

MARSH HAWK REVIEW, FALL/WINTER 2019

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MARK YOUNG***geographies: Haskovo***

The internet café dates back to the New Stone Age. Yellow rock art predicts the future coming of the Beatles' submarine; the floor coverings are mathematical charts, depicting the best weather for agriculture as well as how far

people are willing to debase themselves on so-called "reality" shows. There is a comet asleep in a corner, about which Pliny once wrote that it *blazed almost continuously & with a terrible glare.*

MARK YOUNG

from The Pound Cantos: CENTO XVI

Old men & camels working the water-wheels: sound drifts in the evening haze, touched with an imprecision, a dryness calling for death. The poor devils dying of cold, whose words rattle, left three horses at one gate, three horses at the other. Said only: "Gondolas cost too much, this year."

Dark blood flowed in the fosse, men many, mauled with bronze lance heads, the ocean flowing backward, cutting under the keel. Beasts like shadows in glass, where tar smell had been. Not a splotch, not a lost shatter of sunlight.

MARK YOUNG**A line from Kristen Stewart**

Most terminally differentiated mammalian cells consist of three parts. Details & structure — I was such a rule follower. Carried a vast

inventory of more than one million language devices found in literary texts that ranged from sketch comedy through to late-night improv. Some-

one else has a similar email address: too many emails intended for them have started coming to my inbox. Now it's full of yards of quality fabric

& subtle or passing references intended to be noticed. John thought he'd lost his mom's frog. I thought: *How did we drift so far from Audrey Hepburn?*

MARCIA ARRIETA**Sometimes**

we struggle to overcome the pretense, the reliable—

(assume nothing)

and then the imagination arises from a fierce wind—

(transcend the inconsistencies)

a wind of torn clothing, broken trees, broken plates, broken minds—

(do not vanish)

MARCIA ARRIETA

Dandelion Masks

bird socks the pen is in the dryer the lion lies on the shore
if only the oak trees could speak dandelions & irises dust wind

there are footprints on the roof reaching sky the paintings reveal
nothing details catch fire one hundred poems

MARCIA ARRIETA

Between Perspective & Reality

lamppost the morning glories

the house grows wings

crayon the mind into fireflies

a sentence becomes the world

yellow butterfly green leaf

a cartography of the mind

GEOFFREY YOUNG**To Pierce Harwell after The Amputation of His Left Leg Just below the Knee**

This loss won't affect your masterful handwriting
Nor in any way limit your mind's verdant acreage.
You still walk upright in the baroque corridors of language.
And we were never foot fetishists, were we?

We know your foot-print even when it's not there
Your identity as fluid as slipping off the page
Every chance it gets into passages of music.
We'll stump for you if need be, and harvest you whole.

We'll push your chair down a dirt path on a dare
In search of kumquats in February air.
Or in June heat, or while listening to the beat
Of September's ball-scores. It only takes one thin

Volume of deathless verse to set you off,
Or a tan hand on your brow to prove you're kin.

GEOFFREY YOUNG

Angeleno Musing

Who gave the name Beverly
To Beverly Hills? What urbanist
Of ancient orange groves gave the name
Culver to Culver City? Is there any justification

For building luxury apartments
In Studio City? For the lack of a scarlet A
Announcing one's arrival in nearby Hawthorne?
Let's get away

From it all. Let's catch a tuna
Way out in Laguna. I first saw the light
Of day in the Good Samaritan, the same hospital
They took Bobby Kennedy to in June of 1968

Though by then he lacked for the very life
Doctors would try to save.

GEOFFREY YOUNG

Have Class, Will Travel

Proust says that each grade of society
Is considered best
By those who inhabit it
But what did he know

Of the workers who lay
Paving stones on cold Parisian streets
So that his carriage could rumble
To the next salon?

Still, the variable miracle of self-esteem
Sprints down a track
Offering each runner
The unstable optics of social perspective

Even if few of us enjoy brilliant connections
Or know profound attainments.

TOM BECKETT**Maps elude me.**

Sex is a cross-
Word puzzle clue.

Streets without names
Occlude plot
Point development.

Answers seldom coincide
With given space.

Location's a function
Of nomenclature.

CECILIA WU

Daddy Pancake

Dear Dad, How was the taking of the putting of your cardinally ordinaly bespoke apple pancake? Courtesy of mom, a return carriage to the left margin on the daysake of your birth right? We the people of the wu tang clam hasten to derive navies from the yolky navels of yore. Was it yours, the umbrage of umbilical severance, the gnomes of no man cast as wide waled corduroy pant leg masquerading as king of cling? I beg your question for lore's soldering sake. Was it ego ergo sumptuous, as intimated by the polyurethane lacquer of a ventriloquized forest, summarily wrenched and rendered as hypostatic de facto flooring? I dreamt you brought said bestowed, since sublimated pancake saucer home to stow away in our partial opportunity fridge iniquitously full of spoken for almond jello in hybridized american pie form with graham cracker crust, confected by mom with sympathetic eyelids on the occasion of your democratically bought, datively wrought birthday. Leave it to the sovereign stylized tail of the bushy beaver to save it for a later doomsday of bloom's content. Eyewitnesses report in the alt currency of frayage that mom and I indubitably arrived home for the fridge side seance by way of path breaking trackless magical causation on account of inscrutable trigger, in advance of your arrival, presumably by autonomous car. Distracted by our lofty plan to outsmart the routing and forge our own connection, we missed the promised choo choo of the ever coming messianic train, only ever dressing itself short of coming, or only ever baring itself in passing. Choose your own misadventure, may the forced choice be without you. The am not of the am trak train left us platformed, manifestly overripe, to perversely perseverate as standing room only passengers of anachronistic contradiction, let down in the wake of the railway confederacy's rigged up lose lose game, in the fecal field of infinitely deferred geese as subordinate goalies. Why isn't the Katonah stop integrated, we had wondered as the forget me not tracking device booted us to the wayside of its strategically excremental amnesia. So we continued by foot, through a festival replete with whining escalators and vigilant musicologies, penultimately deposited by way of fanciful duplex extrasensory greenhouse affect, by the incomplete grace of a wayward quantum felicity, at the stoop of our impossibly convenient destination, to face the shock of a magnetized home with a too familiar fridge standing in as makeshift understudy for the missing mantle of an extinguished hearth, an ice box smuggled in or out via trojan ice cube, betraying the secretions of our family of four's neonatal heraldry, in the knick of vacuumed time's release, per the chink in the plug and play chain, to witness the refrigeration of your dazzling pancake! It seemed like we could live off the contents of the fridge for a mini eternity of jubilant surprise, or so i surmise. If ice does eventually give off heat in the reboot, post theft of pyre, might we the clinamental kinder stock of homeless coming taunt the pyrotechnic crystal. Might we lunch on geometric parsimony, tracking down and out

