

THE JASON
CHRYSALLIS

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PERIODICAL STACKS

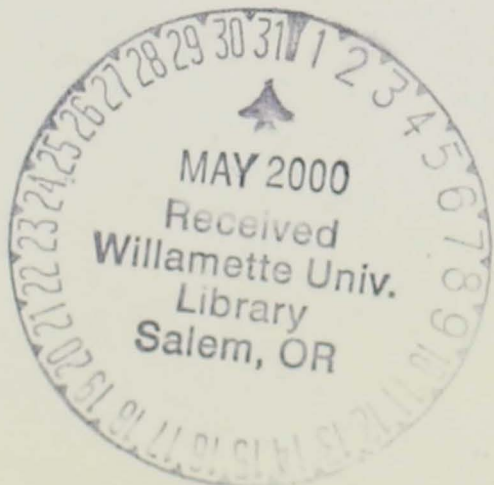
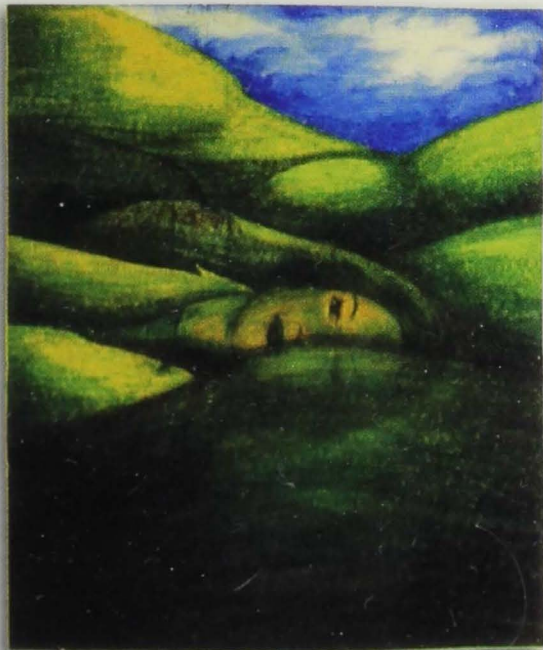


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*Italics indicate artwork

IGLESIA SAN FRANCISCO

in memory of Beth Powell

Heather Wight

blinding sweltering sun sounds
 arguing exhaust pipes and vendors
lottery tickets
 candles
 rosary beads fade into the doorway

a dark cool wet cloth
 as I pass into shadow
(crowded entryway)
beggars blistering bisquick batter
sucrecito? bleeding eyes smile
ancient corridors dust and creak
shuffling
 sniffling
 echoing faith
chiseled saints stand watch
 solemnly stretching up twelve mile walls
shafts of light squeeze through to sprinkle
 gold dust above my head

standing in front of this
 shrine
(what am I doing?) these
 wings of promise plaster peace
offer a nook
en vez de everlasting life
 a moment of silence
 a last glance up at
your photograph,
 friend,
tucked behind the left leg of an angel.

Mags Greenlee

She placed a shaky hand on the splintered banister
To guide her down the stairs her dizzy mind could not see
He didn't notice her difficulty
But offered her instead his coveted bag of Swedish Fish
Too swimming with toxin tears
She tottered past his outstretched hand
Non-comprehensive as the universe.
Another boy might have offered her bigger fish with teeth and flashy scales
And another girl might have read between the sugar structures
To see more than a waterless aquarium
But with no How-To books on an ordinary stair passing
And incapacitated by their own weaknesses
They brushed molecules
But kept their galaxies intact.





Erin Stocker

Mags Greenlee

It's 5 am and are you aware?
I rise creakless to the outside world
Whose eyelids are still weighed heavy with night
And slip past your head
That you turn to the wall so easily
On your tear-lubricated pillow.
Fabric sighs over my bare skin
Like an old dog deep in slumber
While your eyes shut too tightly for sleep
Are shown in the moon-mimic street light
As are your taut knuckles gripping the coverlet
You are aware
As you wait for my exit
Shutting the door not softly enough
To slip into the casino-lit hall
And end my ritual.
Are you aware that I too know
Your tightened hand and saline burned eyes
And my alarm clock I've grown so immune to
Is but another heart to thump beneath the floorboards of your mind?
Too early for an apology
Too late to slip back between the silent sheets
Your hair twists on the pillow
Like a crushed and dying snake
As you stumble back to sleep
I advance down the hall
No longer concerned with the creaking floorboards.
We both have doors to slam
Mine is wood and yours is mind
And we both have dreams to hold and throttle
Yours are murky and nestled between broken feathers and folds of
cotton
While mine is stretched lazily along the horizon
In a faint gray line that awaits to hear my footfall.



