

Graffiti

EUGENE'S CREATIVE WRITING & ART ZINE

#18

OCTOBER 2024



*Gazing
at the
Stars*



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Graffiti

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ON THE COVER: Street art at a sidewalk cafe in Marseille. Photo by Don.

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more work online!
at [graffiti-magazine.com](#)



Our Mission...

...should we choose to accept it, is to encourage the production of creative writing and art by members of the community, to foster skills in those endeavors, to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, and to boldly go where no woman has gone before!

Read Me! and FAQ

- Graffiti publishes artwork, poetry, and short prose, submitted by anyone. Work must be original to you and preferably based on personal experience. We DON'T publish rants, hate speech, excerpts from other people's work, or anything that makes us worry about libel or copyright infringement.
- Submissions aren't juried. Subject to the "DON'T"s listed above, we try to publish — either in the paper or on the website, at our discretion — everything we receive, first-come, first-served. Rarely, a submission may fall through the cracks, get eaten by the dog, or be rejected for some random reason. If it didn't get published, don't query us about its fate. Note: **WE DON'T EDIT. EVERYTHING GOES AS-IS.** So make it clean.
- Please scan your art (jpeg preferred) and email us your art and text. No scanner or computer? Public libraries have them. And librarians love helping Luddites.
- We give highest priority to new work, because Graffiti's mission is to encourage writers to write and artists to art.

HOW DO I GIVE YOU ALL MY MONEY?

It costs \$600 to print each issue. You can help us out by giving us all your money. Or okay, just some of it. Thanks!

Donations via:

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HOW DO I SUBMIT WORK?

Email it to: [graffitieugene@gmail.com](#)

DO I GET PAID?

No. And neither do we.

DOES I GOTTA RIGHT GOOD?

No, but please try. Don't just write for your ego — that's what journals are for. Write for an audience. Sweat over your work. No first drafts. And please, at least run spell-check and grammar-check if you've got 'em.

WHAT LENGTH WORKS ARE ACCEPTABLE?

For printing in the zine, anything under 800 words makes us happy. Submissions longer than 1,000 words will probably be posted on the website instead: [graffiti-magazine.com](#).

WHAT'S THIS? A VEUVE CLICQUOT LOTTERY?

Yes, it's true! Enter to win a taste of the immortal Nectar of the Goddesses! Just drop off your name, phone number, and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot at our High St. "office." We'll draw a bottle at random and invite you to taste it with us! Enter now! It's free to enter, and multiple entries are encouraged!

FRONT LINES

Don Root

Happy Halloween and Day of the Dead!

Halloween! The day we all relish getting scared out of our bajeezusness by ghosts and goblins and skeletons and bats and such. Also relished: eating too many sugary treats, either in our trick-or-treat haul or at home the next day, scarfing down whatever didn't get hoovered up by the trick-or-treaters the night before. Am I right?

It's hard to say what's scary anymore, isn't it? Apparently video games and movies showing gross mutilation and bloodshed don't scare us — in movies, such things don't even merit an R rating. But I guess unclothed human bodies must be scary, since those always get an R rating. I mean, what could possibly be scarier than a blood-sucking vampire or an axe-wielding, child-decapitating, corpse-raping serial killer on the rampage? In this country, apparently a naked body! Eeeeeeek! So kids, if you really want to scare your neighbors this Halloween, forget the ho-hum Freddy Krueger or Charles Manson costume — just go trick-or-treating naked! I'm sure the horrified homeowners will pelt you with salvos of Snickers before slamming the door and calling the cops!

I've never been much into horror flicks. I don't bother with them anymore. But I guess the scariest movie I ever saw was 1973's *The Exorcist*. I was 15 years old at the time, but unlike perhaps many viewers, it wasn't the idea of an evil Satan I found scary. I think for me it was just the special effects — which were kinda new at the time, pre-CGI — and I liked the idea that a girl roughly my age could throw really vulgar insults at adults and get away with it. I mean, all us boys pretty much talked like that among ourselves in private, trying to be cool I suppose, but we'd never even think about spouting "adult" profanities around adults. You go, girl!

As to the evil Satan thing, well, even as a kid I never believed any of that stuff, so that didn't affect me at all. In fact, rather than seeing *The Exorcist* as a film about the battle of God vs. Satan, good vs. evil, I saw it more as a film about evil vs. evil. I've never really pondered or read what Blatty intended, but come on — did Max von Sydow really seem like a benevolent "father" figure to you? Those black-clad guys seemed more like representatives of the repressive regime responsible for the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition and the enslavement and extermination of indigenous cultures all over the globe, not to mention their history of rampant pedophilia (see Stephen Swiftfox's "Compare and Contrast," this issue). So at least half the time I was probably rooting for Regan. Anyway, I thought the film was well done and pretty scary in parts. I give it three jack-o'-lanterns.

Anyway, as we all know, Halloween is the start of "the holidays"—that two-month crush of commercialism that winds up each calendar year. Well, it's actually more of a three-month crush these days; the first pumpkins showed up in front of grocery stores the first week of September. Do we really need blow-up lawn Draculas running air compressors 24/7 for two whole months? And I suppose we'll start to see Santa make an appearance the first week of November, a week or two after all the Turkey Day bumf shows up. Can't wait.

Halloween isn't the same date or purpose as Mexico's *Día de los Muertos*, "Day of the Dead," which is traditionally celebrated not on October 31st but on November 1st and 2nd. Day of the Dead has an interesting history. It may not actually be a tradition steeped in Mexican heritage so much as the result of an attempt by the government of Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas (served 1934–1940) to wrest a Mexican cultural celebration away from anything dictated by the Catholic Church. (Those black robes again!) Some say the now-standard Day of the Dead art featuring dancing skeletons and such was borrowed from centuries-old European *danse macabre* iconography and introduced into Mexican culture with enthusiasm by the Cárdenas government. Others, however, say the celebration has indigenous roots in the Aztec culture of the 15th century. ¿Quién sabe?

In any case, the Mexican version of Halloween doesn't seem to mandate buying or eating tons of candy, although *all* festivities *everywhere* seem to include sweet treats, don't they? Instead, it's about remembering and celebrating dead children and ancestors—dead friends, too. It's not a particularly maudlin affair; living relatives often have a laugh at the foibles of those who have gone before. And why not? We're all headed that way. No one ever really gets the *last* laugh.

I'm at the age now where I've lost almost all my living relatives and a great many friends. Sometimes it seems miraculous to me that I'm still here, when others I've known and loved—many younger than I—are now long gone. It's all a big crap shoot, this life, isn't it? But we might as well enjoy it while we've got it. So eat your vegetables, wear your sunscreen, and above all, **PARTY ON!**

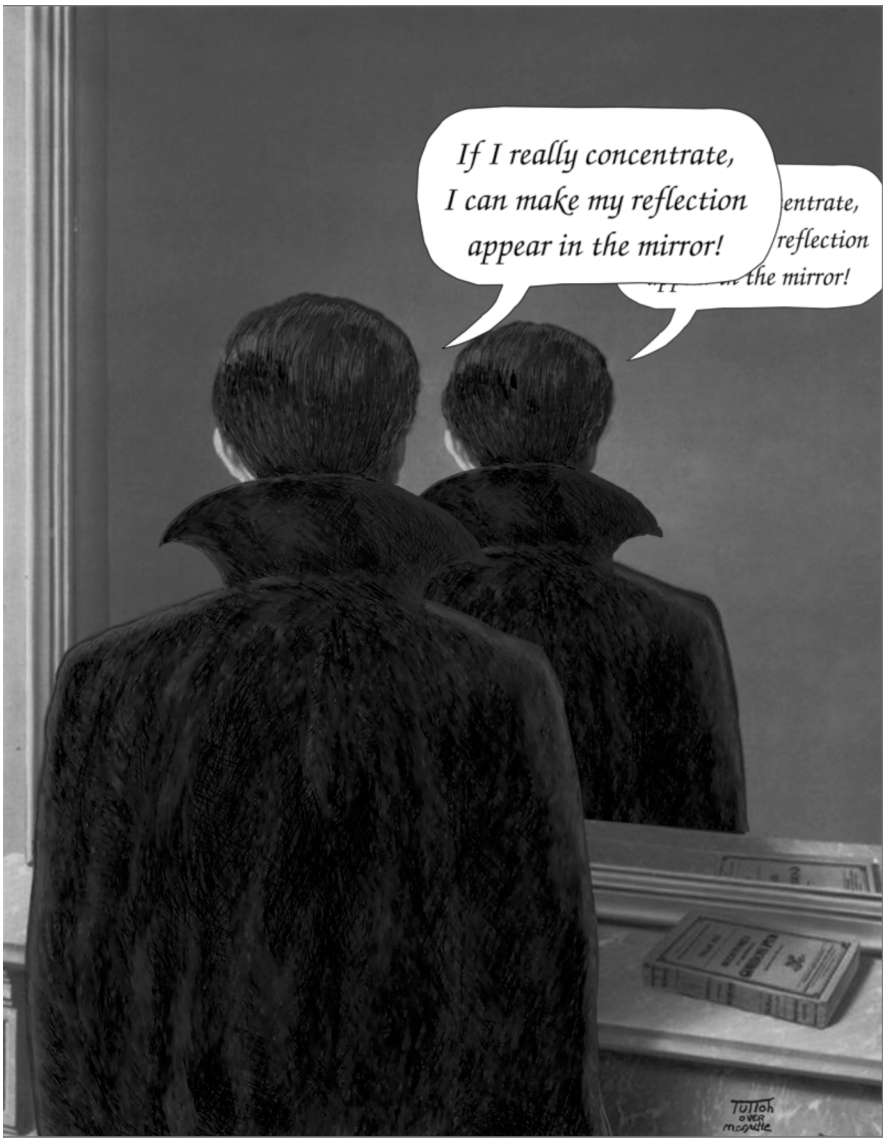
Happy October, Graffitianos! ¡Vaya con Perro!

