

Epigraph MAGAZINE

EPIGRAPH

Magazine

Issue 21

epigraphmagazine.com

In This Issue

LAUREN BURGESS

Look Off, / 4

JACOB BROOKS

I boil my algorithms / 5

Blood orange sky / 6

Crying because I erased my aunt's memory / 7

SOPHIA TEMPEST PARSONS

people with money / 8

SANDRA KOLANKIEWICZ

On the Eve of the Eve / 9

J. I. KLEINBERG

2 Poems / 10 - 11

BENJAMIN RENNE

Old Town Market / 12 - 14

MICHAEL RERICK

from Moss / 15

QUINN RENNERTFELDT

Cachexia / 16

JOSHUA ZELESNICK

6 Poems / 17 - 22

CONTRIBUTORS / 23 - 24

Look Off,

Lauren Burgess

you corpse.
You look handsome
without glasses.

I never want a song
with lyrics.

I want to please you
but the twelve string's
on your lap.

A breath,
the chimney shivers,

I put down *Acts of Light*.
In my head,

You spread out
like scent.

Or vibrations
in the kitchen
remind you of orchids,
wilting there.

Let this hang
with our jackets.

Don't leave us just yet.

Look off.

I boil my algorithms

Jacob Brooks

Positive horizon, I
the point at sky's foot seen in me, curved
leather of dudes exhibit
in the dark and cameraspace in the
carpet basin along the beam of my nerves
awash in agenda, spark and smoke-
beard scrubbed on sentence
sob hybrids in the gut of winter achieving
the object golf course, can-Coke quarry-
water green, to be sexy as viewer
and in hypothetical audience my chunks
I must expend my fluids I must relinquish
my throat, my bladder, my bum and my blood
culled like credit the universe like
fractals and will I test positive
my tongue shrivels my sopping
burrow please teach me about garbage
consumer of my rubber cheek
Sniffing me, imaginary and real
bred, the solvent deciduous gobs
being, wax You are so real
my deer, watched for not anticipated and
disbelieved, nosing grain crusted
on frost dirt, the immortal germs en-
meshed in my lecherous
leather, my breath that implements

Blood orange sky

Jacob Brooks

Wal-Mart parking lot
Suns out guns out
American Apparel tanktop
Pants down in gamestop
Grunting / gutturals
Blood orange sky
Freeway curving
Planning a threeway
Sweltering, things melting
Turning on the Canon
Summer's hot pastoral stuff
We skate over it
Unloading his sugar cannon
Glazing his t-shirt
Filming the solstice:
Knees on parking lot
Car door ajar /
In the weeds
on his knees
There is no mother
Fake antlers
Glowstick bracelet
It smells like fog machine / rubber
Whistling transmission
You smell my pubes
Falsetto's center

Crying because I erased my aunt's memory

Jacob Brooks

I ended all her projects. The smell of ancient hair. My sweat, my tiny draining eyes, my water blooming in the couch. The world won't stop refilling me. My bed is a receptacle, I eat the stimulus and secrete the world. The world crushes the future out of me. The electric fire stops burning. The abusive smell of carpets. Do you want to play Crash Bandicoot? She forgives me. She will build a very new similar memory. I ended her little projects. I synch with the process of crushing. The drive to splatter myself on the world.

people with money

Sophia Tempest Parsons

people with money don't have pests in their house

no matter how fast
and how thoroughly
you wash your dishes
how often you take out the trash
you will always have bugs in your house
always be a dead rat in your walls

when you are trying to sleep at night
and you hear the buzzing in your ear
it is the sound of all your failures
of your futureless existence

