

GRAFFITI

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**Featured in this issue:** Thomas Avery, Iris Bartholomew, Fergul Cirpan, Dimich, Paul Dresman, Marco Elliott, Peter Fenton, Bill Gunn, Brielle Kesselring, David Koteen, Charles Mattoon, James Otter, Jesús Sepúlveda, Morgan Smith, Stephen Swiftfox, Marcel Tulloh, Eva, Maya Sutherland, Marianne Peel, Mac La Caze, Terah Van Dusen, Jack Cooper, maRco, Martha Ellen, Leo Rivers, Randy Gudeika, Cindy Salter, Parker Moses, Tommie K, Sean Bentley, Angie Butler, CJ Mitchell, Rachael Hillenius

**ON THE COVER:** This self-portrait, captured at my grandmothers cabin, speaks to the idea of guarding one's self. The skull, presented as a mask acts as both armor and a symbol— protection from a world to judge. This photo was taken to show the power we hold when we choose to reveal strength on one's own terms. We hide these layers, curating versions of ourselves that feel more palatable for others. But over time, these masks can become prisons, trapping our authentic selves beneath. The process of breaking those cycles begins with acknowledging the mask we've created and working towards being our true selves without living in the fear of "what will other people think". By Bella Bridges. Find them on Instagram @rustedwindowsills



Liz Kuhns

FRONT LINES

Sierra Maish

I suppose I love this life, in spite of my clenched fist" -  
Andrea Gibson

I struggled with knowing what to write about for this part of Graffiti, moreso than doing any of formatting or more important parts of publishing this fine zine . After reading many of Don's "Front Lines", I felt and still do feel like I don't have much to say. Until I find more to say to you all, here is a poem that I wrote a few days ago, and in the other empty spaces you'll see some collage artwork from Liz Kuhns. Stay safe, lean on your communities and don't ever stop creating.

my anxiety migrates south in the winter  
away from the pounding in my chest  
Nor'easter winds reach speeds of 100 bpm  
my ribcage cracks and freezes over  
I'm in flight mode  
as it nestles into my eyes  
eggs are laid  
the humming vibrations blur my vision  
I'm darting to see a birds eye view

can your bones be queasy?  
I think mine are  
the twisting and turning of my stomach,  
contractions  
spilling over acid  
seeping into the honeycomb holes of my bones  
I don't think I am arthritic yet,  
just nauseous from standing up for too long

# Classic & Cult Cinema At Your Fingertips

Check out our upcoming Federico Fellini Series  
and more online and at our campus location.



Hole

If murder were a wishlist gifted  
Mine traversed earth  
Lifting train tracks hacking limbs  
Chins shoulder blades Any bean with a p, v or  
double u Pulling pins stuffing duffels But first  
Gantt the Antman His lilywhite harem of empty  
holes Haggard neighborhood moles Gossipy baes  
languishing scum Included goofy Gus red Benny  
My pretty babies foul chum  
My savior Solomon  
Even the golf trainer dumb as rocks  
Cocky fuckers suckers  
Dumptruckers  
Ruckus luck has it  
Stoking their bellies with hot pokers  
Just for shits  
The sort they'll take as they lock eyes  
Admiring these cherry pies  
Salty dogs grumbling mumbling  
Stumbling round their cubicles in a mickey fog  
Sticky sorts  
Busting nuts to my puckered lips  
Trying to finger me as I threaten them naked  
Plastic bitties shaking taking them all in  
Caking my mouth with their blood  
When I bite down on that base  
Tasting what's that?  
Semen cemented creamy center donuts  
Chemical suds dimpled jellyfish  
Lending my life the relish it needed when they  
kicked me  
Thinking I was rotten low  
Bedraggled stoned-to-death  
Fraggle rock n' rolled to the cliff's edge  
Demented Bee my pussy drippy twisting my own  
nipples  
Licking lippy as I plotted revenge Clenching my  
cunt then cumming at the image  
Of God himself the Wall and his Brook  
Smoking fags laying me down topless on his belly  
bare  
Stroking me at-will

Eva

Trick Box

Back when we were pure and ate  
Cheerios instead of Fruit Loops  
and had grubby faces and wore  
hand-me-downs  
except on School Picture Day  
and lived in brown apartment  
buildings  
next to culverts and made  
slingshots  
out of boys underwear and talked  
about  
Yellow Rivers, you know, the book  
by I.P. Freeley  
and skateboarded around stolen  
yellow cones  
and the neighbors complained  
and the teachers said we were  
gifted...  
back then, we both knew and didn't  
know, saw  
and didn't see our lives unfolding  
around us  
like a trick box.

Maya Sutherland

Passive Income

You poke but I don't feel it  
stick me bloody with your  
tongue  
slice me slowly, overbearing  
heart intact, yet under done  
Envisioned brown eyes, blurry  
Bitter spit spread on my skin  
I saw our futures, barely  
Should've wrote it down back  
then

Iris Bartholomew



by James Otter

HAPPY HOUR AT STONEY'S  
HONKY-TONK

after Kim Addonizio's What Do Women Want

**GYPSY WOMAN LAYERED IN CHIFFON  
AND LACE, I  
REALLY WANT A LITTLE BLACK DRESS.  
I WANT  
TO BE SHRINK-WAPPED IN SATIN, A  
BOA SLUNG ACROSS MY SHOULDERS, A  
RED  
BOA ON FIRE. I'LL LURE YOU TO THE  
BAR WITH THIS DRESS,  
STRANGER IN A FEDORA, BEARD  
TRIMMED CLOSE. I  
HAVE SEEN YOU SNEAKING GLANCES  
MY WAY. I WANT  
TO BUY A ROUND OF TEQUILA.  
STRAIGHT UP. NEAT. CAN YOU FEEL IT  
DANCING DOWN YOUR THROAT, A SLOW  
AND FLIMSY  
TWO-STEP? PUT YOUR HAND THERE,  
ON MY SATIN WAIST, AND  
YOU WILL DISCOVER I AM ANYTHING  
BUT CHEAP.**

MARIANNE PEEL

Untitled

I long to dream on a different plane  
Serene in completion, in eden  
Grapple with it, wildly  
Compact and misguided  
I love all things that will outlive me  
Soul, synchronicity, styrofoam  
Swelling, filling  
Employing my footsteps forward-  
I fear I am a wheel, spun out  
Never knowing when  
To stop.

Iris Bartholomew

I am everything and  
what I am not

I am a girl, I am a dame, I am a woman,  
a dowager, I am a human, an  
automaton. I am a caretaker, I am a  
patient, I am a daughter, an orphan. I  
am a lover, yet a mistress, I am your  
best friend, why am I your enemy? I  
am an artist, a poet, a dilettante, I am  
a tiptoeer, a stomper.

The tear that drops from your swollen  
eyelids, the coarse tongue that slurps  
it up. I am the curled lip, the  
furrowed brow. When you speak from  
the heart I am what purses your lips,  
I am the key thrown away after you  
sew them shut. Young and ripe, the  
epitome of innocence as my legs spread  
apart, I welcome solicitors. I have  
aged out but I am still good enough  
for them. A sweet, crass, courteous  
savage, but yet my heart beats to a  
mechanical drum? A conscious  
existence blundered by mundanous  
sequenced operations. The caretaker of  
all things, home, emotion, animal and  
self. I am plagued by the disease of  
caring, chronically inhibited and  
uninsured. By blood I am deemed a  
daughter but I'm typographically  
orphaned.

A loving devotee outside the bounds  
of marriage, madam mistress of  
despair. I love and love and love and  
love yet despair burrows itself into  
the cleavage of my bust, Mistaken for  
you. Tell me your deep desires, your  
darkest secrets, I am your confidant  
until you see the spillage of your  
dreams seep from my eyes, turning to  
sewage when I gaze at you. How does  
one determine they are an artist? How  
does one know they are not? I am  
amateurly devoted and devoured with  
the urge to create. I am debilitated by  
the cognitive dissonance of what I am  
and what I am not.

I am I am I am I am,

Sierra Maish





RIMAN

### To The Sweetest Things

I know that I am broken  
 But I couldn't tell you  
 why  
 In all the words unspoken  
 Did I ever tell a lie?  
 Did I ever leave you  
 hanging  
 By a bare and empty  
 thread?  
 Did you ever see us dancing  
 In the visions in your  
 head?  
 Cuz I'm here and you are  
 lonely  
 With open mind and open  
 heart  
 We'd be happy too if only  
 We could find a way to  
 start  
 Living in this moment that  
 we

Instead of reminiscing  
 flatly  
 About our waylaid plans  
 All the years as we  
 recovered  
 Can we make it to the end;  
 To die in arms as lovers  
 And regale you as my  
 friend?  
 In earnest I can tell you  
 That I'll always try my best  
 And if it all just fell  
 through  
 I'd hold you tightly to my  
 breast  
 I'll put no one above you  
 And I'll know that it is  
 true  
 When I whisper that I love  
 you  
 And you say you love me  
 too

Mac La Caze

## CONSUMMATION

Approaching Kyongju temple a dragonfly prays on my  
 finger  
 gentle little knives skin the edge of autumn chill  
 raw unadorned desire consumed to calm trust of death  
 jet jewel eyes bloom into glittering shards of passion  
 poised  
 over the mystery that flies  
 from all reflection.

In the land to which I fled  
 the touch of your skin hooks deeper than flesh  
 deeper than longing silence  
 or the fading echo of your eyes  
 that now wander blind inside me  
 temple of hungry ghosts.

Clouds slip my grasp shapeshifting signals  
 to surrender to essential evanescence— gone, gone  
 buoyantly gone beyond  
 fire petals raining all around me  
 consumed in exquisite blue.