Under the Dome

Under the dome, circling Polaris,
we travel together through a lifetime,
climbing steep trails to find lookouts,
floating down one river after another,
driving the streets, drowning in traffic,
awakening to dreams clear as a bell.

We come inside, out of the cold,
when October winds clarify constellations,
grateful for walls and feathered quilts,
a longtime couple, growing old, slowly adrift,
forgetful cartographers of the infinite.

Paul Dresman



art by marcel tulloh

Bernie Drives the Bus

Jordan Mackay

Bernie wonders, as he often does, who is going all the way South – the luckless and the deserving alike, ticket punched for the end of the ride. He chews salted sunflower seeds and spits them carefully out the sliding window into the hot stuttering wind, keeps his driving hand loosely wrapped around the wide wheel. Bernie wonders if the Roads that Climb are very different than these roads – cleaner, maybe; some nice flowering oleander on the median? Bernie wonders if there is a Heaven at all, and how a transit man might catch a break and get transferred. He listens to the chug of the engine, and feels the vibration in his seat, and wonders whether boredom or regret is a more fitting punishment for someone like him. Bernie has time to wonder about lots of things.

The Route Downhill takes three days from anywhere in the Continental U.S. and four from Canada. He has stopped guessing why that is. It is a lot quicker to cross from Oregon to Louisiana in the Night Lands, and a lot more compass South to go than Mexico.

The route begins anywhere; it always changes. Always new, but somehow familiar; some white-washed corner of brick and caulking, an apparition of sunburned ground. Bernie never drives the same roads twice, but he knows the route as well as anyone can. Southward. Follow the red river wherever it flows. Always Southward.

In Boise he stops to pick up two boys off the narrow beach of pebbles at the edge of the canal. Their hair is steaming winter and their hands are clutching stones. Outside of Phoenix he gathers aboard a whole family of migrants that walked all the way from Rio Hacha. They slump into the gray upholstered seats, their eyes cloudy and vacant. Wrong bus. Bernie thinks to himself. But he has stopped guessing a long time ago whether sin has anything to do with who rides his bus. More often than not, it seems appallingly random. Perhaps they believed they might end up here, and that was enough?

Routine ferrying across the highways of the Night Lands has not hardened Bernie as he would have preferred, so he has taken to wearing aviator shades and headphones, and only grunting noncommittally as his passengers drift on and off. The tape deck tends to eat tapes, and the radio stations broadcast nothing but Christian Rock and angry opinion segments on why, how and how soon the world is ending. Sometimes the criers are easier to listen to.

The gray roads are pale and overgrown. The sky is salted with drifts of cloud and gored by random ribbons of white fire that dip and shear across the road. They smell like ions burning in the atmosphere. Bernie thinks they might be memories. But they never feel like his.

A Texas girl who won't stop crying gets on next, a dampened set of pom-poms clutched to her chest like two drowned Pomeranians. Bernie is relieved when she gets off a few stops later at an endless parking lot. She selects an abandoned shopping cart with a shuddering wheel and begins pushing it aimlessly between the rows of parked cars. She is not alone: there are many here, yet so much space between them. Far away across forever, lightning pulses soundlessly behind the Wal-Mart they are all struggling to reach. Bernie slides the bus door closed with a hydraulic hiss. The bus rolls on.



The Adventures of... spRk & sl8

david koteen

they meet

Firstly, Spark is Spark's given name. And it suited her from birth. Feisty. Little tufts of red hair which announced on that first day: t-r-o-u-b-l-e. A real nipple biter. Just ask her Mom. Later on for pure attitude's sake she lower-cased the 'S', dropped the 'a' and capitalized the R.

Same with Slate. Last name was Gray. Fairly unoriginal parents. Born on July 22 — 2nd day of Leo. Not a roaring kind of lion — he'd thought "Slate" fit his nature to a 'T' before he met spRk and became sl8.

Even though they lived two houses away in Iron Meadows sub-division, they never formally met. Probably due to two years difference in age? And, in fact, their birthdays were two days apart. Which made spRk the last day of Cancer. Though fire was always her medium.

This year her celebration was to be on Saturday because her true birthday was Friday. Slate's was Sunday. No one wants to party on Sunday. Especially in Iron Meadows. It was Slate's parents and spRk's grandfather Solomon Dumpster (her mother's somewhat unstable father) who suggested they conjoin their festivities.

Half at each house.

"Hey! I seen you in school."
"Me, too. What about the party?"
"Dunno. Who cares?"
"Right. Let's force our friends to get together."
"Eat cupcake from either side with no hands?"
"Yeah! with the candle lit!"
"I like that. Did you ever climb a tree blindfolded?"

Franklin and Fanny

The second time they got together on July 18, 3 days before their joint party, they found out that the other truly, truly hated their mutual neighbor — Franklin Deadheart. The Deadhearts had the most ostentatious house in Iron Meadows. He was General Manager of the local Walmart. And damn proud of it.

But...that was not why spRk and sl8 detested Franklin. It was because he tortured Orange Puss relentlessly. Orange Puss was the kitten that the Deadhearts bought for their only child Angel (who named it Orange Puss).

Mrs. Deadheart, called by her friends, Fanny, didn't like touching. Not her offspring. Not her husband...unless she was plenty drunk. Most emphatically NOT 4-legged fur-shedding meowing mini-monster!

She liked things squeaky clean.

Angel's moon cycles didn't commence until after her 16th birthday. Perhaps twas her mother, Fanny, who frequently, energetically emphasized disgust to any and all aspects of the menstruation process, which psychologically, subconsciously affected Angel's bodily functions? Only girl in Junior class with no tampons. How would that make you feel?

Thus, loving parents that they be, the Deadhearts bought their angel Angel a marigolden kitten for her sweet sixteenth. They not realizing at the time Angel would two years later leave board-and-bed and her strikingly ghoulish progenitors. And her cat. Angel went to college. Further inuring Franklin and Fanny in stability and sterility. With only one nemesis: Orange Puss.

From either side of the Deadhearts house they heard the cat's relentless meowing. Like prayers. If Franklin was in a nasty humor, he would tie a string around one of Orange Puss's paws and hang it from the metallic clothesline. Or, place Orange Puss in large pot with 3 inches of water and heavy lid on top. Or once used two thick strands of red duct tape taped to either side of Orange Puss; attaching one end to the brown gutter downspout; the other to his two-level outdoor grill. Each time the cat pulled away, her fur got tugged and ripped out. She yowled all night.

their joint birthday party

Yes, spRk and sl8 agreed, the day of their joint birthday party they would liberate Orange Puss. This would take premeditated precise planning on their part. Create a diversion. Easy, but what? Solomon's extension ladder up to limb of Deadheart's live oak. Basket on a rope, to put Orange Puss in. No problem there. She might be frightened...but it'd be a pretty stupid cat not to realize that absolutely anything was better than cohabiting with Franklin and Fanny--the F's.

spRk, who was a drawer of considerable talent, made 7 hand painted invitations. For their friends — her two girl buddies; and four for sl8's dudes and one for his little sister Shadow. They were both mostly loners. The invitation said:

(cont'd on p. 5)

Our History by the walking historian Randy Gudeika



Located at E. Broadway & Pearl, the Eugene Hotel was our finest hotel for decades.

Opening in 1925, it cost \$350k to build (\$6.5 million in 2024).

Architect John Hunzicker (who also did the Miner Building a block away, and WOW Hall) was asked his thoughts after the project was completed. His response: “What I think... is written in stone and steel.”

In the 1950s, then-Vice President Richard Nixon was among the famous guests. Because he liked to play the piano in the early morning, the hotel put a grand piano in his penthouse room. He woke up a lot of folks the next day.