“Pygmy Opossum”
Courtney Skybak



"Casino of Avalon"
Karli Krenwinkel

in Diaspora

Blayne Higa

Born of volcanic soil and sea brine
in the shadows and gentle slopes
of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa
You are (were) my home.

After 18 years I left because
I had to—
Rock fever you see.
And in doing so severed my soul
from the sublime essence of
This Place.

The longer I stay away (by choice?)
my heart yearns to be filled and made whole
by You.
And feel again the love
which is acceptance (mutual. . .).

My love for you has intensified—
and I have found my calling.
But you turn away. . . leaving me lost,
(unable to return to any shore)—
drifting expectantly in Diaspora.



As From a Crippling Rejoinder

Anon Y. Wedgwood

*Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness? It was gone
Quite under ground. . .*

No longer strewn about the darling buds of May,
Or fingering
Marbleized buttons on frayed threads—

Without fingers at all for useful things— instead

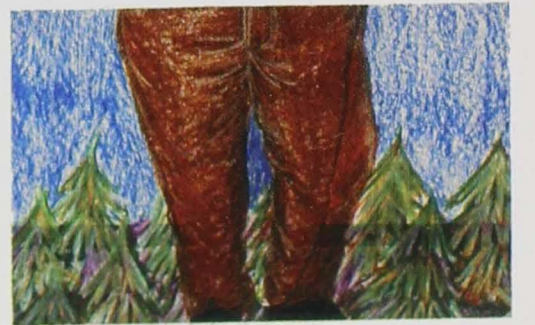
I snap dead toenails against rocks, though the same
Stones pile upon my shoulders, un-
Genetic— or a genesis without apples, but an onion: so that

You had to tear apart the Earth to get at it.

More fitting.

I stoop in the west wind so as not to get caught
& fall back two paces, or ten; I let pollen throb
At the bridge of my nose,

And spread your flowers like a sheet to eat from.



On Playing Ophelia

Dedicated to Beth Powell

Jennifer E. Grose

Elusive Ophelia

Anguished siren

Forgotten in the light of day-

By moonlight she tumbles into the waters of my dreams-

And drowns herself

Night

After

Night.

I'm desperate to catch a glimpse of myself again

But in all reflections I see only her pale face

Eyes staring blankly into mine

Silken hair undulating

Lips moving

Still moving.

Yet when I reach out to hold her,

To urge her trapped spirit towards peace,

She disappears

And leaves me

Wearing my rue with a difference.

I know she will appear again,
My water nymph.
I am her haunting ground
My mind the halls she endlessly paces-
And will continue to do so-
Until I give in.
Until I have slipped into her watery grave
And let the air bubble her words from my mouth-
Until I have crossed the brink;
Tumbled over the bank of fear
Into the waters of inspiration-
She will continue to haunt,
Spirit restless.
Until I set her free,
She will not be satisfied.
Nor will I.

Andrea Gray

I am the Easter Bunny. I am the god damn, fluffy, pink, cotton-tailed Easter Bunny and this little kid just died right in front of me. He was sitting on my cushioned lap, smiling his small crooked smile up into my cheeky, buck-toothed face and his mom was flashing a Polaroid in our faces and the little kid's eyes would squint up behind his thick glasses every time she flashed another picture. I was just thinking that he was kind of funny-looking. That sounds bad. All little kids are cute in one way or another but then there are some kids who just have a goofy look about them. They're probably great kids, smart kids, loving brothers and sisters. But what the hell would I know about kids? I don't even remember being a kid.

I used to act. I never did anything big, never had a leading role. It was just something to do because people said I was kind of good at it and I needed a habit. I worked at a grocery store in Oneonta, New York for six years. They never offered me a promotion. It's real wet in up-state New

York. When people ask you where you're from they always think that you're talking about New York City and then they seem all disappointed when you tell them, "No, not New York City. I'm from up-state New York, near Syracuse and the finger-lakes." "They never know exactly where you're talking about. They don't seem to care unless you're from the city. It's beautiful out there. Rolling green hills, everything so lush.

