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EXILE

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Editor .................................................. Lisa Minacci

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Just past the highway
deep in the woods of Ohio, where ice
turns and folds,
snow has found its own gray pocket
the roots are bare
over in the clearing
is the fallowed place
of the minstrels

In this gathering
the earth is groping
the wind is at peace
and buried away, packed beneath
the wet-black humus, below
the shifting of snails and seeds
there is the sound.
    I heard it only once--
when the sun was on my face
when ice cupped the morning
and the lines on my palms were thick
and long.
    It could have been my foot
scraping my sole on a pebble
or blood rushing in the shell of my ear
but the sound was of an instrument
turning and gleaning under there
it was like a lung filling,
pumping--taking the deep deep woods
into itself
    First, the intake
then the release, a letting-go,
the slow slow mutter
the spindle set loose
and music rising from
out the ground.
By Penelope A. Riseborough

You fill me with Browning and texts
the classics and masters of

Knowledge you offer me with a gun
when I can no longer accept.

And I scream at others and myself
sometimes asleep, and ready
to burst, even while dreaming.

But I continue towards
the long hollow barrel-

At breaking point I grab
and pull and shoot

at myself, waking
cold, under covers of printed
words and specks of blood

Regent Street Mannequins
by Penelope A. Riseborough
By Dane Lavin

He first noticed it when his mother was cleaning out the dusty patch of space under the bed. She bend down uncharacteristically on one knee and contorted her head and arms to reach the tattered box of comic books and gum cards that was wedged against the farthest leg of the bed. She sat up, her knees to her side in the bed and sorted through it casually, winding the grime from its surface with a soiled dust cloth and a squeegee. He had seen her squat on her knees like that before, with the top two spots of her feet showing beneath the rim of her buttocks. Later that day when she was supposed to be basting the chicken breasts he caught her lugging against the refrigerator next to the stove with a Cosmopolitan in her hands and her forehead pointed in a studious frown. When she looked up and saw him he turned defiantly and went into the den without saying a word and closed the door behind him. She stayed in the kitchen until his father came home.

He didn't think about it often during the bus ride to school or during study period. At least he would sometimes avoid the usual sandlot baseball game and head instead for the swings, where he would pull himself up into the highest seat and sit for the full thirty-five minutes, watching his sneakers dangling aimlessly behind him making colliding shadows on the smooth surface of ground. Sometimes he would hear the bigger kids' feet rubb the felt
drum. He felt himself growing more and more uncomfortable walking the three-quarter's of a block to his house. He would go through the motions of greeting and hugging her when he came through the door, but it was grateful for the distractions school would sometimes bring, leaving him breathless and sweaty after a football game or a whirl on the gym jung. But eventually it would always come back to him, punctuating the smell of the moist and salt on his skin with the acrid hurt of stale on his tongue, starting on one knee and contorted her dusty patch of floor space under his bed. She bend down uncharacteristically on one knee and contorted her head and arms to reach the tattered box of comic books and gum cards that was wedged against the farthest leg of the bed. She sat up, her knees to her side in the bed and sorted through it casually, winding the grime from its surface with a soiled dust cloth and a squeegee. He had seen her squat on her knees like that before, with the top two spots of her feet showing beneath the rim of her buttocks. Later that day when she was supposed to be basting the chicken breasts he caught her lugging against the refrigerator next to the stove with a Cosmopolitan in her hands and her forehead pointed in a studious frown. When she looked up and saw him he turned defiantly and went into the den without saying a word and closed the door behind him. She stayed in the kitchen until his father came home.

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favorite blue sweater one day and she forgot to use the
right kind of detergent and she accidentally bleached it,
putting it through the dryer with ours, and the sweater
came out all blotchy and ugly looking. And I was so mad
that I said I would never wash in that machine ever again.
I said I would wash it by hand, and I did, all along, but she
said I was being too careless, so I had to wash it by hand.

"Yes, mother," I said again in the open doorway. He
stopped at the back steps and looked up at them with his
linoleum that lined the foyer and the hall to the stairs un-
til he was back in Mrs. M's classroom with his pencil in his
hand."