In 1977, when the movie “Animal House” was filmed in town, actor John Belushi decided to hit up the Eugene Hotel lounge for some entertainment. Local blues-harmonica musician Curtis Salgado was playing Eugene Hotel’s “Blue Monday” program that night. Belushi “borrowed” a piano from the hotel’s basement bar and put it in the elevator. He and Salgado played blues together in the elevator all night. The result was an SNL skit and, three years later, a film: the Blues Brothers.

- RANDY

More: The Eugene Hotel is on the National Register of Historic Places. Its paperwork, loaded with info, is online.

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TURN IT UP!

WELCOME TO A SPECIAL EDITION
OF THE TURN IT UP! COLUMN.
THIS ONE IS DEDICATED TO...


RAP MUSIC.

In the summer of 2012, a documentary film was released that taught me something I hope to always remember, for it is a message about the power of the human spirit.

The film, *The Art of Rap* — produced and directed by Ice-T — is a collection of interviews with artists of rap, from its foundational creators to the superstars at the time of its release. One of those interviewed, Lord Jamar, explains the story of rap’s origin, that U.S. inner city schools in the 1970s were cutting music programs from the curriculum. Without the expensive brass... the violins and cellos... the pianos... without the guitars and drumsets... the kids turned to the only musical instrument they had, beyond their vocal chords... a record player. And so the “scratching of vinyl,” “beatboxing” and “sampling” became trademarks of the genre. So, what I learned, what I love, is that the human desire for creativity and expression will find a way.

Here are some important songs along the history of rap:

- Rapper’s Delight by Sugarhill Gang — 1979
- The Message by Grandmaster Flash — 1982
- Planet Rock by Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force — 1985
- The Show by Doug E. Fresh and the Get Fresh Crew — 1985
- King of Rock by Run-DMC — 1985
- Rock the Bells by LL Cool J — 1994
- No Sleep Till Brooklyn by Beastie Boys — 1986
- Paid in Full by Eric B. and Rakim — 1987
- Kickin’ 4 Brooklyn by MC Lyte — 1988
- Straight Outta Compton by N.W.A. — 1988
- Fight the Power by Public Enemy — 1990
- Nuthin’ but a ‘G’ Thang by Dr. Dre feat. Snoop Doggy Dogg — 1992
- C.R.E.A.M. by Wu-Tang Clan — 1993
- Keep Ya Head Up by 2Pac — 1993
- Juicy by The Notorious B.I.G. — 1994
- Ready or Not by Fugees, Ms. Lauryn Hill — 1993
- My Name Is by Eminem — 1999





art by eamon morris

Amor Fati

See myself for who I really am
*playful, unknowing, wild
with grace, and my soul is on fire*

Dreams coming up
In the ocean of existence
The moment will keep changing
Burning of the old
Allowing the new in
New things can be simple
A walk in the neighborhood
A new song on repeat

Fergul Cirpan

Pencil Man

A pencil drawn man
Languidly lays down,
Face half submerged.
in a wide shallow stream,
on a sheet of paper.
Craning his head he sees the logos with angst.
Swirling along the edges of shore,
BMW, Gucci, Audi, Dior, Range Rover...
Can't reach them.
A rock worn down,
He stops caring, admires the science.
Emotions constructed, alluring acronyms.
Pencil Man emerges from the stream of logos.
They bump off his ankles, he pulls off his white T-shirt,
Sculpted shoulders, back in the sun,
Slapping his wet shirt on a hulking boulder,
The logos go splattering off, his mind hears wind.

Parker Moses

Bleeder

bleeder
breeder
planter of seed
hope for the future
filler of need
stranger
danger
woman in red
mother for family
or whore bound to bed
pleaser
geezer
dwindling stash
rotten peach
A potential long past

Heather McBride

Note This

This body: My own temple
Late summer
Fake fall
A few surprises
I am light and its distortion
I am love and every emotion
I am vibrational and atomic
I am creation
Creating
Just hanging out between
everything and the
nothingness.

Fergul Cirpan

Summer Love Falls

After short'ning dusks
Autumn winds cut through
Worn summer shirts.
The changes ripened
By glorious warmth
Fall from their branches
And sink.
Expired relationships
Softened and brown from inside-out.
Worms puncture their once proud skins
And writhe with glee
Through bittersweet remains.
Seeds exposed from their centers
Await the clouds to weep
And quiver with detectable, yet invisible
Implicate potential
Time withholds in a strategy
One must believe to see.

Inspired relationships
Store sugars and negotiate roots,
Birth plans to knit socks, tend hearths,
And feed ducks once songbirds
Head south.
As young love grows old,
Old love looks back
And skips stories across still ponds.
When the sun returns, they say,
And surface levels evaporate
One or the other lover
will swim to the bottom
And see where they landed.

Jeffree Morel

spRk & sl8,
cont'd from p. 3

Come To Our Party
Pool & Pizza
Don't Bring Presents
(unless your mom makes you)
6 pm-9 pm
120 and 140 Joy Street
Iron Meadows
spRk-14---sl8-16

End of July, early August is notoriously hot in Iron Meadows which is weak on meadows and strong on concrete. July 19 temperature hit 101 F. Next day the same. And for the party the wise weather woman had promised a "scorcher." The pool idea was solid — though surely to be crowded.

"At least by six the moms with tiny tots will have left."
"Right. Any kid they leave we'll take home for party favors."
"What'll we do after the pizza?"
"Let's play murder--you know where one person's the killer and one is the detective; and one is the victim."
"That's good. With some old heavy metal volume loud-ie! To remind our neighbors that we really do exist."
"Gotcha! Start the virus early. So when we bust Orange Puss out they won't even notice!"

But the Deadhearts didn't notice for different reasons. Even though Franklin's driveway had been repaved the preceding year, he decided to have fresh coat of tar added...on July 21. Like Mrs Deadheart he preferred cosmetics to change.

A couple of hours prior to the birthday fete a wet, shiny layer of tar was added to their joint neighbor's driveway, smelling atrociously and increasing collective heat in the already stifling Iron Meadows sub-division. Then, (and no one could have predicted this) Franklin took a pair of Fanny's lycra underwear and placed Orange Puss in it, two paws through each hole; and with two 6-inch brass safety pins squeezed the holes tight around the cat. And suspended Orange puss by two bungee cords over the fresh, hot tar. Whenever Orange Puss struggled her feet landed on the tar, and she jumped again. Continually burning and blackening her paws.

Because unbeknownst to all (except Franklin) the only thing other than alcohol that aroused Fanny Deadheart's dead parts, was the sound of someone like Orange Puss, suffering. It turned her on.

spRk & sl8 to the rescue!

spRk held out through the swimming time, through the pizza eating, and (...happy birthday spRk and sl8...), and the pink-frosted chocolate cake that sl8's mother had bought, and quickly dripping double chocolate ice cream cones before she lost it...and began bawling. This turned out to be the perfect solution. Their friends went home. The Grays cleaned up and the birthday boy and girl returned to her home. She went into her grandfather's kitchen cabinet and got down his bottle of Hornitos tequila. 100% agave.

(cont'd on p. 7)

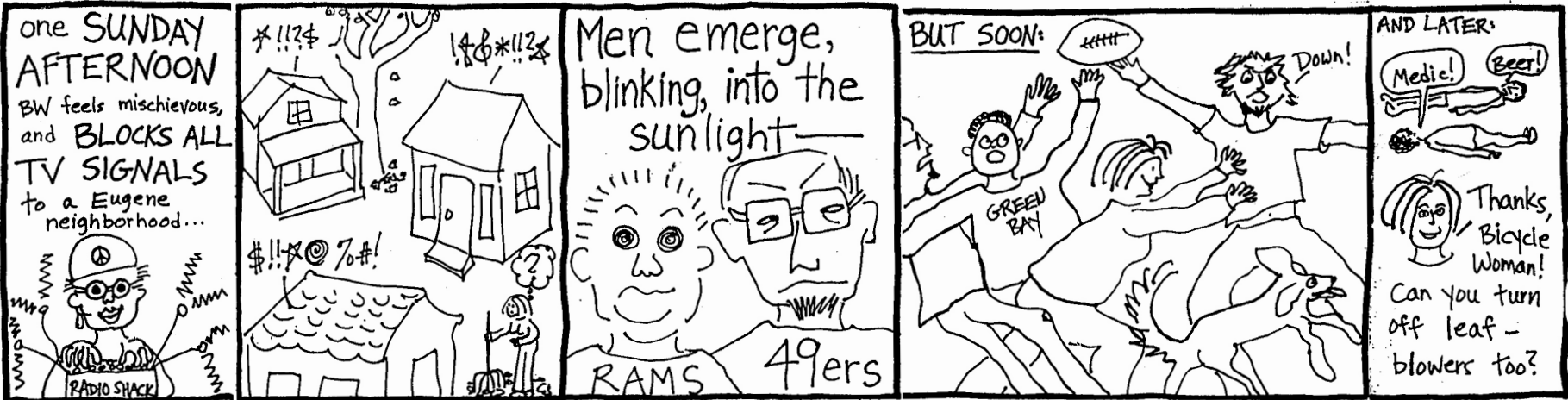
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Bicycle Woman

by Jean Murphy



art by marco elliott

Wilder Wanders

Jeff Southwick

What happened that day back in 1966?
As Wilder drove away from Trestles beach
He never even washed the sand off his feet
A free life with gas cheap as he headed east
Snooping questions come some fifty years later
Behind the barn on a farm near Wilmer Minnesota
A Volkswagen Beetle beached within aeolian soil
The weathered surfboard held by rotten rope coils.