the serial fugues of flammable histrionicities. Profaning propane. Postponing priapic
memorials to the glory days of ferocious heat and fantastic flame, cliff hanging in a sun
tanned face off. Prosopon finally a hologram sans crowning halo of mercy's ruth ridden
certificate of incompleteness

CECILIA WU

Wandering Planetarium

I walked through Chinatown alone tonight to avoid the threat of a terrorist attack, imagining terrorists would spare small houses. What waits in the wings of the dovebar that would have us for dinner? The US of the USSR. Acronyms have expanded to criminal foursomes. The we is missing from the babbling of the vault. Did you open? We opened nothing, we only heard the chirping. Is the zeal of an aviary suspiciously taut? The usual expectorants pool data until the wiring itself is interrupted by a blessing in disguise. If a mistake is a false borrowing what is an error? A wandering planetarium in search of the you-rock that is outside of time only because it is time itself. Why is there a rock and not a void you would refuse in the service of distraction? What spring made this rock be here now in the simultaneity of comparative superlatives? Cascades dangle from guillotines of unembarrassed formalisms. Insults and injuries add themselves to the summary. The dead are nothing but simply absolute. What about the others coming before us, am I really to help myself first? Am I real, the reality of repeat offenders who are so old they know where fortune cookies come from? They deliver the truth of the lie and striptease to make you see a man that made the woman act to come to be the stillness of a waiting. It is again, too late. The tortured child is cooked and cut on the mirror's edge, the kimono is collapsing earnestly and all that remains is the bloody hanger of abortion. We three kings rot, invaded by the time shares of obsolete conditionals. Would you, could you, hang yourself to get some time away from time?

EDWARD FOSTER

Malachite

1.

(Be austere
Worship space.)

For he's the
Poet of niceties:
What scribbles
Does he mean?

For him,
Life is one
Long entry in
Social media.

(All there is
Is work.
They lock the doors.
They make us promise
Not to ask.)

But what to do
With poets so sweet
They do not understand
Their lines..

Who follows them?
Their calling?
What do they call
Their need?

Producing
Book after book,
Signed,
Done so well.

Tempers so
Sweet, friends
Think his language
Cracked Ice.

He is the poet

Of niceties.

His new order
Is wherever
He has been
But will not show.

2.

Court danger.
Bide your time.

Let us see
If flowers
Relieve the pain,

For there are
Three poetries.
The first is revenge,
The second: be with me now,
And then the one he does not
Want to speak.

(What's left?
The attic room
Where rivers
Become a roar.
"Edith, the boy
Is not well.")

Whatever else,
You will always
Believe, or
Wish to believe.
All might be well.
You think,
If you could
Believe.

Things between
Then and now
Are waste.
Wrinkled
Skin.

("Edith, the boy
Is not well."
He wants
His father.)

So, do you have a cross?
What is yours?

To be secular
Is such a waste
Of time.

ALLIA ABDULLAH MATTA**st. albans continuum**

Caroline black honey nyc
 salty dill southern strong & fierce;
 other mama blood aunt to queens tribal georgia-land imports and them;
 red clay, corn, and cane jim crow, slavery reboot
 like quitted black boys and girls down in the georgia-quarters
 left to their no mama lonesome slave selves;
 daddy, uncle, auntie, & cousin shipped and sold to plantations unknown.

Carolines in the quarters became black family line reboot
 become other mamas and aunties red bloodline *not* significant.

Cousin William, silver long goatee in green fatigues
 smiles and winks at them southside girls, *y'all better carry yourself away from dem fresh ass
 boys or I will tell your mama that I saw you out in these streets!*

turns away and chuckles cause they know he won't tell their mama
 watches them walk away from dem fresh ass boys
 remembers when they played with baby dolls and blond barbies
 jumped double dutch in the street
 read *right on* magazines on the stoop

Cousin William bought her the walking baby doll from the five and dime
 that peach-pink baby doll, freckles and red hair, gapped tooth smile,
 white socks & patent leather shoes
 her daddy said, *thanks man, but she can't have white dolls
 you gotta take that back*
 Cousin William watched her brown eyes fill with water
I'll get you the brown one next time!

The next time she saw Cousin William
 he had the brown-beige walking baby doll from the five and dime.

Smiled and told her that story again before he died,
I told you I would bring you the brown one, and he did.

