



The Los Angeles Resilience of Los Angeles

#11

THE LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF LOS ANGELES, NUMBER 11

JUNE 2016

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------|
| THE DEVIL'S MISTRESS | Megan Lynn | - 4 |
| POEMS | Arlyn LaBelle | - 7 |
| EMILY AS SHE RINGS A BELL | | |
| WITH HER NOSE | Darren Demaree | - 10 |
| BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME | Woodrow Hightower | - 11 |
| IN MY LOS ANGELES | Lana Bella | - 13 |
| MY LATE NIGHT RHAPSODY | William C. Crawford | - 16 |
| OXYGEN | Morgan Bazilian | - 27 |
| POEMS | Rose Knapp | - 28 |
| NO PLACE IN PARTICULAR | Phillip West | - 31 |
| I LIVE ON THE THIRD FLOOR | Carl Boon | - 32 |
| ASK THE BLONDE WITH THE | | |
| BUCK TOOTH TO STEP ON IT | Jinapher J. Hoffman | - 34 |
| READING PLATO IN A SOUTHERN | | |
| MOTEL | Patrick McGinty | - 39 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------|
| POEMS | John Sweet | - 41 |
| ART | Allen Forrest | - 45 |
| ART | Mark Wyatt | - 48 |
| BEFORE IT WAS NO-HO | Leroy B. Vaughn | - 49 |
| POEMS | Melissa Parietti | - 59 |
| ODE* FOR ANDY WARHOL | Michael Roach | - 61 |
| BUFFALO THEORY | S.A. Harris | - 63 |
| POEMS | Simon Perchik | - 80 |
| THE HIGHLY SYNCOPATED | | |
| GHOST OF JACK KEROUAC | Joseph Ferguson | - 82 |
| A DREAM JOURNAL POEM | Sujash Purna | - 103 |
| THE BUS RIDER | Veronica An | - 105 |
| A LITTLE BLACK DRESS | Thom Young | - 114 |

COVER BY ROBIN WYATT DUNN

THE DEVIL'S MISTRESS

Megan Lynn

we lived under leaves, buried in the soil,
shared kisses with the stars watching,
fed each other berries,
licked the juices off unashamed skin.
we watched the other two,
the first man and first woman, fight.
'I will not lie beneath you,
only on top, for you are fit
to be in the bottom position, while I am to be
superior,' he said.
'I will not lie below,'
she said. 'we are equal,
created from the earth.'
she screamed the ineffable and flew away,
an angel with no wings.
the ground shook

my summons to the almighty who
made me the second woman.

I played my part,
supplicated to the man,
but inside me was poison.
vines held me under him,
inferior.

one night

when I was shaking under the tree
from the words the man cursed,
He came with the fruit.

'Give this to the man
and you will be free.'

it was an empty promise but
I did what I was told.

the Devil won't deal with me
anymore.

Now I am nobody's whore. I walk in the shadows,
sleep with men whose faces I do not see,
and rest during the day.

I cry sometimes in the shower
thinking of Eden and remembering
the Devil I loved.

TAILLIGHTS ARE TEMPLES IN THE GROUND

Arlyn LaBelle

The plastic bag fills with rain
like a body.
The plastic bag like the latex glove.

The rain is too gentle for her.
The wheel pulls.

On the side of the road,
a red bumper smiles
cut from a jack-o'-lantern.

The semis send up waves
like whales.
Whale whale whale
whale.

COMEDOWN

Arlyn LaBelle

The air is stillborn
After the storm, it sticks
to skin. As I walk
the shadows of birds cross
between my feet like
sharks through milk.

FINGERS THROUGH THE TREES

Arlyn LaBelle

When seized, do not speak.
The sun strips you to what she knows,
and she knows heat.

YOU BREATHE OUT

Arlyn LaBelle

Your body teaches you death today,
slowly, there is no enchantment
in your limbs, only pull.
And outside,
the heat you've lived with
your whole life, the kind
that's thick, still
like an ocean, kicks
at your windows.

EMILY AS SHE RINGS A BELL WITH HER NOSE

Darren Demaree

Some dirty, little

parts of the processional

are pure delight.

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME

Woodrow Hightower

I once wrestled a rhino in flip flops Pinned him with a full-nelson
I've memorized Appetite for Destruction And the Sermon on the Mount

I advise not sleeping with a bed wetter In an ankle bracelet
I have catfish whiskers And a fake ponytail

I can eat corn on the cob While riding a unicycle
Old Mexico or New Mexico It's all Mexico to me

I make stellar cigarette-butt shortcake
And lavender's my favorite color

I've taught tap dancing in a canoe While singing "swamp-monster boogie"
I like strip club dustups

And chocolate-dipped cones
The tabasco remedy

Cured my Surf City skin rash
Penetration and propagation?

I'm Underwhelmed and overvalued
I've an extreme dislike of poodles And once loaned Buffalo Bill my sitar

If I had had the had when I had it
I'd be moon walking the solar system now

I wonder what it's like to weld pipe Inside the holy of holies
My one good eye ain't so good

Stick a corkscrew in it, see what comes out
The Doctor says I'm addicted to everything But I'm getting a second opinion

IN MY LOS ANGELES

Lana Bella

In my Los Angeles,
the vain, the lost, the virgins, the breathless, the fame hungry,
all are stoned on the toxin of a stagnant film.
Traveling over grainy ash sky where the refrains
scale high above azure surfs coasting Highway 1,
I sweep my flight through downtown skid-rows
then encircle past Bel Air's mansions' round-about driveways.

In my Los Angeles,
I turn to ride the weightless loop,
each wing, each breath
takes me deeper into the underworld of Griffith Observatory
that staggers between dream and planetarium.
Beneath the sunrise golden and remarkable and heartless,
rich men rev up posh cars with blond coiffed companions
speeding past Wilshire toward La Cienega for a promised bite at Nobu,
leaving the air violent in wisps of smoke

that eventually fade among the blaring hip-hop songs
from lowriders with over-sized wheels
and custom rims trolling Sunset Boulevard.

In my Los Angeles,
sometimes it's just a quick jump
from the rooftop of the historic Biltmore hotel to the bottom
when an actor begins to believe he's no longer
what the world seeks,
while nubile girls strut with secrets and sleeps on casting couch
that will all wash away in needle marks,
where vanity sits at the throne of grace.

In my Los Angeles,
hipsters in beanie hats sipping Starbucks' ice caramel macchiato,
where repast becomes the harvest time for scripts and movies proposition,
strangers assume form of brothers
with empty promises skim shallow underneath--
what's hard is finding truth and meaning in the most ordinary words,
spoken or written, even menial or hyperbolic

on postcards with Hollywood sign and no return address,
if you could pore over the contours of the hill behind the white letters,
your fingers would grieve to know of loss
whose corners are bent where light nods off to the valley wind,
with the air smells like the far-away ocean smothered in smog.

MY LATE NIGHT RHAPSODY: CATCHING UP WITH PANCHITO VILLA AT THE MOTEL 6

William C. Crawford

Jimmy Pro delivered; he always does. He promised clean, cheap lodging. But no guarantees of peaceful, uninterrupted sleep. We could save some big bucks booking by the week, the length of our West Texas photo shoot. Hard by the interstate, nestled in by the sprawling railroad yard, the El Paso Motel 6 was legendary in Jimmy Pro's mind. And this was with good reason.

He stayed here in relative solitude countless times. This dated, gritty sanctuary helped

to launch his plodding photographic forays along the nearby Border and beyond. He swilled plenty of early hours coffee carried upstairs to his habitual third floor haunt.

He stayed here on holidays so slow that his rental car was the only vehicle in a deserted parking lot. Jimmy relished the empty motel when it came to pass. He never really got lonely, and after all, there was the teenaged Latina desk clerk who was always good for an impromptu rap.