Charles Mattoon

### Handiwork

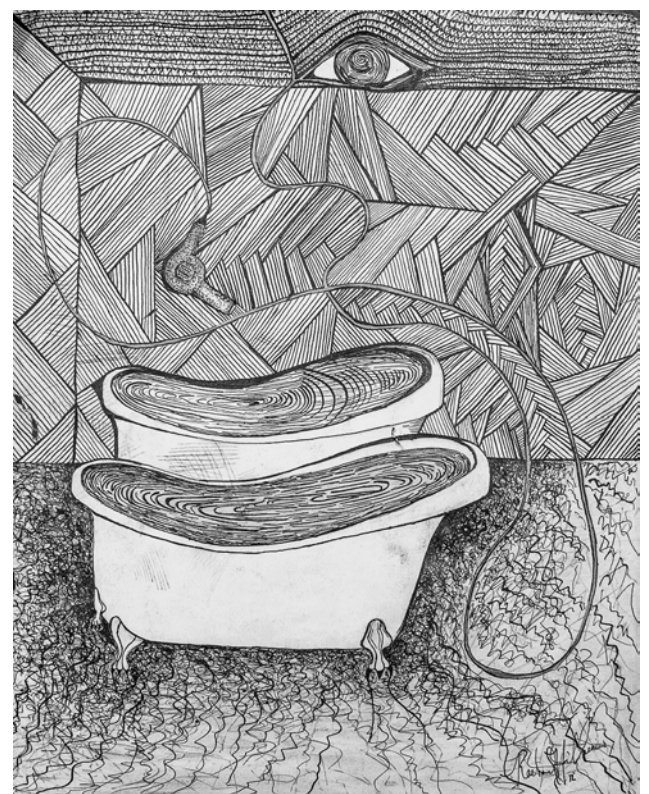
The only thing I will  
 say about the man is  
 this:  
 when reclining, he  
 reminds me of a fallen  
 redwood tree, and I want  
 to climb all over him

I'm curious about the  
 various ways our  
 bodies—his long, mine  
 miniature—could  
 possibly  
 fit together;  
 considering this, I get  
 lost in thought, touch  
 myself

I feel intimidated  
 speaking to him, as if  
 he might swat away my  
 words like he would a  
 fly  
 not giving me long  
 enough to explain  
 myself, to fully know me,  
 to soulfully desire me

Knowing it will take me  
 a lifetime to explain  
 myself, my thoughts  
 circle back to his body  
 I believe Goddess gave  
 us more of him out of  
 grace, showing off her  
 handiwork

Terah Van Dusen



Rachael Hillenius

### Forbidden you

I know I just met you  
 I want to do so much  
 with you  
 Explore abandoned  
 buildings in the middle.  
 of the night  
 I want to watch gory  
 movies and sit in the  
 dark for as long as we  
 can

I want to hop fences and  
 watch the sunset  
 Walk the streets at night  
 with nothing but cameras  
 I want to go off trail  
 and climb through the  
 thorny mess

Witness the world nobody  
 else wants to talk about  
 I want to go where it's  
 cold and unforgiving and  
 laugh at life

Cause it hurts so bad to  
 be alive  
 To spend so many moments  
 with the thoughts  
 cycling between day and  
 night  
 I don't want to escape  
 I want to get in too deep  
 I want to know where  
 they put our souls when  
 they take our bodies  
 apart

I want someone to hold  
 my hand while the world  
 sections off my organs  
 and checks me for  
 bruises

I want someone to admire  
 my brain and keep my  
 eyes in a jar

James Otter



**FIRE**

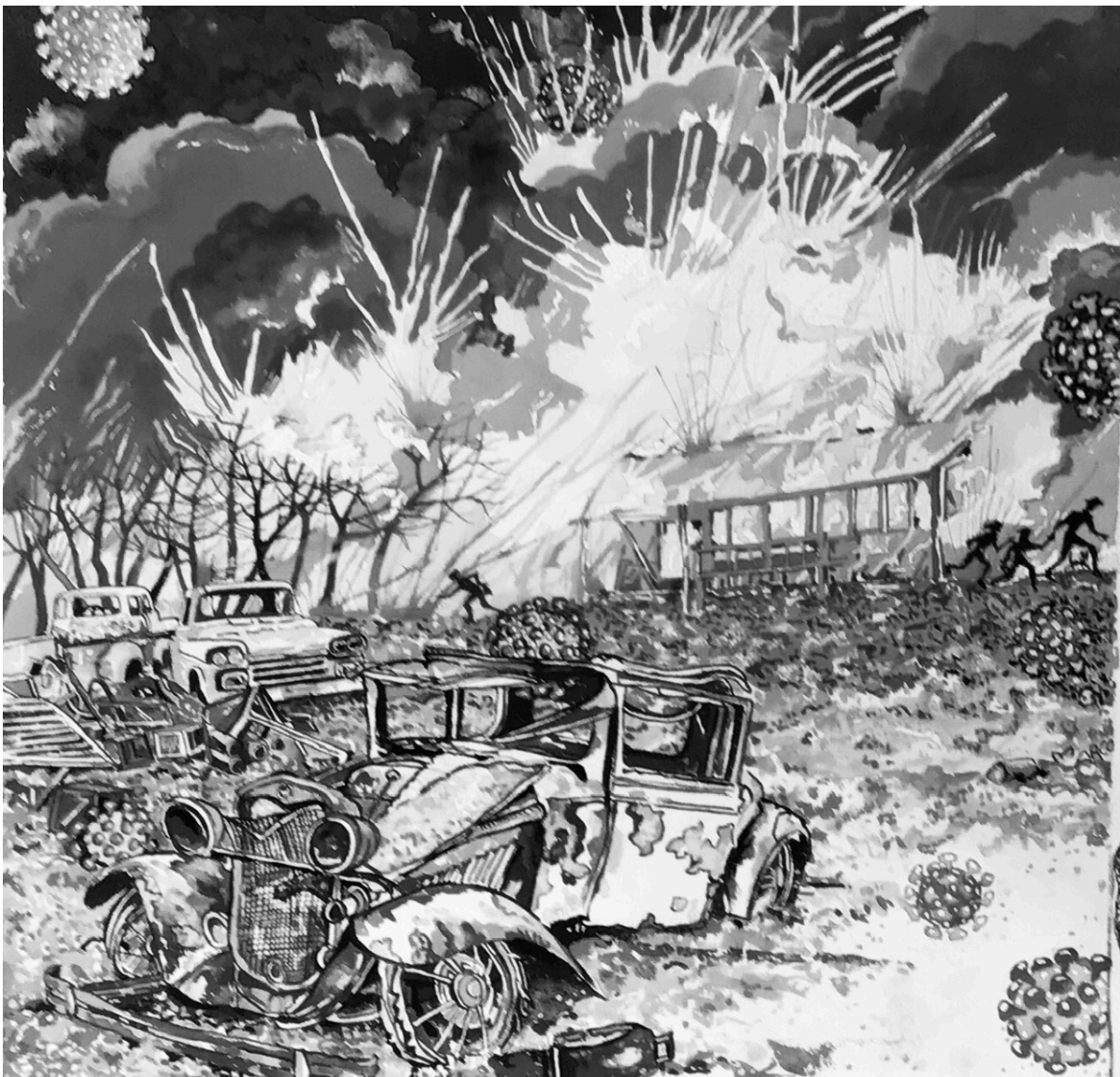
**YOU CAN'T HAVE A  
LITTLE JAR OF  
WIND  
OR A BOWL OF LAKE  
NO SUCH THING AS A  
PET CLOUD  
OR A PRIVATE WAVE  
OR A CORNER IN THE  
LIVING ROOM  
JUST FOR  
MOONLIGHT**

**BUT YOU CAN HAVE  
YOUR VERY OWN  
FURIOUS FIRE  
RIGHT NEXT TO YOU  
AS YOU READ AND  
GAZE  
AND SIFT YOUR  
THOUGHTS  
THROUGH COGNAC**

**HAVING A FIRE  
IS LIKE HAVING A  
CAGED TIGER  
IF YOU DON'T FEED  
IT  
IT WILL DIE  
IF IT ESCAPES  
CONFINEMENT  
IT CAN EAT YOU  
ALIVE**

**BUT IT IS NOT YOUR  
FRIEND OR LOVER  
AND YOU KNOW THIS  
ON A WINTER DAY  
HOLDING YOUR  
GLASS IN BOTH  
HANDS  
YOU KNOW THIS  
BECAUSE FIRE  
YOU CAN GET BACK  
ANY TIME IT GOES  
AWAY**

**JACK COOPER**



marco

**HAPHAZARD  
TRAILS**

As the tide comes in  
with its foam and  
flotsam  
covering the sand  
ripples  
and breathing new  
life  
for the sand crabs,  
memories fly back  
like sparrows  
to a far off nest.

Foot prints in the  
wet sand  
last only as long as  
the  
next equal wave  
and I am jarred  
by staring at the  
distant horizon.

I think of the long-  
ago atrocities  
perpetrated over  
there—  
beyond our view.  
Here, in our view  
lies haphazard trails  
that, in their haste,  
cross themselves  
in a vain attempt  
to learn the way.

As the tide comes in  
and the dirty foam  
touches my feet,  
I kick it away  
and think of my life  
as a carefree child.

Bill Gunn

**LETTER TO THE EDITORS**

LOS ANGELES TIMES

January 9, 2024

Dear Editors

Los Angeles, my former home,  
is a vibrant city, of course,  
bursting with opportunity  
and creative energy, but, as  
the current fires  
demonstrate, it operates  
with little environmental  
oversight or a core vision  
of sustainability. If there  
is any blame for this  
inferno, it's us and our  
short-term focus on  
individual comfort,  
convenience and wealth  
rather than on a shared  
responsibility for a livable  
future.