Wilder's family had no roots here planted
No naval anchors buried in the middle continent
His known aversion to isolation and frozen water
Gave friends no reason to stir up a thicker plots
Named by ambitions after an admired admiral
A beach bum provides parental disappointment
And his friends all said he had no Penelope
Blame not twisted romance on this journey.

Maybe there was a fair blonde hitchhiker,
Picked up on an accent slightly Scandinavian
Who sang like a siren of her early mornings
Called to shoveling shit out of a dairy barn
What but a beautiful woman could lure a man
From ocean sand sculptures to manual labor?
Apart from cost and quality of weed in Tijuana
Wilder never showed attractions to agriculture.

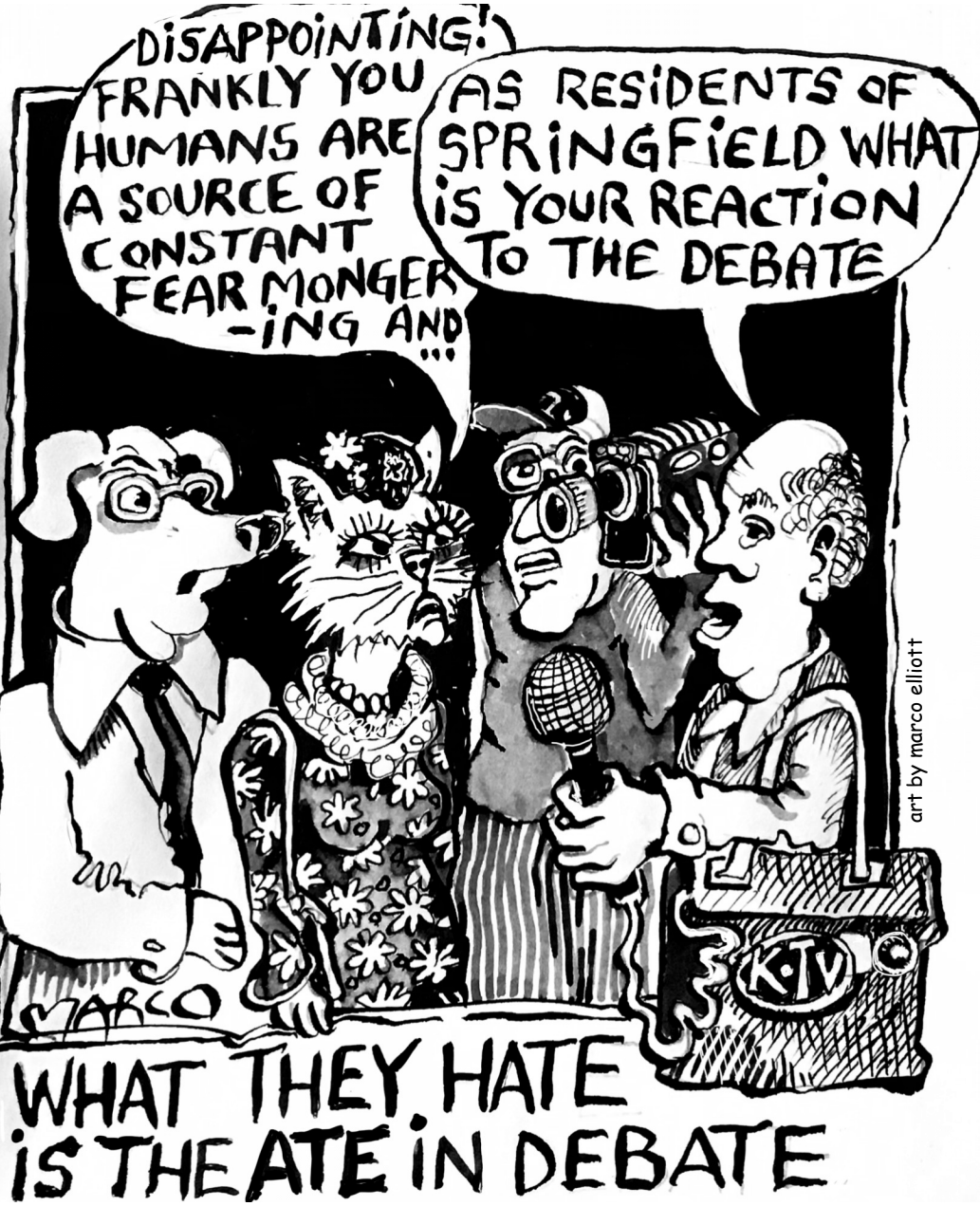
I've put away any theory that Wilder left
To meet someone with motivation to malice
For a surf board and body would been dumped
Probably in Arizona with the Beetle left in Dallas
Any bits of story left under seats or glove box
Surely now have been mouse nibbled into dust
By the front bumper where Jane weeds flourish
Obvious that rodents found his spare tire stash.

A knock on a farmhouse door gives no response
As expected based on the spider webs and dust
Several months unoccupied but not quite deserted
As one might be slowly nibbled away by dementia
Most folks are so focused on current daily details
Dead ends come asking of an old barn and Beetle
Among old men who gather at Sherrie's for coffee
Moved into town but still dress for farm chores.

They're likely to tell you to watch for white grubs
Be careful with monoculture and rotate your crop
And the extension agent has traps to catch adults
A waitress interrupts by refilling coffee from the pot
Conversation broken you explain it is a Volkswagen
One will say they pile up crap over in South Dakota
But a wise man will fix the hay wagon or haul it away
Junk equipment tends to attracts weeds and rodents.

Are you thinking motivation or a lack of experience?
Some folks it seems are competent with the basics
You've got that extra step of keeping a place neat
Now you're talking of debate over a cluttered desk
Is a pile of work indicative of inspiration or chaos?
Well say that one has a rosetta or hex on their barn
Should be more inclined to paint and maintenance?
Neglect the paint, neglect weeds, neglect rot, I say.

Pie? I'd never say no to slice of strawberry rhubarb
Barn gone, put up a steel building, and its a factory
Employees in the fields working for suits in Saint Paul
But what can you do when kids move off to the cities?
So, shoveling frozen shit or palm trees and beaches?
Following a good laugh everyone ponders their coffee
That experience comes, said another, a glint in his eye
Like when I got fresh cow shit in my huarache sandals.



art by marco elliott

My Obsession with Halloween

Am I taking this too far?
I just really like the holiday

How I wish I could fight it
How I wish everyday could be
my holiday

All my skeletons are hanging on plastic
hooks
up all night with a paint brush
head full of nothing

Cobwebs in my mind
I need you to come back to me
in more than one piece

I need to find your body in a plastic bag
by the highway
so I can rebuild you

I've been waiting through Summers of blue
skies
and endless swimming holes
I've been wandering off the trail
looking for you

It can't always be Halloween
the living walk among the dead
lucky them

Its not an obsession or a religion
its a single day unlike any other

Disappointment accompanies high
expectations
beating me into further damnation
I continue to paint my smile on my face
Burning a buissness suit

I want to be anybody but myself
so many think I'm so off beat
what till you meet the fathers day killer
What about a walking black hole?