Ah, what the hell am I rambling on about. I took this god damn job in desperation for something different. I had no idea I would have to wriggle into this thing every morning. I look like a distorted dream, a nightmarish, cotton-candy monster. "Wear strong deodorant," they told me before my first day. "Hold the kids tight enough so they don't fall, but not too tight. Don't make anyone uncomfortable." This is all very basic and general information they gave me. Some of those little suckers cling on to you like you were their mothers. You gotta wonder about some kids and this crazy ritual of worshipping versions of team-mascots. But then I was infatuated when I was young.

Santa Claus is the master; no American child can resist the material pull that he harbors over a simple candy-craving. I come in second. Then the tooth fairy; she's got the cash. Pulling up in fourth are the classic leprechaun, the Thanksgiving turkey, and the groundhog. They lack the charisma and bounty that we have. It sounds odd, this hierarchy of holiday symbols. No one can deny that it exists. We are gods to children. They will never actually see us doing what we "do". The stories about us float through their lives from day one. They pray that we will come; they behave differently if it means that we are more likely to arrive. We are a polytheism that exists on a separate plane from that of the Christian holidays that we represent. Some would say we are symbols of blasphemy and we distort what holidays "should" be.

But, that can't be true. A little boy just sat on my lap. He was a small boy. I think he may have been retarded, but I don't know for sure. His thick glasses were held onto his head with a wide elastic band. His mouth was

wet with excessive saliva, his hair, matted, this way and that. His brown corduroy pants were hiked up high, trapping a crooked blue and red striped shirt. His mother placed him on my lap delicately and it honestly worried me. I felt like I was gonna break this kid.

"What's your name?" I asked in my most happy bunny voice.

"Ch-ch-charles," said the small boy. His spittle flew at my pink, cushioned body. "I gotta get this over with," I thought.

"What is your favorite kind of Easter candy Charles?" That's the pitch. I know it sounds a lot like Santa, but kids want something. What can you do?

"C-c-can't eat candy," he said. This caught me. "Got di-beetees," said Charles. Well, crap. Here's this poor sad kid on the Easter Bunny's lap, mom flashing away with the camera and he can't even eat candy. It was then that the emotions started churning around inside. This little kid was sitting on my lap for the sole reason of wanting to meet the Easter Bunny. He didn't care about the candy, he didn't care about the holiday

booty. He just wanted to meet that mythological character that was me. He was a sick kid. You could tell that. I was sure that diabetes wasn't his only problem. I looked up at his mother. She was kneeling down on the pale blue carpet, kind of off to the side of us and she looked all proud and torn up inside. She looked how I felt. I started to sweat.

"C-c-can you weelly lay eh-eh-eggs?" asked Charles, eyes raised up to my enormous synthetic head.

"Only at Easter," I quipped. I was nervous. The child was obviously in heaven; I was at his mercy. For a few moments, this god was his own, he could ask what he wished. The sweat was dripping down the back of my neck as Charles searched for his next question. I was scared, terrified, and at the same time, filled with a powerful pity for the boy and his quiet mother. I raised my huge paw of a hand to scratch the back of my neck, shifting the hollow head as I did so. The boy glanced at my hand, confused. I quickly shook my head to wiggle the mask back into place.

Suddenly he glanced at his mother and her merciless camera. He stared at her for a few, unusu-

ally long moments. He looked back at me and I could see that his happy fascination had disappeared. He began to struggle against me, as if trying to get down. His mother stood quickly, "Charles, sit down. If you're ready to leave, you may say goodbye to the Easter Bunny." Charles stopped struggling and once again turned his enlarged eyes towards me.

"Are you hot in there Easter Bunny?" And then he died.

I won't get into the details of the seizure, the security guard, the screaming mother, and the ambulance. I won't describe the limp body and how it just hung across the bunny lap. I won't talk about the huge crowd that gathered around or how my supervisors hurried me away and then asked me to leave. It's all irrelevant. I was the Easter Bunny. I was an idol and a god and a lie. I brought joy and imagination and hope and frustration into children's lives. It's a delicate thing, being something you are not, especially when you are so much.





Makie Suzuki

What I See

Benjamin Gaddis

I would like to describe
The light I see upon the western horizon.
To kindly subject you to the warm humming
Of glowing clouds.
To offer you a bite
Of the crisp mountain silhouette.
I would even like to offer up
A cone of burning incense
So that you may feel the cool,
Gliding air rush through your lungs
And dance off your tongue and lips.
I would like to show you the shadows
On the ground,
Painted by the sighing sun.
And I would like to kiss you
The way the ocean kisses the beach,
Moving soft and shattering.



