

EPIGRAPH

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Not to Get All Philosophical // Jordan Sanderson

In a mute universe,
it's somehow OK
that order doesn't
imply meaning.

The names are worn
out anyway. Anyway.
I enjoyed your solo,
your icy expertise.

The inaccuracy of
sunrise was also
touching. Essence
is a chocolate

exoskeleton, being
a nougat filling. Kids
used to like to toss
candy bars into pools

at peak hour. The water
soon came to rest.
Your lampshade needs
dusting, your sheets

airing out, your image
a sprucing. You don't
have to, but you could.

Alarm // Jordan Sanderson

It's a kind of swirling,
a shifting of weight,
an action-painting
as seen in stills.

A toreador's blood
flagging. A hitchhiker's
stump of a thumb.

A gardener's barren
bed. A kind of cramp
that comes from walking
too carefully.

A smile disappearing
into the wilderness
of a clerk's symmetrical face.

The Ghost of Your Coffee // Vaibhav Sutrave

sitting here staring thinking
about drinking
the ghost of your coffee.

in march the spring melt the snow
morning was spent watching your winter's cigarette butts
unburied (baking) on my porch.

remember this?: "Our idiot ancestors"
"who proudly proclaimed" "the earth was forgot"
"and we are alone" "and" "and we are happy? or something."

pretend was a dog that drinks Bushmills COLD
you always phased me in, was always out-of-it
wishyouame - we'd make it made: a scalding day trip in December.

for us(2)lonely)freaks of the franchise)
:what was my favorite wall to bash head against?:your head equally bashing
today my daily battle with balance now i BREAK my NOSE a LOT.

some here some now and in the middle of our carsick universe
asshole birds are being happy near me
could feel go 7 rounds for disappointing tko w/ man made of caralarms.

your cracked & bleeding loved looking good lower lip
the time you licked a bandaid & i couldn't play guitar cause i played
guitar too much
& the kind of bad jokes you liked made me stupid.

i want to fuck the
sky and somehow listen to music a
beer to break against my chest.

but really what did we ever do to the video store do to us?
and what was your coffee?
and why has it died on my porch?

Berlin Dramaturgie // Robert F. Gross

O Moon of Alabama!

above the Spree and beneath
the arches of early evening:

Hedy Lamarr
the Salvation Army lass

black against white
lips set against damnation

the glamorous foreign agent
tambourined
radared

(are you washed in the blood of the lamb?)

India ink insignia
of the sea-goat sketched
on her armband

(The kingdom is at hand!)

In this sign shall you conquer

voluptuous virtue

and must have a boy, o you know why!

"It's a bridge worth crossing when you come to it, sir" She tells me

as I pop
a handful of recollections from my pocket
into her mother-of-pearl poorbox

(hallelujah, Hedy!)

Under the bridge all the gossip whispers
carried along whiskey-whiskered and against the current

flaming nights
white-bricked labyrinth
of cities ruined glazed

amnesiac sirens river rats
who forget the words
all clear and wobble
Hallelujah!

and me with a ticket in my vest pocket
heading off to see Miss Sara Sampson
die of poison and applause in a rented bathtub
(Are you washed in your blood on the lam?)

stopping off at Vincent's
on the Schiffbauerdamm

arrested for a single smoky malt
and listen with one ear to Ella arabesquing Cole
in the still of the night

as the bar rumors under scars and bandages
palette knives and purgatory

'cause my daddy he treats it so well Miss Sara in a her small hotel

Surabaya Johnny and a Starry Starry Night

Outside Bert Brecht busted beneath

the furniture showroom billboard

rooks fly over Mahagonny and Marwood

and all the double agents of salvation *(hallelujah!)*

I enter the Berliner Ensemble

Kefalonia // Tasha Graff

These are not Don Quixote's giants:
Massive, churning, anachronistic machines—
white needles scraping an ocean of sky
above an ancient landscape.

A war was fought here.
Over there, where goats block the road,
an earthquake tore the mountain village.
Behind the whir, beside the tinkling bells,

a driver honks.
His attempts to move are futile.
Apricots fall plump from their branches,
the silver leaves of olive trees coruscate

the piping sun, as a gentle but persistent wind
gestures toward coolness.
A larger bell is tolling somewhere
but I can't hear it.

A Wren, a Bear and a Bicycle // Tasha Graff

for David Huddle

He sent me a picture with no note
but the imagined caw emanating
from the throat of a Carolina wren,
beak open, tongue splayed, caught
in between songs, gulping Roanoke air.

We lived in Vermont then.

I sent him a response, a brown bear,
betraying his massive size and growling
potential by lolling in a field, dining
on nothing but dandelions, fur veneered
in shadowed mountain New Hampshire sun.

I live in Barcelona now.

But today I am in Amsterdam.
I take a picture of snow falling
on a turquoise bicycle, with flowered
panniers and a plastic-bagged seat.
I send it to Oregon, to my brother: a flare

shot through the web, a hello, an I love you.