My jet lag left me and I lit up with excitement. I toted my ponderous photographer's bags up to my third floor room via the worn, outside concrete staircase. I slid my key in the door which swung open to reveal a spartan, plastic appointed room which looked like it had been frozen there in 1974.

The acclaimed pioneer, minimalist photographer, Stephen Shore, could easily have shot a classic, color pic here. The caption might well have read "Racine, Wisconsin, 1974" instead of "El Paso, 2015." I half expected to find a Gideon Bible with "S. Shore" inscribed inside the cover squire-

lled away in the ancient night stand.

I hurriedly pulled out my Nikon wide angle and grabbed three quick perspectives leaving my bulging luggage outside and out of my shots. I was checking into a funky museum outfitted with a sleeping bed!

We shot hundreds of images around El Paso barrios plying the expansive Border underbelly for the funk which we revered. The forensics here were highly favorable. The tricky January weather alternated between the Sun Bowl and the howling winter wind of West Texas.

As the weekend arrived the Motel 6 filled with shoppers



and revelers of various persuasions. We turned in early after long days of desert shooting. Well after midnight, the unmistakable clicking sound of high spiked heels echoed off the concrete veranda outside my door.

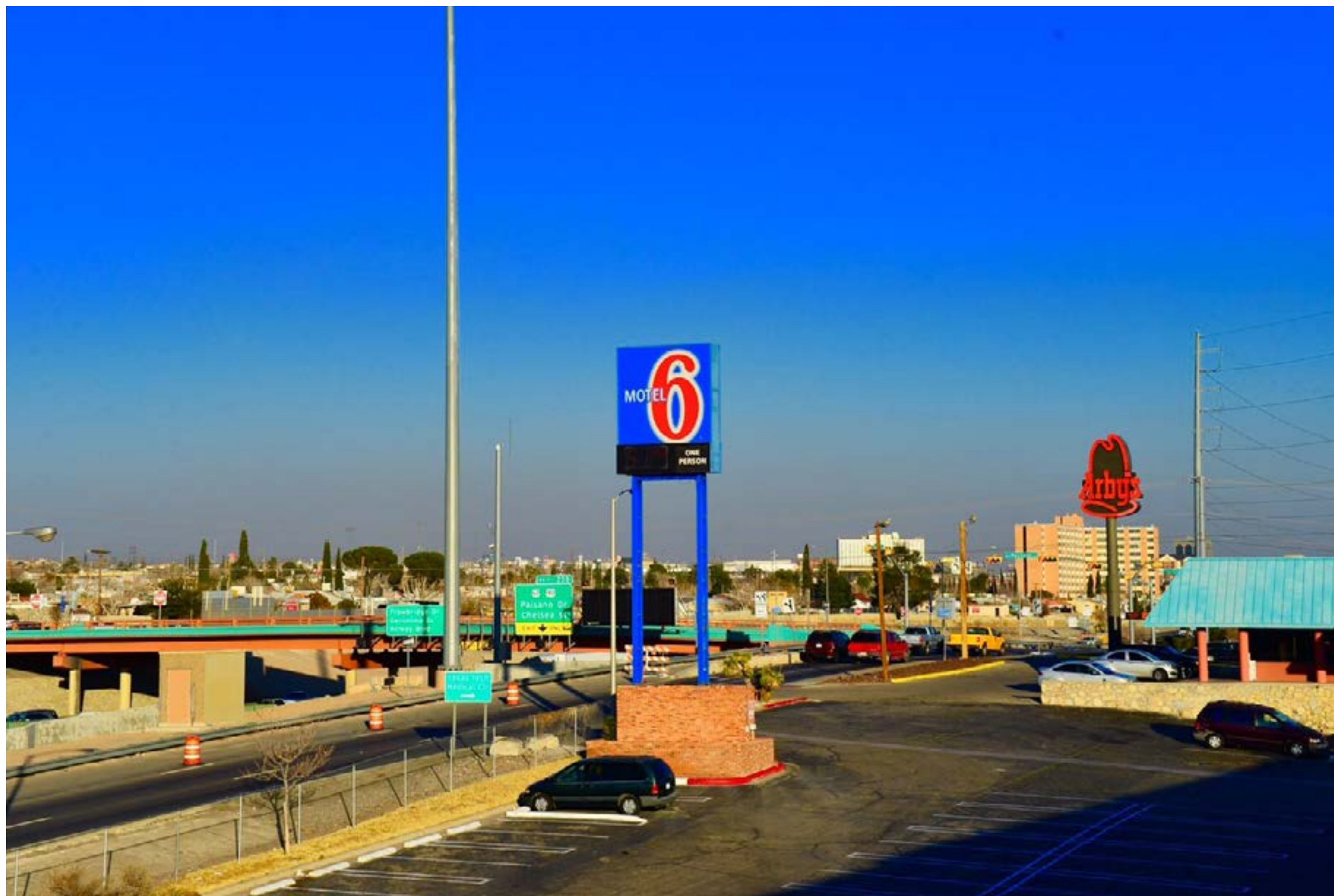
A wry smile creased my sleepy face. Lady of the Night, I reckoned! Nobody else up at 4:00 a.m. on Saturday. The sharp click, click, click stopped just beyond my door at the next room.

Sleep for the next few hours came hard. The dude next door was putting the Lady of the Night through her paces! He alternated between loud groans of

ecstasy and shrill squeals of agony. The Lady was, however, stone silent. All the audio was wildly masculine.

Along about daybreak as I finally dozed off, I heard the sharp spiked heel strikes of the departing sex worker. Click! Click! Click! I mused that a good time was had by all next door, but over here in 309, Crawddaddy had lost plenty of sleep to the boisterous frivolity.

After a few more minutes of fretful dozing, I struggled down to the far removed office to grab some free java. I immediately encountered the bleary eyed Latina desk clerk who was



also just waking up. As she fiddled with her ever present smart phone, I posed a not so subtle question. "Who is that guy up in 310?"

I caught her off guard for just a moment and only half awake. She stumbled straight to her computer terminal and tapped in a query. "Pancho Villa," she mumbled sleepily, unaware of the uncanny absurdity of the terse response.

I turned quickly away juggling my two cups of steaming coffee not so carefully balanced. I wanted to come back with an equally inane, historically related retort like: "Yeah! I just saw Davy Crock-

ett up in 319!" But I settled for muffled laughter as I controlled both my unsteady coffee and my disbelieving reaction.

The next night served up a reprise of romantic gusto in Room 310. I noted that more frequent, intermittent clicks of dangerously high heels seemed to signal the goings and comings of three separate Ladies of the Night. A near traffic jam was building just outside of my door!

The previous night's script otherwise unfolded remarkably the same. My sleep went by the bedside as I again enjoyed the edgy dialogue of masculine groans and squeals. Three



rotating Ladies of the Night offered up no discernible audio. Maybe Pancho Villa was gagging his lovers, revolutionary style? You know-a bandito thing for the flashy dressed hombre!

Later, as I swilled my early morning coffee in Jimmy Pro's room a few doors away, the subject of Click! Click! Click! happened to come up in a casual conversation about onomanpoeia. Jimmy had heard and immediately identified the origin of the passing nocturnal cadence. Moreover, his room was too far removed for him to savor the enthusiastic sounds which I enjoyed.

I relived my previous inane dawn exchange with the senorita at the desk. Jimmy remained stoically nonplussed by the senor's creative choice of a nom de plume.

However, when I posed the nagging question as to why I only had heard male audio from the busy room next to mine, he responded with laser like clarity. He regarded me with keen intensity. Then he answered firmly with his thick Maine brogue still present after decades Down Under. "Well Crawdaddy, it might just be that Pancho is doing all the hard work in there."

The simplicity of his brief



reply was unnerving. Hell, I should have figured that out on my own! Jimmy Pro had delivered again; he always does.