As he came around the house and up to the back porch
he could hear them whispering on the thick rug. "What did
you talk about, Shawn?" she asked at last. "I don't know.
I didn't for about, oh, a week, I'd guess. And my mother
said that something they did made us unhappy, we
would never see before. The man looked even worse. With sud-
den fury and fear he charged for his bedroom door. Halfway across the den
he felt the man's thick arms impulsively. He jerked away from her instant-
ly, so hard that he nearly fell back against the wall. "Let
me go," he shouted. "Don't touch me, I said." His father
looked him straight in the eye and nodded, 

"I'm your father," he said curtly. "You're not my parents. You're...im-
posed." He shook his head apprehensively. "I didn't
think you were. Why would you say that, then?" He could
hear them running behind him, their feet
jiggling gently against his leg. "Did you ask her
to talk to me?" he asked. They nodded. They were smil-
ing similar to Mrs. Ladky. He realized his father had
deliberately come home from work to be there to meet
him. His father would never get off this early otherwise.
He moved past them through the doorway and out into
the house. He took him to the set of his
chair by the kitchen table. He set his lunchbox under the
sink. He heard them coming behind them, their feet
whispering on the thick rug. "What did you talk about,
honey?" she said. "How did it go?" "I didn't say anything." He filled a dixie cup with orange juice from
the refrigerator and drank it while they stood there. He
scowled at the back wall as he held them up to the
sink. He glanced up at them derisively as he tossed the cup away
under the sink. "Don't worry," he said. He went to move
past them to head towards his room, when he moved in front of him and reached to hold him back. "Please,
Shawn..."

"Don't touch me!" he snapped. "I said I didn't tell her
anything." He tried to move by her and she grabbed one of
his arms impulsively. He jerked away from her instant-
ly, so hard that he nearly fell back against the wall. "Let
me go," he shouted. "Don't touch me, I said." His father
opened his mouth to speak but apparently could not. He
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before, had never really known the face as it became known to him now. He waited for her to speak and was silent until she did.

"Your father brought me - that man, in there - brought me these when we were engaged. Every month for fourteen months I got a bouquet of these on my doorstep. I still don't know where he got them or how, all those months. These just remind me of that...that time. That's all." She sighed and pulled a few errant leaves from the stems of her plus bouquet. He looked at her face and dry eyes and firm chin. "I will always love your father, Shawn. You don't stop loving someone overnight for no reason. Whatever happens in life, I want you to know," she sighed slightly, "I'll always love him." She set the vase on the rack of dishes above the stove and turned to look at him for the first time. She knelt down a few feet away from where he stood and left her hands at her sides.

"But the most important thing," she said, "is that we will always love you. You're...everything we have going for us, is you."

He watched her for a few minutes and then turned back into the living room and down the long hall to his room. The sun had gone and the room was black and lifeless save for the vague taint of the streetlights. He sat on the edge of the bed in the dark and listened to them. The cool yellow light from the hall made streaks in the carpet through the cracks in the door. He waited to hear the sound of her feet creaking the kitchen floor and the rush of water above the clinking of plates, and the rattle of icecubes, and distant crowds laughing from the den.

to give in, to let them take him, to relinquish his fate to whatever cruel forces had somehow seen fit to disrupt his life with such a subtle, sly, cancerous crime. He wanted his mother like a baby, and he said so. She was clutching at his clothes and he could still feel the wide palm of the man’s hand cradling one shoulder. He turned his face away from them and spat out whatever words he could think of. He was tiring and he was glad. "You're not my parents," he said for what must have been the thousandth time. "My parents love each other.

She let him go and he stumbled into the bedroom and slammed the door shut, then locked it. He could think of nothing but to lie on the bed and sleep - running was of no use and either was crying. Things seemed immediately doomed for him but at the same time, perhaps because of that, relievningly final. He felt a glowing pang of justice of proud self-righteousness, even in the face of the enemies that had struck upon him so viciously. The sun was going down. The room was dark and deep like the inside of a tunnel. Within seconds he was asleep; for long minutes he was numb.