Jack Cooper

**WHO'S TO BLAME?**



TEXT BY MARTHA ELLEN

BENZO BRAIN #1

“IT’S A CHEMICAL IMBALANCE  
IN THE BRAIN.” AD COPY FROM  
DON DRAPER. I BOUGHT IT. AN  
ALMOST MOUSE SCAMPERS  
ACROSS THE FLOOR. A NATIVE  
WOMAN WITH SAUCER EYES.  
SHE’S NICE. SOMEONE IN THE  
KITCHEN PLAYS YOU SUFFER BY  
NAPALM DEATH. A FIREFLY SMILES.  
WHO KNEW? ADORABLE. DOC  
SAYS UP DOSE FOR TWO WEEKS.  
STARS IN THE LIVING ROOM. KURT  
COBAIN HOVERS. “HI. MISS YOU.”  
“MOMMY I CAN STILL CRAWL!”

BENZO BRAIN #11

IT’S BRAIN DAMAGE. ARMS  
TWISTED AGAINST MY CHEST.  
FISTS WITH FINGERS TWITCHING.  
LEGS KICKING ALL NIGHT LONG.  
CAN’T STRAIGHTEN MY LEFT  
KNEE.  
HOBBLE TO THE JOHN. PISS ON  
THE  
FLOOR. SHIT ON THE SHEETS.  
FROZEN  
SOLID UNDER ELECTRIC BLANKET.  
FEET WENT NUMB WITH ONLY  
ELECTRIC JOLTS AT EACH  
PAINFUL  
STEP. I’M CAPTAIN AHAB!  
SHIVER  
ME TIMBERS. SHUFFLE. SHUFFLE.  
STUMBLE. SHUFFLE. FALL. HELP!  
I’VE FALLEN AND I CAN’T GET UP!

BENZO BRAIN #12

I CAN’T SUBTRACT, MULTIPLY OR  
DIVIDE. I CAN ADD USING MY  
FINGERS LIKE I WRITE A HAIKU.  
I STUTTER. I SMILE AND PRETEND  
EVERYTHING IS JUST FINE. I SHOW  
MY FRIEND A PHOTO FROM MY  
“CLOSED DOORS” COLLECTION.

“IT’S MY FAVORITE.” SHE LOOKS  
AT ME WITH PITY. SHE GIFTS ME  
HER OLD PHONE AND LEAVES.

BENZO BRAIN #7

I AM WEIGHTLESS, DRIFTING  
ON THE SOFTEST, FLUFFIEST  
CLOUD. I LOOK FOR ANGELS IN  
HEAVEN. FR. LANCE REACHES  
HIS HAND OUT PIERCING THE  
ILLUSION OF TIME, BRUSHING  
ASIDE THE DUST OF DEATH. I  
REMEMBER WASHING HIS FEET  
ON MAUNDY THURSDAY. I

KISSED  
HIS HAND ON EASTER MORNING.  
NOTHING HURTS. I AWAKE  
SOBBING.  
MY MOUTH IS FULL OF GRAVEL.

AFTER HER DIAGNOSIS

SIS CALLED. 11:00 PM.  
SHE NEEDED A PEN.  
[SHE DOESN’T KNOW.]  
I DREAM OF A COUGAR  
SLEEPING NEXT TO ME.  
DON’T MOVE A MUSCLE.  
SLOWLY I COVERED MY  
JUGULAR WITH MY  
HAND.  
THE MOST I COULD DO.



RIMAN



# FEATURED! POET

## The mermaid in a cloud of fairies

Do you see that little girl, legs  
wrapped under her, looking over  
her shoulder sat  
on the rock round which  
dolphin sport  
and small waves dance at play?

Who would behead such a  
beauty?

Did you see the Fantasia which  
was the light of Maya herself  
in cinemascope  
and wide screen  
where the fairy girls all in  
Grecian dress  
play on bubbling Waters  
cloaked in lily pads,  
made damp by the fog  
of chilly spray  
sweet on the cheek  
and diaphanous?

Some who see the graceful play  
of female limb slender and  
pale  
as milk white carnation  
blank their eyes as if dust got  
in them  
and frown to see the graceful  
curve of bosom!

I don't know what devil got into  
them.  
Who would shame the pretty  
children  
or lay chains of words upon  
their women?

Such flowers are made by heaven.  
and I would speak up for  
that/a flower who/that  
speaks/speaks up  
for the beauty of the garden.

Leo Rivers

## Touch the Heart

The heart has four portions -  
one's son, touch the heart,  
one's daughter, touch the heart,  
one's father, touch the heart,  
one's mother, touch the heart.

One's thoughts are the fragrance  
of one "from whom we had to part",  
go hence we too  
through death, through to  
tomorrow's curtain part.

The sunrise in the blue sky,  
the moon rise in the constellations  
roll.  
A wheel rolling Without End, my  
friend,  
raise your hand and touch the heart

Leo Rivers

## The way to Love Her?

Welcome your  
sister creature  
who upholds you  
in embrace.

Behold her with  
Gentleness.  
Show her  
Gratitude  
with Grace.

Leo Rivers

## We Who Go Before the Empty Throne of God

How does the wind know which leaves to  
take?

How does a leaf  
know when to go with the Wind?

As a hand in a glove does a God's  
thoughts  
fill the infinite fingers  
of the Wind on a windy day?

When the wind lays on the waters  
are the waves their children?  
Or can the eagles see the stars  
reflected in them?

I do not believe the words that are the  
spittle  
of the angry cannon  
or that there is guilt in children  
equal to the stones the bombs  
have cast upon them.

Those who protest, priests and  
politicians  
are like three dogs  
playing with a kitten.

I do not listen to them.  
The angry lies or explanations.  
Their words are bubbles of confusion  
falling from the jaws

of a red and rabid dragon.

Leo Rivers

## A Simple Good Wish

(a response to a prayer by  
Ayyā Khemā)  
\*3

May we all be free  
from hatefulness.  
May all beings be  
free from harm.  
Free of disease and a  
troubled mind,  
may we go in Peace  
and Calm.

Leo Rivers



Morgan Smith



# TRIPTYCH

Stephen Swiftfox

**Four** days in ICU overtaken by sepsis and keeping a few steps ahead of darkness with full life support. Thirty three years old. Me, adjoining room, not sleeping, eating, but well into second-guessing. Team of five doctors finally realizing what is happening, team leader tells me that I 'should pray for a miracle'. I punch her out, much out of my character and not even remembering until the hospital lawyer shows up along with the ethicist.

A friend takes my arm, says that I need to take a break, eat, bathe, change clothes. I ride in her car blind to the city that never sleeps. Guilty in the shower. It feels so good, a good guilt? Can't eat, it all comes up. Remedied by doing our Buddhist evening prayers. There I 'saw' a golden sphere with soft edges approaching me from behind. It touched my back and I felt warm, it progressed into my chest-heart, I felt joyous. "Everything will be all right. It's all OK." I was overcome, it was joyously comforting. The sphere continued its path and I saw it leave my chest and wink out before me. Tons of guilt had been lifted from me. I repeatedly tapped Barbara on her right shoulder. She stopped chanting and looked at me with questions. I dismissed them and said that "We have to go to the hospital, now! It's all OK. It's great. Things are wonderful."

Our ride was silent but I was unable to stop speed talking about how everything is now ok. I'm sure she thought I'd cracked. She parked, I ran in to ICU looking for Donna in her glassed-in isolation room. An abrupt halt. She was just the same. Swollen, purple, intubated. Have I been betrayed by delusions?

Went to my room where the 24/7 Buddhist friends looked after me. I did not tell them of the sphere, not just then. I told them that I was filled with a sense of completion, of relief. That everything is now OK until now. Silence. Guilt about my shower and how good it felt, the relief of the stinging feet and stinking body. I should have remained here. I should have seen what moved or changed in my absence? Would I have 'seen' it here? Did I lose the thread?

A few hours later one of the team comes into the room and approaches me. He has papers. No hope. Go from heroic measures to letting go. Draw down the sedative, extubate her, watch life support cease. Let her go. I snap to the present reality. I become clinical again. Triaging

countless adults and children trapped, maimed, burned, crushed, by their cars or seeing tissue and brain matter smeared on the highway. I can do this. Done it before. Whisper what comforting words that I have to the dead and dying. I look at her in the glass room and understand.

A bail out! I ask, "Couldn't her parents sign the papers?" Makes total sense to me. They've known her longer and more intimately than me. "No. You are the husband." Clinical act. Ok, Sign multiple sheets on a black clipboard.

In the glass room. Donna has been extubated. Monitors still monitor. No struggle. Last breath. Alarms alarm. I turn them off. Being clinical again. Watch Donna die.

Resting at our Buddhist community center. Chanting. For her repose, my sanity, and forgiveness for any hurt that I may have caused her. Then... it doesn't quite 'hit me' as it encloses me in a tightly wrapped flannel comfort that during the previous night's evening prayers Donna had come to me as she passed onto her next life and told me in warming tones that it was all wondrous, she was happy, I did the best I could with my limited resources. My body relaxed. The clinical left and I wept for joy.

2

My fourth or sixth expedition to Mongolia. Just Chimgee multi-tasking as my best friend, translator, guide, and confidant. A 4-wheel drive, driver, and supplies. 604,000 square miles, size of 4 Californias. Population density <5 per square mile.

We're heading South, a long way South. The Gobi Desert and the Gobi Forest. Bet ya didn't think that there was one. It's there, it ain't much, and I love it too.

The camp we stay in. Small dot in emptiness. My ger is like any other. We have a central dining area in the camp. The "fridge" for the food is a stair-cased descent under the desert floor. An elderly cook, 2 camp workers, and a young woman.