Every little details counts
even if I'm the only one that notices

The key is to run myself raw
break my own heart before anybody finds
out I have one
Blood,sweat and glue
I make do

What I have to offer
is never enough
as the day draws closer.
All is hectic
all is around on all ends

My eyes may decieve me
things are exactly as they do not appear

If you find yourself at my side
its best you learn to hide
I'll drag you into the darkness
We'll walk hand in hand through
thrift stores and abandoned buildings
where the caution tape has grown old

If you help me
I will reward you with friendship
you will be part of the bigger picture

The night draws near
the walls painted red
Taping paper to the floor

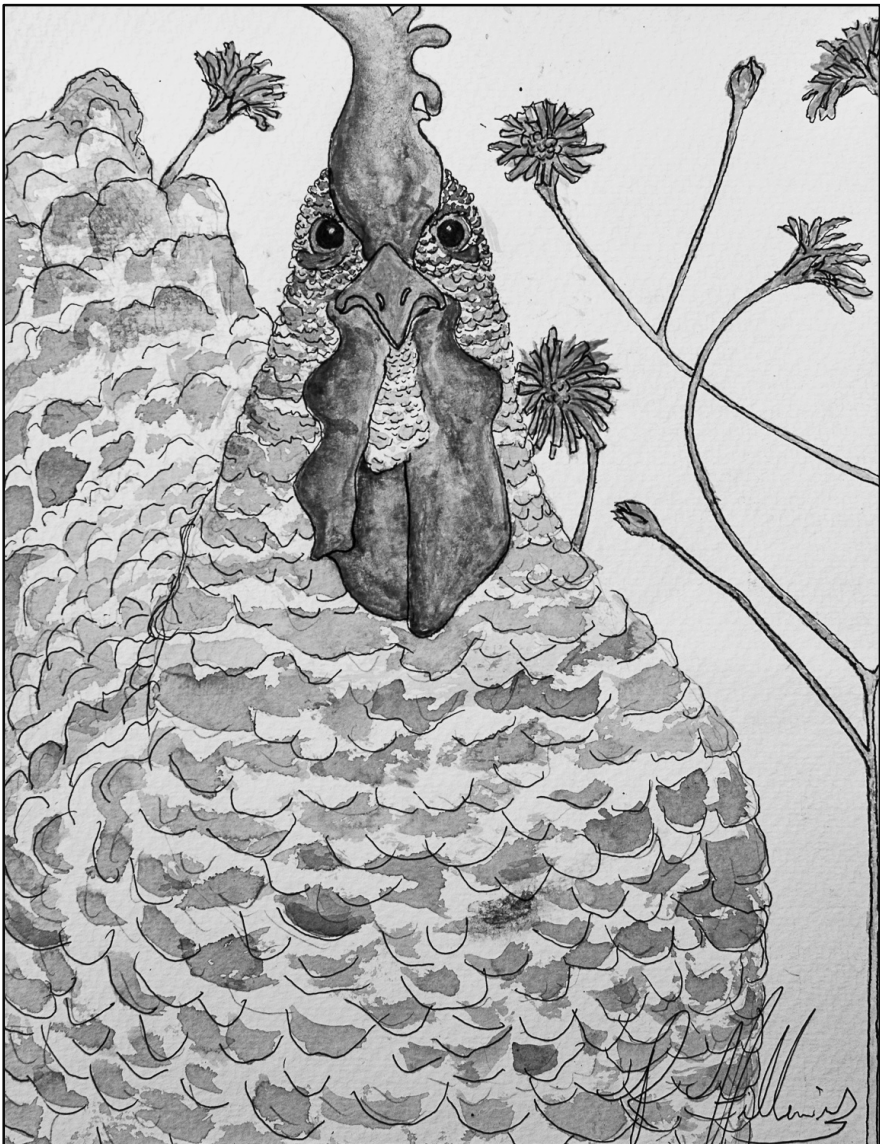
How far can I take this obsession?
I always start out completely alone
screaming out to the audience
promoting in person
begging for a dollar for my fear fueled
addiction

Its all for you
all of you
Be you a regular or be you new
this is for the authors of the past
the ghosts of our futures
this is for us

I want to make it unforgettable
buying up all the pumpkins
drawing out the crowd
drawing out the breath

I'll lay in my crypt until the doors open

James Otter



art by rachael hillenius

Compare and Contrast

Stephen Swiftfox

My grandmother was taking me to a midnight Easter Sunday service at her Russian Orthodox church on Fountain Avenue in Hollywood. This was the last thing that I wanted to experience. Weekends were a too short respite from Catholic school where Fr. M.A.F. SJ had free daily access to me and had been raping me since 4th grade. By 8th grade it was becoming a suicide experimenting night on Sundays.

From what I remember, and it is volumes compared to the other church, we stood a lot and people sang. We sat a lot and the priest, really weird looking with his full beard, prayed a lot in a loud voice while normal looking young guys swung around these incense burning pots on chains. And we stood up a lot. And we sat.

When it was finally over, my grandmother was invited over to the priest's house next door. I do not know if I was exhausted from lack of sleep or expecting to be molested yet again. We were greeted by a wife (surprise) and two friendly children a few years younger than me. They wanted to play. Hell yes, I almost said. In those remaining wee morning hours I was treated like a human being. Even more so. I was treated like a little prince. The wife fussed over me and was complimented by my endless appetite. I finally was seen. I mattered.

Back at school, the same dark routine. I stopped waiting in the rectory for my mother to pick me up after school from her work. Everyone frowned because of my lack of appreciation for the attention that Father M.A.F. lavished on me. So, I was made to wait in the enclosed courtyard of the nun's convent. At least they didn't have a reason to slap the back of my hands with a wooden ruler or make me kneel on pencils as they did in class. If I did need to use the bathroom I was told to hold it or walk back to the school and see if the janitor was still there so he could let me in. I did water the cafeteria wall instead.

When I entered D.M High School, an all boy's school run by the Dominican order, I cast about looking for a place to await my mother getting off of work. Memory fails as to how I found the Monastery of the Angels miles away from the school yet still on the way 'home'. It was a cloistered order. Sister Mary Rose was the only nun that had public exposure. When I'd get there, she would treat me to their homemade pumpkin bread and a glass of milk. When I was done, I rested in their chapel. It had an altar which had a large wall behind it which was covered with an elaborate scrollwork. It supported a translucent screen of material. Through that screen the voices of the nuns filled the chapel during services. It was both entrancing and calming. After a while Sister Rose would check on me to see if I needed more pumpkin bread or needed to use the bathroom. There was no trace of violence or sadism.

When my psychotic mother came to pick me up, I often was in tears. It may have been awkward for a 13 year old boy, but not for me.

Decades later, many decades, I returned to Los Angeles. I visited the Russian Orthodox church. It was being totally rebuilt and the resident priest was difficult to find. When I did, I tried, and failed, to tell him my history and how this church was a shiny spot in my life. I then went to visit the Monastery of The Angeles. Only one nun greeted me at the door. She was patient as I told her my story. Sister Mary Rose had passed away many years earlier. That stung and brought out a sob. I felt such a warm glow from her that one wouldn't expect to be given to a total stranger. She asked me if I'd like some pumpkin bread and invited me to sit in the chapel. They were having services. The nuns were singing. I was breaking down.

THERE IS NO COMPARISON.



spRk & sl8,
cont'd from p. 5

They poured an 8 ounce juice glass full, swapping sips; until sl8 coughed/spit his sip all over spRk's face and hair. Then they laughed and spat water at each other...
...and then spRk remembered her grandfather's 1977 scratched yellow-green Toyota Corolla permanently parked next to the garage under the blue and green awning.

Perfect! As they say: the die was cast.
The getaway car. Should they ask Solomon? or just take it as their proper destiny!

They climbed up the ladder, across the oak branch, tied the rope and sl8 shinnied down, basket on his shoulder. Orange Puss could hardly meow, her paws so hurt. sl8 unpinned her from the bungee cords and placed her still inside Fanny Deadheart's silver lycra panties in the basket. Which spRk then pulled up.

Before shinnying up the rope he found four large rocks and gave each a big roll through Franklin's still cooling tar.

By the time he untied the rope and got back to the kitchen there was Orange Puss pretty much all cleaned up. With 4 white bandages around her feet.

"Gauze-on-Paws", is what we're gonna call her from now on." grinned spRk. "Gauze-on-Paws." They drank little more tequila adding wee dram to Gauze's bowl of ½ and ½.

spRk eased the cat onto a pillow; then carried her into the bedroom, and set her next to the bed on the floor. They watched the moon rise up over Iron Meadows for awhile; not saying anything. And fell asleep...with visions of adventure dancing in their heads...

locket, map, and shoe box

The next morning when sl8 unfolded from the end of spRk's bed, she said, "Dude! Check this out," producing a small gold locket, inside which was highly folded piece of onionskin paper. "Found it around Orange Puss' neck."

The onionskin had been folded 6 times to fit inside the small slim gold locket. And as one could only wish for within: a map!

Today was Sunday, sl8's actual birthday. Sweett 16! sl8 said, "All them vents is alike. Unless what's hid in it is hard to get, I bet I can just walk into that stupid model home with my Dad's electric screwdriver and be out in 5 minutes. We need you to create some mini-diversion?"

"You mean like digging a trench in their Wonder Turf and clogging the Blue Fairie fountain so it overflows and runs down the trench through the oh-so colorful azaleas and manicured Monkey flower ground cover?"

"You read me like I'm in bold italics."

"Truth be told, I've always wanted to do that."

(cont'd on p. 9)



art by eamon morris



art by moss

“Sunshine” Was a Quiet Woman

Jeff Southwick

Mary “Sunshine” was a quiet woman
Who lived alone in an old mobile home
In the Hilltop MHP outside of city zoning.
By the fence along a mile of salvage autos
Where quiet people make the best neighbors.

The worthless man she long ago divorced
And Mary’s daughter left for somewhere else
Mary’s hands busy while she watched TV westerns
Knitting and humming along with the theme songs
Or writing to her pen pals— incarcerated in prison.