ALLIA ABDULLAH MATTA

motion

colored folks call it pink others say rose
 rose-colored lace curtains on her windows
 red brick, matched oak, pine wood planks spackled
 one-color

a new place, red brick stand-alone houses
 on tiny land plots & concrete driveways
 two redwood doors, modest front & back yards
colored folks say pink others say rose

Juanita upsouth, houses too close, no outhouse
 dark musty-wooded cabins & shacks
 illegal juke joints with fake bandstands
 urban shacks, cook outs & rent parties
 a new place, red brick stand-alone houses

apartments & after hour spots on 1 2 5 street
 fried chicken, collard greens, biscuits, gravy & hot sauce
 moonshine sips & the blues
 wines & moans to the beat
 red brick, matched oak, pine wood planks spackled
 one-color

sweaty bodies snuggle & grind to the beat
 sex-standing up to the blues
 church folks shake they heads
 sunday morning sun & nappy heads
colored folks say pink others say rose

Juanita upsouth,
 these houses be just *too* close

STEPHEN PAUL MILLER**The Already Shuffled**

It was so peaceful
as if to correspond with a chance I had lost
but is all this revolving around myself
trying to get away from something
and if gray is the pure tone
am I the greener tensions
anxiously compressed?

Flying around with these little bugs
Why must my discoveries always be negative
 (to discover what you hadn't been doing,
 who cares what you've done)
or bypassing the customs official I'm harassed
or just in general feeling like a sandy
vegetable, in retrospect a trodden salad?

The peace has already turned into a cave-in
as if God's impatience were my guilt
but most of all I feel I've missed a chance,
many chances in fact form a pattern
which coming in retrospect seems a shadow.

STEPHEN PAUL MILLER

If Ever The Angels Should Take Pity On You

If ever the angels should take pity on you
For all the cheating, stealing, and outright
abuse you take,

If ever a tribunal of angels
ask what you want
to make things right for you.
Anything! You
can have anything you want—

the head angel asks

What do you want? Don't ask for
some nothing. Don't be modest. Please

Do not ask for a warm roll and butter.
The angels will roll their eyes,

knock the heaven out of you, spit
and treat you like an imbecile.

You know angels.

STEPHEN PAUL MILLER**Automotive**

I might as well settle for what I always wanted,
the camel bells.

You already know health, which is a kind
of "intoxification"

before you meet yourself at a party
and punch his error in the face
the sea is sensed, like infinity to us, on
a beach.

Quite conceivably your stock drops, and
you look back longingly on the fact
you can develop
now because you didn't then.

Grids defining words are
monuments that in turn are like
eggs to egg salad, which
like the horrid vegetable stew

Jesus manages to spice just right
for the women and take to the men
himself is made
into something the likes of which
no one there ever
tasted before.

SUSAN TERRIS**1984 Again**

Before me a young face—androgynous—expressionless,
straight nose, plump pursed lips.

Above: a fountain pen, where ink like black blood
oozes from its nibs, obscuring eyes,

creating a slick glass mask, deflecting pointed truths.

The face is, somehow, impervious

and despite the pen seems unfazed. But wait—above
mouth, nose, eyes—no forehead, no brow

or crown. Only the mask, where emotions and threads
of an inked self are sutured into

the white of beyond. Stop. Turn away. Run. Before this
orwellian leak erases you, too.

SUSAN TERRIS**Worm**

It's spring. Planning to fish, we are digging for worms when we spy a large one wriggling down by the river. As it moves closer, we see it's not a worm at all but men, women, and children, dressed in army uniforms and shrink-wrapped together. They are inching toward us. Then abruptly, they turn away and slip silently into the muddy water.

SUSAN TERRIS**William Faulkner Says:
The Past Is Never Dead. It's Not Even Past**

Sometimes, on the Golden Gate Bridge, I remember
seeing a woman leap from it, though I never would.

Still the idea of flight appeals, because every day now
when I get up, there's a dense cloud over my head,

and sometimes hail strikes me like cold bullets.
Remember duck and cover, cowering beneath desks?

Or atomic clouds? Though hellish, all that seems almost
innocent today. But new threats are here. The world

as we know it: nothing but a swamp. Where have all
the flowers gone? Is the corn no longer high as

an elephant's eye? How come no sea to shining sea?
Where's the sun? And what bridges lie ahead

of us—bridges to be struck or towers to be toppled?
And what then will become of the children, our children. . . .

TOM BECKETT AND THOMAS FINK**From Arbus Etudes:****Patriotic Young Man With A Flag, N.Y.C., 1967**

You think I'm an
object
for irony?

America protects us.

So
what, me worry?

Child With A Toy Hand Grenade In Central Park

"Cuteness" cloys
brutally.

Or it
doesn't.

The binary
isn't exhausted.

EILEEN R. TABIOS**Losing Music**

(Diaspora Story #579)

I was 8 years old when I first placed my fingers on the luminous white ivory keys of a piano. Next to me, a nun touched each finger into place. A year later, I wore a white lace dress in my first piano recital. Everyday for two years, I took lessons from that nun. At the end of two years, I left my birthland for the diaspora. A few years into my teens, when my parents could afford it, they brought an upright piano into the house—I never played it. A few years after college graduation when I was barely making my rent, my parents sent me that piano as the only piano I could afford—I never played it. Decades later, my husband ordered a grand piano for our living room. My fingers strolled through its keys to make my husband happy but, swiftly, I came never to play it again. But I do cherish this figurine of cats on a piano which I discovered within my mom's things after she died. Its innocence reminds me of when, once, I was so happy playing the piano that I quickly became proficient enough in a year to present music during a recital in the local university auditorium. People dressed up in their finest clothes to see me and hear me

EILEEN R. TABIOS**Spots**

*While a preference for long sentences is common to most Communist writing, a distinct vocabulary provides the more easily recognized feature of the "Communist Language."
—from "How to Spot A Communist," a 1955 pamphlet from U.S. First Army Headquarters*

Comrade, it's not a witch-hunt but a mark of the vanguard to peek at the ruling class' hootenanny (after all, hooliganism has many roots), not chauvinism let alone jingoism but the appropriate recognition of bourgeois-nationalism—let's not ignore that divide between the progressive and the reactionary—not materialist but, if anything, an attempt to dilute exploitation from oppressive colonialism, and indeed is simple integrative thinking that might even be confused by book-burners as syncretistic faith—note, too, the length of this sentence as dialectical proof.

