LABEL TO CURB IT. WITH PLAIN FOOD HUNGER ALL IT TAKES IS A GOOD VEGETABLE SOUP OR SOMETHING, A CHEESE AND TOMATO ON RYE AND A GLASS OF MILK IF YOU AREN'T A VEGAN, BUT THESE OTHER WEIRD HUNGERS, LIKE IN MY DREAM, AREN'T TELLING ANYONE TO GO EAT.

MY HANDS ARE STILL SHAKING, BUT NOW I CAN SEE PAST THE DOORKNOB AND HALLWAY AND KITCHEN COUNTER TO THE REFRIGERATOR AND MY STUFF FOR CAESAR SALAD. GREEN HAS NEVER LOOKED SO LOVELY. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT I'LL ENJOY THIS CAESAR SALAD. BUT IT'S SO EASY JUST TO FORGET WHAT IT WAS YOU WERE WAITING FOR AND POUNCE ON THE OBJECT WITHOUT HESITATION AND GET SICK BECAUSE IT WAS DEVOURED IN LESS TIME THAN IT TOOK TO PREPARE. PARMESAN. MY SALAD NEEDED PARMESAN CHEESE. BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY. I JUST RAN OUT OF REAL, FRESH PARMESAN AND I REFUSE TO EAT THAT POWDERED CRAP.

PARMESAN CHEESE. IT TAKES TWO YEARS FOR IT TO ROT RIGHT, AND IT'S ONLY MADE IN THAT SPECIAL PART OF ITALY, BY SOME FAMILY OF CHEESE-MOLDERS THAT HAVE PROBABLY USED THE SAME EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS FOR ABOUT EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS OR MAYBE A THOUSAND. MY LITTLE PASTA WOMAN WOULD HAVE SOME PARMESAN, I'M SURE, BUT I JUST GOT UPSTAIRS, THE FOURTH FLOOR, AND I DON'T WANT TO GO ALL THE WAY BACK TO HER LANDING.

THE LANDING. THE LITTLE COOK.

HER REAL NAME IS ELOISE. IT FITS, IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT PIANO PIECE EVERYONE LEARNS TO PLAY IN THEIR FIRST YEAR, "FÜR ELISE"; THAT BEETHOVEN PIECE THAT STARTS OUT LIKE A SPINNING PENNY ON ITS DECLINE. THE PENNY TOTTERS TOWARD A RESTING STATE BUT BEFORE GETTING THERE ITS SPINNER SWIPES IT AND STARTS IT ALL OVER AGAIN. THAT'S HOW ELOISE WAS. TALKING, SHE'D SPIN AND RATTLE STORIES AND TRIVIA, ADVICE AND RECIPES AT AN AMAZING RATE, LIKE THE FRESHLY SPUN COIN. IT TOOK HER A WHILE TO WIND DOWN, SOMETIMES, BUT BEFORE STOPPING HER INTERNAL PENNY-SPINNER'D START HER UP AGAIN. ELOISE DOESN'T MEAN TO BE LIKE THAT. SHE JUST GETS A KICK OUT OF KNOWING THINGS, AND SHE

WANTS EVERYONE ELSE TO KNOW THEM, TOO. SHE KEPT THINGS—RECIPES, RECIEPTS, GROCERY LISTS, KINDERGARTENERS' ARTWORK, LEAVES—STUCK TO HER REFRIGERATOR, ON HER CUPBOARD DOORS, IN HER PURSE. I REMEMBER

CHILLED PARSLEY AND
TARRAGON SOUP

3 T. UNSALTED BUTTER
1 CUP CHOPPED ONION
4 CUPS CHICKEN STOCK
1 BUNCH FRESH PARSLEY, TRIMMED
CHOPPED
3 T. CHOPPED FRESH TARRAGON
1/4 CUP HALF AND HALF
MINCED FRESH PARSLEY

ELOISE HAD MADE IT FOR ME AND EXCEPT FOR THAT LINGERING PARMESAN CRAVING, I COULD ALMOST TASTE IT RIGHT NOW. THAT LONELY, SINCERE LITTLE COOK-ENCYCLOPEDIA HAD NO TROUBLE DEFINING WEIRD HUNGERS, JUST:

MELT BUTTER IN HEAVY LARGE SAUCEPAN OVER MEDIUM HEAT. ADD ONION AND SAUTÉ 5 MINUTES. ADD STOCK, 1 BUNCH CHOPPED PARSLEY AND POTATO; BRING TO A BOIL. REDUCE HEAT; SIMMER UNTIL POTATO IS TENDER, ABOUT 10 MINUTES. MIX IN TARRAGON. PUREE MIXTURE IN BLENDER IN BATCHES. TRANSFER TO BOWL. MIX IN HALF AND HALF. CHILL AT LEAST 3 HOURS.

(CAN BE MADE 1 DAY AHEAD. COVER, KEEP REFRIGERATED)

SEASON SOUP TO TASTE WITH SALT AND PEPPER. LADLE INTO BOWLS. SPRINKLE WITH PARSLEY AND SERVE.

I'M STARVING. THIS CRAZY HUNGER. I AM LOOKING DOWN ONTO MY DREAM AGAIN, CLIMBING, THE WEIGHT OF MY RED BACKPACK RETURNED ME TO THE LANDING WHEN I WANTED TO BE ON THE FOURTH FLOOR, HOVERING.

LITTLE COOK, THE GROUND BENEATH ME.

NO PARMESAN. "FÜR ELISE." IT'S CALM IN MY STOMACH AGAIN, A WELCOME CALM, LIKE AFTER ELOISE STOPS TALKING, BUT IT'S AN UNCOM-

- THE JASON -

FORTABLE SILENCE. I DON'T LIKE IT AND I DON'T LIKE THE FACT THAT MY SALAD DOESN'T HAVE ANY PARMESAN AND LITTLE COOK DOES. I DON'T WANT TO BE ON THE FOURTH FLOOR, HOVERING, I KNOW: I WANT TO BE DREAMING, WITHOUT MY RUCKSACK, IN PARMA.

WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKED

BY MACCORMAC E. RINEHART

SOOTHING TOUCH,
(AND YET IT IS A FIREY PULSE)
HER TONGUE DANCED OVER MY MOUTH
LIKE A SWIRL OF PEPPERMINT TEA,
DEFTLY PIROUQUETTING ITS WAY TOWARD MY THROAT,
THEN STRETCHED OUT FLAT,
GENTLY LEVITATED
AND SHOT SKITTERPRINKLES ACROSS MY PALATE.

SHE WITHDREW, AND
IN THAT BRIEF MOMENT

LOOKING INTO EMINENT EYES,
MY CONSCIOUSNESS REGISTERED THE TINGLE SENSATION OF TWO NOSES
A BREATH APART AND GENTLY DEFINING TOGETHERNESS.

THE THOUGHT WAS A SUGGESTION
AND I, TOO ENRAPTURED TO CONTEMPLATE ITS IMPLICATIONS,
DRANK IN ITS ESSENCE,
MURMURED A SIMPLE SPELL
AND LEFT.

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PAIGE'S PAGE

- THE JASON -

CYBERZEN

BY JAMES T. HADLEY

ON THIS WILLAMETTE VALLEY

NIGHT OF HIBERNATION

I POUND THESE EMBERS INTO AN ELECTRONIC SPACE

WARMING THE BACKWOODS OREGON RAIN

A LITTLE CYBERZEN TO PASS THE CREEPING TIME

LOST IN THE ETERNAL EMPTINESS OF MY OWN MUSINGS

FINGERS CREATING

SOMETHING ORGANIC ROLLING FROM WITHIN THIS POOR PITIFUL BEING

IT SCARES ME TO THINK

SOMETIMES

THAT HE AND I COULD NOT BE OUR ALL WITHOUT EACH OTHER.

THAT THIS MACHINE OF SILICON AND PLASTIC HAS BECOME

AN EXTENSION OF MY SOUL. LOST TOGETHER IN A NOTHINGNESS CREATED
BY MAN.

Popsnya!

You come and go,
You come and go,

From Nowhere=====>to Hollywood==>to **MTV** =>to
oblivion.

A single catchy tune,

An artists living testimony to fame

Blankets an entire generations subconsciousness.