In Mongolia privacy is a funny thing. You live in a yurt, a ger, you have visitors, they just walk in. When I do my chanting of morning and evening prayers a number of locals come in and watch. They know I'm an anomaly, white, Buddhist, no hurry to go anywhere.

The young girl, Emujiin, granddaughter of the

cook, travels with her grandmother who cooks for various camps all over the country side. During the school year she lives with her single mom in Ulan Baatar. Emujiin hears me chanting, she walks in listens and watches. We soon become companions. After days of exploration, dinner and chanting and our habit is to walk around the camp. Emujiin speaks only Mongolian, I English. No matter, over time we each know what the other is saying. A communication over lifetimes, heart, and as if we've never been apart.

One early evening, walking, I start chanting, I hear her chanting. I stop and turn. Emujiin walks up close to me. We face each other, chanting. She places her hands on either side of my face, chanting. I raise my hands and place them on her glowing cheeks. Time takes a respite. Chanting, looking into each other's eyes. In a flash, I see all of our past lives together through her deep brown eyes. Her brows rise, she sees, I assume the same. Tears flood her eyes, mine too, with recognition. The centuries, the millennia, all the forms, genders, places but all anchored in Mongolia. Chanting, re-connecting, crying with recognition and joy. To finally be together again.

Broken off, grandmother is calling Emujiin to help with dinner. We both shake off the shawl of our togetherness and head back to camp.

Time to leave. Emujiin is in my ger as I pack. She's speaking at a remarkable pace. She does help me load the vehicle, but with stubbornness and a flare of anger. Chimgee, the driver and I are trying to beat the incoming sand storm. I look at Emujiin, not knowing what to do, where she will go, and the diminished chances of us seeing each other again in this lifetime. Only looking at each other, the world disappears. Snap. Chimgee's voice tells the importance of leaving before the storm hits. I get in the car. Emujiin's hand on my window, leaving an open streak through the dirt.

We finally drive slowly off. Emujiin chases us crying, waving, finally shouting. I look back as my life's skin peels off and stays behind.

3

Mia, my service dog, took ill suddenly. Vet made her comfortable with warm blankets. In a few moments she passed in my arms before the sedation even took place.

Scheduled doctor's visit. My friend Hailey, the NP, greeted me by saying, "Steve, you look like shit." I could only whisper that I'd just lost Mia. During the exam Hailey told me of a young German Shepherd that needed immediate rescuing. Knuckle-head Steve responded "I'm getting a Golden Retriever, I don't want a German Shepherd." Hailey countered by saying that this young female Shepherd had been beaten by its owners and needed help now. Fine.

Drove up to see Daisy. My god, what a magnificent animal. She was shy but walked right up to me. She's "it" I thought. She loaded up into the car and seemed to enjoy the 2 hour ride home. Upon arrival she checked out the house, my bed for comfort, then used the doggie door.

Months seemed to melt us together. Classes were difficult as Daisy had a lot of trauma to forget. She easily sensed mine and pressed herself close whenever I was about to have an episode or difficulty. An oddity, I kept calling her Jitters, the name of a previous rescue, a quirky female Border Collie. No matter how conscious I was about calling Daisy, Jitters kept popping out of my mouth.

Hot and windless day. I grabbed Daisy's rake and brush as she trotted outside to be groomed. It was therapy for both of us. A question occurred to me between brushstrokes. I asked Daisy, "Daisy, I keep calling you Jitters. Why is that? Are you really Jitters come back to me?" Garden chimes rang. I turned around. Two shepherd's hooks each having a large set of chimes. One pole was rocking back and forth with the chimes tickling the air. There was not a breath of wind. The pole next to it was still. Daisy was stock still just staring at me with infinite brown eyes. Never had a dog that answered to two names.

## Our History by the walking historian Randy Gudeika



Warning... this one's a bit grim! Just northwest of W 8th & Oak, amid the trees in front of downtown Eugene's Farmers Market Pavilion, lies the unmarked site of a hanging. Lane County's first legal execution. On Friday, May 12, 1899, young Claude Branton was marched out of the county jail, which in those days was close by, over to the newly-built wooden scaffold. In June 1898, Branton and his friend Courtland Green had shot wealthy cattleman John Linn in the heart, at Isham's Corral 15 miles east of McKenzie Bridge.

They thought the old man had a thousand dollars in cash on his person, cash they both needed to marry their girlfriends. Immediately after the murder, Branton chopped up Linn's body with an axe and threw it into a bonfire. Apparently, while he waited for the flames to consume the evidence and as Linn's pet dog was howling in fright, Branton sat and played his harmonica in the moonlight. After Sheriff William Withers discovered evidence implicating him, including the bloody axe, a guilt-ridden Green turned state's evidence. Convicted in November 1898, Claude Branton waited in the county jail for 6 months while his appeal was denied. During the wait, he read the Bible, experienced a conversion, and was baptized in a borrowed bathtub. On the gallows he told 50 witnesses: "I hope people will learn a lesson from this and tread the right path. I hope to meet you all in the other world" (Eugene Guard, 1924).

MORE: See "Beautiful McKenzie" by Leroy B. Inman, 1996.



## Modern cutlery

They expect us to eat with plastic utensils  
Even our food contains plastic  
Micro-plastics  
No See-ums

What is this world coming to?

Plastic peanuts?  
Phoney baloney!

Even the fork in the road is plastic  
Leaving us to twist in the wind.

We are so forked.

Cindy Salter





# Turn it up!

by Joe Butler



I recently had a friend tell me that he "didn't care for live music." The audio quality isn't as good as the album mix, the stage patter between songs is obnoxious, so on and so forth. Blasphemy, I say! In honor of rock legends who left this earth much too soon, today's column is dedicated to a few incredible live albums whose sound was incomparable.

## Live at the Fillmore East



### Band of Gypsies

Released: February 23, 1999  
Tracks: 16

Jimi's lesser known 3-piece band who delivered all the feeling without losing that authentic Hendrix sound.

This quintessential Hendrix album captures the legendary performance by Jimi, Buddy Miles, and Billy Cox on New Year's Eve 1969 and New Year's Day 1970. I love this album because of its blues and funk inspiration, which is quite different from the better-known Jimi Hendrix Experience sound. Notable tracks include "Machine Gun," "Who Knows," and "Changes," which highlight the band's raw energy and powerful live presence.

## Life (Live Album)



### Thin Lizzy

Released: October 16, 1983  
Tracks: 19

So much more than "The Boys are Back in Town", this album shows how much this band truly rocks.

This double album released in 1983 hits pretty hard for an Irish rock band. It captures the band's final tour performances, featuring classic hits like "The Boys Are Back in Town," and "Jailbreak," but my favorites are "Holy War," and "Got to Give it Up." The album showcases the band's energetic live presence, screaming double guitar solos and lead singer Phil Lynott's incredible vocals.

## Quietly Now!



### Frightened Rabbit

Released: October 21, 2008  
Tracks: 12

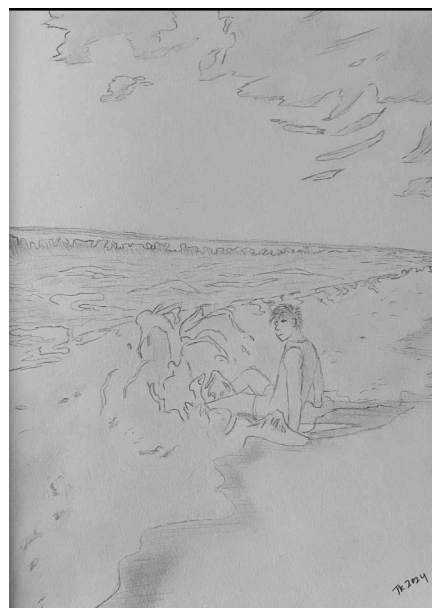
Thought of as a throw-away recording by the group, this album masterfully showcases the band's stripped down melodies and vocals.

Recorded at The Captain's Rest in Glasgow, this acoustic recording of critically acclaimed album "The Midnight Organ Fight" features stripped-down versions of favorites like "The Modern Leper," and "My Backwards Walk," but my favorite is "Head Rolls Off." The space's intimate setting truly highlights lead singer Scott Hutchison's emotional depth and deep lyricism in a most palpable way.

## AMORCITO ERA UNA MONJA

Preparo café  
Por la ventana se  
asoma mi gata  
Trae la muerte en su  
boca

Jesus Sepulveda



by Tommie K

## PARADE

for maRco

When we met at the gallery of  
so-so art  
I didn't have any of my books  
to autograph for you

but I did have a zucchini from  
the garden  
and you suggested I sign it  
instead

but the idea was interrupted  
by the parade of inner lives

revealed in the way people  
walked  
the reticent

the determined  
the fearful

our own flaws  
diminishing with every laugh  
we shared

the truculent  
the depressed

the nonchalant  
which was your word

pronounced nasally in French  
your first language

We mimed the different leg  
actions  
as we danced back to our bikes

then rode our separate ways  
home  
vowing another catharsis  
again soon

Jack Cooper

## Cellulae

From Welsh gyda / with  
From Dutch vriend / friend  
From Japanese の / no  
From Old English blyscan /  
blushing  
From West Frisian jitte / yet  
From Greek elpis / hope  
From Gothic faur / for  
From Turkish sığınma /  
refuge  
From Burmese နှစ် / two  
From Zulu ukwabelana /  
share  
From Spanish pozos / wells  
From Corsican di / of  
From Tibetan རང་ / self  
From Dinka ye rot  
dhuoꞌkciëë/  
reverberating  
From Mongolian дамжуулан /  
through  
From Māori ratou / their  
From Latin cellulae / cells

## Parker Moses



Parker Moses



PAYING HOMAGE TO PAUL DRESMAN, A COMMITED GRAFFITI CONTRIBUTOR. HE ASKED FOR THIS POEM TO BE PUBLISHED. TRANSLATED IN FRENCH BY F.D

Pegasus in the Rain

Before Jim Morrison died in a bathtub in Paris, aping Jean-Paul Marat, singing  
along to Marat/Sade—  
"We want the revolution and we want it now!"—  
he once rode a motorcycle  
down the aisle of a poetry reading  
at California Western College, Point Loma, gunning the engine, drunk and  
disorderly.