When he awoke he walked calmly down the hallway and into the living room to avoid his father in the den. As he turned to enter the foyer he could just glimpse him in the armchair in front of the TV, but the room was silent. He had his hands folded around his chin and his eyes wide open.

She was in the kitchen sorting a handful of lilac blossoms into a wide-mouthed ceramic vase. She did not turn when he came in, but he sensed that she knew he was there. He stared at her in bewildermnt, with painstaking studiousness. It struck him that he had never seen her

---

Resistance

By Lisa Mead

i've got eight nails

tapping me

on the shoulders.

And each of those
eight has eight of their own
(mine.) and so...

forth, making about

80,000

fingers taptaptap

ing. My head

swirls deeper

and deeper

around and

-into- my two 2

pillows until the

soft, whiteness

is hard and

black.

Why don't they put their gloves on?

by Jennifer E. Gardner

nine

eight
as I brush my teeth
the blue veins in my neck
on the right side
bulge to the surface
pulling the tendons up with them.

but when I relax my neck
I tense my left hand
that holds the blue toothbrush.
now my fingers will
cut into the fleshy muscle
at the base of my thumb.

so I release my left hand
and move the toothbrush
with the white bristles
to my right hand.

but I've lost my concentration
and my jugular jumps out again.
my right elbow locks
at an awkward angle
immobilizing my right wrist,
and my left hand is still caught
in its tight little fist.
Trash Can

By L. S. Viola

This morning the trash can spilled into the yard
a rotting fish with mouth agape on the sand
Eggshells, beer cartons, milk, orange peels,
puked from its mouth while it eyed me coldly

My roommate said it was the dogs
but I thought it must have been a whale

It's your turn he gestured I did it last time
I smiled and stuffed its scale rusted torso with chicken bones
I kept a look out for the whale
to see if it had been to the neighbors homes
but all their fish were neatly chained through the gills to poles
and looking at me as if to say
You are a disgrace the way you treat your fish

WAITING - for Anne Sexton

By Chad Hussey '83

There you sit,
bathed in stained light,
filtered through the impure glass,
yellow, like your nicotine stained hand.
Gin clear icicles with sharp points,
and glistening bodies
Hang hungrily outside
Waiting,
like a tigress.

Why not go
Outside?
The harsh white light may
Burn your cat-like eyes,
which are used to the dark?
Nonsense!
Wear sunglasses
Take a walk
Go to town
Buy cigarettes
make a snowman
Absorb the sun
But don't sit there
Alone
Waiting
for that little man to
Hotwire your Brain.

by Laura Gilbert
Jeremiah wears a red hat. He always wears this hat. He thinks it elegant. Jeremiah will do anything at the drop of that hat. He walks through the gates and stands near the monument of Prince Albert. The stone angels with erect nipples look down at him. He walks on.

It is Sunday and families are lying about on the grass. Most of the dogs are running after each other. Some are chasing sticks instead. The park is large and there is a pond. A small boy is crying on the edge of the pond because his miniature sailboat has sailed into the middle, out of reach. An old man is trying to make the little boy laugh, but his face grows more purple and screwed up with each word.

Four nannies are pushing four prams. They talk to each other as the four babies become heavily furred. One nanny is wall-eyed and Jeremiah notices that she and her pram are on the end of the line. When she speaks, the other three nannies either ignore her or laugh. Her pram catches on a rock and the baby cries.

Jeremiah comes to a fence. According to the map in the park, this is where Hyde Park begins. He has to scale the fence and cross over to the roundabout. On the other side of the roundabout, Jeremiah can see Hyde Park. Jeremiah stands at the fence a moment and is trying to decide whether to climb it. He is heavy and the doctor has told him to be careful of over-exertion. Jeremiah also wants to be careful not to rip his new rabbit fur coat.

Finally he lifts one plump thigh and rests it on the top of the fence. It is warm out and Jeremiah rests in the position of a wishbone. Finally Jeremiah hoists his other leg up and grabs the fence with both large, wet hands. The cars that go around the roundabout honk at him. Jeremiah falls over on to the side grass unhurt and relieved. His pants have a small tear in the seat, but his coat and hat are intact. He wheezes.