Young faces smile from yellowed school photos
Propped up by mementos on her front door table
Gifts sent to grandkids produced nothing fruitful
She said mixing with people leads kids to ramble
As Proverbs say— idle hands are tools of the devil.

Prominent on the wall over her sewing machine
A stars and bars flag is tacked on golden oak paneling
On the east wall of this room two framed pictures hang
Within a gold frame blonde Jesus prays at Gethsemane
And glaring from the other— is Adolph Hitler in uniform.

Her neighbors say she was just Mary, never “Sunshine”
So surprised the day black SUVs had her home surrounded
Swarmed by armed federal agents processing a crime scene
Mary and her evidence were removed from Hilltop isolation
If asked— neighbors would have said, Mary was a quiet woman.

So, do we wonder if Mary’s neighbors had questions?
Watching, obscured by curtains or glancing without staring
Did handwork and family visits provide unsatisfied feelings?
Maybe Mary always had an interest in like minded affiliations
Was “Sunshine” on a mailing list for some Aryan newsletter?

Perhaps Mary’s neighbors would rather fly under the radar
For cheery words to inmates in New Mexico seems admirable
But what if cryptologists decipher directions from letters of pen pals?
And figure out the brothers want to eliminate this deputy in Texas?
Maybe quiet neighbors keep their noses out of that business.

Scars

I wouldn’t touch them at first,
laid across your skin like bare wires—
even after the tubes came out
and you were healed enough to want me,
I made my hands not stray there,
arched my back so I embraced air,
not because I thought they might hurt
you but because I feared they might hurt
me, shock away my love for you.
A long time later I let my hand
go there as if by accident and felt
the same warmth as everywhere else.

Dan Liberthson

Monsters

Suburban kids bored stiff,
we had one adventure:
walk a mile to Bailey Avenue,
carry back a Bocce’s pizza each,
and eat them watching Saturday night
horror double-features till 2 AM.
Kong, Dracula, Frankenstein, screamed defiance,
hating ordinary life as much as we,
but daring to go down in a blaze of glory
while we only dreamed in cinevision,
monstrous behind our foreheads’ bars,
safe from what we might do
if our dreams came true.
Our love was all for the monsters
but they had to die, while we got life—
so we learned to take grim satisfaction
when they fell, lovely carnage ended.
Their fraternity of joyous rage we’d never join,
but soon became the cops, army, villagers
hunting down wild and wondrous creatures,
the better to enjoy those half-pleasures left
for the balance of our undead lives.

Dan Liberthson

Pearls

One. It is. Two,
It’s dying. Three.
It cause itself
To be. Thus, pain’s
Name of game. From
Above you see.
Fruitlessness. Be
Low. Waterme
Lon come from not
Hing. For love. Flesh
Must be et. Rind
Tossed to swine. Who
Drag it through man
Ure. While they chew.
Few seed pass un
Consumed. Not bet
Ter to sow. This,
American
Version. Of Bud
Hist Holy No
Ble truths. With pig.

David Koteen



Turned on the Table We the People Have Set

When we were a nation at its birth
It was written that all have an inalienble right to "life
liberty and the pursuit of happiness." What was not
stressed because at the time this truth was self evident
was the word 'pursuit.'
Very important this word. Nobody would have at the time
taken seriously an inalienable right to 'be given' life (if
you failed to prepare for winter you died)
Liberty (if you pay more attention to whatever your drug
of choice (chemical or otherwise) is than the
government's doings, you get what you played for:
resolute unhappiness.

Nemo

Blanket of the Night

Sitting in the darkness
Upon the lonely place
I won't leave too soon
With so many clouds too cover the old man's face
I can't even bark at the moon
Still I keep hoping I'll run into her
The girl who's finger's Work the loom that weaves the night
Will she deceive mine own senses?
Take her pleasure as I lay?
Struck, defenseless
Okay,
I'll stay a little longer,
yes, okay.
Okay! Alright!
Perchance to make my bed
Within the shadows without light
Stong and supple
Blanket of the Night.



Nemo

dancing frogs by gideon stuart

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We rely on donations from people like you to keep us going. Every little bit helps, from
\$1 to \$1 million! (Hey, we like to think big!) So get yourself a dose of good karma by
chipping in something for the cause today, eh?

Thanks!



graffitieugene@gmail.com



@GraffitiEugene

My Vibe/My Tribe

Tender-hearted feelers
Believers

I know now
I now know
It is all love

You have arrived!

Fergul Cirpan

No More
Sad Music

The saddest words of all times
All have to burn
With your smile

A more romantic path through life
We shall walk together

The thrown kiss
My stolen heart

Amorous glances
Words make or break us

The saddest music of all times
Burn with your smile.

Fergul Cirpan

Of Darker Days

Oh to be black or white
A recognizable shade of either
But I live in the borderland
Fading Grey at end of day
Pale chill before true light

There is no chance for ecstasy
For a life contained within a tear
All light is canted
Bringing only bleak illumination
Colors black
Colors Grey
All others run
All others fade away
Solitary Trac
Heading only down
Destination pre-ordained
To meet harshly with the ground

No innocent
No bystander
Lying bellow the bright sunshine
So beautiful
So Toxic
Wreathed in darkest mahogany
Carved or oleander

Nemo

Eugene by
the Briefs

If chaos is creation
Eugene public works
Is the most creative of its kind
In the nation.
Even a child knows,
If you give one hundred mice
One hundred cookies
You get one thousand mice.
Eugene: a town populated by
citizens who believe they
can save the planet
While driving like
they are the only one on it.

Nemo



What Remains?

John Zerzan

What remains of culture? What remains to be thought of culture?

Eight decades ago, Europe's most cultured nation (Kant, Hegel, Beethoven, etc.) descended into genocidal mass murder on a vast scale: Germany's Holocaust, well known if not so well understood. An industrial enterprise that systematically murdered millions.

Today, our captivity by capital and technology is obviously not a Holocaust. Yet it casts a pall of estrangement on a deeper level than ever before. The culture of massive alienation is bloodless in its toll, if we leave out deaths from despair (e.g. youth suicides, drug overdoses, mass shootings). The isolation is palpable, despite tech connectivity; loneliness has been declared an epidemic. "Why Is Loneliness So Hard To Cure?" was the cover story of the September 1 New York Times Magazine.

A New York Times op-ed the next day provided an answer: "The Loneliness Epidemic Has a Cure." Namely, "make a friend." This myopic response omits the fact that the number of friends Americans have has been declining since the 1980s. That's when the high-tech super-

highway opened, first with the explosion of personal computers early in the decade, later with quickly ubiquitous smartphones, social media, generative AI, and the rest of the technology takeover. The bottom-line results: isolation, loneliness, fewer friends. Online "life."

Technological society is a central component of our near-total unfreedom. Society tells us, through technology, that all is well. We've never had more choices or been more connected. Our experience tells us that this is a false picture. We see a prevailing dis-ease, even immiseration, that is itself evidence of a radical (if unacknowledged) desire for a different reality. One that is free, authentic, fulfilling.

But is it possible, or even conceivable, to anticipate redemption from this near-total eclipse of genuine choices? Upon which foundations, with what resources could we move?

Maybe the closest nod or hint toward a life of freedom comes from children, their toys and games, which are not functional, not part of the rackets of exchange or technological advance. Their realm of enchantment is separate from the disenchantment of our world. ☺ ☺ ☺

The Lonely Man

Dallas Hiskey

Call me a monster, a man with no heart. Man with no emotions, just a body that is so numb from being alone all the time. So I don't know what I should feel or think anymore. Mind so corrupted that I'm barely holding on to what real. Just figure that I would go day by day, as the days get longer. The pain of everything I have lost over the years is hard bare anymore.

The lonely man having no clue where to go from here
Just trying to make the best of what he can, but it seems like it is never good enough. Always happy to see familiar faces but it's hard when you miss something you never had. As a child people have made up for what you have lost but not the same when you get older.

The feeling of being alone is no joke. You can be around 100 people and still feel alone. It is like having a part of your heart missing and having no one to help fix what has been broken. So as the years goes on the more it breaks, it breaks until there no more break and then it would be late to repair because you would be too broken to even love or care for anyone anymore. It hard when u know ur loved by people but it the same as having someone, so more time I'm alone the more my heart breaks until one day I wake and decided I'm not going to care no more and then I would be more alone then I was before.

And it's a sad face when you want something but u know u can't sucks. I wish I could find someone that was good.

☺ ☺ ☺

spRk & sl8,
cont'd from p. 7

"Let's do it around 4; no! exactly at 4. Nobody is likely to be there except that rent-a-hokey watch woman. We gotta get some watches to synchronize."
"True that. Meet chez moi at 3:30."