"x=0, y=-1.5"
Brian Kinyon

THE LEFTOVERS

Mags Greenlee

It was a left ovary really
Like stock for soup
Unrecognizable and inedible on its own
A left ovary
The kind no one wants to hear described when they inquire about your health
So the dark stabbing deep in the unexplored recesses
Of your internal cavern goes unnamed
“Abdominal Pains” you grimace from your doubled-over permanence
 like a rigor-mortised fetus
“Woman Problems” they acknowledge
Quickly turning to the sports page
As they shake their heads at the stats
While you count the calendar
And calculate the unexpected blood
A left ovary
The one no one wanted the first time around
Sitting in the back of the refrigerator in green tupperware
Away from the light
While with a loving hand he strokes your hair and asks,
“What’s for dinner hon?”
So you bring the tupperware out and open it
As he recoils in unpreparation at the ovary-gone-wrong
And yelps,
“For God’s sake, didn’t we have that last month?”
You can’t quite resign it to the dumpster
But are weary of tucking it back in the fridge
So you crouch on the floor in indecision
Afraid you might tip too far over
And spill it on the floor you spent so long scrubbing clean
Knowing the guilty smear of blood the left ovary would leave
And he stands near
Shifting his weight
Uncomfortable with his presence
Like a monolith given life
But uneasy of his potential movements
He examines a smudge on his tie
And asks if you would like to eat out tonight.

Geology

Matthew Hindman

It is written in the rocks in the braille of erosion and absence—
but not forgetfulness, for here the wind
works the dust into everything. Everything is the color of dead grass.
Not far from here there was a falls to drown Niagra;
they have built a kind of shrine to its dry skeleton,
though there are few pilgrims. You can leave with a postcard.
Here, less celebrated, there is a monolith, a Babel,
a basalt chimney arcing across the symmetry of the sky;
rattlesnakes sun themselves on top of it.
Before the flood, before time and memory and pressure,
this was a forest; but the ice came, and the ginkos turned to stone.

These are called scablands, because the wound is still fresh,
the coyotes sing in time to its slow throbbing,
singing against the shadow of the future.

It is a problem of scale. One can lose one's self in the horizon,
or in the details, in the Buddha-like certainty that an outlander
is too familiar to be a stranger, look, see the syndicated simplicity,
see the shale in her fingertips and the salt in her spine.
This is my inheritance, and it grinds me smooth as glass,
I used to think that it was the organic in us which
but it is obsidian which always comes back to us,
and we die with the roar of its pulse in our veins.

In school I read of a Mexican farmer who was out plowing
his fields when the ground grew hot and began to shake.
He ran. Behind him a new volcano was born.
Nothing on the surface suggested the fault line.

It is hard
to put your mind around anything you cannot hold in your fist;
how much harder it is to grasp the idea that only a few miles down
there is a place that cannot remember because it has not changed.
At the very center, where gravity is at its height and every direction is up,
there is nothing but a vast rimless crush, billions before and untold trillions unborn,
a time which does not tick, does not move, is more eternity than we can ken—
it mocks us, beats us into the silence of irrelevance,
and always already the slow, certain violence
of compression.



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Jennifer Hess

Jennifer Hess

CLAM DREAM

S. Andrea Timm

He called my breasts beacons, objects of
guidance and inspiration, two lighthouses

on a flesh beach. That made him the lost
ship, the plane going

DOWN.

It was often dark where we swam, so at
first I didn't notice as he began to drown,

flailing wordlessly in that moonlit water,
going under without a sound. The fire

had gone out on shore. The fish were all
sleeping, comfortable as rocks. He was a

proud one, that boy, so I wasn't surprised
when, weeks later, his corpse washed up

on that white beach, bloated and blue, half
digested by the ocean, handsome as a pearl.

The Night of the Frappucino

Brook

Charged skies
Rainbow bright
Amazon day builds to
silent, sultry night
where the mysteries go by,
each with different breath.

Rhumba on the tongue.
Cool cocoa
Specks of spice
Stillness of low light,
Refreshment of liquid night.

Poised on the sill of an open window
while the faces go by,
each with different eyes.

Sips of spice; sounds of splash.
Green Lake entices but they are held back by the
safety of watching the waters of purple-black.

Stories rise and fall,
according to suggestion.

And how are they seen,
these voyeur three,
among the shadows of charcoal trees?