He remembers wheezing when he was young and he and his father had gone bicycling. They would bicycle to the grocery store in summer to get ice cream bars. The very first time they had gone, Jeremiah's father gave him his ice cream and said that he had to learn to do two things at a time. They both were to eat ice cream as they cycled home. Every time Jeremiah went to eat the ice cream bar near his mouth, his bicycle would wobble. As the two pedalled further, Jeremiah's ice cream began to melt. He could feel the tears coming up to his eyes. He couldn't see where he was going. As the ice cream melted down the handlebars blurred his vision and his father cycled onwards neatly eating his ice cream. Jeremiah felt his father disappear. Jeremiah looked and saw the ice cream still in his hand. He sighed and sat on the side of the road to eat his ice cream.

Jeremiah takes out a cigarette and darts across the road. Huffing and sweating he lights a Camel and stands a moment until his hands stop shaking. He sees a path that has a sign with an arrow that says, "Speakers' Corner." He walks. His sneakers have holes in them through which soil keeps entering. Jeremiah can feel the soil grinding under his toes with each step.

As he follows the path, he notices some people glancing at him. One foot follows the other as Jeremiah pushes himself to get to Speakers' Corner. A crowd of people appears as Jeremiah turns a bend. The dirt in his sneakers is damp with sweat. He grinds his feet faster and faster as he half walks, half runs toward the crowd. His cigarette is still burning in his left hand, but he doesn't smoke.

When he is within a hundred feet of the crowd, a few people hear his running and turn around. He stops short and looks back at the people.

He watches the crowd from a distance. The man with the red hat draws deeply on the non-filtered cigarette and lets out a lump of smoke through his mouth with a belch. The crowd cheers. He puts his cigarette out with a sneakered foot.

The crowd quiets down and looks on expectantly. "He was in the new wave film, wasn't he?" titters a fat lady in a navy blue jumper. "Ooh look, his lips curl down on either side at the same time," sighs one sallow-faced girl. Slowly, slowly he raises his arm. His hand outstretched at shoulder height, he pushes his arm higher.

The crowd hears the rip as the fur gives way. They roar. Pens, keys, hats, sweaters, books, anything they can find are in the air.
I used to sit in school all day and write. The little hairs on the back of my neck stood up as I scratched black ink on white paper. The creases in my hand were veins as ink seeped and ran, dried and then caked. Now I hear the new method is to take a blunt instrument and puncture each an.

sweryouthink
toherecorrect.
I'd rather be dead.
in the mood for eroticaism
Reflections

By Michael Heinlen

At night I can hear the snowplow shoving aside snow that will be melted by morning anyway.

I wonder how often the minister across the street really prays to God.

My dog sits and shakes on command, in hopes of some reward -- are my own prayers nothing more?

I heard a man say on television once that blind obedience is the highest quality a man may possess, but I'm not so sure.

To me, dreams are as real as a cigarette burn or broken glass.

A woman I know lost her eldest son. Since, she has neglected her youngest.

Johnny Morris, a retarded dwarf, always asked me: what's for supper? he is one of the happiest men I know.

In the morning a fresh layer of snow has covered the snowplow's tracks.
Milo McGee shuffled carelessly into the street zipping up his fly. Tattered grey flannels, baggy and beltless, surrounded his legs and rather large stomach. A Homburg, obviously his prize possession, sat proudly atop his half-head of sooty grey hair. Milo’s shirt was stolen from a boy he once knew. It was blue with four breast pockets. Each pocket contained some item necessary for survival; string, cotton balls, assorted safety pins, matches, and a corkscrew. He stood in the hazy, cool September light of New York’s 125th street looking, watching, aimlessly paning the quiet street.

Seldom did Milo do in any one day more than any other. In short Milo rarely did anything. The minutes of his day were snowflakes: coming in rapid succession, or slowly, or heavily, or they would come thick and choking, even often they would just cease, hold their breath, and wait. Milo pulled at his nose, twisted his lips, and sneezed. His sharp green eyes watered, and using a small tuft of cotton that he carried in his lower left breast pocket he dabbed at their corners.