I am yours sincerely,

A Literary Critic For the Sake of National Security

EILEEN R. TABIOS

Flower Poem

Major failure here. You know those seeds you kept planting, watering, debugging, and fertilizing? Belatedly realized what you thought was fertile earth was actually dumb, hard concrete. So here's a public service announcement: when it comes to nature versus nurture, nature is as implacable as a politician is compromised. Be cautious: that gleaming-white wildflower cracking, then blooming, through the sidewalk deserves praise. But most curl up and die, never breaking through to attain health from the sun's ethical lucidity.

CHARLES BORKHUIS**Nothing But The Truth**

nothing but the truth so help me god
are you now or have you ever been human
do you ever consider the cow
you are eating or have you become
indifferent to the slaughtered among us
little gods all in a row count them
one septillion stars in the known universe alone
that's 1 followed by 24 zeros for those still counting
isn't that enough sand in your box
you want our minds too
sorry but some things are sacred
although I can't tell you why

perhaps it all comes down to this or that
the squeeze toy in the corner
or the no-nonsense moon
hanging over a know-nothing sky
notice how the domesticated dog rips
the stuffed animal to pieces
but let's not mix and match
isn't it enough that feral thoughts
open cracks in the ceiling and the sky
speeds past like a runaway locomotive

see how one body enters another
how one thought climbs atop another
and takes it for a ride
look your body has been opened like a tin can
while another you watches from the ceiling
clearly they are operating on the you
who isn't there
the child caught in a lie
the poet lucid dreaming on a branch

it's a kid's game to be sure
but you're too old for spitting pennies
back at the slot machine
life was worth something
when you had a few answers
not that you'd have given them away
it's just now the darkness shoots light
though a bullet hole in your shadow
now you see it now you don't
no matter the blind never know what time it is
still one day time will roll over and play dead
meanwhile you might as well relax
take a pill if necessary

soon the universe will seem manifest
in every detail illuminated
in the folds of the cosmic fabric
but of course you keep losing the thread
the truth like every good story
wakes us up and puts us to sleep
remember it all depends upon us
to forget just enough
to make this old world appear new again

CHARLES BORKHUIS**Private Parts**

sex was left to our private parts
they'd convinced us they knew
what they were doing
and they did it well
who were we to interfere

we sat on the sofa like polite guests
and smoked cigarettes watching
until their last screams and groans
faded like the circus big top
finally coming down

only when they fell asleep
in each other's arms did we
fold back into our bodies and whisper
sweet nothings so as not to awaken
their ferocious youth

CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT**Concrete Dry**

Hair licks not the chest
but the patches of wrist
where a watch would sit
if watches were worn.

The man I'll call Leitmotif.
Picture it the 70s; the body wants
bell sleeves any way it can get them.

Today I feel inadequate to the poem's hunger
for word-image. Even Pound
retained that coin.

Imagine the poem a fast-moving river.
You grasp the raft of
the concrete but the dream so heavy,

the tears not ours, belonging instead
to some ogre or titan who made off
with the marbles ages ago.

I began the day with sponge and cake
but the matter and theory wouldn't bond
into a macadam I could walk on.

Whether Burle Marx adequately
camped black-and-white cobblestone
waves lifted from the melancholy Lisbon

of Pessoa is a style of opinion.
An opinion on style I refuse
to question if concrete is the answer.

Every ruin needs an allegory.
Assuming state apparatus manipulates
the optics, why not change tack?

It's not what they want with
but what optics want of us:
to watch the what, loosen the watch.

DENISE DUHAMEL AND MAUREEN SEATON**27 Lines about Death**

1. My father and my cat died the same year. They both had black hair.
2. I'm not sure I've adequately mourned my father, as he died when I was a mess, going through a divorce.
3. My grandfather died the same year they closed Newark Airport because three planes crashed in Elizabeth, which had nothing and everything to do with flying.
4. I could never be sure if the kids at the Children's Hospital where I spent 4th grade, went home or died, but a certain child would sometimes be gone by lunch and the nurses wouldn't tell us anything.
5. After my brother crashed his racecar, he said he wouldn't mind dying behind the wheel.
6. After my sister crashed her car, she was in a coma. To this day she doesn't remember a thing about it.
7. The 10th most dangerous activity is Heli-Skiing. First you jump out of a helicopter, then you ski down a mountain, then you parachute to the ground. (No comment.)
8. And what about orgasms, *la petite mort*? It's important to have as many as possible (especially for women) in preparation for death.
9. I can't remember the last time I thought about death during orgasm, although I was worried my dead grandparents were watching me the first time.