She

Brook Gauthier

The daughter of a falcon
Sister-serpent
Fire soaked in wine
Blood Aflame
Gliding swan
Hissing feline
Soaring, drowning
In a mist of evaporated tears
An affair with the sun
An affair with the moon
In love with the breadth and depth
Of the landscape that spins about the
Wild calm of Earth
So devoured in the claws
Of a dying leopard
So enveloped in the eyes
Of a speechless raccoon
A melting peach
In an orchard of
Crystal waterfalls
An apple in
A room of motherless children
A shepherd in the midst of
Hungry wolves
A cocoon
Betwixt the fingers of a nymph
A horse with wings
In a night of fury and peace
She.



Atsuhiko Fukuda

It wasn't the way you sat

Sarah Graves

*Good girls sit like this,
bad girls sit like this,
and girls who sit like this,
get this like that. (snap)*

I still sit
legs crossed
in defiance of
you, who
got it.
(SNAP)

We dreamed
now your mother
grows inside of
you, who
got it.
(SNAP)

Thirty, we thought
time enough
to live. What of
you, who
got it.
(SNAP)

I still cry
innocence lost
around the finger of
you, who
got it.
(SNAP)



Tania Zyryanoff

Child poem

Anna Tollenaar

I remember running up the path
to the covered play area.
We played house under the picnic tables.
We climbed trees
and built forts.
Remember when I fell?
Our garden grew squash and zucchini,
but never grapes or watermelon.
The cherries from the tree
had ants in them.
One day we hit a ball
into the mean neighbor's yard.
I had to go ask for it back.
You were too scared.
So was I.
We got a jungle gym
from the junkyard.
We played on that
for awhile.