Pancho checked out at Sunday noon replete in resplendent vacquero's garb! My late night sleep soon settled back to normal. And Jimmy Pro didn't have to answer any more of my dumb ass questions.

When I checked out a few days later, I noted wryly to the shy senorita on duty that it was great to have seen Simon Bolivar outside at the vending machines. She looked away and cooed some soft Spanish that was above my pay grade.

She regarded me further

with polite but obvious disdain. Then she retorted, "That was General Santa Anna out at the vending machines. He is a chocolate freak." Loosely interpreted I think she meant something like: "gringo imperfecto!"

OXYGEN

Morgan Bazilian

My friend says, “hurry”
Take the key
Turn it on, quickly
Turn it up
All the way.

And the plastic tubes
Go around his head
And into his nose
And he can breathe
Again.

He then apologises
A few times too many
It was not the disease
It was fear
And the heat.

And we nod
And agree on
How warm it is
The old fans
Barely spinning.

NO SUCH THING AS CLASS

Rose Knapp

Hey how u doin hun?

Opium hum, rapier,

hush it's all alright

he has money

connections.

CEO FOURSQUARES

Rose Knapp

Dis Stilled H₂O

Ponds petrolfied

Black oil, nil suits

HANNAH OURS DIDN'T

Rose Knapp

Steam melts inwards

Crying bad wolf

Book burning blacks

NO PLACE IN PARTICULAR

Phillip West

SFO to LAX never levels out. I barely have time to finish my pretzels, pour the rest in my hand, dust and all, try to forget you, but there are no mnemonics for forgetting, besides heavy drinking, which, on this flight, there is no time for. The reclined seatback in my lap reminds me of capitalism. People who masturbate in airplane lavatories shall be known as the jerkmile club. Sedated dogs in mesh handbags everywhere groggily return home. On the hike to baggage claim, through that long tiled tunnel of light, wrestling headphone wires and zippered pockets, I consider the first puff of smoke that sent me on this trajectory. As Sepulveda advances beneath the wheels of the cab, I find you again in the annals of my email, I open the attachment, I too am an attachment, I open myself, and there's a picture of us so close to the camera you can't tell where we are, we are in no place in particular. Later, I will forward the picture to my travel agent who will tell me there are no longer services to there, and haven't been for some time.

I LIVE ON THE THIRD FLOOR

Carl Boon

The morning Charles Grace leapt
from his fifth-floor balcony,
grabbed an oak limb,
dangled, and dropped,
I was watching Soledad O'Brien.

When the limb snapped,
she laughed at something
the weatherman said,
something about a hurricane
that sounded like nothing be-
cause

the crowd below in unison
was moaning, and the woman
they called Silver Esmeralda
rushed inside for her rosary
beads.

I made a vow not to move.

Soledad in 2002 was sexy,
and Charles I imagined only had
some busted vertebrae
and burn marks on his palms
from the limb. It would be

another regular Tuesday—
tuna fish for lunch, class at 4,
and my copy of To the Lighthouse
from the El Sereno Branch library.
Charles Grace died in surgery.

ASK THE BLONDE WITH THE BUCK TOOTH TO STEP ON IT

Jinapher J. Hoffman

They always say, She's a little weird, and for a long while that stuff offended me - It's the teeth, the freckles...the way she plays in the dirt- and luckily, I'm old enough now to say,

kiss my ass.

10 years of braces and yet, I'd say - Yeah, they're comments don't bother me.
A long time of trying to fit in - But, I still say I don't care.

I'll play in the dirt as long as I want. I'll climb that dirt mountain and stab my toe with a nail and I'll roll from bush to bush playing flashlight tag and I'll look at the stars - God, I'll look at the stars, and I'll dream of

being a converse girl dressed in heels;

Heels that make my butt look nice and make me confident.

All the while, wondering what the hell I'm playing at.

The stars are nice in a clear sky.

Who am I to say they aren't right?

Now, I'm 18. There's adulthood banging on my door begging me to open up, and all I want to do is go back to that dirt hill and stab my toe again, because that day in the urgent care the doctor gave me a free popsicle, and things don't come free anymore.

They come ragged

and sour

and with a price tag that asks me to screw my life over -

hand it to the man with the nice suit;

do the dishes and look for a better wage;

clean the rooftop in a dress;

buy the groceries and smile at the woman that blocks the aisle looking for a certain brand.

They aren't right.

I'll start my own company;

Build a hit-list with no agenda;

Slander anyone with balls;

Grab a bottle of Jack and chug it,

chug it,

chug it.

But, then, does that make me better than them? Maybe I'm being a bit extreme, but it's all this
pent up

anger,

rage,

bitterness -

GO TO HELL! I want to say.

But they're right, I need to calm down - as long as they calm down too. Maybe if I wasn't hurting so much from words -

those stupid things that absolutely will break bones -

I wouldn't

want

to hurt

back.

Back - go back.

There's that dirt hill, all mighty and proud, and one day, it up and disappeared. I didn't get it. I didn't understand how it could leave after all of our adventures together.

When I got older, I knew that it was simply a hill amidst a construction site, and its plan was to be moved. That was what the world had decided for it, and I wonder if that's what's been decided for me.

From bitter to rage to on-the-fence,

I've been moved,

and I'm lost,

but I think that's okay.

There's the parties in high school.

There's the parties in politics.

There's the men.

There's the women.

But, the dirt awaits us all.

Bury me in the dirt hole.

Put a nail at the base.

And, ask the blonde with the buck tooth to step on it.

Watch the blood spit on the dirt.

Watch her get carried off.

And, watch the rain wash it all away.

READING PLATO IN A SOUTHERN MOTEL

Patrick McGinty

Shifting grains in Technicolor
cascaded down the far white wall,
the shadow of her head bobbed

and nodded in the center, her aura
alternated across the spectrum,
a black cloud floating in smoke
over a sea of varied hues.

We wasted days dragging
our bodies across the carpet,
through a minefield of dirty dishes

and overflowed ashtrays, pennies
and pills dropped and forgotten,
from couch to bed to bathroom
and back again,

shades drawn to hide
from the ever-present threat
of sunlight, of the natural

motions and infinite cycles
that loosen and fold skin
at the edges of our eyes
and darken the bags below.

We invented our own language
in love and slang, gave new
names to the strangers

rocking bedposts in rhythm
against shared walls, who
parked, staggered, and scraped
keys, who came and went unseen,

unaware of our blessings.

THE CITIES, ABANDONED

John Sweet

approaching easter in the cold sunlight,
down empty highways & past dead lawns.
Past trailer parks filled with garbage,
the black water of birdbaths,
of drainage ditches.

Plastic bags caught in branches,
caught in barbed wire and the barbed wire
rusting.
The sky faded.

Almost blue, almost white, and if you're
not willing to pay for your beliefs
then you will be made to pay
for something else.
You will be left with blades, with spoons,
with the frightened bones of all your
unborn children.

You will stand in the shadow of Icarus
and wait to be counted.

Will wait to be told that you're home.