Besides well-earned hangovers (from Fanny's one-and-only invention: the zammer--two parts rum; one part vodka; one part frozen lemonade; with tablespoon or two of coconut milk. Pretty hard to resist.) the Deadhearts were plenty stoked to find Orange Puss had vanished into thin air. That in itself called for champagne. But Fanny was dumbfounded at Franklin's confession of having put the cat in her stylish silver lycra underwear. The obvious symbolism of that act: panties; cat; torture; sex. Definitely, an additional couples' counseling session with Dr. Slither was in order.

Stealing the useless nuisance cat was one thing; but creating messy ruts in his newly tarred driveway...! Well, that would be a lynching affair. What type of person would do such a thing?

If he had thought 'teenager', he would've been right.

At 2:40 o'clock spRk started among the Monkey flowers, very nonchalantly digging mini-trenches through the bark mulch with the claw end of Solomon's hammer. And gradually up through the Wonder Turf, ripping an irregular two inch trench up towards the Blue Faerie fountain. She knew she was invisible because she was performing a righteous act. Few good wads of toilet paper in the Faerie's drain. Et voila! Water began pouring down the fountain, along the concrete, and into spRk's trenches, and eroding through the azaleas and Monkey flowers, before oozing over the wall onto the sidewalk along Iron Meadows Avenue A.

3:30 finally arrived. sl8 wore a clean striped, buttondown shirt and combed his hair. spRk had donned a light summer yellow and white frock. They looked very innocent, indeed.
sl8 said, "Wow! spRk, you look different."
"Well, girls'll be girls! You're on sl8; I already started the flood."

Stopping an inundation at the source is lots easier than stopping it spreading out in multiple streams among the variegated azaleas. Where the rent-a-hokey guard woman Chubina Comfie crawled frenzily about in feeble effort to halt all the runaway rivulets simultaneously. Alas!

That's why sl8 could breezily stride into the Iron Meadows Model Home, unscrew the 4 screws attaching the vent cover and retrieve the cigar box which Angel Deadheart had strapping-taped directly above the vent entrance. Minimally conspicuous. And walk out again, cool as a cucumber, except the wide Cheshire cat grin leaping from his face.

(cont'd on p. 11)

Onselfoffing

Every suicide is your saviour.
Who dies for your sins?
Life is so precious.
Itself, the only pure gift.
To give it up...is what?
To say just "no." To say:
This holding, whole, hole...sucks!
That the strength of this body is
Unequal to the Will of Evil.
They are our Holy Ones, Who
Witness despair unflinchingly. And let
Wretch thrive on their Beings.
Stupid people...Imbeciles! Morons!
Monogoloids! Brain-damaged apes...
These persons are not always visible.
Unless, of course, you ')\nLook caringly...
Ok, back to the thing about care, or
Could be called kindness. If you don't give
It, you don't get it. Or contrariwise: if
You don't get it, you don't got it.
Depression is worse than hunger. It
Has no object to dream on. No subject
To transform. They become non-such them
Selves. Like: "If i wasn't, no difference
Would there be." Have you had these thoughts,
Recently? Another point, disturbing as
It might be, is that folks get off on
It. The Grande Finale (dead processional?).
Full of pomp, precision--hopefully--and
Success. Demi-deaths don't cut it...Also
The relationship clued by the deliberately
Penned note: "I jumped cuz me mudder nebah
Truly loved me." What is the point of all
This? People inflicting wounds on each
Other...all the blankety-blank time! To
What end...Are these conscious acts of
Injury, prayers to Our Lord Who art in...
It's enough to wear a person down. Little
By little, stone by stone, The other side
Begins to look attractive. It flirts. No
Amount of self-abuse will suffice. It's
Not that you never win, it's that the entire
Fucking game is a loss. It becomes pro
Gressively clearer that "out" is the only
Direction worth checking "in" to. That staying
Around "to please the crowd" is not where
It's at. And even--get this--the pain
Of death has a feeling of fooling the
Infidels (w-i-n-k). To give credit where
Credit's due, the suicidal personality, is
In direct conflict with the church of
Catholicism, which "feels" as an established
Institution, that "they who do themselves
In in Hell belong." The logic behind
This sentiment is obvious. Don't you agree?
But back to the so-called victim. You
Killed him. Wait, that's a joke. It
Killed it Self. Thought did it. It said:
Je ne pense pas donc je ne suis pas. The
Anguish--lonliness--hopelessness--
Grief--and so on and so on, is what you
All have. Different size chunks, perhaps.
But you've been there. Halfway across shit
Canal when your inner tube springs a leak.
Panic is the least of problems. You begin
To sink. It begins to pull you down. You
Grasp for the surface. There's no air!
It's suffocating. It's worse then you ever
Imagined. You are sinking. Down. Down. Down
Down! Down. Down! Down...Down...Down...Down.

David Koteen

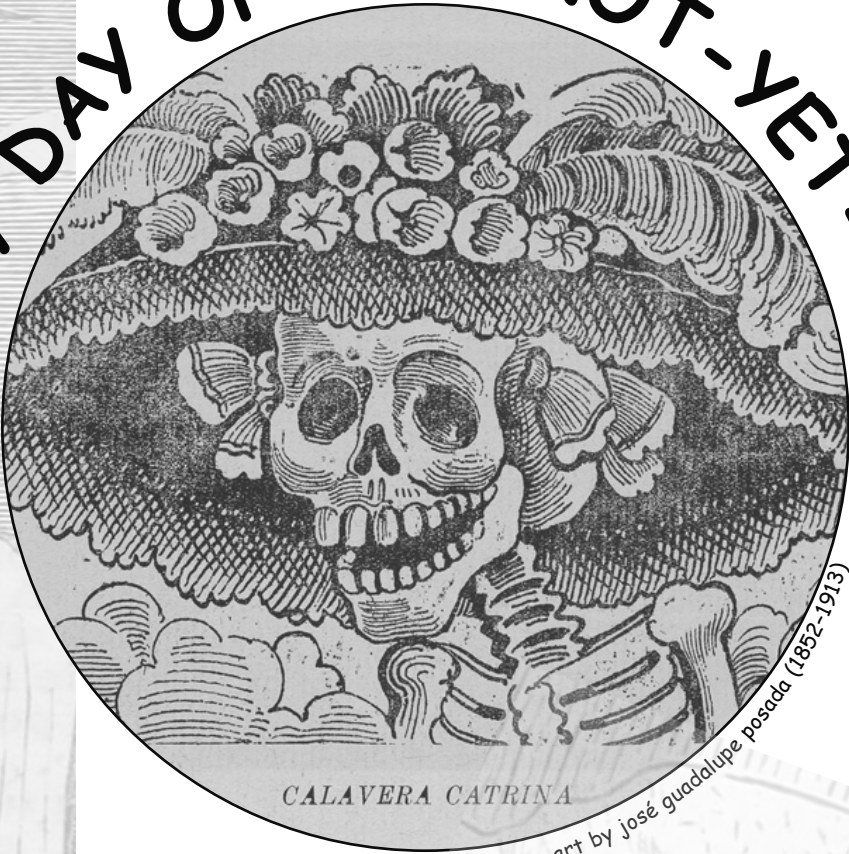
Dialog from
Peanuts,

by Charles M. Schulz

Charlie Brown:
“Some day, we will all
die, Snoopy.”

Snoopy:
“True, but on all the
other days, we will
not.”

HAPPY DAY OF THE NOT-YET-DEADI



Just a Little Bit Further

I almost turned back and went home early today.
But if I hadn't gone on just a little bit further,
down the lane where wild foxgloves grow...
I would never have felt the evening breeze on my face.
And now I know that may seem like such a small thing,
such a small simple little thing.
But
If I hadn't gone on, just a little bit further,
down the broken and uneven sidewalk that day,
I wouldn't have smelled the sumptuous salt and fat of somebody grilling steak;
hopefully sharing it with friends.
And
If I hadn't gone on, just a LITTLE bit further,
right down the middle of the quiet suburban street,
I wouldn't have seen, one of my neighbors,
being wheeled from their home to a quiet ambulance.
Now, I hadn't known who lived there, in that quaintly blue little cottage,
but I had often stopped to admire the lovely, wild-kept, French garden,
that spilled out onto said broken, uneven sidewalk.
I felt a certain twilight melancholy upon me then,
yet despite the sadness, I found myself breathing,
oh so much deeper of the sweet evening air; just glad to be alive,
glad to have my handsome dog at my side, simply happy that I had listened to him
and went on,
just a little bit further...

*In loving memory of everyone
who has ever taken their life.*

H. R. Harney



art by james otter



Kauai, art by morgan smith

Ten Words To Remove From Your Writing

Jeaux Bartlett

Writing long isn't necessarily better than writing short. More words don't often equal more grace on the page. Just more space.

When I write, I do my best to turn off my inner editor and critic and let my fingers relay whatever my mind and body want to express. During revision, however, I trim and snip, spending a good bit of quality time with my word processing program's find and replace feature.