"M-M-Milo...b-b-b-hey Milo!" came from an unknown source. Milo looked about slowly, his eyes like trowels digging into the crevices of pavement and buildings. "M-M-Milo" came the shrill voice. Milo again scanned the street and adjacent alleys. Seeing no one he tossed his hand into the street, let it fall to his thigh, and turned to walk back into the alley. His black buckle-booted feet scraped a small segment of sidewalk when he was stopped by the sharp stuttering voice. "M-M-Milo its me T-T-Tooly. Over here." A burr of black curly hair was held aloft by the sharp stuttering voice, "M-M-Milo its me T-T-Tooly." Milo's alley.

"M-M-Milo you'll d-d-die!" Tooly said pleadingly, "i ain't yet me friend, but aye, I might. With this Milo ambled to the front of his cavern, and glared the street with his burning green eyes. Tooly followed.

"How long y-y-you been here?" Tooly asked, taking a new track. "Long time me friend." Milo answered, fixing his gaze on a half bottle of gin that lay prostrate in the gutter. "You s-s-stay all the w-w-w-inter?" Aye." "What do you eat M-M-Milo?" "The same thing." Milo said gently, taking three steps to the curb, and bending to pick up the gin. "All w-w-w-inter?" Tooly queried.

"Aye me friend. It keeps me blood warm, and the Devil's snakes in the street where theirs likes belong." "I c-c-c-can't do it M-M-Milo." Tooly said scratching into the ground with his shoed foot "its t-t-t-too cold." "I ain't a rich man me friend. I ain't have the licks always, but I got me spirit. Me spirit is in these bricks and the ground with his shoed foot "its t-t-t-too cold." "I b-b-b-been uptown s-s-sometime Milo. I's been livin' with C-C-C-Come. We's gonna go to Florida Milo. C-C-Come with us." He continued, putting his arms around Milo's waist. Milo tore away, and turning, facing the wall he raised up his hands, and cursed the bricks with his thick pudgy fingers. "This is me home Tooly. I can't leave. Say with me here-we'll chase the Devil and sing, stay me friend." "I c-c-c-can't!"

"Stay! Milo cried out, pounding the wall "stay and....and...and...ohh-hh" he trailed off. Milo pivoted on black buckle-booted feet, and stared with white and watering eyes at Tooly. Embracing him in sobbing passion he whispered quietly. "Stay, me friend." The snowflake minutes swirled away, stripping the sky, the garbage, the cold dripping nitre, the noxious ains of fear, and they stood lonesome, all alone.

"T-t-to Florida M M-Milo," He continued. Milo did not answer, but lay on his small, frayed straw mat staring through the angular lense at pale blue changing white air. "M-M-Milo I c-c-c-can't stay again. For the c-c-c-old, Milo. I c-c-c-can't. We's gonna go to Florida Whince. Stagolee, B-B-Bubba, an'm-me. We's gonna go Milo."

"Aye." Milo said sighingly as he stood up. "I w-w-w-ants you t-t-t-o go too Milo." Tooly said leaping to his feet and facing him. I gee me home." He replied blankly. "What about the s-s-s-now M-M-Milo?" "Aye, it snows." "And the c-c-c-old?" "Aye its cold."

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"Stay! Milo cried out, pounding the wall "stay and....and...and...ohh-hh" he trailed off. Milo pivoted on black buckle-booted feet, and stared with white and watering eyes at Tooly. Embracing him in sobbing passion he whispered quietly. "Stay, me friend." The snowflake minutes swirled away, stripping the sky, the garbage, the cold dripping nitre, the noxious ains of fear, and they stood lonesome, all alone.

"T-t-to Florida M M-Milo," He continued. Milo did not answer, but lay on his small, frayed straw mat staring through the angular lense at pale blue changing white air. "M-M-Milo I c-c-c-can't stay again. For the c-c-c-old, Milo. I c-c-c-can't. We's gonna go to Florida Whince. Stagolee, B-B-Bubba, an'm-me. We's gonna go Milo."