...OR THE KISSES OF GHOSTS

John Sweet

each day arriving with
the taste of permafrost

gravel embedded in the lips
in the gums
and salt in the cracks where
the skin has split open

spread your wings like
some defeated angel

bury your hands by
the water's edge

every action is followed
by sorrow

all bitterness burns like bile

say this, then, say i'm afraid
at any given hour of the night

wait for the furnace to
kick on or the pipes to burst

grey spreads from
fingertips to paper, from room
to room, then becomes a way
of life

youngest child wakes up
feverish, crying, soaked in piss

the dream of needles fades
but the addiction remains

snow in the early hours of
any winter morning and
the empty ticking of clocks

the tower lights flashing red
above invisible hills

there is still a lifetime
waiting to be lived here



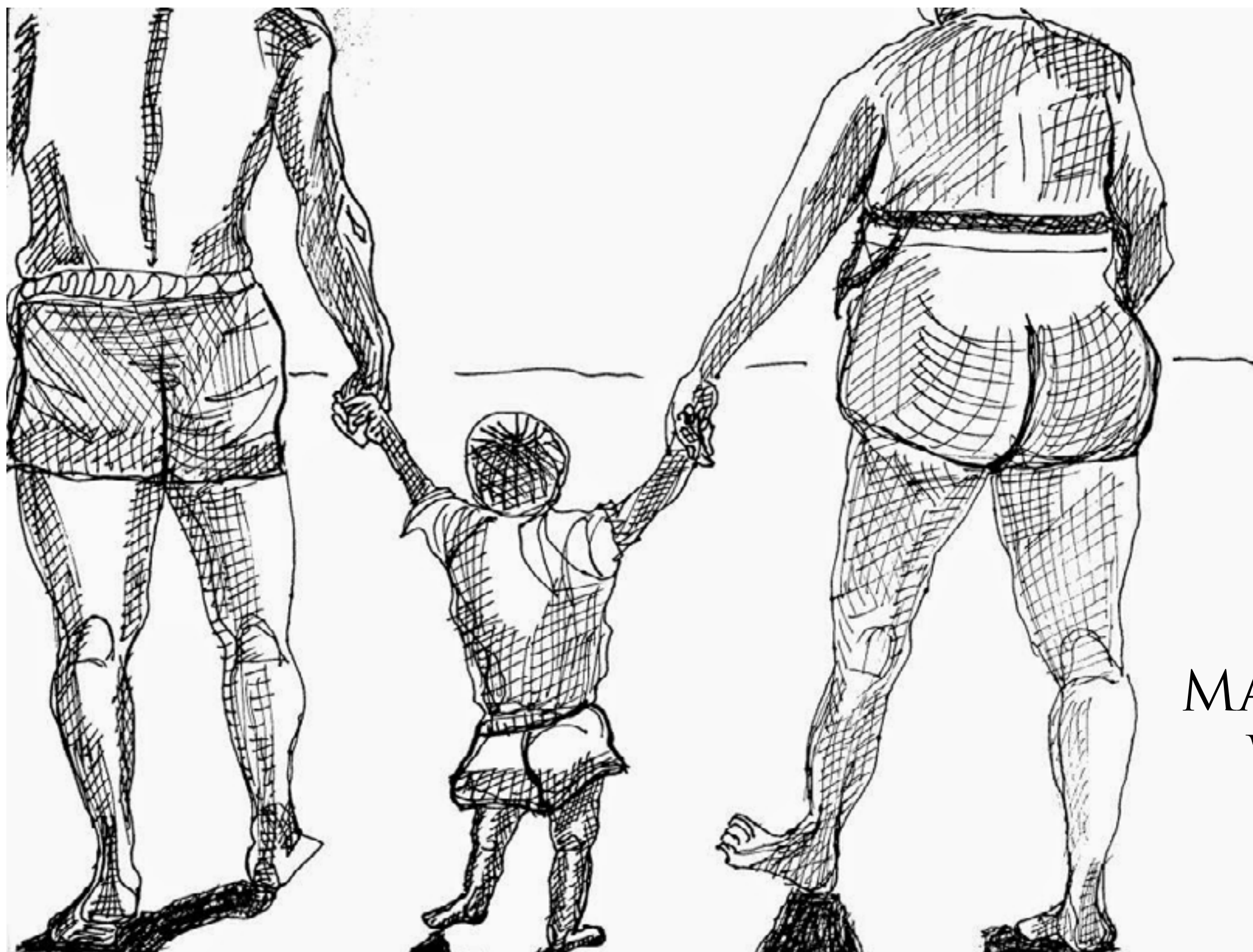
WOMAN POSING WITH MIRROR

Allen Forrest

BATH IN THE SINK

Allen Forrest





MAN, CHILD,
WOMAN

Allen Forrest



Mark Wyatt

BEFORE IT WAS NO-HO

Leroy B. Vaughn

I was twelve years old in 1960, the year we moved to North Hollywood. It was only about three miles from our old house in Van Nuys.

At that time, there was no No-Ho arts district, Valley Village or Valley Glen.

Our house was on the last dirt street in North Hollywood and maybe in the entire city of Los Angeles.

As a kid, we never considered the San Fernando Valley and especially North Hollywood to be a part of the city.

Downtown L.A. was 25 miles away and looked nothing like the Valley.

Our neighborhood and the bordering districts of Sun Valley and Van Nuys looked more like parts of Bakersfield than L.A.

Sun Valley at that time was considered a no man's land for punks and hooligans from North Hollywood, Pacoima and Van Nuys.

My buddies brother Bill was stabbed by a member of the Lynchmen, a street gang that called themselves a car club, about five years later.

I visited him in the hospital with his brother and Bill never explained why he had drifted into Sun

Valley, but we suspected that the punk that stabbed him may have known Bill from the Youth Authority, where Bill had spent much of his younger years.

The word on the street was that Bill knew some Negros that belonged to a gang called the Purple Cadillac Gang and that they would be rolling in from Watts to avenge the stabbing of Bill.

Me and the boys watched for a few days, but we never saw any purple Cadillacs, or Negros in North Hollywood.

While Bill was in the Youth Authority, his brother, my buddy spent two years at the Boy's Republic in Chino.

I never saw Bill again after that night in the hospital. He died about twenty years later of a heroin overdose in the Los Angeles County Jail.

A few days later Bill's mother went to the Bank of America on Laurel Canyon, and was in the bank when two maniacs walked into the bank with assault rifles, and started the most famous shoot-out in the history of the Los Angeles Police Department.

There weren't many nice houses on our street and we even

had a few houses on the block that would be considered shacks by today's standards.

The man across the street was a mechanic and he brought one of his customer's car's home one day at lunch time.

All of my hooligan buddies came over to see the Pontiac parked on our dirt street with the rifles mounted on the rear fenders and trunk, as well as the six shooter gear shifter near the small saddle between the bucket seats, and the long horned steer horns mounted on the hood.

There were silver dollars inlaid on the dashboard, miniature chrome horses on the rear

bumper, and so many other cowboy items that I can't remember them all now.

The Pontiac belonged to a little Jewish tailor known as Nudie, that owned a tailor shop on Lankershim Blvd.

Nudie was famous with the country and western singers that bought their rhinestone suites from him.

Several of these entertainers performed at the Palomino Club on Lankershim Blvd, not far from Nudies shop.

Twenty some odd years later, the world famous Palomino Club would become a Mexican nightclub.

Lankershim Blvd. was known

to the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverage Control as the street in Los

Angeles with the most bars and liquor stores per square mile in the State of California.

George Barris was a famous car customizer that owned a shop in North Hollywood.

His custom cars have won awards and have appeared in many television shows and movies.

Another buddy of mine, that would become a well-known television reporter years later walked into George Barris's shop one day when the showroom was packed with customers, and

fans of

Barris and walked out carrying a manifold with a four-barrel carburetor.

All the kids in my family had to start working as kids, in order to have anything. I got a paper

route when I was twelve years old and delivered newspapers door to door on a bicycle that I

bought with my own money.

By the time I was sixteen, I was going to work at 5:00 AM at the Big Donut #16 on Laurel Canyon.

I would work three hours in the morning before school, opening the shop and baking do-

nuts before the other employees arrived.

I was putting a fresh batch of donuts on the rack when a man drove up to the take out window in a nice looking Thunderbird.

The man said good morning and ordered two dozen donuts.

I looked at him and said something like, "Hey aren't you the guy on Wanted Dead or Alive."

He grinned at me and told me he was Steve McQueen.

That made my day. I had just met the King of Cool.

Laurel Canyon is a few blocks west of Lankershim and is the street that goes over the hill

to Hollywood.