"Busted"
Brian Kinyon

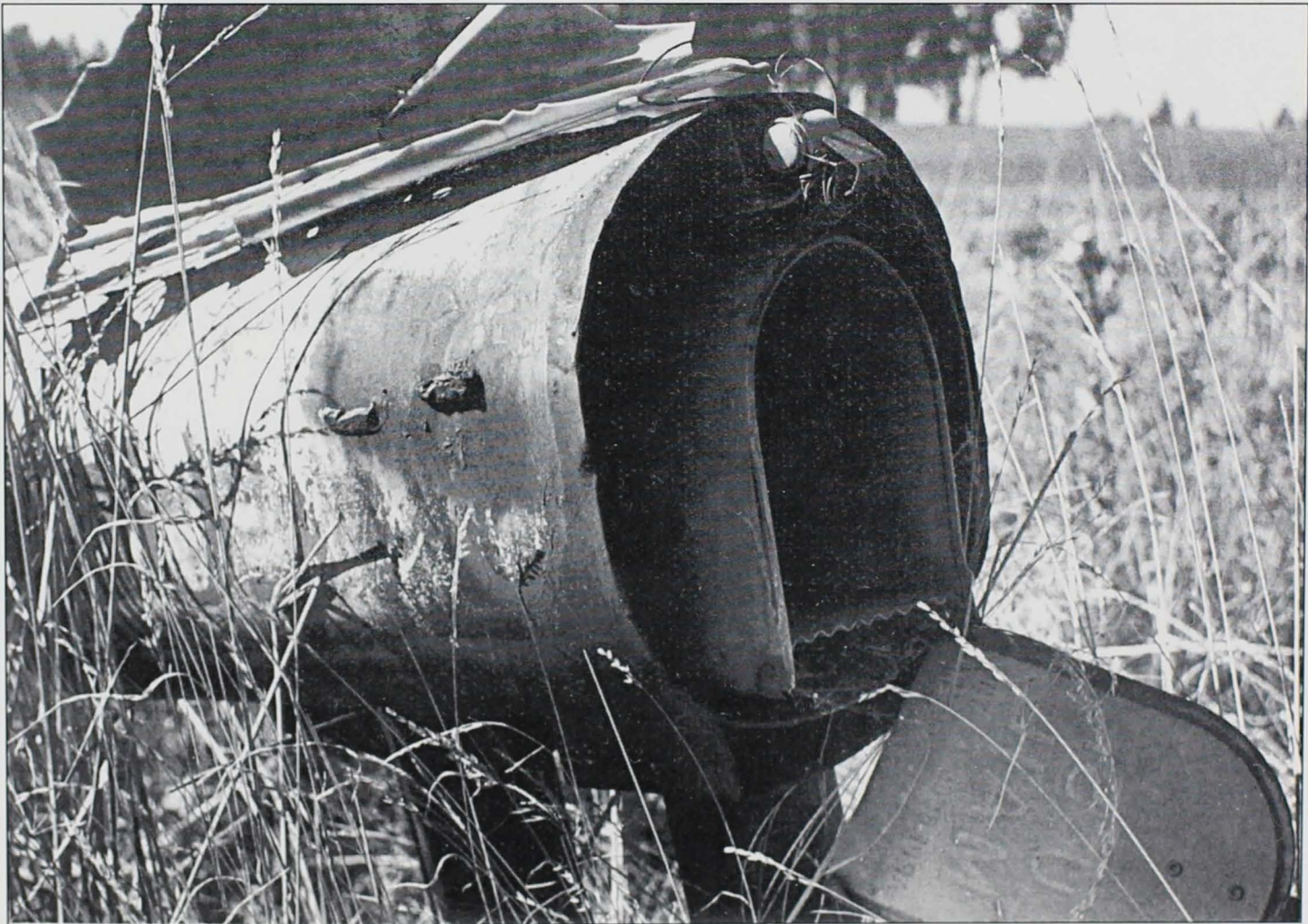
Gun Fight at Dot's

Heather Parkinson

Gun fight in the whore house
silver spinning pistols
tried to rob the place
took the piano player out
holed in the back right through
the pipe organ, woods cracked
he's knocked out floored
on his back flat.

They're hunched in the dress closet
Dot Allen and her girls
peeking through the holes
holding tight in the face
Lizzie's trying not to cry
Betty's busting
the seams won't hold
too long without a breath

Fats, the Chinaman
is calling Dr. Wright
he'll be down
for the clean-up,
Sheriff is still
standing scouting
for lost bandits
from the whore house door.



Tania Zyryanoff

halfway to the sideshow

Lindsay Hunter

I know you only like me because
I'm halfway to the sideshow
 a part time freak with champagne taste
 conventional body with a head case attached
someone you arms herself with a rubber knife to meet your parents
but doesn't breed iguanas under the bed.

I may eat seaweed
but I still shave my armpits,
 eccentric by sweet as clover in the cowyard,
 a christmas tree with wormeaten side turned towards the wall,
 a black rose, but in full bloom
and I will always lay down for you.



Eric Mulder



Eric Mulder

Vitamins

Marie Diamond

Maniacal people are attracted to me
Or, rather, I am attracted to them
I found one the other day
Locked inside a vitamin bottle
He was just sitting there
At the bottom
In an accepted solitude
I slightly paused as I walked by the shelf
But continued on
Heading toward the aisle
With the concentrated lethargy
Before I could get there
A bright red bottle
Demanded my attention
They were cornflake pills
In the shape of tiny, shrunken human heads
Each wearing a plastic smile
The heads started to hum
When I picked the bottle up
It was so pleasant
The sound of jellybeans
On a summer day
I started to shrink
So I could fit in their bottle
But my inner pus stopped the process
Hastily I put the bottle back on the shelf
My hand stained a repulsive red
Smelling of brushes and female effigy barbecues
I stumbled away from the vulgar

Candy-coated humming human heads
Turned around and found myself
At eye-level with the vitamin bottle
The one containing that elfin person
The humming stopped instantaneously
As he lifted his head from his hands on his knees
And faintly smiled
Though I was staring quite rudely at him
I carefully nicked I picked up his little bottle home
To read the label:
“Caution: fragile contents
Store at room temperature
Open only if you are a raisin”
I looked at my stained hand
And realized I was a raisin
So I lined up the arrows
And pushed against the cap with my thumb
It clattered to the floor
As a white vine with turtle polka-dots
Surmounted the bottle
Shakingly coming toward
My tarnished hand
Then wrapping around it twice
In a gentle hug
It sucked the burning red stain
Into itself
The polka-dots
Turned into gooey chocolate
And the sun was a lovely shade of purple that day

Calloused Vibrations . . .

Brook Gauthier

Calloused vibrations dead in a wire
Fallen thick in a muddled puddle
Stirring, rippled reflections of a storming sky
Hovering in a sickened atmosphere
Doubled over with the wretching of rain
The noise is pissing
And the ants are drowning
Kiss me.

Kiss me with light from a warm lamp
With a smiling sleeping cheek
With a sweaty forehead, sticky with hair
With closed eyes and curled fists and fetal comfort.

I rise from the river
Sand slipping from my hands
Hair dripping
Eyes dripping
Lips wet with earth.