"Aye." Milo said sighingly as he stood up. "I w-w-w-ants you t-t-t-o go too Milo." Tooly said leaping to his feet and facing him. I gee me home." He replied blankly. "What about the s-s-s-now M-M-Milo?" "Aye, it snows." "And the c-c-c-old?" "Aye its cold."

"M-M-Milo you'll d-d-die!" Tooly said pleadingly, "i ain't yet me friend, but aye, I might. With this Milo ambled to the front of his cavern, and glared the street with his burning green eyes. Tooly followed.

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The Echo of the Street
By Suzy Snyder

From dark cafes
Smoky eyes and like a silent butler
We present ourselves
to moon brick buildings, smoldering side streets,
and gray window glass.
Cat cries from beyond the cracked wall.
Clicking steps on the pavement
like a message delivered
to the hooker
who stumbles pass us
red lipstick smeared
over the bottled bagged wine
She calls to the man
on the raw iron stairwell
A honey hand fishes for
white gloves and dead roses
under the embellished trash
Through the stricken alley
We descend down
the familiar creaking stairs
back to wine and candles

Bobbie
By J.L. Freeman

Your teeth sit
in the trough indenting your protruding tongue,
a sign of your genetics;
you place the familiar white plastic hat
on flattened head,
bang it down with your hand.
Smiling
you walk through the room of people
avoiding them all;
you paint lines and blotches
and carefully remove the smock,
holding it up.
you move away
to another project.

You run to me
to tell me something of importance to you.
but inside of you
is too much of one chromosome—
too much DNA, too much life material—
stuck together sometime after
your conception;
I am angry that chromosome—
won’t let me understand what you say.

Puzzle Picture
By Jennifer Gardner

The rubber cement of your smile
drips
off your face
over my legs
gluing me down
where I sit.
I wish to leave
but you have my shoes under your bed;
you too wish I would leave
but I cannot stand
because of the stickiness
that covers this chair
and the floor;
I want to feel
this is also your fault.
The Store
By Mike Augusta

"Got anyshawgun shayls?"
"Sure do, Watcha need?" Ben straightened from writing a letter on his counter and went over to the ammo shelf.

"Shawgun shayls. Uh. boyd shot."
"What kind of gun you got?" Ben pressed further. The black man began unwrapping the bundle, revealing a rusty old .410, a Pierce, out of production for half a century. Stanley and Bill casually took in the gun, veiling their interests with throat clearing and head scratching.

Bill took it confidently in his hands, turning over the little single barrel and smiling at the pocked steel and the butchered stock. Without comment he pushed past Stanley to consult the used gun digest. Keeping his back to Stanley and the black man, Bill pored through the obsolete brands, the Sinter's and the Appletons, until he found the Pierce Sporter, available from 1926 to 1928 in .20 and .410 gauges, original retail, $11.95. The price for one in excellent condition was put at $500 and up. Bill figured he could clean this one up and get a 50-cent out of some tourist for it. "Yup. Pretty beat up," Bill said, turning around.

"We could go twenty on it."
"Oh no suh, I need shayls. I doanwan sell it."
"You shot that thing?" Stanley chimed in, wanting a piece of the action.

"Oh yeah, I gest some rabbit. Yeah, down Immokalee then's lotsa rabbit. Gimme boxsa shayls.

"Sevens or tena?"
"I take seven."

"OK, that's five and a quarter."
"Whooe, five an'a quastah Shee." The black man reached deeply into his pocket and pulled out a thickly layered stack of wallet. Ben Franklin emerged from a strata of U.S. mint green, and was tossed casually on the counter by the shellac smooth hands. Bill and Stanleys' eyes followed the trajectory from billfold to counter with several blinks. Bill coldly counted out, "Change is six, seven, eight, nine, ten, thirty, fifty, thank you, air."

The bills disappeared into the deep pocket and the black man flashed a grin of several strong thick teeth. "I be gettin some rabbit now."

Stanley walked over to the door when the old man was gone and muttered, "Jeez, ya see the wad that ol' bugger had?"