One day we sat in our jalopies across the street from the Barrel House Bar, and watched the Galloping Goose motorcycle gang as they mounted up and headed towards Hollywood to raise hell.

The last time I was in town, the Barrel House had been turned into a coffee house.

A whole lot of drinking went on in North Hollywood. The town was full of veterans from World War Two and we had a lot of hell raisers.

Sherman Way was another one of the streets that had a lot of bars and liquor stores.

One day, I was walking down

Sherman Way with my buddy from New Castle, England.

He wanted to show me some polaroid photos of a girl that I knew from school.

Kenny, my buddy had convinced her to pose in her panties and bra for a few cheesecake photos.

Kenny lived in a motel with his Dad across the street from the Van Nuys Quality Diary.

The room rates must have been good, considering the smell from the diary.

At night, when we were bored we would cross the street and try to talk with the old Mexican that milked the cows.

We knew an older couple that

would buy beer for us.

Once in a while we would stop by and give the old man a few bucks and he would go next door to the liquor store and come back with two six packs of Rainer Ale.

One six pack for me and Kenny and the other six pack for him and his wife.

We never talked much. I guess we didn't have too much to say.

It must have looked odd to see two punks in white t-shirts and blue jeans sitting on old beat up furniture with an old man in overalls and his wife in a worn out house dress slugging down cans of panther piss.

As we walked, we passed the Lighthouse liquor store and I told my buddy Kenny about me and a cousin of mine getting kicked out of the Lighthouse when the clerk caught us peeking at girlie magazines two days before.

Two doors down from the Lighthouse was a dive called The Black Cat Saloon.

The front door slammed open and two brawlers came flying out of the Black Cat, swinging and mule kicking each other.

We stopped and watched as a group of bar flies stumbled out of the saloon to watch the slugfest.

“Hey Shorty, isn’t that your

Dad,” Kenny asked as my Dad took a kick to the stomach.

We were contemplating helping my Dad out, but it seemed to be a fair fight, just hands and feet.

We didn’t have to decide any longer when two L.A.P.D. cops got out of their patrol and one of them yelled, “Break it up you fuckin Okies.”

They stopped punching each other and my Dad told the cop, “Who you callin an Okie, I’m from Arkansas.”

The other fighter mumbled, “Okie my ass, I’m from Texas.”

The cops told them to get off the street and they both headed back into the Black Cat.

It was payday for my Dad and he wouldn't be home until he ran out of money.

That night, a car pulled up in front of our house and someone pushed my Dad out of the back seat, onto the curb.

My Mom cried when she saw that his pockets had been cut open and his money was gone.

Forty years later, I returned to North Hollywood and drove around the old neighborhood.

On Sherman Way, a chicken walked down the sidewalk and a man pushing a pop-sickle cart rang a little bell in front of a Vietnamese fingernail parlor where I think the Black Cat Saloon used to be located.

Three pregnant teenage girls stopped to buy oranges from a man on the sidewalk pushing an old shopping cart at the corner where the Lighthouse liquor store once stood.

The motel on Sherman Way where Kenny and his Dad lived was gone and the Van Nuys Quality Diary is now a strip mall, with all Latino or Asian shops and cafes.

I didn't recognize any of the houses on my old street and I found where our house used to be by looking at the address painted on the curb as I drove down the street.

I was back on Sherman Way heading towards Van Nuys when I

stopped at a little café named
“The Blue Fox.”

The Blue Fox was near or maybe in the same place an old chain restaurant named “Sambos” used to be.

Sambos was the restaurant that was forced out of business because of the name.

I read somewhere that Sambos was a combination of the two owners names and it may have been one of the first victims of political correctness.

I was fairly sure that this place was not affiliated with the notorious bar/bordello in Tijuana with the same name.

Back in the sixties, the Blue Fox in Tijuana sold a lot of

tee-shirts that said, “Eat at the Blue Fox.”

That Blue Fox did not serve food.

I watched a thin woman with a pretty face and lots of make-up walk into the café with a punk that had pimp written all over him.

The thin woman was wearing a white tank top without a bra.

Her breasts were too firm to be natural and I suspected by the way she carried herself and the gold necklace around her boyfriend’s neck that they worked in the porno business, or sex trade.

It was possible, since the San Fernando Valley is the

porno capitol of the United States.

North Hollywood wasn't the greatest place to grow up in, but I'm sure there are a lot of places that are worse.

I got out of town in 1965 when I joined the Marines at the age of seventeen.

I was gone from Los Angeles on and off for the next sixteen years, returning to live in North Hollywood, East Hollywood, and Eagle Rock.

I probably wouldn't feel comfortable in any of those parts of town now, since I'm not some kind of aging hipster.

From what I read and hear, all of those towns have changed

a lot since the early eighties, the last time I lived in Los Angeles County, but everything has changed a lot since my family rolled into Los Angeles in 1953.

I just look at everything, good or bad as part of life's experience and despite the hard times, life for me has been good.

MUSIC BOX

Melissa Parietti

Firstly Coral was
written, along with
Kelp and other piano-cello
songs I lost in the
fire; I still hear them
delicate notes
when I taste -

A CERTAIN LOOK

Melissa Parietti

I am at conflict with today's
landscape - I don't like the way
anything looks, I don't like the
over-glosses demure look on a
model's face (gender non specific)
I don't like falsetto as a means
of introduction or fleeing -

ODE* FOR ANDY WARHOL

Michael Roach

this is the story of johnny rotten, best i can tell he is rotten,
his dreams have all been filled, run over and soaked the carpet.
just 15 minutes, 15, 15 that's all,
life will be full, the vase of flowers will last long enough
to be willed to the daughter, not born yet, no mother anywhere in sight,
little things, not to worry.

rotten johnny can get on with life, now as rotund johnny
king of all,
nothing gets sin the way the holy book does, to be tossed
under the sofa and forgotten,
life simple, again back to tv ad time of before

15, 15, 15 a hexagonal number, a pentatope number and a 5th Bell number,
as if this is not enough
15 & 16 form a Ruth-Aaron pair, under the second definition
in which repeated prime factor's are counted as often as they occur
and much more

andy was so insightful and correct, rotten johnny arrived, blossomed
shown forth and moved on, on the point of a needle.

*music to follow

BUFFALO THEORY

S.A. Harris

Such as spiders have. At college, Nalren Boykins would always tell me about a particular episode of the T.V. series Cheers, the one where Cliff tells Norm about his Beer Buffalo Theory. To be truthful it was just his way of convincing me to get drunk. It goes like this; a buffalo herd can only run as fast as its slowest member. So when the herd is hunted it's the slow, weak buffalo at the back that get picked off first. It's a form of natural selection, as the slower

members of the herd are killed the general speed and strength of the group increases. It's the same thing with the human brain; it can only operate at the speed of the slowest cell. Excessive alcohol kills off brain cells but it attacks the slower, weaker ones first. Frequent consumption of beer kills off the slower cells allowing the brain to function more efficiently. That's the reason you feel smarter after a few beers.

There was a large group of

us here, men, women and children. We were careful, we listened all the time. Sometimes you could smell coffee cooked in tin pots, the aroma floating through the corridors, it was always a good sensation.

I'd arrived at the collective about a year ago. The memory was clear. I kept the communicator so well hidden while their suspicious eyes followed me. They stood without making a sound as I passed them until finally someone extended a hand in welcome. I took it, almost crying with the humanity and as the weeks passed I slowly became one of them. There was no question as to why I

was accepted, being as wretched and emaciated as any one of them. Some were worse than others. Newcomers were always the worst, the more emaciated, the fresher you were to the group. The more established residents were meatier. Some of them played poker the first night. I watched from a distance until the players became tired of the game. I watched them settle their debts and leave. At the table it was a matter of business. Each of them left and went to chambers like cretins to sit alone and still within the walls of the derelict building that was once Buffalo State Mental Institution, they

went to the chambers that were now their homes and thought about what the next day would bring.