The Front Room // Tasha Graff

for Pete Coviello

Over beers and chicken tacos
with more spice than anticipated

you told me, *Bliss does not replace grief.*
I will learn, as you learned,

that happiness and sadness live in the same house,
sometimes nestled side by side,

sometimes on different floors
or just down the hall in another room.

We, too, are neighbors. We've moved
closer, each placing our lives into the banana boxes

I picked up at Shaw's and later checked for worms.
Tonight, you insisted that I would survive

even this, buoying my beaten heart until it glowed
like egg whites peaked in a cobalt bowl.

Procedure // Justin Parnell

i said i
want you to feel
breeze and fire
at our locus
sweat rain
in foothills

city is far
raster lights
or nature

dahlias
like mouths
blue on blue
and pines

red flares

A Soft Nightmare // Iman Byfield

Last night you were not a poet
teaching me poetics in a dream,

you were a car seeping into darkness
a weak hinge over an empty street
unattended children; furious water sounds
seeping into the blue green depths.
at that moment, you are beautiful
a still life of furious water sounds
a car seeping into darkness
a weak hinge over an open sea.

Both of Us, Alone // Valentina Cano

You're changing in front of me,
a constellation deciding to die.
I watch.
My pulse, a thread that has lost all
connection,
just a cricket's thrumming leg
in the dark.

Cowardly Choices // Valentina Cano

I'm making a habit
of skimming over thoughts.
I take a hot knife to the edges,
scooping up clotted films
as sour as old milk.
As impossible to swallow.
There must be a closet somewhere,
where these curdled words
can writhe together,
molding in patient silence.

Sorry Mom // Coleman Bishop

They
 blew UP
My damn country
 and
My damn family
My mother
 wants me
 to be a
Mathematician
 and
My father
 just does
 not want a
Faggot son
Now what if
 I did not
Want to be a
 Mathematician
And I already
 had straight sex
No worries there
 Pops
How am I going
 to honor my mother?
Well
 I
 am just
 going to become
an astronaut.

Excavation // Victoria Fryer

I've been digging up old bones from underneath
Buildings I have erected to contain you,
Trying to put you back together in my own image
Laying out the pieces of your skeleton and
 pressing into my skin
To figure out where all these puzzle pieces go

Your jawbone (what you would say?)
Your face (don't look away)
Femur, patella, tibia, fibia---baby, walk this way.

I've been tearing apart old memories I
constructed to reframe you
Trying to find us in the past that I've created
Memory is built solely by the beholder.
I colonized this tract of land and these
 bodies: this woman, this man.

But if the walls cave in from my
haphazard excavation, what other
ghosts will I set free, and will they be
 coming out swinging?

Time Machine // Joshua Lyon

That damn scourge on the shore
Soaring up to crack the sky
housing the flock in efficiencies
I miss the days of old
when saw grass waved
in the eastern sea breeze
or when Chinese lanterns
flew lambent in the night
and orange moons
rose over heavy seas
Treasures small and simple
but buried and gone

The Thoughts of My Mind When I Look at
Johannes Vermeer's 1658 Painting "The
Milkmaid", Which I Only See Kind of Randomly,
But Still // Rich Boucher

She's taking her sweet time
pouring that milk, I'll tell you what.

Somebody needs to do something
about that wall; it's all chipped and dingy.

She looks like she's about to slowly
open her eyes and look at me looking at her.

That black intercom above the basket
by the window; it seems out of place.

The bullet holes in the wall behind her
tell me that her neighborhood is bad.

She looks like she's about to slowly
open her eyes, see me there, and smile.

The foot warmer on the floor behind her
looks like an early, baby television set.

In a way that only I can understand,
that window looks very Dutch to me.

She looks like she's about to slowly
open her eyes towards the Dutch window.

There's no way she can be comfortable
wearing that top while milkmaiding.

I'd hate to think that wicker basket
on the wall is full of kittens, but there it is.

She looks like she's about to slowly
open her eyes, see me there, and scream.

Irvin Studies Horology // Douglas Luman

your hands shake
a gale force wind
trying to resuscitate
mechanical hearts
with screwdrivers
prodding rough teeth
connecting pendulum aortas

each adjustment made
causes you to pull back
swish iron flavors
around in the mouth
tasting the mettle in blood
you thought Carl
tasted before he bled out

you loved
to talk Regulators
on sweet tea afternoons
over scents of freshly cut
grass and your neighbor's
motor oil

but there was
one subject
that you never spoke of saying
it's not yo time to know

you hope to silence
memory by diving
into a clock
swimming
between gears
letting them pry
away skin
until it has confessed
muscle memory
of French hospitals
where no one could fix
your brother's apparatus

toujours le meme chanson

CONTRIBUTORS

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VAIBHAV SUTRAVE was born by accident in the backseat of an '88 Corolla en route to the San Jose Community Hospital. When they got to the hospital they pronounced him dead. Later, he pronounced himself alive. Now he is out of the hospital.

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Ecuador is for Lovers