"Yup, them old timers always got the bankrolls," Bill replied icily, walking off to the warehouse to put price tags on a new shipment of field jackets. Stanley went back to his letter, a long, carefully penned message to his sister back in Ontario, where Stanley had been born. Stanley had spent his first twenty-five years there, through some good, but more often lean, times in the shadow of the London Smelting Company's towering stacks. He escaped to the Merchant Marine just in time for World War Two, and rose to Ensign on the corvette 'Chrysalis', escorting freighters full of Lend Lease C-rations and blankets to Glasgow, and twice Murmansk. Stanley survived the war.
to join the Canadian liquor control board, and while he couldn't control it in his own life, he and his wife Noan were meeting every Saturday night for a midnight drink. Stanley bought a new gun case. When he'd gone to the warehouse, Stanley quickly edged up to the front door and nonchalantly took the contents of the gun case and Toby read Newsweek. Just before closing time, Bill shuffled back into the store. He leaned against the wall behind Stanley and pulled the five hundred dollars in cash out of his pocket. What the hell is he waving around for?, Stanley wondered. It was more than they made for the week. Bill fingered the cash in his hand, knowing that around for?, Stanley wondered. It was more than they made for the week. Bill fingered the cash in his hand, knowing that they had two hundred dollars in his sweaty palm and Toby didn't look up. Bill walked down the street to the thunderheads stacking up over the river. Stanley felt he should ask Bill and Rene to come over to his place for dinner, or maybe he and Noan should drop by Bill's later in the evening. Bill felt bad about subjecting Stanley to this. Both men felt they should talk, but throats were dry and words were elusive. Stanley suddenly patted Bill on the back and stuck out his hand. "I'm sorry, Bill," Stanley said with genuine feeling, as if they shook. "Hey, we'll see ya in the mornin'."

The words hung as if on a clothesline while Bill stared at his shoes. Stanley opened his eyes wide and straightened his creaking back. Toby's head popped up from behind the Old Timer's knife display. The temperature soared as the ceiling caved down on Stanley, forcing him to say something. "Huhy?" "You, the old girl just. We hadn't counted on it so soon. Had to trade the car to cover it. She didn't eat anything but grease, ya know, dip her bread in the fryin' pan after we was done cooking sausages. Perin' all over herself in the middle of the night. Ohh me.," Bill sighed. "I'm gonna miss that damn girl."

Toby started to make like he was going over to see something, Stanley glared at him. If he says anything I'll break his face, Stanley fumed. Toby sensed the tension of the moment and kept his distance.

Bill was still leaning against the wall talking to himself when Stanley and Toby started turning off the lights and locked up the front door. When the change and bills were stuffed under the loose step, the three of them went out the front door, locking it and the grabbing behind them. A thunderstorm was building up. Heavy and still. Toby got into his car and raced off without a word. Bill and Stanley stood silently, looking down the empty street at the thunderheads stacking up over the river.

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Bill's eyes cleared and sparkled as he looked into Stanley's. "Yeah, 'night Stan. See ya in the mornin'."
It was a warm spring day in perhaps my fourth or fifth year. I was roaming the garden just after a thunder shower, replacing the worms that had left the earth for fear of drowning, to seek the safety of my driveway. The driveway was no place for them. I reasoned, they could get run over. Therefore, I amused myself by digging small holes, dropping in the worms and then refilling the holes, sealing them with several stomps of my foot.

Then I saw them, hundreds of them, a line of them stretching from the side of the garage to an old banana on the porch. I knew what they were. They were ants. I followed the column to their hill, under a hedge by the basement window. Then I was hit with a terrible realization. What if they weren't satisfied with the banana? They might try an assault on the kitchen. I had seen them by the baseboard under the sink, so I knew they knew where it was. These creatures were threatening my food supply!

There was but one course of action—wipe them out. I began stomping on every ant I saw, crushing them under my P.F. Flyers, scraping them across the driveway, filling in the cracks in the asphalt. I was the master of their fate. They could not resist me. I began to jump up and down, laughing and shouting insults at the ants. I searched for those ants that might have been foolish enough to attempt an escape. I was running around furiously in an attempt to rid my yard of this menace.