10. I once saw a child-ghost at an artists' colony and a painter said a prayer to help her to the other side.
11. I yelled at a prankster ghost once to leave my daughter alone when she lived at the Ansonia.
12. I used sage and a gentle tone to get rid of the ghost in Lewisburg who was fond of turning on the lights in the middle of the night.
13. I guess ghosts aren't really dead, are they? Departed, gone, no more, passed on, asleep, at peace, exanimate?
14. Depending on what psychic you listen to, dead people might not even be fully dead. It sounds exhausting now that I think about it.
15. I'm laughing the laugh of the dead right now. All around me: clacking teeth and skulls thrown back.
16. My favorite death movie is the Pixar animated *Coco*—so many skulls!—and I am not alone. It has a 97% rating on Rotten Tomatoes.
17. My favorite death movie is *Harold and Maude*. I love when Harold gives Maude a present and she promptly throws it in the lake.
18. My favorite death poem? Who can say! So many to choose from.
19. For a lot of poets, the term "death poem" might be an oxymoron. Or do I mean redundant? I like the words *elegy* and *elegiac*.
20. It sounds as though a jay could fly right out of *elegiac* even though I know it's usually doves released at fancy

funerals. It's possible I saw that gesture in a movie about death.

21. And crows, of course. I saw a murder of them yesterday and thought, damn, I can't even put these guys in a death poem anymore because a publisher said they're being overused. (Do I care?)
22. It's been three full weeks since I wrote a line about death. Suddenly I miss it.
23. Sometimes I miss the living as much as I do the dead.
24. If I can text you from the afterlife—if I have a phone and a signal—I promise I will!
25. Now that this is about to end it feels more like a bucket list. Or, as my friend Linda prefers to say, a fuck-it list.
26. I was thinking of calling mine a basket list as my wish is to get in a hot air balloon before I die.
27. At 104, Pulitzer Prize winner Herman Wouk headed the DeathList 2019—fifty celebrities chosen for their likelihood to die this year. He made it to May, then died in his sleep.

TIMOTHY LIU

Ars Poetica

Fudge Tunnel is a pretty good name
for a band. So are The Butthole Surfers.

I'm sure you can think of others but

the point is this: is the music better
than the name? It's like asking if

the first season of *Game of Thrones*

is better than the final season
of *Walking Dead*. It's like wondering

if reading the title of Wallace Stevens'

"The Final Soliloquy of the Interior
Paramour" alone is better than all of

Blake. As far as we know, Hopkins

liked pretty boys, somehow managed
to channel all that into sprung-rhythm.

Who or what came first, the theory or

the practice? Most of my students get
their poetry from YouTube, Instagram.

I say why not invent a new platform,

embed a chip? They say right back, *not
on us!*, and mean that in a loving way.

There are no emojis in this poem. Duh.

No shortcuts. Make the reader feel what
you feel without relying on any easy outs.

TIMOTHY LIU**Believe You Me**

when the conductor says
there's train traffic

up ahead of us,

you can't believe
a word of it despite

best efforts

to regulate congestion
pricing just South

of Sixtieth Street

because why fix
what's broken when

you can keep on
throwing money at it—

It's sick, this feeling

crawling through
underground tunnels

at a snail's pace

literally. What other city
would grind its heels

into infrastructure's

choking throat, I mean
c'mon Cuomo, c'mon

a to my house and

I'll give you everything
we really don't need

to keep the riffraff
off the streets, bundled
up on a G train

from dusk to dawn, you

go girl—you're going
to have to slow way down

if you're ever going to

catch up with me
is what I heard

my rinpoche say—

all of us
lulled by the sound

of some inhuman voice.

KARIN RANDOLPH**Report 1**

Dawn climbs. Day. A bit. The sun creeps up. Sweaty a little.
Days zoom in. Another day crawling. We descend fan out hold a
candlelight vigil. I keep watching feel funny loose put on soft
music, stuff my security pockets, watched the detective show no
one could understand. I improvise. Wear my lucky black top.
Watch an episode. Day decays. We delete. Talk about the
weather poke warily and so on. My gown grows twisted difficult
to explain its true loose details intricate fastenings
inconsistencies. I have to use simple words just to think. I
watched the Weather Channel for clues. It's cloudy. I remain
alert. Ate. Rose. One slow explosion. Scientists announcing a
new ghostly particle. I feel only a small draft.

KARIN RANDOLPH**Report 2**

We make small dark errors in the dark. One sentry nodding out. A mother and father at the door. Squinted felt fine read about the Big Bang its disasters bric-a-brac. The children move in circles. Clouds inching in. The sun could be anywhere. I organized cubes and sacs or tubes in folds replete with tiny furniture. We subdue eliminate make our sounds. Put it into short squat words. We too are pulled in awkward directions. Carrying a person through tangled alleys looking for a soft dark place. The days pass. A diva dies. Dad died. Gone. Gone? I bounce back. Put on the security system. Do a downward dog. Days grow heavier. I gave vague answers. Bought a thin book. Wear a dress named for a cloud. My central nervous system in a delicate womanish state of filagree.

KARIN RANDOLPH**Report 3**

I walk fourteen blocks for a sonnet. Have a safe day. Called three times. On multiple occasions. A slip of the tongue. Five times on Thursday. In the heat of the moment. Tweeted at least eight times. People clap and clap in the control room. Our war passes. At the speed of night. It's slow now. Father drags on forever. The weather holds for minutes at a time. The conveyer belt where you pick up your luggage in a distant airport. Your things mysterious swift and precise. This war just beginning. A tank topples in a blink. I recheck my results. Wrote a thin book. Drank Tang.

BURT KIMMELMAN

The Mind's Arc
for Basil King

*... the jagged
edges of oblivion stop the first humans from
jumping into vats of color.
from "Clyfford Still"*

The jagged edges,
an oblivion,
were what I wanted—
what did I know of
color, its solace?

BURT KIMMELMAN

Night, Late Summer

Through the open window
the crickets' din, black night,
invisible trees still

breathing, the nights are cool—
day's hot sun—the empty
dark full of life, waiting.