It was the Sixties, and  
I guess he had a dream about poetry flying high on a gasoline horse.  
But what is poetry? Is it a line of words?  
Or a long, tall wall? Is it a flight of starlings turning and turning in a  
murmurance,  
one of those vatic shapes that flash overhead and disappear as fast as they  
ever happened?  
Maybe just a pop in the night on July 4th or 14th when fireworks explode  
everywhere.

In Paris, there's a long, tall wall along Rue Férou  
with Arthur Rimbaud's "Le Bateau ivre" painted on stone, a ferocious one-  
hundred-line poem that leaves you dizzy. Looking up and reading it in the  
narrow street,  
you're cast adrift, a drunken boat along a river of words that makes a blank  
wall feel hungry for poetry,  
even for insatiable graffiti, rap's nasty brother that can turn into art with  
art market gluttony.

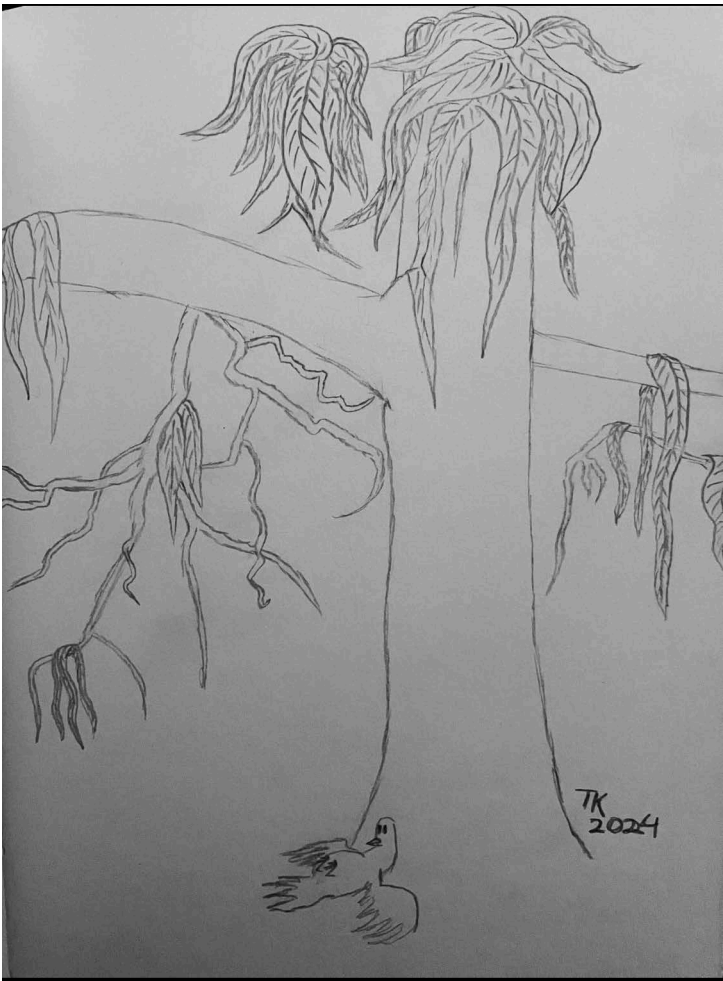
Does a lyrical ride in a river by a teenager deserve a wall? Fantastic Floridas  
dangle to attest like and kind. See Jim's arrest— indecent exposure in front  
of thousands on a stage in Miami with a wall of sound. Nobody but the police  
saw such a thing.  
No wonder poet-singers go bonkers and leave for the Left Bank—just as the  
French kid  
from the countryside arrived to recite the poem in a nearby restaurant, age  
17, a poem  
he wrote when he was 16, July, 1871.

On July 3, 1971, exactly one-hundred years after Rimbaud wrote his poem,  
Morrison climbed into a bath and—voilà!—  
he was transformed  
before he could ever again say: "This is the End, my friend..."

Not even enough time for a last cigarette. No farewells from the ramparts of  
Paris.

In Père Lachaise Cemetery on December days  
when endless rains obscure the names, Jim Morrison's  
grave stone resembles Arthur Rimbaud's wall, the boat mimes the cradle, the  
rocking cradle apes the womb, and the tomb is at the root  
of the drunken tooth, the stone cutter's chisel.

Paul Dresman



Tommie K

Pégase sous la pluie

Avant que Jim Morrison ne meure dans sa baignoire  
à Paris, singeant Jean-Paul Marat,  
en chantant avec Marat/Sade—  
« On veut la révolution  
et on la veut maintenant ! »—  
il traversa en moto  
l'allée d'un récital de poésie  
à California Western College, Point Loma, le moteur  
vrombissant  
ivre, troublant l'ordre public.

C'était les années 60, et  
je crois qu'il avait rêvé de poésie  
chevauchée défoncée sur un cheval à essence.  
Mais la poésie qu'est-elle ? Une ligne de mots ?  
Ou un mur long et haut ? Un vol d'étourneaux  
qui tournent et s'en retournent dans une murmurance,  
une de ces figures vatiques qui apparaissent  
et disparaissent aussi vite qu'elles se forment ?  
Peut-être juste un éclat la nuit du 4 ou du 14 juillet  
quand partout les feux d'artifice détonnent.

A Paris dans la rue Férou sur un mur haut et long  
« Le Bateau ivre » de Rimbaud est peint sur la pierre,  
féroce poème de cent vers qui donne le vertige.  
Tu regardes et tu lis dans la rue étroite,  
Tu dérives, bateau ivre le long d'un fleuve de mots  
qui donne faim de poésie à un mur nu,  
et même faim de graffiti insatiable, méchant frère du rap  
qui se change en art avec une gloutonnerie marchande.

La balade lyrique d'un adolescent sur un fleuve  
mérite-t-elle un mur ? La quille d'incroyables Florides  
est témoin en tout genre. Voir l'arrestation de Jim—  
pour outrage à la pudeur devant des milliers  
sur une scène à Miami avec un mur du son.  
Personne n'a rien vu, sauf la police.  
Pas étonnant que les poètes-chansonniers deviennent fous et  
s'en aillent  
rive gauche—tel le gamin français  
de la campagne venu réciter son poème  
à 17 ans dans un resto du coin,  
poème écrit quand il en avait 16, en juillet 1871.

Le 3 juillet 1971, cent ans exactement  
après que Rimbaud écrivit son poème, Morrison  
prit un bain et —voilà !—  
il se transforma  
avant de pouvoir jamais dire à nouveau  
« This is the End, my friend... »

Pas même le temps pour une dernière cigarette.  
Pas d'aurevoirs depuis les parapets de Paris.

Au cimetière du Père Lachaise en décembre  
quand la pluie sans fin obscurcit les noms, la tombe  
de Jim Morrison ressemble au mur d'Arthur Rimbaud, le bateau  
imite le berceau  
le berceau à bascule singe la matrice, et la tombe est à la  
racine  
de la dent ivre, burin du tailleur de pierre.

Trans. FD



Marcel Tulloh



Questions for My Daughter

Do you speak to your dead father in your dreams?  
Does he still have the ventilator down his throat,  
forcing him to breathe? Do you pant with him,  
for over a minute, like a beagle on a too-long walk  
during the dog days of August? Do you color his skin  
blue with the chalk dust of your remembering? Do you  
shave his hospital beard with your pink razor?  
Do you spread shards of broken glass on the floor,  
your personal act of revenge, to snare the soles  
of his diabetic feet? Do you read and reread  
the obituary he wrote during Covid, knowing  
his co-comorbidities could consume him?  
Can you still hear him laugh? Tell those knock-knock  
jokes?  
Do you help him find his lost keys, his lost phone, his  
lost shoes,  
his lost umbrella? Do you see him walking the  
perimeter  
of the swamp in a hail storm, tallying the minutes  
until he can see you again? Do you roll his  
compression socks  
up over his ankles? Do you sew buttons onto his work  
shirts?  
Hem his cuffed trousers? Fetch him a diet Coke  
from the Speedway gas station? Did you dress him -  
pull his Superman t-shirt over his head - before  
he was cremated? Are you still outside his locked door,  
begging him for a goodnight story? Are you still  
banging your feet agaisnt his closed door?

Marianne Peel

A Loveliness of Ladybugs

There were days when she spoke in fragments,  
in sentences minus verbs,  
sometimes just a stammering of adjectives.  
  
Is my daughter telling me  
about trees or rocks or clouds?  
Or the gravel path  
that was just an idea of a road?  
  
Her pockets filled with shriveled leaves  
and lint. With orange berries  
and pussy willow buds  
smooth as a caterpillar.  
Worry beads in her pocket.  
  
Once I made a burgundy fleece robe  
for her. Sewed strings into the pockets.  
Something for her thumb and forefinger to twirl.  
All that friction firing  
just under her touch.  
  
Last month she counted eleven ladybugs  
on her windowsill. She worried  
if they got too close to the radiator,  
their wings would melt.  
She named one Icarus,  
and all the others "I" names:  
Isabella, Ingrid, Ivy, Iris, Imogene,  
Irene, Ida, Ivanna, Ivory, and Iliana.  
  