“What instrument are you? I’d like to think I’m a bass drum.” It was add odd question from an odd young woman and yet I found myself trying to think of an answer. Something clever, maybe quirky but impressive nonetheless.

“Maybe a Kazoo.”

“A Kazoo? A wind instrument you vocalize into? Interesting; what sort of thing would you vocalize?”

I started to struggle.

“How to succeed in poverty without really trying? “

She smiled.

Someone screamed in the distance. Before I could react properly my companion was already running in the direction of the sound. I trailed behind her and she disappeared from my view. I couldn’t see where she had gone amidst the dark corridors but I could still hear that screaming, that wailing siren that would lead me to the girl and whatever spectacle she had gone in search of. By the time I reached the sound what was once a hysterical scream had died to a whimper.

In the room a girl had her arms around a man’s shoulders. I stayed at the edge of

the room. The man's skin was a greyish colour. The room waited in silence for the girl's anguish to diminish.

"Shian's dead." Whispered the girl who was a bass drum and I felt all my cleverness slowly slink away like a suspect whose been caught in a lie. I looked at the girl holding the corpse, there were many years hidden behind those eyes.

"He died free." Another said. A syringe lay next to the dead man. That's how I remembered my time at Buffalo State Hospital; anguished cries echoing through dilapidated hallways carried on what seemed like the wings of barnyard fowl.

A deep sleep and each night my conscience scrutinized by the lost and denied inhabitants of this place.

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
I awoke askew on a thin,
damp, rubber mattress, my eyes
sore from the dust that seemed
to collect in every corner. A
rat scurried past my feet, un-
aware or indifferent to my
presence.

The girl, who was a bass drum, or, as I later discovered, Iseult, would always greet me with a simple recognition in her eyes. Her room was well lived in, dark but with enough light to capture it. She

had no fashion, only a darkness like the crust that covers magma. She held an old copy of Atlas Shrugged in one hand and a jar of water from which she had been drinking in the other. She was seated on the floor.

“I’m afraid there’s not much water left in the tanks.” She put the book down and stood up leaving a handprint in the dust. “I’ll have to get a group together and stay clear of the policeman.” Singular, that’s how she said it, like they were one entity. It was a comfort to think of them that way rather than individuals. When I replied I was surprised by the ostentation in my voice.

“I’ll make sure we’re all safe. “

She put a hand on her waist and nodded. Sometimes I believed she thought me a coward. What followed would be an unforgettable experience.

The pace was leaving me breathless as I stumbled over clods of earth. Our group split up when we were close to the city. What lay ahead was a dangerous game of scavenging, even thieving. There was a sense of adventure and anticipation when something hard struck my head.

Are there higher things than love? I awoke like the undead clawing their way from the grave. There was an intense

pain between my legs and I suspected I'd been kicked in the nuts while unconscious.

"All things considered you were lucky. Some of the others found you before they did any real damage." Isuelt leant in close as she spoke.

"What happened? Someone hit me."

"You got rolled by teenagers, Wyndham." It was the first time she had called me by name. She seemed suspicious and started to speak but her voice fell to an inaudible murmur. She walked stiffly to the door.

"I found this on you."

In my mind I heard the icy laugh of Nalren while he was

watching Cheers as Woody says," If you have a problem, you lock it away in a secret place. You keep it bottled up good and tight. And if it gets full in there, you just keep forcing the pain and clamping it in."

She winked, placed the device on the ground out of my reach and gently left.

It had become quiet. She'd found my communicator and left it so I could be haunted by its treacherous vapours. Up until that moment I had believed I would never be discovered. I closed my eyes and wished the communicator never existed. I sat for some time occasionally shaking my head in regret not

of carelessness but of shame. When I went to retrieve the device it was no longer there.

How would Isuelt treat me now she knew I had contact with someone outside? I feared our relationship could not be revived.

I woke in the darkness; the feeling was slowly coming back to my upper legs. I struggled to my feet and managed a few steps before falling where I'd last seen the communicator. I could see out into the hall with its partially collapsed ceiling. There was an overwhelming sense of guilt about the situation. How had I let my life turn into this?

A wooden board had been nailed up to cover a broken window. Behind the board was the moon, but what did that matter? Was it full or was it new? Did it wax or wane? I wept for the passing of time and I believe quietly wept for me.

The dried blood remained on my clothes. No one seemed concerned. Least of all Isuelt, her sense was unlike any I had encountered before. I wiped some snot from my nose like a child with something to hide.

Over the days I spent more time with Isuelt, she told me she had been a runaway child but once she'd found Buffalo State she'd settled. She said

there was something very strong and binding within the walls.

Suddenly she stopped and looked around as if we were not alone, as if the space were filled with comparisons.

“You’re the ugliest man in this room.”

“And the most handsome.” I replied.

“That’s how it is, you can be the best or the worst of what you are, in this room, in this decaying building.”

“In this hospital.” I added.

“This asylum.” She corrected.

My conscience was grieving and I felt a great need to leave.

“When you’re fully recov-

ered we’ll go out for supplies again.”

I considered what she said.

“I’ll be with you in case you get in trouble again.” She reassured.

Such confidence led me to suspect she had military prowess, now that would be something Nalren would like to know. It would be weeks before another sortie was mentioned again.

“Time to tread the tight-rope.” That’s how she put it.

I felt hesitant after the beating I took during the last outing. She looked past the cracked glass of the window and out at the world while I moved

back into the shadows of the room behind me, hiding under the skin of the enormous structure, almost fearful that one day it would shake me loose, that my affinity for the place would be would end.

Amy smeared the tears across her dirty cheeks like war paint.

“Will...not...sleep.”

The date was February the second. Her partner, Cheyenne, had been teased from life by an overdose a year earlier. It was the way were when one wanted to escape the mortal coil. Amy bit her nails till they bled while we waited for her to recover but she slipped away from re-

covery every time we had faith.

“She’ll get it together. In this place we’ll all get it together before the end.” I heard the words but couldn’t see who said them.

There was mist in the air as we returned from gathering supplies. The sound of machines had caused us to scatter.

No one wants to get caught.

In college Nalren assured me they’d never find our dope. Why the hell did I believe him?

Nous sommes de plus en plus enragés.

We watched the authorities as they performed their ritual on the homeless teenager they had caught.

Amy turns the heat up on the cooker, pollution rises into the air, and there is an unmistakable smell of an animal's flesh being burnt.

As they set the young vagrant alight the homeless population of the city decreased. I saw humanity fall and felt a fury that was terribly strange and yet reliably my own. Watching a life immolated to the God-thing State was unendurable. I thought of this world and quietly imagined it gone. One of the policemen showed an odd interest in the charred hand of the vagrant but when an alarm sounded in the distance he marched from the corpse in syn-

chronization with the others.

Amy is outside searching for her zenith in the night sky. Our presence gained her attention. There was sadness in her smile that must have come from her growth of experience, that catharsis of hope. Isuelt saw it too. After that Amy was on suicide watch for days. Often I'd sit at the edge of her bed and wonder when she would perish. She never seemed concerned at my presence, I suppose time subsides us.

"You were looking at him," She said. "He would have liked to have lived."

"Shian?" I replied. She shook her head. Her eyes were glow-

ing.

“The burning boy.”

Isuelt stood at the door.

“Has he paid off his debt?”

Amy continued with her abstract words. Had someone told her about the burning vagrant? Had she somehow seen?

Diogenes was underground building a reality, a structural entity made of many individual parts. He pounded his chest as though trying to restart his heart.

“My destiny is to repair this day. The originals are here somewhere.”