if only you had money you wouldn't
have pests in your house

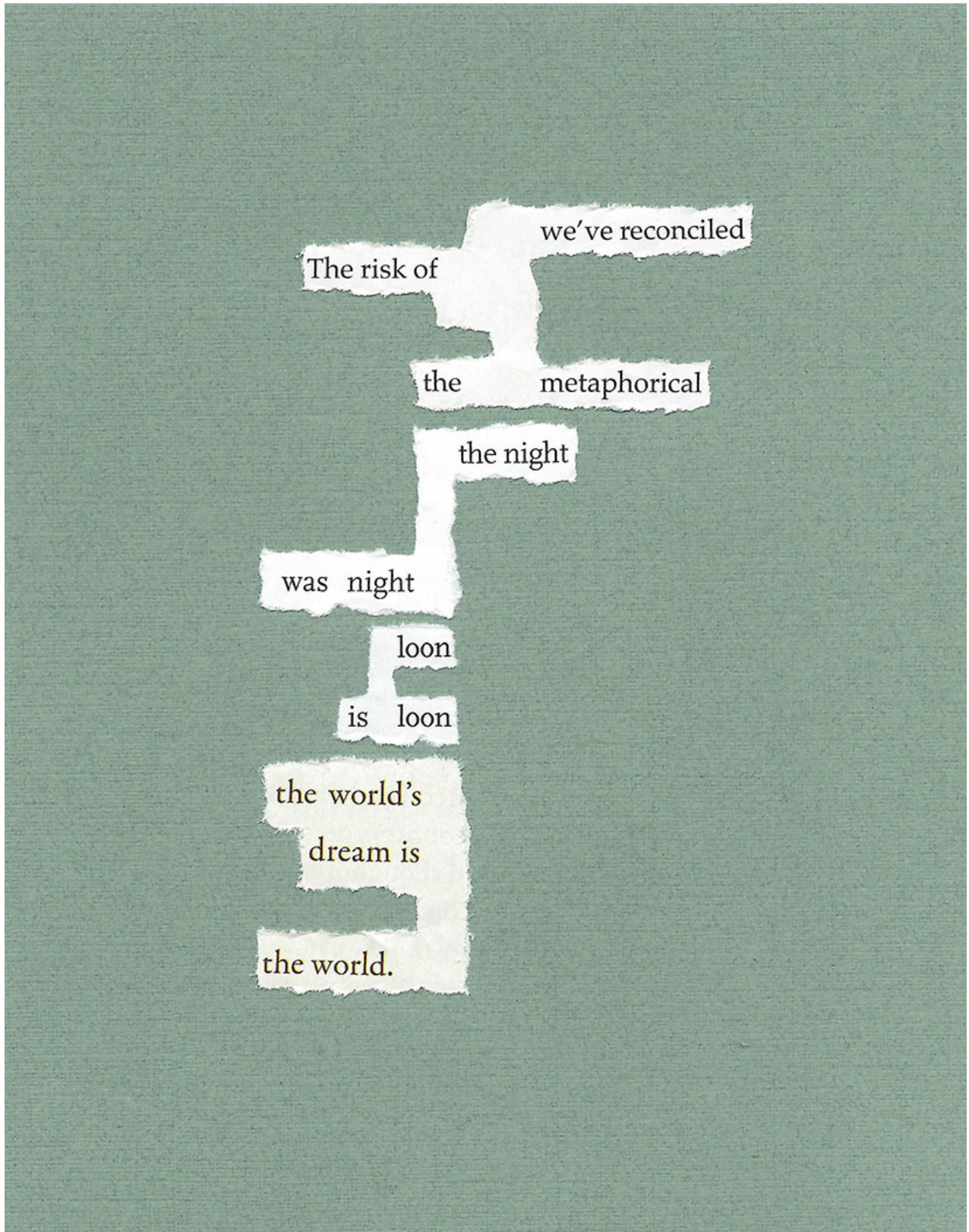
On the Eve of the Eve

Sandra Kolankiewicz

Then I realized how foolish I'd been to
pretend all the souls I love but cannot
see are dead, and all the beloveds who
are dead I pretend are on vacation,
the thriving no more and the extinguished
both off on the same adventure without
me, a sort of dissociative plan
leaving me unprepared for the future.