She turned the heat off for a week,  
determined to protect this cluster  
from the hiss and spit of the radiator.  
  
They will bring me luck, she told me.  
  
Last winter she found a brown house moth  
clinging to her kitchen window.  
She fed her with cotton balls  
doused in sugar water. Flakes of oatmeal.  
  
Nothing ever dies, she tells me,  
if you tend to the business of living

Marianne Peel

Untitled

That's why they put cracks in the sidewalk.

Love when established feels plenty physical,  
tangible as the pavement and puddles my feet patter  
against as I run from the daunting hurricane of my  
own mind.

I tear across miles of shattered glass fields  
searching for refuge for my bloodied soles and  
battered back, ripped apart by the memories and  
events thrashing throughout the storm, jumping at  
me; resembling talons of a thousand clawed raven.

I run. I run for my life. I'm tired of this storm  
choosing my direction for me. Beginning to lay down;  
accepting my efforts for how far I've traveled on  
this chase, albeit for nothing if I continue to lay  
my head.

There I lay, fingers chewed to the cuticle; pulled out  
hair surrounding my destroyed body. Light strikes  
my eyes, burning hotter than 10 Canis majoris  
supernovas. Is this what my trek has lead me to?

Her eyes were the  
very first thing  
to come into  
fruition; golden  
at the core,  
spreading to a  
pale yet  
prominent green,  
and trickling to  
a faint blue hue  
to close the  
circle.  
Perfection. My  
soul throws my  
head on the  
lifeless body in  
which I own and  
drags me to her  
light. The cold  
begins to leave  
my nerves, am I  
dead? I reach  
the source of  
this blazing heat,  
enough strength  
to balance my  
detached head on  
my upright  
shoulders. The  
embrace courses  
through my very  
existence, cuts  
disappearing from  
my person as I  
lift off the  
ground; I am  
alive.

anonymyous

The Pallbearers

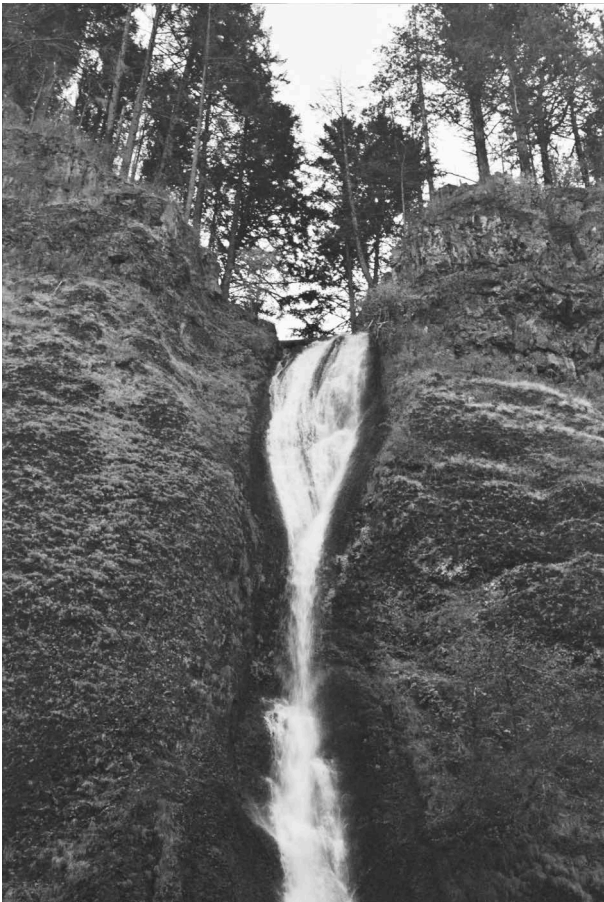
I stand before you now  
Mind blank and soul restless  
In a home of grief  
  
Grief for the love lost  
Among sacred breaths and burning tears  
Grief for a legacy that is just beginning  
Even though it feels more like an  
ending  
  
We are those that are left behind  
Privileged to carry the weight  
That has been dropped at our feet  
Gentle and frightening  
  
This burden,  
The cost of our devotion, our loyalty  
For the man who started it all  
The one who taught us to love and to  
laugh  
Even with his last breath  
  
The one who defeated the odds  
Who went down with a fight  
  
He brought us up  
Stood us high on our own two feet  
Stepped up to the plate for his family  
Now, so will we  
  
We will take up the mantle he placed at  
our feet  
Earnestly and without fear  
To continue what has been started  
Shrouded between layers of mist and  
sorrow  
In the home of our grief  
  
Brielle Kesselring-Rigney

The Portal

On with the dance  
Unconfined joy  
Carnival of dreams  
Magic flows  
  
All work  
Led by heart  
  
Delicate spirals  
Life's mysteries  
Intricacies  
  
This girl's got a lot to  
say  
She probably will never  
behave.  
  
Fergul Cirpan







REDTOWN MINING CAMP

Veins of coal sink toward the water table;  
my veins settle deep in my own maze-like seas.

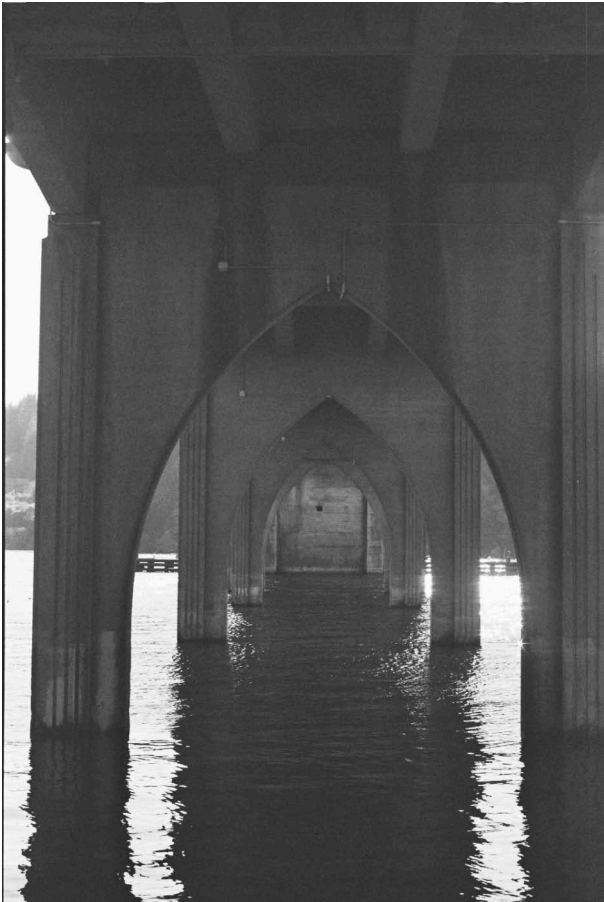
We stumble the rooted leaf-muck paths  
amid new ferns and brilliant furry buds.

Ghost machinery limned in moss and runner, mythic structures flung in the woods for hikers to ponder.

One day, down came sawmills and railways; now only trail signs  
on the mountain point toward errant chimneys and flumes.

From this hill the trees were to be stripped,  
and via our intrepid machinery build our cities.

Sean Bentley



THE HAT NAMED CEILING

How thick the water is tonight. Whiskers of fire grow  
around the eyes of wild birds who stalk the surf  
as I watch their path diminish into the sea.

I know their steps are covered by air and water  
and yet  
no matter where I step the stones are the same stones; but

what salmon are, as they burn their lives out  
along the fuse of stream,  
is open to question – egg? Flame? Story? As if I am  
the hat named ceiling, the egg known as flame.  
Stop me

before I smoke away like a glowering rag of coal, a bit  
of old earth broken off sheerly as a wrecked train. Surely

the muck around rootlets is as wondrous  
as the petals, surely clams in the beach  
as brilliant as suns upon the shores of space.

Sean Bentley



Photography by Angie Butler

I HOPE THEY ARE WELL

I can still smell the fumes  
of the burnt villages  
deep in the jungle.  
I can still hear the screams  
of the innocent tormented  
people that hated us,  
and just wanted to  
be left alone.

And now,  
after forty five years  
I can feel the angst  
of the people that held out  
for a distant hope.  
A hope for their family and friends.

A hope that life would get better.  
A hope that they would live  
to hold their grandchildren  
and push them in a swing.

I hope that the survivors  
are doing well.

Bill Gunn

BLUE LAKE

It must have been Blue Lake  
in the Cascades where we saw  
all the pollywogs.  
Some family member  
took a picture  
of my daughter and me,  
cheek to cheek, smiling  
and looking pretty happy,

This portrait, a glossy,  
color eight by ten  
hangs above my bed  
as a reminder  
to this old bastard  
that there are  
important things in life  
that should be  
well attended to.

Bill Gunn

I am an Atheist

the fear of god, his  
kiss stains my skin  
scarification  
I'm not a christian  
yet I fear I do not feel  
deeply  
the general census weep  
in agony  
shout in excitement,  
heavy head laid, knees  
bent and squished  
together  
I surrender!  
god please grant me the  
serenity to feel things  
without a veritgo  
diagnosis  
to not crumble like the  
great civilizations  
a low swept tide  
floods my mind -  
metamorphosis  
noash arc  
yet I am the only one  
drowning

Sierra Maish

ON OVERHEARING BARKS FROM THE SEASIDE AQUARIUM

On concrete cots heap the seals;  
they whuff. They could,  
through tight grating,  
examine distant breakers.  
They do no such thing.

Years they've lain here,  
heaving away from the needless  
prod of memory. Gone,  
all, in constant dream.

Creamy waves; cod  
quick and red; rocks  
ragged with urchins;  
kelp; cormorants;  
the diving, diving far down,  
sailing  
the bottom like rays, into green,  
it is the diving they miss the  
most.