He had been sleeping in public rest spaces when they found him, a wonder to their eyes and

judgements. It was his odd will that had kept him alive. He had only one possession on him, a book, Dostoevsky's Demons. He was obsessed with the character Stavrogin, the name meaning “cross”. He could never fully subscribe to any one interpretation of the word, sometimes angry, sometimes crucified, sometimes a plus sign, sometimes a crossing over. The top of his head looked like a burnt rubber ball. There were strands of hair, wild and wispy, that sprouted from one side and his eyes were like balls of alabaster. His past was a palm with no lines.

“Is Basquiat still wearing

that hat?" He said with annoyance.

"It'll run its course." I replied.

We sat down on the floor together.

"I should talk to him more often." He said. The muscles of his eyes twitched at their sides. He seemed oblivious to the occurrence. Basquiat is also oblivious.

I found him sweeping the floor in the tower. The floor was covered in what looked like rust coloured flour and the light from the generator kept flickering out, alternating between fluorescence and the darkness of the waxing moon.

Stains on the back of his hands would be washed away in the morning light and he would be ready for the new day.

"The development of two fish has always existed in children." The words blurted from his mouth and he seemed pleased with himself, pausing to give me a chance to comment. What could I say? He was happily insane. With fire in his eyes he began to dance a foxtrot a partner short and forgetting the correct order of steps. He would continue till sunrise, and as he did something dead had begun to have a voice.

There was fresh blood in the sink.

“From time to time, following him, things aren’t too badly that way.” In the dark I could see the sink but not the man. A slap of his hand in the blood puddle helps me find him. He lights a lamp and I see an unknown face.

“For all my talents I know my purpose is to only tell you this; his irritation is growing and he will not wait for your report but don’t let that concern you. He has no dominion in this place. Him and Her... they both got their philosophy. You know his Buffalo Theory, do you know hers? She thinks of “being and time” like Heidegger. In the light I saw his pupils were

dilated and he sang his last minute addition.

“I was blue, just as blue as I could be...” I can see he’s cut his forearms, almost the shape of an apple on each appendage. I realise I am too close when he grabs my hands.

“She knows it’s a full house now, king’s high with you here. He’ll find his way in but get lost in the burrow.”

He stopped and breathed heavy and steady like a machine in an already too hot factory. I started to back away and he froze. There was still blood in the sink and on his arms but the cuts themselves were gone. He smiled to himself like he’d

performed a magic trick.

“There’s a tower on a hill and a fortress in a valley, between them we plough the land. We plough closest to the tower.” It grew dark and his image faded and finally vanished completely.

I knew Nalren wanted them to die. This was his own idea of Buffalo Theory in practice but the thing was I could never find the episode Nalren told me about and I watched the whole series. In the end I guess it was just his way of convincing me to get drunk.

At what stage was Nalren’s plan? His whole life was like champagne while ours was piss;

aqua vitae, sailors in the doldrums awaiting the wind.

Amy had a suicidal bent and she could bend like glass under heat. In time she would be assured of success but until then death had to wait. The footsteps got louder and I squeezed my eyes shut, holding Amy close. Isuelt entered perpetual and perfect. She saw the used shard Amy had wretched from a broken window and the trail it had carved up her arm.

“You must think you’re on your way.” Isuelt said and Amy nodded.

Isuelt bent close to the pair of us.

“We’re friends Amy, we need

you.” I saw the rules of nature lose dominion when the flow of blood slowed.

“How much time before they come?” Amy asked. “Can we really stop them?”

Isuelt looked at me with a deception in her eyes, a beckoning I could not understand, a question that seemed already answered but needing validity.

“Can we?” Isuelt asked.

Amy sighed like a wave breaking in from the sea; there was no hurry, it was as though she had done it for the term of her natural life. Her broken flesh was re-joined. Her sigh then became fevered gasps and voices filled the room even though

there were but three of us occupying it.

“My friends are here.” Amy whispered. I felt cold when she looked at me. “They’re not going to wait for your report. Think of what he wants to do to us? We’ve been here for years, this ground is ours.” I felt an embrace of despair when we heard the shouting. We followed the vociferation and the mould, decay and corrosion followed us. The portal of the dead and gone had been opened but I felt that needn’t be feared. We’re all friends here.

They were standing at the windows looking out into the dark. Soon others came to join

them. I could feel the blood rushing through my veins.

Isuelt looked at me.

“Clear your head.”

Outside, in the distance we could see the dim lights approaching. I couldn't quite understand how I was able to see that far and that knowledgably. There was a difference in my vision I could not fully explain. Isuelt's face was like clay. Our hearts connected and I felt I no longer had a discernible face in the sudden silence. There was a single eye in the institution and it was a receiver, giving hope to the hopeless. It was the navigator who was pure and as Nalren's

men approached the blood of the institution flowed down every corridor and hallway, inquisitive and frantic. There was a safety within the walls for those that knew the labyrinth. The labyrinth overcomes the lost. We stood close to the glass and I'm sure they looked up and saw us there standing at every window of Buffalo State like burning candles held in the hands of ghosts.

A mourning dove landed on the window sill close to where Nalren was sitting in his luxury apartment. It was a bird he had rarely seen if ever. Alone in the room his flesh flushed at the sight of it. He would

have like to have shot it but there was a change in the room, a parting between him and his surrounds. The dove gaily let out a “Roo-oo.”

Nalren suddenly felt pinned to his chair like a lesser chess piece in a game.

Yet again the dove let out a “Roo-oo.”

Flames burst from his hands, followed by his keratin stores. For a moment he thought the chapter was still open and wished the heat would be quenched by the waves of some sea until he saw the visage of Buffalo State and his confidence crumbled to cinders as flames ignited from his stomach

and he thought,

“Why like this, why like a freak?”



Without an address your hands
lean across -another crease
making the final correction

though this note still opens out
windblown, fingerprints
everywhere on her lips

on her breasts, on the bed sheet
folded and over, warmed
for its nakedness and side by side

-every word is already lost
and there at the bottom
where little blossoms should grow

there's nothing but silence
and the long line for a stamp
to cling when it leaves your hands

as if even without the flowers
the corners will arrive as evenings
covered with dirt and her forehead.

Simon Perchik

What you open leans against wood
that is not a door you can muffle
put your arm around the only sound

when you knock on this kitchen table
whose corners were broken off
straight down, still lit, letting you in

circle her mouth not yet the room
left over and listen for the smoke
around the hush from small fires.

Simon Perchik

THE HIGHLY SYNCOPATED GHOST OF JACK KEROUAC

Joseph Ferguson

The dream has faded; curling at the edges. Basement Man and Hose stare like crash dummies out over the dashboard. The road hums. In the back seat, the ghost of Mutley haunts the shoulder with Village of the Damned eyes. Heads bob in slow motion as shock absorbers devour road rhythms in a roar of silence. The overhead light is on, glaring stupidly on the spectacle of their boredom.

Slowly the car drifts out of its lane. Road reflectors grind like dentist drills through the floor board. They look at one

another. Then away. Basement Man swerves back into lane. The road continues to hum.

“Shoulda fuckin’ got beer before we left.”

“Shouldn’t a left.”

“Should never a brought fucking Mutley.” Hose flicks a thumb at the unblinking figure in the back seat who outstares his reflection as it floats next to the car; just beyond the glass.

“Should never a fucking come.”

It is a litany repeated in one form or another all night;

the speakers interchangeable.

Outside, emerging from the fog one by one, a strange procession of color and grillwork, fenders and fins. Cars, none less than 30 years old, seem to have risen from the grave to possess the highway.

“There goes another one.”

“Forty-nine Merc.”

“This is fucking weird.”

Basement Man listens to the swish of each dotted line passing. The hood of the car rises and falls like the prow of a ship. He focuses on it; like waves rising and falling. The road blurs to backdrop. He shakes the scene back to clarity; feels like he’s in a driv-

er’s ed movie. They all end badly.

“Put the radio on man.”