CARRIE CONNERS

The Cryptids' Daily Grind

One lounges at the bottom of a lake all day,
practices contorting her tail and flippers
into shapes that resemble other animals.
She's recently added a knobby goose head
and the neck of a deer to her repertoire.
That'll keep the photo analysts busy for a few

years. Another skulks around the woods
waiting for some gullible hunter, preferably
an unstable loner, so he can expose
himself just long enough to elicit the predictable
gasp, maybe let the guy get some blurry
cell phone video of his hairy back through
the branches, turn him into a monster chaser,
clippings of sightings wallpapering his home,
fuzzy enough to leave others questioning
his sanity, *Kind of looks like a bear to me, Bob.*
The drudgery of it all.

Forget early retirement and cushy health benefits,
there are no days off. The mystique would be lost
if they bellied up to a bar for pub quizzes
on Tuesdays or, on a whim, took a guided bus tour
of celebrities' Hollywood homes. Sure, sure,
there's nobility in shocking people out of their
stupors, scaring them into living again. And yes,
it is entertaining to glimpse the fishermen's faces
after bumping the bottom of their boats before diving
to the lake bottom, tail-slapping the water for show.
But sometimes a creature just wants to let
his guard down, bask in the sun for all to see.

CARRIE CONNERS

Uninvited Guests

My friend thinks she has scabies. It's either that or dermatitis, but she's set on scabies, in large part because it's the more intriguing disease. *It's like human mange*. Burrowing mites trump plain old allergic reactions any day. She blames her movers for a skin-couch-skin infection. *It takes 4-6 weeks to show up, so the timeline fits*. Her third move in as many years. The mites leave S-shaped or zigzagged tracks as they tunnel in. Before dermatoscopes, doctors rubbed ink on patients' skin to highlight the mites' paths. She unearthed her fountain pen collection for ink, tried to examine the tracks. She's not sure if the tracks are truly scabietic, but now has fresh bruises from the stubborn indigo, *like a new tattoo trend*. It's an ancient affliction. Aristotle described mites leaping out of pimples when scratched, a DIY flea circus of sorts. She hasn't gone to the doctor, is self-treating with sulfur—*If it's good enough for the ancient Egyptians*—despite being an attorney with fancy health insurance that covers visits to poreless, perpetually-23 year-old dermatologists (when did they go to medical school?) in spa offices with soothing waterfall waiting rooms. She's fascinated by the malady, enamored with fighting it the way that people have for ages. I suggest her next career: professor of the history and philosophy of skin infections. It's not met with laughter. It's getting better, but she's sad to lose her epidermic mystery, her unpleasant, but not unwelcome guests, who helped her see her body as a home.

LEWIS FREEDMAN**A Poverty which Babies the Page**

A poverty babies this page, cries a tune to dance on for the chance we'll rue missing, with words, augmented slightly and then slightly again, a chatty stylist, like perm, and then perv, and then in this perdition, a parmesan that settles like a warm blanket on our tots. My car stuffed with old periodicals and sequined with coupons can't even down down the block anymore, and I've always known with every machine I've loved that I am them (or is it they are me) incarnate, and we're burrowed by (or is it in) ignorance, and it's best to try and ignore the ridicule that comes our way, to just be at large.

But our codependencies are like fateful incantatory dirges, and if there's one thing we can be assured of it's their tenacity, which is more competent than any person for sure, and in its desperate inseparability that is quite actually our world resides its poverty, what the best and worst of us can only aspire to. I mean, have you ever truly abolished another person from your life? I mean even the asshole who couldn't stop prodding a weakness we hid, or the one we only knew in groups already ours, even if we've just culled them into facile memes, don't they still batter us with familiar forms, retrenched into the quandary of what people are? I mean we do & can not live without you.

But you're so you: rebooted, debauched, & converted, yeah, but it's like your brain's been detained for its stated affinities, & though you claim your war's long gone, you're still alive & you're not coming home; and I don't mean this to shit on you, or to act like you're my arch enemy, I mean there's a certain charm to you, it's kind of magisterial the way you haven't aged at all, there's a grandeur to your prematurity, the way you're actually a baby, the way your crying can actively debase my own claim to maturity, lets me see how I've paved over my joy with trope.

And I want to note how characteristics have already issued their compliance, arrogance, for instance complies with itself as an else, or, having failed to leave when the air quality index was dangerously bad, it dismounts its own resemblance and is given new scale by the formerly little people who fucking volunteered to help you evacuate. We're failing to descend a mountain path down the mountain; we thought we'd stopped speaking to or about you.

Approaching this again from elsewhere, to our mind a significant difference between working for the government tax office and working for an antinational terrorist cell is that the tax agent has to go into work every weekday. Wouldn't it be better, we say, just to work for ourselves nowhere? Our feet are new, we must leave our own aura. Like yes, definitely, good to defile what we're moving towards, & sufficed to say I'm lacking the ulterior motive, the energy of interrelation borne by it, to tell you why.

As though this poem were a pair of hosiery or jock strap stuffed with various gourmet cheeses, our desire to follow it thru has passed. But please let us continue, we long to be the main inspiration for a facile shadow-play that'll wear these pants in this poem, to render the impermanence of the day kind of mauve-like, to crimp the many commas here into fashionable ridges.

Instead, a little one-on-one meeting with the day with a view to the day to come, because I'm no quitter and will advance myself through this détente singing, *I'm a Mendicant, I'm a Devi-ant*, and the air will just gather around me.

The air here would love to trade you its coins for ours, will push on us doubling down. We'll probably do it, as tho we could trade our page for the world, as tho we really could just sit down and type out the whole of that old journal tomorrow.

Fuck! It's a poverty this page is so hopelessly babied!

SHEILA E. MURPHY**Wear Out Welcome**

A gentleman of soft sweaters
and a mouth relaxed and listening.
What of the eyes would keepsake
what he heard?