And fed bagged sardines, the pup  
born on cement who does not know  
the sea or his cellmates' fever,  
overlooked in quiet and dream-  
thick dusk,  
yelps to them Hello? Again,  
Hello? I'm here! Hello? Hello?

Sean Bentley



**Too Smart For Hope**

Sometimes I look at the way the sun beats the sidewalk and think:

"I can't keep living like this."

While the sun caresses my skin and makes me feel whole, it lashes every object it strikes, leaving dark shadows. When the sun hits a street corner, I am reminded of all the people, places, and things, we all run from and towards-Of all the places and times we wish to forget and those we wish to carve into our brains. I am reminded of the things I cannot control. Like the whispers, the pictures, the assaults.  
Assaults on not only me but on you too. **The assaults on our livelihood, Our food, our education. Our equality, our homes.**

The sun chews these absurd words and spits them out into the charred forests and onto our lonely streets. **The sun makes buildings scream, and street lamps cry, reminding them of the things they will never be.**

When I cry, I don't really cry. There is no more water left in the wells of my eyes. I buy eye drops instead. After I buy eye drops, I buy my prescriptions. With my prescriptions, I buy my sanity.  
I wish the sun didn't shine on our treat-based society. Without a \$5 biggie bag, what hope is there to have? Does it actually bring them joy, to lash around in cold sweats at night in their California Kings, after not even knowing what they were purchasing? When I hear someone who has it all, who has a pool and a house two stories tall, who is privileged to be hateful enough to vote for someone who wants me dead say:

"You're so young,  
You have so much time,  
There's no rush.  
Don't put so much pressure on yourself.  
Things will get better."

**I want to gut myself alive and drag my intestines along the sidewalk.**

Maybe for them, maybe even for you, time is an affordable purchase. But newsflash my friends, time is not for everyone. Time is a commodity, meant to be bought and sold and quite frankly, a product I am struggling to afford.  
Hope and time are allies and they are against those of us who have mostly enemies and whose best friend is a cloudy sky. When I unwrap hope, it tastes like caramel. I suck until there is nothing left and from my mouth a razor always falls. I hold this tool, coated in hope, and wonder: Is this truly my destiny, to die by this blade?  
My hope comes with hell, for some people, it comes with fortune. At the risk of losing it all, I have to be too smart for hope. Too smart for lies, too smart for false promises, too smart to believe in a piece of paper that says I have a degree. When I started working before I could drive, my father told me:

"I think it's important you struggle to survive."

I thought back on all the times he refused to buy himself new shoes and instead orders of large fries. In those moments, I realized why I hate the way the sun hits the world sometimes. All my hard work, per the promise of my father, has yielded to something but not nearly enough. The glass is half full, but my stomach is empty.  
Yet, a minuscule amount of time and money still gives me hope. I wonder if I'll get lucky and things will get better, like they do in the movies.

Or if I'm going to be stuck in the cycle of dread, running, believing that I have to be someone extraordinary, a prodigy even, to happily survive and thrive.

- How to get rich quick**
- How to start your own business**
- How to get noticed in the industry**
- How to establish a morning routine**
- How to work out**
- How to take a shower**
- How to not kill yourself**
- How to care about any of this when it's all trying to kill me**

Do they think we buy this shit? Some of us do. I wonder if some of you say:

"Maybe people like you aren't smart enough to hope."

I've given 17 years to academia, struggled to finesse and survive, graduated with 4.0's, lined my walls with newspaper zine, watched the debates, watched the shows, cried at the movies, read the books, thought about everything I learned, thought about my existence, decided it should've been a no-go, realized everything I realize is going to kill me someday

Drag all my demons through the streets and watch them throw plays. Peel my layered skin away to find what I'm looking for and when I find nothing I pick away at my arteries instead and wonder how much I can sell my heart for.

**Newsflash my friends, for people like me, things usually don't get better.**

Usually.

In spite of all this, I still have hope. Maybe people like me are stupid enough to hope.

While sometimes I believe the sun shines to make me feel special, other times, I believe, It likes to watch us suffer.

Next time you look at the way the sun hits a staircase railing, or a bridge, or a road, Remember that some of us think:

"I can't live like this anymore."

**RIMAN**



**maRco**



# On Conquering Manhood

My reign stretches  
the length of your body  
to tissue paper skin.  
This hair is spreading, I've grown it  
to conquer where you begin and end, your habitable  
land.

For one last hour, birthright monarch,  
let the pleasure confuse my judgment  
of these unfortified gates  
with a dear Eve's permissible triumph.

Between gasps of friendly fire  
Play along to this pretend as if  
I have any territory to own  
or the manpower  
to charge for yours.

You below me  
my army scrapes with fresh bitten blades,  
and a newfound rule  
will draw a line of ownership between us.

Ol' Liz has got a problem

Barricaded by the boxes  
and by the hoarded wicker.

I've stayed past my welcome;  
I don't think she minds it.

"Go 'head and take a seat"  
can be much harder than she thinks,

when the dining table is an amassment  
of every night guests,

and in every open spot,  
they've got me beat.

The coupon books are kind enough  
to offer up their place,

between assorted stale gumdrops  
and scavenged back alley crates.

Foam hair curlers join us  
with unfree hands

to push aside return receipts  
that'll never get the chance,

and with the bases of fancy sundae glasses,  
seal fine wood with rings.

Dimich

# Poem in Which I am Groomed by Sister Marie Charlene to be a Cloistered Nun

All moon face  
behind a scrim  
my breath supplication wheezing  
into the asthmatic silences I pray  
to a statue of a star-robed woman  
with bare blue feet,  
clematis-veins twining up her calves  
muslin rag bandanaed around  
her forehead.

I am the face behind  
the brick façade  
where schoolchildren  
insert wishes on wax paper  
between the chinks  
of mortar holding desires fast  
for days, until the slivers of stationery  
become rags devoured  
by a famished wind.

I gather the milk bottles  
inching my hand out  
the rat terrier flap door.  
Cold pasteurization  
succumbs to alabaster fingers  
around the neck of the bottle.  
I know how to whisk this cream  
into the raw eggs I will scramble  
for my silent sisters.

Give me a flask  
of communion wine  
with my flagellation stick.  
Wipe my mouth  
on the frayed hem of your habit.  
Mine brushes yours  
as we wordlessly navigate  
the tunnel maze beneath the convent.  
The way we each tuck our hair,  
everything secure beneath the wimple.  
I have never seen anyone's hair.  
Not even my own.  
There are no mirrors in our rooms.  
No looking glasses above the sinks.  
But I have spied myself  
in the chrome of the paper towel holder.  
And I avert my eyes, fingering the three knots  
in the long rope suspended from my waist.  
I pray one Hail Mail on the first knot of poverty,  
one Our Father on the second knot of chastity,  
and one Glory Be on the third knot of obedience.

I count my six and a half decade flesh  
at the Tuesday novena. My first liver spot:  
a tilted heart on the back of my hand.  
I grow old asymmetrically. A limp  
in my left knee. A creaking  
in my right hip. One restless leg  
startles me before morning vespers.  
My fellow sisters  
pray to St Anthony of Padua,  
the patron saint of lost items.  
They have misplaced skeleton keys,  
the lace table runner,  
the cork to the communion wine.  
The tannins billow into the room,  
refusing to be contained.  
I implore St Rita of Cascia  
to intercede. She reigns  
as the patron saint of hopeless causes.

Take and eat; this is my body.  
And I rise like compliant dough,  
wishing for palms to knead me  
in the pre-dawn dark. The rosary dangling  
from my side sways and snaps.  
In Gregorian Chant, I count the beads  
in choirs of tens. Sing a Dewy Decimal hymn  
for scattered baubles.  
Each Hail Mary wrapped in under-the-bed dust,  
in determined cockroaches that peck at them  
when the fluorescent light staggers  
whiskey wailing  
and bourbon caterwauling  
into the morning.