Who can it be now?

--Men at Work or Men Without Hats or Mental

Graffiti?

Relax.

--Frankie Got to Hollywood and turned around.

**"ATTENTION LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN,
SURRENDER YOURSELF TO
THE `KARMA CHAMELEON!!!"**

This is Kulture--
Join the Klub.

"POPSNYA!"

BY DAVE LIPPERT

TEARS OF THE SEA

BY J. K. ANDERSON

THROUGH EVERY HUMAN FLOWS PAIN
LIKE WATER. IT IS MUCH AKIN
TO BLOOD. IT IS INTIMATE WITH
BILE. IT IS NOT EITHER.

THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD DO IT
WORSHIP. IT LIES IN THEM A
DEEP CISTERN WHEREIN THEY
MAY LAY THEMSELVES DOWN
DREAMING TO RECREATE THE
BAPTISM. TO BE CLEANSED.
TO DRAW IT DEEP WITHIN THEMSELVES.

THERE ARE SOME WHO WISH
TO SHROUD THEMSELVES IN IT.
FOR THEM IT STEAMS OUT OF THEIR
PORES; A MIST, THAT CLINGS
TO THEIR SKIN VEILING IN
GOSSAMER SCARVES,
THE FACE OF THEIR FATHER
THE FACE OF THEIR HEART
IT BUBBLES UP AT THE EDGE
OF THEIR LAUGHTER AND DULLY
ECHOES IN EVERY CLICK OF THEIR
TONGUE AS THEY FORM SOUND
IN THE CAVERNS OF THEIR JAW.

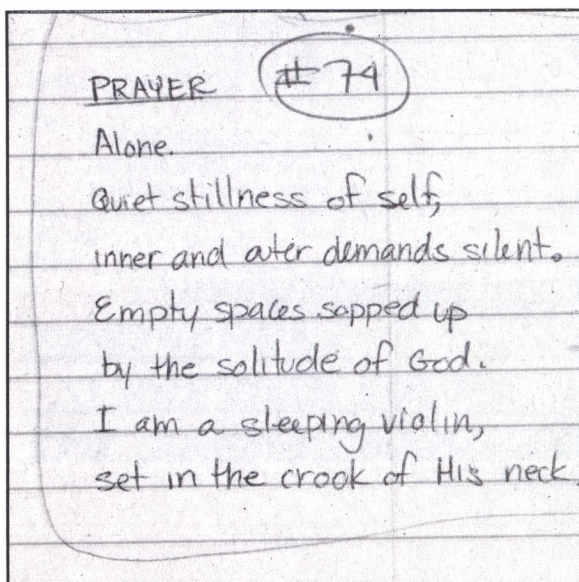
THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD
FIGHT IT. FOR THEM IT IS
A HOAR FROST. WATER FREEZING
ON THEIR HOLLOW BONES
MAKING THEM STIFF AND BRITTLE
IT TURNS THEIR SPITTLE INTO
STONES AND SUCKS THE HEART
FROM THE SPRING WIND.
IT IS COLD; THIS PAIN
UNWANTED, UNCARED FOR, ISOLATED,

- THE JASON -

FROZEN. IT BREAKS APART
PEOPLE, LIKE WATER FREEZING,
SPLITS APART STONES.

ICE. LIQUID. VAPOR.
THROUGH EVERY HUMAN FLOWS
PAIN— LIKE WATER.
THAT IS WHY ALL MEN KNOW
THE SEA. THEY KNOW IT FROM
THEIR SKIN TO THE INNERMOST,
SILENT, VIOLENT EDDIES OF
THEIR HEART.
THE SEA GIVES BIRTH TO THE LAND.

THE WATER GIVES BIRTH TO MAN.
THEY BOTH CONCEIVE.
THEY BOTH CONSUME.
ALL MEN KNOW THE SEA,
AS THEY KNOW THE TASTE
OF SALTY TEARS.



"PRAYER"

BY ERIN JANINE DUFFY

UNTITLED

BY CRAIG JACKSON

THE LOVE OF YOUR FAMILY IS FELT BUT NEVER SAID YOU THINK AND WANT TO
SPEAK, BUT IT'S STUCK INSIDE YOUR HEAD.