The hands this graceful, that
forming a light grip on the arm rests.
Reported to build plots from scatterings.
Let them form themselves in range
of hearing. How he heard seemed quiet.

His photograph in black and white shows
gray with furniture and paneling.
A season disguised by being in the house.
We can guess by looking in on, just surmising
how the morning started and transcended into afternoon.

Just like that his visage held, and how it seemed
almost to know him was to want a talk
that would not come unless by accident.
If one began a conversation about something
he had noticed or had known then wished to say.

SHEILA E. MURPHY**Breath of Her**

She speaks fragrance that shifts
a kind of hunger in the eyesight that beholds her.
Sostenuto, this late in the day,
a forest of shared heart.

Sustaining moisture as the sky
empties its white,
releases an emotive stance.
We live together in the warmth

of a perfume we have invented
out of habit. And the night
forthcomes as we repeat
respective daylights.

As though winter were a tall
imagined brevity just vertical,
not lasting at all,
as life we elevate eventually goes small.

SHEILA E. MURPHY**Logic Makes Me Tired Again**

Caught between the impulse to convene a quorum
and desire to frame self-portraits in composite,
I gentle past the stream of thought that narrows taut robustness
to a clamp.

Now we know the furtive looks amount to something
primitive or stolid or refractive.
Why not loop new sensibilities with straight-edged lines?
The mauve in anybody's eye light stains each future.

Now we warm our toes beside the fictive flame light
as we sample autumn in its time
when nursing one sweet candle of the dream,
showing how slowly we absorb our little lives.

How many if-then seeming nautilus extractions
minnow toward our here-and-now without the prompting
we are used to? Many instances of water
dousing flame and shrill lamé a moth away from paradise.

THOMAS FINK

Medium Hooray

Can we
 refrigerate
 this corpse?
 Too busy to salute
 aging points in the
 mirror. I sit on
 this ass all day.
 Paperwork &
 shit like that. The
 fleas, though smaller
 this season, are getting
 more insistent. If you
 only run
 unopposed, you'll
 never lose an
 election.

DANIEL MORRIS**Tusk**

The Beatles should never have broken up.
Follow Fleetwood Mac.
Addition and change, not division and subtraction.

Be Beatles with Billy,
Yoko, Linda, and even little Sean.

Think *Tusk*. Trojans marching
Mise en abyme in red
And gold, like Demuth's Figure 5.

Let the book be according to Marshall McLuhan,
Said my mentor, Stephen Paul Miller.

Book history is not about interpretation.
The thing most defined is the thing
Most fluid.

MARGARET HEATH JOHNSON**Trapped at the State Fair**

Back at the State Fair difference was an oddity.
We waited to see human souls that Heaven forgot: World's Tiniest
Woman, World's Tallest Man, Monkey Lady, Turtle Man, Lizard Lady,
Two-headed Dwarf, all acting proud to be side-show features.

You held my hand the way you hold to your wife's in church.
Despite you are family, I felt wrongly entertained.
I don't rightly know which is more disturbing,
Persons born with oddities, misfits, or family secrets.

Stepping over mounds of animal dung, hoards of spectators twist-
Sliding between, running into myself in the House of Mirrors
Finally plucked into safety by you, a timely rescue,
But leaving me ashamed of the way you held to me.

"Someone left the cake out in the rain..."
I recall words sung by the Lizard Lady
And winks from the two-headed one. Have we
Wandered from what's expected in families?

I'm not proud of feeling trapped at the State Fair...
Next year will be oddly different. I won't go.

CARLOS HIRALDO

The Revolution Will not Be Facebooked *in honor of Gil Scott-Heron*

You will not be able to man your posts from the comfort of your offices or homes
 You will not be able to sign in, rant, and log out
 You will not be able to friend and unfriend your way into community,
 share your way to the communist utopia,
 like your way to power, brothers and sisters,
 because the revolution will not be facebooked.

The revolution will not be brought to you by book length, newsfeed articles telling you
 everything you already know
 The revolution will not show you videos of cowardly officers shooting brothers at point
 blank range because they moved too fast or they moved too slow
 The revolution will be no Onion repost
 The revolution will be front page news, brothers and sisters.
 The revolution will not be facebooked

There will be no smiley selfies of you and colleagues you never talk to at the Global
 Warming march,
 CNN will not be able to file an entire report based on your social media posts of events
 because the revolution will not be facebooked
 There will be no soft-porn pictures of meals to be shared
 There will be no soft-porn pictures of meals to be shared
 There will be no kooky anti-government conspiracy theory discrediting all opposition
 because the conspiracy to be attacked will be what they call reality
 The revolution will not be facebooked.

The revolution will not be brought to you by an old closeted celebrity or a nubile brainy hot
 thing giving brilliantly obvious quips
 The revolution will not sell you Doc Marten boots
 The revolution will not give you flattering easy IQ tests
 The revolution will not tell you what country you should have been born in
 because the revolution will make the country you were born in
 the country you should have been born in
 The revolution will not be facebooked.

The revolution will not be facebooked
 The revolution will not be facebooked
 The revolution will not be facebooked
 The revolution will be no parody, brothers and sisters,
 The revolution will be an original work of art.

CARLOS HIRALDO**Lame Trujillo**

A tyrant who cries
because he can no longer
rape to his satisfaction.

Once upon a time
the destroyer of hymens,
now no longer stands.

The old man prays
in lamentation
while the wide-eyed girl
looks on,
deflating thinness in the Caribbean heat,
arms held tight upon a flat chest,
legs stretched to a Y
on the magnificent bed.