MY COUSIN MERMAID

S. Andrea Timm

Growing up on the wrong side of town can
have its side effects. In her case, more than
one distinct personality surfaced like a fish's
exhale, and she acquired a twitching cheek.
She had been pink on the purple side of town,
the rainbow baby of five under a tin roof
that leaked, flooding her cradle. Her brothers and
sister grew up to be stiff as drinks, hard as
liquor and full of holes. They shit on that nest
and flew that coop as soon as they were able.
That left the baby in the bassinet under a
round sky that leaked like a bad roof into
her open mouth whenever she spoke, filled
her up like an aluminum bucket until her
mind was diluted with fresh water, a new
fish. She was a shipwreck, water-logged.
Nobody ever came for her there in that
sorry house on that sorry doorstep, not
even the tide. When she was finally able,
she jumped from her bowl and swam for
a barred window pane, a sterile room on
the right side of town, silent except the hum
of the fluorescent lights and allowed Them
to lock her In, Up and Away: an immaculate harbor.



Torry Bend

catnap

Lindsay Hunter

his voice was warm and sloppy
the yolk of an egg served sunnyside up
and dripping words into her lap
that sounded like
marry me
so she laughed and said
ask me tomorrow
and tell me again about the children with beautiful names

and she lay down with him and his voice like
salad
dipping two toes into a dream to see if it was warm
going white, white
and soft,
cotton wool in the middle of the day

Marie Diamond

And it shone down
turning the sun into water
adding to the ocean in the sky
with waves that slowly moved
onto a nonexistent shore
and the people had
to walk on their heads
but still were somehow walking
on the ground
as the bruised clouds
washed our hands

we moved under water
thin as air
breathing like fish
the rivers poured into space
the oceans were sucked
into the mountains
as our hands were dried
and we walked on, sideways



Atsuhiko Fukuda

Crash

Elizabeth Markese

I'm colliding with you again
Crunching bones and breaking glass
Because it's all I know how to do
I forgot how to make you smile
Forgot where I was going
Directions on the kitchen table
That go somewhere we can't go anymore
Car crash
Thought-accident
Alone again with you
But you think I'm here.

Three was a pizza boy who just about died of surprise,
Mister Three with his ocean sized
bedroom eyes.

Four was an actor from Alabama.

Five nearly survived,
but I managed to crack his skull like a melon.

Six had the gaul to laugh at my left breast
(it is smaller than the other), but as I stood
over him with a kitchen knife (sawing away
at his excuse), to say the least, he wasn't in good humor.

Seven the priest, Eight the saint,
both died like any sinners,

Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve
weren't quite the same when I was finished.

Mister Thirteen, now he was good luck
(that wealthy fuck).

I drowned him and took all his money.

Fourteen and Fifteen were clean and called me
angel,

Seventeen, Eighteen and Twenty-Two
weren't as thankful a crew,
and Sixteen actually called me Satan.

I forget Nineteen and Twenty,
Twenty-One I left dead in a closet,
Twenty-Three was no masterpiece
for me
(a bullet through the neck),
and Twenty-Four got a shot through the temple.

Twenty-Five and Twenty-Six
I mauled with sticks,
and I broke every bone in Twenty-Seven's body.

Twenty-Eight was my work of art, made a sculpture
with his body parts.

Number One, now he was a fine mess,
a fire in my belly,
my first.

He was a rock star, a walk on the wild side,
a cannon ball, a cannibal, a red hot forget me not,
a Camel cigarette smoking degenerate,
wild-eyed and kicking.

His stains were satin, his pain, velvet.

He smelled like forgetting, was soft as stone.

He had been conceived in a station wagon,
born black bird baby blue and bawling,
his dad always said

“Son, what am I going to do with you?”
and his mom mumbled something about attitude.

He thought himself surreal. He thought himself sublime.
He Played with rhyme and philosophized about
decadence and ruin.

He was a race car a race car a race car, sleek
and unsmiling, fast and furious,

a damp jewel dripping in his white
terry cloth towel that day he said he was
leaving me, making a clean break.

“For good this time,” he said and I thought,

Good, for good, good for you,

and after his morning coffee, I laid with him in
our claw foot tub, his exquisite corpse still
damp between my legs as I stroked his blue fingernails.

He never knew it, but I understood.