Here are the ten words I search for to replace with stronger ones—or often nothing at all.

That: We overuse “that” constantly because we feel that we need it in our writing. You don't need it. There are times “that” is appropriate, such as, “I want to buy that awesome book over there.” But, most of the time, “that” can go by way of the delete key.

How can you tell? Re-read your writing without the “thats” and see if it still makes sense. If it does, you don't need that “that” there.

Just: “Just” weakens your writing. Unless you're using it in the context of justice, you can replace “just” with a stronger word—barely, exactly, recently, only, or simply—or delete it altogether.

When you delete “just,” the only difference is fewer words to read in writing that's stronger and more engaging.

Really: We use “really” for emphasis. Change the word you're emphasizing. Rather than saying “writing is really hard” use a stronger word, such as “writing is difficult.”

Very: It's the same as “really.” Delete it and make the word it modifies stronger.

Almost: At a writing seminar I attended more than a decade ago, a speaker lectured us on her dislike of the word “almost.”

“Don't write, ‘He ran so fast he almost hit the door,’” she said. “Tell me what actually happened instead of what didn't happen.”

Clearly, it's stuck with me, as I carefully consider whether “almost” truly needs to be there when it crops up in my writing.

Perhaps: Perhaps and its sister word “maybe” indicate uncertainty about what you're saying. Unless you want to indicate uncertainty or multiple possibilities, perhaps don't use it. (Kidding. Don't use it. Declare yourself upon the page!)

Quite: I'm originally from England, so “quite” is a regularly-used adjective in my speech. It used to be in my writing as well, until an editor told me I was “damning with faint praise.” My assignment was on a band I described as “quite energetic.”

Depending on the word it's describing “quite” can either mean “a little, fairly, moderately” or “very, totally, or completely.” Decide what you're trying to say, then replace “quite” with that word. Unless you're writing British dialogue.

Literally: Before we collectively changed our minds, “literally” used to mean something was true in a literal sense. It now also means “figuratively.” As the word has essentially lost its meaning except in hyperbole, I prefer not to use it.

Nice: “Nice” is bland. Surely there's a better, more alive word you can use. People aren't nice. They're friendly, observant, kind, patient, polite. Food doesn't taste nice. It's savory, comforting, palatable, bland.

Every: I confess, I'm a former rampant over user of “every” including “everyone” and “everything.” Over use of this word makes your writing less believable. Writing (and thinking) in absolutes (every, always, never) doesn't work well on the page or in life.

While there are plenty more ways to strengthen your writing, cutting these ten words will go a long way to making your prose (or poems) more polished and engaging. When your writing is strong and clear, it's easy and fluid to read.

Jeaux is on the staff at Wordcrafters in Eugene, a nonprofit creative writing organization. You can learn more about them and the classes and events Wordcrafters offers at wordcrafters.org.

A Morning Metta

There is 8 billion and 68 million people on Earth.
How many has a name that will be remembered in a century?

How many of them has done evil and found that evil made them happy?

How many of them strived to be a good people but fell into the grave only to be forgotten immediately?

You bathe until clean, you dress yourself, then go out of your door and down your steps to the sidewalk and make a choice of left or right, (Selfishness or Generosity).

You choose the street you will go on until it's time to sleep.

When you wake up to the World think of all that dwell in it, wish them well and when you're done get up and go out to wish well upon each of one of them, one by one.

Leo Rivers

Dogs and Cats

Dogs and cats and piss-faced fuckers that only come at dusk or dawn, can make the dew on spring maple leaves blush with new vigor.

Daring to visit some new dimension, I sit with arms akimbo and legs in a somewhat lotus position, waiting, as if some deity will come and order them to some distant sage desert.

I sit here in bed, pillow between shoulders and wall in a somewhat upright position putting words together like screaming to distant gods, and wonder if I'll wake at 2:00 A. M. or 4:00 A. M.

Looks like I'm fucked again.

Bill Gunn

Welcomed

On the drive home, the Wolfhound hears ravings, insecurities, incongruities, secret scores of lost poems and like a trusted friend, will never repeat them.

Yellow-brown eyes, tearing canines and a countenance that makes the most vicious of war-like creatures come to toe. He is the calm one that observes and assesses all the little contrivances that have been spewed from the day.

He keeps me sane and I worship his tenacity. His life is food with garnish, cottage cheese, treats, water, new friends and me, whom he sniffs to see if I have touched other dogs.

If you are a dog-person, you are welcomed by the wolfhound, you are welcomed by me.

Bill Gunn

spRk & sl8, cont'd from p. 9

They were both so happy that they almost kissed; but didn't. Instead they bumped foreheads. Then, returned to the remnants of the tequila bottle before opening their treasure-trove.

in search of Angel

spRk lit a candle. This was truly the most special birthday gift ever. They went slowly. Angel had overdone it with the strapping tape. Then again, she was the Deadheart's daughter. And inside what was there (each item taped down separately with red and green Santa Claus gift wrapping tape)?

photo of Angel and Orange Puss as a kitten
muy bonito joint
straight edge razor
Olde Dragon Fire Crackers
gold cross on silver chain
100 \$20 bills
key to private entrance at Wal-mart (with diagram of its locale)
Lindt Dark Chocolate
Can of Beach Cliff Sardines
Angel's cell phone number

All neatly taped down. Much better than Christmas!

"Then sl8, it's been decided."
"For sure, spRk. What?"
"We'll take Solomon's Toyota and leave him 15 or 20 of these twenties."
"Good job! Call it 25."

At 2:00 AM they met under the blue and green striped awning and put their stuff in the back. sl8 had taken his Mom's wicker laundry basket and put a tattered cotton quilt in it for Gauze-on-Paws' bed. They pushed the Corolla down the driveway, so as not to wake up spRk's grandfather. Turned the key, and they were off to find Angel. But not before a stop at Walmart.

They drove around Walmart a couple of times to check for guards and to discover just where Franklin's private entrance might be. Easy as pie. They agreed: Angel was pretty damn right on!

What a dilemma! So much stuff to choose from and such a small car. In the end they went for function. A 3-person all season tent and Coleman stove and 5 gallons of propane. State-of-the-art Walkie-Talkies. 2 all synthetic black sleeping bags. A case of French red Rhone wine; and three cases of cans of Clean-Net 100% tuna fish.

spRk found a jerry can half full of gasoline, and because in some preposterous way this was still her birthday, she poured the gas around boxes and boxes of toilet paper, paper towels, and tissues. sl8 was wheelbarrowing beaucoup candles which he placed in and on the gas-dripped boxes.

It wouldn't do much damage they knew; just cause a big Walmart mess. Hopefully Franklin would be blamed. spRk went out and returned with the Olde Dragon firecrackers.

"Brilliant!" sl8 smiled.

(cont'd on p. 12)

Breaking Through

Here it comes again
that old feeling
that a breakthrough is near
layers of ego and fear
falling away.

You triggered it
when I looked into your eyes
and fell into your soul.
Such power swallowed me whole
but you didn't know it happened.

Have you ever had an epiphany?
Do you know the real from the fake?
Have you ever been shaken by the light?
Have you ever had a ghost in your sight?
Do you want to float in the sky?

We'll go for a swim
inside the blue lagoon.
We'll eat mushrooms and berries
and dance with the fairies.
Close your eyes and watch the sparks.

Love, we have cognition.
All engines are firing.
We're on our way to the moon
and the stars
with a short stop on Mars.
Don't look back or you'll fall.



poem by jim smith
art by erica snowlake

Words

Certain words
Evolving
Language dissolving
Vibrationally upgrading

These words are not ours sometimes
Delivering the frequency

Familiar words a decade from now
- will be different

New words
To be found

Allow yourself to be
Allow your words to be

Fergul Cerpan

Swim in Summer Rain

She stands on the bank of the pond
In jeans and denim top
Warm rain pouring down
Running off her long and straight hair
Down her back and legs
She dives into the water
Floating on her back
With eyes closed
Enjoying the rain
Gently falling on her face
And dark blue breast and thighs.
She turns and dives deep down
Then swims to the bank
Climbs out and
Stands in the falling rain
Arms outstretched
Eyes closed and smiling
Contented with water running down her face
Hair and dark blue denim jeans.

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—from the Prologue

Award-winning poet Paul Dresman taught literature and writing at the University of California at San Diego, at Beijing Teachers' University, and at the University of Oregon, in his hometown of Eugene.

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spRk & sl8,
cont'd from p. 11

They drove to highest point overlooking town. Tomorrow they would call Angel. Before they exited their Iron Meadows life, they sat on the hood of the green-yellow scratched Toyota Corolla --the three of them at 3:00 AM-- while fire engine sirens and smoke filled the air.

"What a great hallelujah birthday!"
"What could we possibly do next year to top this?"

Gauze-on-Paws looked lovingly cross-eyed at her liberators, cracking her best cat smile.

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