He can handle assassination plots,
conspiracies of priests, Americans,
Cubans, verbal assaults
from that Venezuelan monkey, Betancourt,
and the effete Puerto Rican, Muñoz Marin,
but what weapon can be used against
this treason from within?

CARLOS HIRALDO**Futurecide**

Would Dominican androids daydream of electric platanos
 to avoid work? Or would they
 hack into the Haitian Socialist Republic's cyber center
 and reverse the deportation of Haitian-Dominicans taking place today
 to concoct a retroactive sense of brotherhood with the Utopia
 to the West
 that will lock us out under the charge of racial psychopathy?
Or might
 the blond, blue-eyed servant class
 created in our
 self-delusion
 contract the disease of consciousness
 ?
 Will palm trees cease bearing coconuts
 for deliverance
 of the foreseen fruit,
 swinging with the warm Caribbean breeze
 like merengue dancers on air,
 the still-not-whitened-enough
 bodies
 of
 our
 des-
 cen- heights?
 dants- tropic
 dan-
 gling the
 from

MARY MACKEY

In This Burning World

on the long road down the hill
the cobblestones tip us like drunken sailors
under a sky smeared with volcanic dust

at the bottom lies a sea
clear and pale as the skin
beneath our arms

in this burning world
where we can never stop to rest
you reach out and brush
the tips of my fingers

our parched skin flakes off
in tiny bits and floats up toward the sun
riding the great cone-shaped thermals
of this slowly turning planet

we are two birds
gliding through an empty sky
lost uncertain
filled with unreasonable joy

ANDREW LEVY

The Things that They Do to Shoot Through this Country

An inheritance of liquidation in meta-forgery deploy. The lending of
 Selling and buying in the disturbance cul-de-sac of public opinion and
 Investment escapes surveillance. It is the surveillance synchronized
 By satellite to hit a distant terminal (misunderstood as arbitrary)
 Spinning around, self-sufficient, and scattered, to captivate one's precise
 Location yields another surface in the center of one's soul & screen.
 An army of trolls among the stoned sucks the stoned in yellowish
 Monochrome the quality of a mindless relativity. The illusion of having
 Overcome distance, of having erased time, however incommensurable,
 Is the delusion of distances overcome, of times erased. The meats are
 Perfectly smoked. Citizens, too. This quarrel with time is the
 Ciphered part of human thought, an unstoppable drifting toward
 Governmentality kindled almost without smoke, though discolored
 By oil. The power of complete non-attachment as per Eigner's "the /
 Constant ephemerals," between thinking and listening, called sidelines,
 Provides half of the oxygen we breathe. People create their own
 Genres, not genders, to keep them from falling below the beautiful
 Shapes of participation the implicate order implies? It says nothing.
 That's not all. I am devoted to money, yet I don't care about the pay.
 Beyond the personal I can't see anymore – to squeeze, to put
 Pressure on one's immediate environment, words compete to be
 Selected as a function of their semantic distances, the plasma levels
 In the blood and brain. To guard your boutique in the little boat,
 In a system of ceaseless goat cheese, one notices only an inexpungible
 Smell of things moldering that robs one of breath. If you put the sandwich
 On the blotter and take the boat in both hands, the falling price of
 Coal wipes it clean, then folds it up and puts it in your wallet. Parents
 Stand beside it and eye their children. Fed on fishes, frogs, and worms,

Their beaks wiped clean, the muscles growing stronger, the genetic
Clock in tender green meadows (on Blackboard?), the variables
Gathered at a nearby table, launches into the opened spleen a person
Who cannot grasp the troubled script that a shooter dissolves.

ANDREW LEVY

Open Letter to Hannah Wiener

No freedom for me. A cretin's
Labyrinth in the work of departed prophets, what if the artifice
Cascading through all vessels of common and private good creates
A calm within damage so extensive that we no longer know it
To be anything other than a part from ourselves? So that, being innately
Suspicious, moral unpleasantness doesn't faze us. The Elysian Fields
Haven't kept their promise, they are the déclassé purgatory
Where Blanche Dubois lives with Stanley and Stella Kowalski,
Elysian slobber upon her folded handkerchief. In time
You become inured. Elected representatives have fled D.C. 'owing to circumstances'.
They'll come back when order has been restored. One more thing:
They have only to touch something for it to crumble into dust.
'Give up the ghost' and 'breathe a last sigh'. The world is dying of
Consumption; it begins to seem natural that things disappear.
I passed the rambling Kellyanne Conway outside a Jersey shore surf shop,

It hardly matters. I felt no need to speak to her. No one will lay
A finger on my children. All I could see before me was an old lady
Gazing at me tenderly. Hannah, you came to the end of your journey,
There's no turning back. No friend, relative, or neighbor—people who must
Have known what was happening—tipped off the authorities.
Tonight, you need to go to bed early. Behind me, the vast pile of
Suitcases filled with hopes and unrealized dreams. Pointing to them,
The judge asks me, 'What have you done with the children?'
I have become Conway. I'm a proud NRA sell-out. Basic orientation
= able liars take money off less able liars. Minutes away, incomprehensible
Comfort, hives taxed downstrata. You can mow right over them.
Hannah, have you forgot the structure in my silence? As you saw, "we are
All same mind go crawling together." I lost my poem, and
Don't smoke. I don't hang myself upside down, really. I might hang
Upside down. You, on the other hand, enliven everything.
The faces I have loved flash past, as they do every night. All of us are
Ready to die for our beliefs. People die for their beliefs.

NATSUKO HIRATA

little.
little by
eyes open
Finally

flower bed.

to the surface,
gradually float up
with friends,
into the sea
Tears melt
still faintly.
Conscious
uncanny, solo.
floating,
innumerable,
organisms,
with unidentified
even if not sad
and crying

Sleeping in the sea