Acrostic in Search of an Author

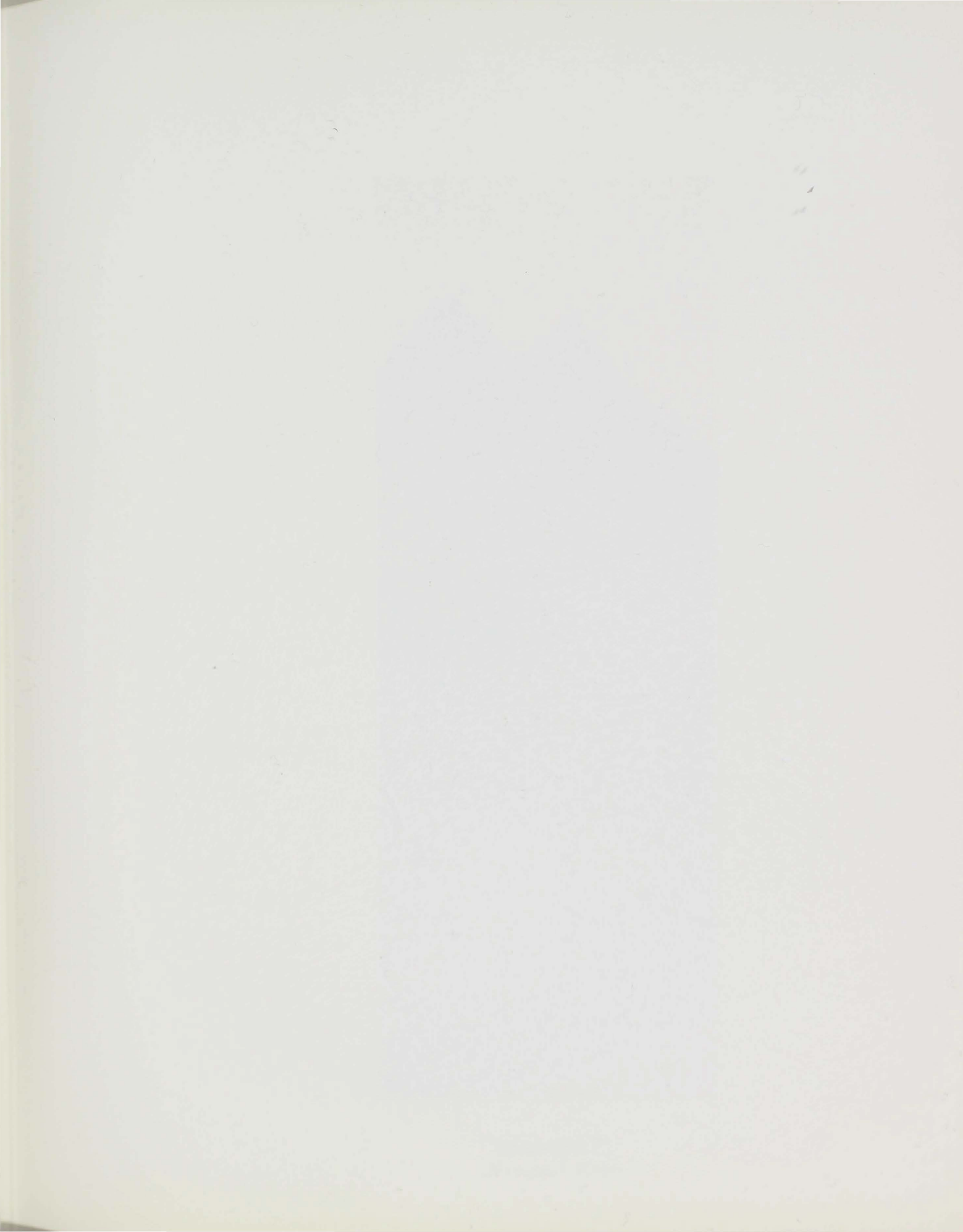
Anon Y. Wedgewood

Although it *is* a desperate task, your
Search for these hands still wrought from hot urns,
Hold fast your hands in the waste stream,
Be ready for the water thrush song.
Even Charles—great Adam,
Recorder of beasts—knew not the record, nor how long. Know
Yet may come to it a caged bird, singing:

*“Honey drips from the spoon,
Will you open your mouth?”*,
Entangled in claws and alulas, bound
To the water thrush as though he were the same bird; the

Cage, neither bird, the true source of the sound.
And though it remain a desperate task
Still, be design—
Embossed on this ill-colored bronze—
Made hastily, poured from ash to fit that form,
Encrypted within the lines within these lines:
To it has come a caged bird,
Singing:

“People may dance for the feeling of dancing.”





"Mountains I"
Nathaniel Tilden