YOU KNOW THE WORDS WELL, THAT YOU WANT TO SAY. YOU HAVE THE
COURAGE TO SPEAK, BUT YOU'RE SILENT ANYWAY.

AFRAID OF THEIR RESPONSE, TO YOUR WORDS OF BLISS, YOU'RE SILENT YET
AGAIN, BUT GIVE A HUG AND KISS.

UNTITLED

BY KARA McANULTY

"I LOVE YOU."

THE WORDS ROLL SO EFFORTLESSLY OFF YOUR TONGUE,
I STOP TO WONDER IF YOU EVEN REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE SPOKEN.
IN THIS MOMENT OF CLOSENESS,
IT SEEMS STRANGE THAT THAT IS ALL YOU CAN SAY.

IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND YOU, I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES.
I AM COMFORTED BY THE FRUSTRATION I SEE THERE.
FRUSTRATION BECAUSE WORDS SO OFTEN FALL TRAGICALLY SHORT
OF EXPRESSING THE SOUL,
LEAVING THE SPEAKER AND THE LISTENER UNFULFILLED.

FRANTICALLY, I SEARCH FOR THE ADEQUATE WORDS TO REPLY.
THESE MUST BE THE PERFECT WORDS, FILLING THE VOID BETWEEN US,
BRIDGING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER.

STEALING THE LANGUAGE THAT IS NECESSARY TO EXPRESS MYSELF, FUELED
BY THE ENERGY OF MY EMOTION, I BELATEDLY HEAR MYSELF SAY:

"I LOVE YOU, TOO."

- THE JASON -

MONOTONE

By DAVE LIPPERT

ON AND ON AND ON | DRONE | DRONE IN MONOTONE | DRONE I'M
NEVER UP AND NEVER DOWN | STAY THE SAME AND STAND MY GROUND, OH
HOW | LOATH THE STABLE STONE BUT IT IS ME IN MONOTONE | WANT TO THINK
AND FEEL AND SEE | WANT EXPRESSION TO BE FREE BUT FEAR KEEPS ME A
CONSTANT DRONE | THINK AND DRONE IN MONOTONE PERHAPS SOMEDAY I'LL
GRAB THE PHONE AND FEAR WILL LEAVE WITH MONOTONE BUT FOR NOW |
ONLY DRONE AND ACT AND DRONE IN MONOTONE | CANNOT BEAR TO BE
ALONE BUT THIS | AM IN MONOTONE THE PRESSURE WILL NOT LEAVE ME
'LONE IT BEATS AGAINST THE MONOTONE IT BEATS AND WRACKS ME TO THE
BONE THE FEAR WITHIN THE MONOTONE | FIGHT WITHIN TO LEAVE THE ZONE
OF ALL SURROUNDING MONOTONE | FIGHT AND FIGHT AND STAND ALONE AND
RAISE THE STRENGTH OF MONOTONE BUT IN MY FEAR | STAND ALONE...IN
INTIMACY, LOVE MUST BE STRONGER THAN FEAR.

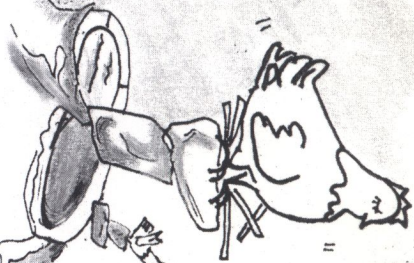
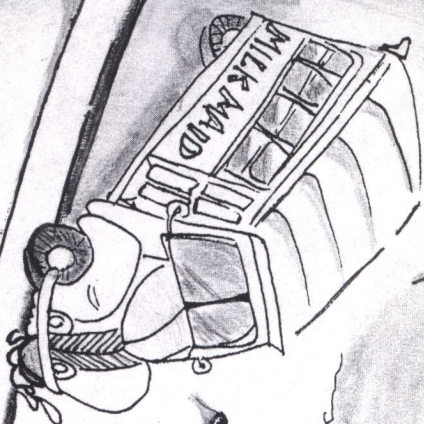


"BARN"

By DEREK HEVEL

SPRING '95

A REFRESHING DRAUGHT



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