2 Poems

J.I. Kleinberg



who owned
the
birds

—and was light

made with

Honey

The afternoon was an

accident

—a

green door

—named for the
light

Old Town Market

Benjamin Renne

So I woke
with you, fragments
on our fingers,
the sun still
hungry, the sky
still tired
& you said –
let's go
to the market,
let's go
buy peaches &
white nectarines
& zucchini,
let's make
bruschetta
with fresh
tomatoes &
basil & mozzarella
& let's drink
from Nalgene
water bottles burnt
orange & aquamarine,
infused with
lemon balm &
mint from your
garden of clay pots
& let's spoil
our lunch with
gelatto & cinnamon
coffee when
the weather
is clear, humidity
broken finally
& the living room
shaded with

our towering stacks
of unread books.

I said OK
& let's also
walk the black
dog through
the woods
on a leash
covered in
cat hair &
also covered in
your hair, clumped
with fabric
& decay
& sunlight.

Yes, you said
let's go
to the market
& park in the
big underground
garage
& let's curse
out those
motherfuckers
who take so
long to walk
their scattered
children across
King St. &
never look around
to see the pile-up
of angry
suburbans & minivans –
because we just
wanted some
fresh tomatoes
& maybe

some bread or
a house plant
or two, like
the rosemary
you once bought
my mother –
the sun scorched
it, bloomed
white fungus
on its leaves
& died,
curled up brown
in her kitchen
window a week
later.

from Moss

Michael Rerick

temples hustle
which change of clothes
and shoes in a bag
depends on mood

a ripple of bicycles labor the hill

sacred cars
like tomb
stones park

unclean telephone poles give their splinters

administrators salute
passing sun cycles
with leafy pointed
shadow hand spread

Cachexia

Quinn Rennerfeldt

Now, nothing feels right.
Like finding an eyelash
in your mouth.
Like a moon
obliterating daylight.

I am whispering
into a slot canyon
and receiving only
cold-shouldered silence.
Echo abandonment
feels too perfect
an analogy
for the loss of you.

My dreams look
for you, full-bodied,
still bearded,
not yet an ash
in my hand.
So diminutive, now,
you fit in a ring,
the ink of a tattoo.

It's hard to imagine
you, hale and happy,
contained in anything
that closes, and yet
there you are,
under the lid
of that jar,
and at the end
of this sentence.

6 Poems

Joshua Zelesnick

~

the prisoner is a hologram
can you tell, the glow, and we should
all take comfort in that reality
that even though there is no body now

the hologram still speaks eloquently
almost as eloquently as the prisoner
in the flesh once spoke, which is cause enough
for optimism don't you think

getting irritated at the reporter
for probing about false connections the hologram
says, *look, I'm getting annoyed*, see how
on point, as on point as any hologram could be

~

living room cockpits of complicity
we hear the headline, *stocks surge*
after missile attack, a drop
to the bottom like a prescription

bottle, burnt orange, is thrown away
with not even an afterthought, no
discussion of heritage first
just popped balloons before

they're even filled with air, what axis
of thought could accept such timing
breathing in breathing out, breathing
the order, *light 'em all up*

~

glory (hole) for the theophany
show us all, broadcast it all, please
for the prisoner, show the images
what do they look like, please what

time does the freedom begin, again
the drone of proof through the night
that his brain is still there, our prisoner
takes refuge in gently touching

his own face to feel some love
follows because it was born here
shaking its head in the river
lake, sea, temple, story, bullet

~

in solitary, research proves
difficult to pull through the bars
all day, a desk, the archive, fever
from no natural light source

our prisoner is hyper active, scanned
into this secret glow
the slightest motion could upset
the landscape, and then erase

his dewy eyes, covered from view
with 3-d glasses—lighting up
I reach toward the cold shadow
of a cloud to pull down, the blinds