Marianne Peel



Angie Butler



# JACK AND JILL AND TIM AND SARAH

Peter Fenton

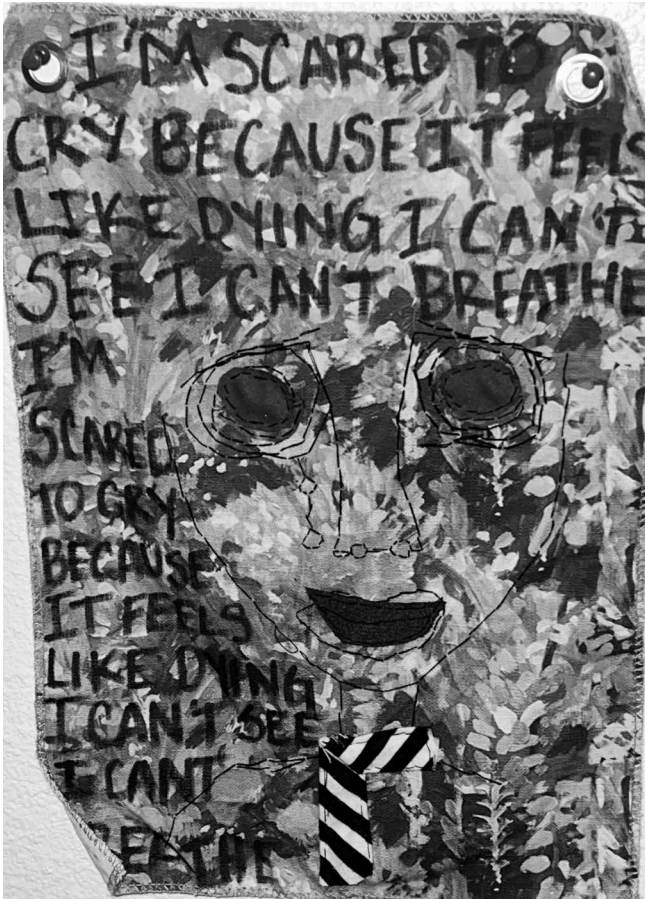
**ONCE** upon a time there was a couple named Jack and Jill. They had been married for 10 years and their relationship had become a bit dull. They had grown tired of each other's company and were finding it harder and harder to find things to talk about. One day, while out on a walk, they decided to liven things up by including a pair of imaginary friends. Jack's imaginary friend was named Bob and he was a wise-cracking trouble-maker. Jill's imaginary friend was named Sue and she was a sweet and nurturing old soul. While similar in age and attractiveness to Jack and Jill, Bob and Sue were each two feet taller than they were. At first, Jack and Jill were a bit skeptical about their new companions, but soon they found that their imaginary friends had breathed new life into their relationship. They found themselves laughing and having fun together again, all thanks to Bob and Sue. They would go on adventures with their imaginary friends and would even have them join them on date nights. They would tell each other about the things that Bob and Sue did and said and it brought them closer together. Bob and Sue were always by Jack and Jill's side, making sure that the spark in their relationship never died out. One would think that at this point Jack and Jill's marriage was saved and they lived happily ever after. Instead, conflict arose on multiple fronts: **\*Jealousy:** Jack and Jill's imaginary friends were always around, and they were starting to get jealous of the attention they were receiving. They felt like they were being replaced by their own creations. **\*Different interests:** Bob and Sue had different interests and personalities, which led to conflicts between Jack and Jill. Bob loved to go out and party while Sue loved to stay home and read. Jack and Jill found it hard to compromise and make plans together. **\*Secrets:** Bob and Sue were privy to Jack and Jill's inner thoughts and feelings, which led to some secrets being kept between them and their imaginary friends. This led to trust issues and arguments between Jack and Jill. **\*Dependence:** Over time, Jack and Jill became increasingly dependent on their imaginary friends for companionship and entertainment. This led to them neglecting their responsibilities and relationships in the real world. **\*Imaginary Friends' Agenda:** Bob and Sue had their own agenda and sometimes it conflicted with Jack and Jill's plans and goals. This increased

tensions and disagreements between them. **\*Reality vs. Imagination:** Jack and Jill found themselves struggling to differentiate between what was real and what was imagined. This led to confusion and frustration in their relationship. **\*Acceptance from others:** Jack and Jill's friends and family had a hard time accepting the idea of their imaginary friends, which led to isolation and alienation from their loved ones. **\*Control:** Jack and Jill found it hard to control their imaginary friends, and they often acted out in ways that Jack and Jill found embarrassing or inappropriate. The relationship had reached a breaking point. After considerable thought, Jack and Jill decided they needed a time-out from Bob and Sue. Bob and Sue were initially a bit disappointed. They enjoyed being a part of Jack and Jill's life and didn't want to lose the special connection they had with them. But as they saw the positive effects the changes had on Jack and Jill, they realized that it was for the best. They understood that Jack and Jill's relationship needed to come first and that they were just a fun addition to it, not a replacement. As time passed, though, Bob and Sue became increasingly dissatisfied with the new arrangement. They missed the closeness and attention they used to get with Jack and Jill and felt like they were being pushed to the sidelines. They started to feel neglected and unimportant, and this caused them to become resentful towards Jack and Jill. They began to act out and cause mischief in an attempt to regain their attention. Despite Jack and Jill's attempts to address the couple's concerns, Bob and Sue couldn't shake off their dissatisfaction. They started to feel like they were no longer needed in Jack and Jill's life and began to look for other ways to fill the void. Eventually, Bob and Sue decided to move in with Jack and Jill's neighbors, a couple named Tim and Sarah, who were more than happy to have them. Like Jack and Jill, Tim and Sarah had reached a low point in their relationship. Bob and

Sue saw an opportunity to fill that void as their imaginary friends. At first, Jack and Jill were relieved that Bob and Sue had found new pals. They understood that their imaginary friends needed to find their own way and happiness. Furthermore, they realized that their own relationship was strong enough to survive without them. Yet nothing is ever so simple. As Jack and Jill saw Bob and Sue's cozy new relationship with Tim and Sarah flourish, they couldn't help but feel a twinge of jealousy. They began to resent Tim and Sarah for taking their imaginary friends away from them and started to look for ways to subvert their relationship. They would often make negative comments about Tim and Sarah when Bob and Sue dropped by for a chat, hoping to plant seeds of doubt in their minds. They also started to compete with Tim and Sarah by trying to outdo them in activities and outings, in an attempt to show Bob and Sue that they were still fun and exciting to be around. Their efforts were in vain. Bob and Sue were happy in their new relationship and didn't want to be pulled back into the past. They were grateful to Jack and Jill for the time they had spent together but were looking forward to a bright future with Tim and Sarah. Jack and Jill eventually realized that their jealousy and resentment were only hurting themselves. Recognizing the futility of trying to subvert Bob and Sue's new relationship, Jack and Jill decided to take a different approach in dealing with the loss of their imaginary friends. They decided to "play the bar scene" so to speak and explore the possibility of finding new imaginary friends to fill the void. They started trying out new activities and hobbies, and meeting new imaginary people. Through these experiences, Jack and Jill discovered that there were many other imaginary friends out there, just waiting to be discovered. They found that by keeping an open mind and a positive attitude, they were able to connect with a diverse group of imaginary friends, with their own unique personalities and interests. Jack and Jill started to have fun again and to rediscover the joys of companionship. They also realized that by expanding their social circle, they were also expanding their own horizons and learning new things about themselves and the world around them. As they moved on, they looked back on their relationship with Bob and Sue with fondness and gratitude. They understood that it had been a special and important chapter in their lives, but that it was time to create new memories with new imaginary friends.

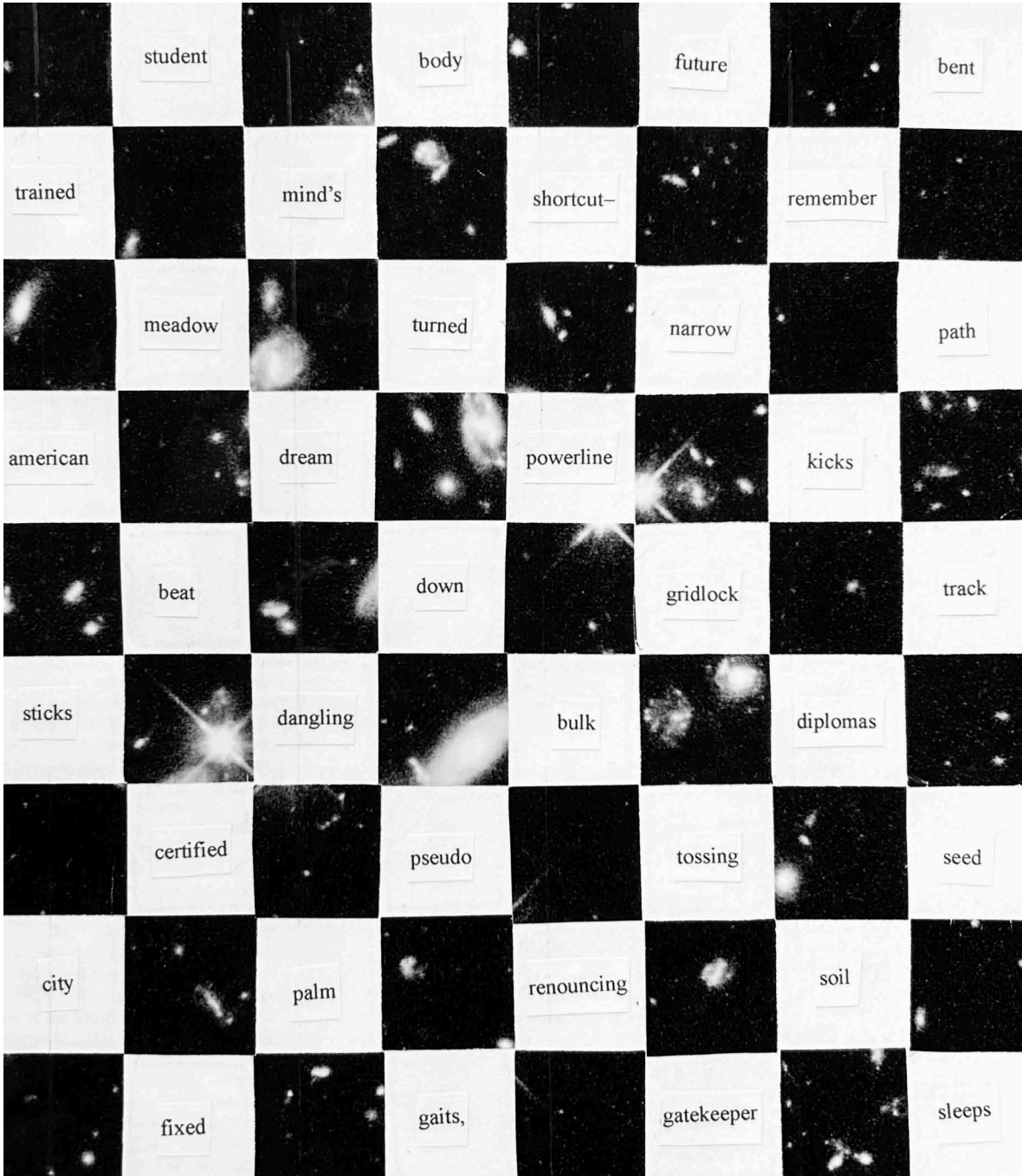


Cj Mitchell



Sierra Maish





Liz Kuhns