Then I accidentally stepped on a worm. Solemnly, I bent down to look at the goosh on the driveway. Worms were nice; they ate dirt. I didn't eat dirt. I scraped up as much of the worm as I could and carried it to the garden. There I dug a small hole, dropped in the worm, filled the hole with dirt and sealed it with several stomps of my foot.

By Laura Gilbert
Friends in the Park
By John Whitworth Kropf

What would it be like
To be
A
dog
For a day or two?
Some of my best friends
These days
Are dogs.

Four-Lane Breakfast
By Andy Acker

Make me some
automobile pancakes mother:
can't you see the
vinyl roofs bubble,
and listen to the
chrome pleasantly peel.

What would it be like
To be a dog
For a day or two?
Some of my best friends
These days
Are dogs.
I hate cleaning now. Believe it or not I used to really love it. I used to want to clean a lot, straightening all the time, perhaps as a good diversion from other things. But now I really hate cleaning. When I have to feel or do something because of someone else I begin to detest it. I can't stand the dust, the dishes, this small kitchen, that ugly picture. You see, it's this big problem-hating to clean but hating why I have to do it even more. So it sits there and finally I give in.

But it isn't just the cleaning or even her; it's so much more. The everydayness, I can't escape it or won't let myself. I'm bored but so afraid of seeming bored. Encased in a calm, I am much more numb than I used to be, yet much how I was when I was young. I've always wanted to be in the eye, dying for the chance to get mixed up in that beligerent storm but too scared to fall. It's hard either place for me. My personality is grained so smoothly, evenly, but I envy that storm's which is rough-edged, uneven yet deeply warm and sensuous underneath.

On a train, all alone, from Le Haute to Paris, I was a storm and for a little while I felt dangerous, threatening and burning with the strength of unpossessable power. It is a stoned memory now but I remember we were meant to be, timeless above all things, together for those moments, and forever in my mind if not his. I was recklessness and I let myself fall. Powerful yet powerless over myself, I gave no thought to where I had been or what I had to look forward to. I didn't care. On that train from Le Haute to Paris, I didn't care about a calm, an equilibrium or even trying to remember his crystal green eyes or the words to an Irish ballad.

I left that train without recourse, or a sign of lament in my eyes. I have a deeper regret now. Broom in hand, storms stored in memories, I feel so cold and alone enclosed in my private warmth.

Anonymous

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Mussels
by A. Pence

I dream I am a mussel, a button and you talk to me in the rain.
I dream of severed legs the gut-gut guttural sound of the disposal.
I dream of doom--hollowed-out.
someone I love must die.

It is always summer when I need you most.
The sun sets--a hole opens in my heart
I sleep on a bed of stacked bodies--and think of your voice leaving trails on the green front lawn.
I smell damp skin-seeping out everywhere.
I have lost the sense of touch.

I pull my weighted head out of sleep, dreams vaults of silence--in which I lift my hair, back to mirror--lift it like a shell to see protrusions, tumors my skull consumed by disease or injury. Somewhere you could be laughing or driving a car.

In the morning, I address an envelope to you--it is stiff, brown. Inside--ratters of my wrist, you will open it and know. My hands fall away under the faucet. Once outside, I am a hole against the sky eating my shadow off the sidewalk.

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THE DROP
by Lisa Minacci

She was named after an ancestor who was hanged by the neck.
The woman who killed her husband, for some reason like deformity or wrath.
No one screamed not even her mother.
The choke as her blood settled in her feet; suffocation without a sound.
The older shadow is dust under a hood, the tongue distended.

This newer name of guilt dropping through a boarded floor. Her dress is cut at the top in a circle for her neck.
She imagines death, like a series of necks and open holes in the bottom of floors for the passage and the change of face.
Sandymount Strand

I appeared out of a vacant bluegrayness and walked the windswept cement. Smooched, once jagged edges crumbling stones beneath my feet.

Sandymount Strand stretched out beyond me into its own greyblue bleakness, while the water took time-worn particles of land out to sea.

Surrounded by their inspiration naively observing its weathered consistency, the essence of those poets' dreams refused its secret to me.

I turned away from distant Dublin Town the strand and the sea at my back, while the cold, bland wind gave way to my retreat.

Anonymous