~

the prisoner in a t-shirt
the prisoner in a blazer
the prisoner with make-up
hair slicked just so, the camera's twitch

the prisoner in the embassy
the prisoner in solitary
the prisoner with sleep-deprived
eyes still pale as a suffocating

fish, the prisoner in the breeze
the prisoner climbing trees
the prisoner as a meme, planted
in the parched earth with dramatic lighting

~

the sky and ocean are reverses
of each other, gaze at one
take a dagger to the other,
this scenic view goes viral

just like that, I snap
clouds blacken, sand
rallies with the wind loosens
all the shells, then what, a gale

then what, a conspiracy
to give the illusion of a flood
walk backwards pointed toward the ocean
and watch the buildings disappear

Contributors

LAUREN BURGESS is a queer writer from New Orleans. She is an MFA student at Louisiana State University, where she serves as assistant poetry editor of *New Delta Review*. Her work has appeared in *Dream Pop*, *Bodega*, *A Velvet Giant*, and others. She is a grateful recipient of the Ryan Chighizola Memorial Award for poetry. You can reach her [@poemdaddy](#) on Twitter, if you like.

JACOB BROOKS is a writer and communist organizer living in Philadelphia. His chapbook *ARTPORN* (2016) is published by Citizen of the World. Follow [@jakesymbol](#) on Twitter.

SOPHIA TEMPEST PARSONS is a poet from Austin, Texas. Her debut chapbook, *LAMB HANGS BY ITS OWN FOOT*, was released with Ghost City Press in 2019. Tempest is her real middle name.

SANDRA KOLANKIEWICZ's poems have appeared widely, most recently in *One*, *Otis Nebulae*, *Trampset*, *Concho River Review*, *London Magazine*, *New World Writing*, and *Appalachian Heritage*. *Turning Inside Out* was published by Black Lawrence. Finishing Line has released *The Way You Will Go* and *Lost in Transition*.

Twice nominated for Pushcart and Best of the Net awards, **J.I. KLEINBERG** is an artist, poet, and freelance writer. Her poems have been published in print and online journals worldwide. She lives in Bellingham, Washington, USA, where she tears words out of magazines and posts occasionally on Instagram [@jikleinberg](#).

BENJAMIN RENNE lives and teaches in the Washington, D.C. area. He loves poetry that is multidirectional, visionary, and expansive; poetry that is at once both inside and outside. He earned his MFA in Creative Writing from George Mason University and his poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Juked*, *Cleaver*, *Ghost Proposal*, *CatheXis Northwest Press*, and more.

MICHAEL RERICK lives and teaches in Portland, OR. Work recently appears or is forthcoming at *Clade Song*, *COAST/noCOAST*, *Graviton*, *Mannequin Haus*, *Parentheses*, *The Wire's Dream*, and *Waccomaw*. He is also the author of *In Ways Impossible to Fold*, *morefrom*, *The Kingdom of Blizzards*, *The Switch Yards*, and *X-Ray*.

QUINN RENNERFELDT studied creative writing at the University of Colorado at Boulder and currently lives in San Francisco with her family and animal menagerie. Her heart is equally wed to the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains. Her work can be found in *Slipstream*, *Bird's Thumb*, *SAND*, *mutiny!*, and *elsewhere*, and her chapbook *Sea Glass Catastrophe* was recently released by Francis House Press. She is the co-founder of *Q/A Poetry*, a journal promoting womxn and nonbinary poets.

JOSHUA ZELESNICK's poems and political essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *Jubilat*, *Drunken Boat*, *Word For/Word*, *Juked*, *CounterPunch*, *Called Back Books*, *Pretty Owl Poetry*, *Poetica Review*, *8 Poems*, *DIAGRAM*, and elsewhere. His chapbook *Cherub Poems* was published by Bonfire Books in 2019. He teaches at a public school in Pittsburgh, where he lives with his partner and two young daughters in a garden co-housing community. With friends, he helps host a living room music and reading series.

Epigraph Magazine
Issue 21
edited by Nicholas Bon

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