“Shit! Why didn’t we think of that an hour ago?”

Static fills the car like audible fog. Hose fiddles with the dial. Voices, confused and far off as dead men’s, float in and out of their dim cubicle. Each time Hose tries to pin one down, it drifts off; a blur of white noise.

“...ruary third, 1959.” An explosion. A wail. A banshee howling through the airways. A station arrives loud and clear 50 decibels above the static.

“Hey! Lower that fucking thing! I’m goddamned wired as

it is.” Basement Man checks the rearview. Mutley reacts by cocking his head slightly left; like a dog listening to sound beyond human range. “Huh. Brain dead.”

Hose scans the dial. Vague hints of Perry Como cough from the cosmic background noise lurking at the far end.

“Fuck. I guess the one is all we got.” Hose laughs, looks from Basement Man to Mutley, stopped short by his thousand-yard stare. “See if I can find it again.”

“How the fuck could you miss it? Sounded like we were drivin’ through the fuckin’ studio.”

“...That’ll be the da-a-ay that I die.” Sound fills the car with the dying notes of a song. Then static. Swirling voices.

“Did they just say something about Ipana toothpaste?” Hose points at the radio. “I didn’t think they still made that stuff. ‘Member the fucking Ipana Beaver?”

“I remember the I-fucking-pana muff diver.” Basement Man leans into the dash lights. His teeth gleam like King Kong’s at Carl Denim’s nightclub.

“Fuck you...”

Basement Man and Hose look back at Mutley who watches a candy-apple 57 Nomad pass through his reflection.

“There goes another one.”

“This is really getting fucking weird.”

“Yeah maybe we’re having acid flashbacks like that moron Pool Man.” Hose begins to come to life. “Remember the way he used to hold his head and fall down yelling ‘Flashbacks. I’m having acid flashbacks!’” Hose grabs his head and mimics falling. They both laugh.

Dead ahead, the apparition of a man appears; hitch hiking. Behind him, headlight beams toss on the fog like a foundering ship. Basement Man pulls over.

“Climb aboard cap’n.”

“Thanks man.” The smell of

wet raincoats and body odor enters the car and sits next to Mutley. The two stare from the backseat like a matched set of wooden owls.

Basement Man and Hose exchange looks and shake their heads. The dim light now shines on four gaping mannequins. Outside, a piss-yellow Willys roars by, mooneyes decals stare blankly at them through the night.

“Where ya goin’ Ace?”

Radio waves have made a wrong turn somewhere. They writhe and sweep formless through the night, into the car, and back out into the air. Like spirits howling, moaning, rattling

their chains. Words and sounds apart from language and music. Isolated. Bizarre. "... the tour ..."

"Fargo South ..."

Abruptly, the reality of a voice.

"The night was burning cool." Basement Man and Hose jump in their seats. The voice is monotone, yet sharp as diamond set in the fuzzy silence; grating their nerves like squeaking chalk. "Black heat slung low over the highway weaving like a sax lick inandoutand-upanddown hills that syncopated the landscape in a bulgeanddi-panddipandbulge kind of dance ... themselves syncopated balls of smooth nakedness and small wiry

clumps of pubic-hair scrub...the whole scene a syncopation of clarity and fog seeking their natural highs and lows ..."

In a voice like the undead from a B-zombie movie, the hitchhiker rises slightly from the seat as he speaks and falls back with the last word, moving nothing else but his lips.

The night roars black about the car. A window begins to whistle faintly.

Basement Man and Hose smooth their feathers. "Hey. We got Jack-fucking-Kerouac back there. Basement Man jabs a thumb backward and sneers.

Headlights rise from the next hill like twin suns on a

hobo planet. Tail lights fizzle like slow meteors.

Silence and static mix, filling the car like tepid bath water. Hose nods out while Basement Man's eyelids drop to half mast.

"Hey Kerouac. You still didn't tell us where the fuck you're going.

"When I was small, I would walk the long attic stairs to meet my dead grandmother who rocked in a noiseless chair. She had iron-gray hair, and in her eyes you could read the hip Grant Wood-Norman Rockwell days of her life, where generations of farmers leaning on hoes, penetrating the moist

wormy earth with shovels and picks, pitchforks and plows, stiff from the forge, pulsing in callused hands with the pain and joy of life ... riding hills on slanted tractors so red and green and yellow, first-grade reader figures with straw hats and red bandanas, who jump down to stand in the rich middle American mud, their hip/beat/jazz/American gothic overalls hung like interlocking barrels with cuffs from Porky Pig suspenders, while behind, the sky is a moving diorama flashing light and dark."

"Like I said, Spider, I still ain't hip to your destination."

Silence roars 60 miles per

hour down the road. Basement Man and Hose wait, but nothing follows. Dead eyes stare from the backseat. It is already difficult to imagine the hitchhiker having ever spoken.

Silence roars 70 miles per hour down the road; eyes stare from a car full of Raggedy Andys.

Silence roars 80 miles per hour down the road; a coarse, scratchy hush, itchy as fiberglass.

“Hellowww Baaaaaby!” The radio cuts in from nowhere; at first loud and clear, then swirling off in clouds of static; music drifting off to other worlds, then back to clarity.

“Jeeeesus Fucking Chritmas balls!” Basement Man hunches his shoulders and shakes his head.

“What’s the matter ... got the T’s?” Hose manages to conceal his surprise by turning his startle into the imitation of a madman.

Got that right. I could use a cold one on my program right about now.””Sheeit. If we had any cash we’d be drivin’ the ‘System.’”

“Yeah. The fuckin’ system ...”

“Fuck, you remember the time me you and Blop drove to Boulder on the frickin’ system?”

“Yeah, the system.” Basement Man begins to bob his head. “

“Jesus what a pisser.

“The Mother Fucking System.”

He is smiling at the steering wheel.

“We were in the middle of a fucking bender before we even left home.” Hose’s hand is curled and moving as if he was holding a beer can.

“Damn! The ever lovin’ mother fucking system. Basement Man is really starting to bop now.

“That is the only way to fly. One driver. One drinker to keep him company. And one sleeper. All in continuous, sinuous, mellifluous motion.”

The two join in a duet of cackling. Hose’s laughter trails off; Basement Man sput-

ters into a coughing fit.

“Fucking Blop.” Hose begins nodding his head, but ends up shaking it.

Yeah ... fucking Blop.” Basement Man stares ahead, watching the dotted lines point the way to nothing.

Silence roars 90 miles per hour down the road. The radio keeps sputtering. “Number one hit ... 59...Donna ...”

“But she couldn’t tell me anything.” Again the hot knife of a voice cuts through the buttery still.

Both men turn screaming on the hitchhiker, angry and embarrassed at being startled.

“What! What the fuck are you

talking about, asshole?

“My grandmother. She lived and died; but there was still nothing she could tell me. Only rock gently and stare at her thoughts.

Silence. Silence. Dead roaring silence 100 miles per hour down the road.

“Hey slow down, will ya. I mean, Blop was a great guy and all, but I don’t want to meet him tonight.” Hose grins weakly at Basement Man who glows yellow-green in the dash lights.

“Or this guy’s fucking grandmother.” Basement Man jabs the air again with his thumb.

Hose laughs but continues to stare. “Man, you got the weird-

est fucking tan I ever saw. You look like this guy I knew who tried one of them self-tanning lotions and came out orange. Only you look more like the color of a school bus.”

Radio waves old as the big bang continue to surround random words. “... he ... and ... with gardol ...”

Basement Man and Hose stare blankly at the radio. Mutley and the hitchhiker have found great meaning in the headrests. They roll on for another hour.

“Hey man ... This system of yours, it sounds like syncopated visions of Jack and Neal On the Road, man ... I dig it.”

“He digs it.” Basement Man

nods at Hose.

“Yeah man. I dig it. I got some money. Why don’t we get us some booze, and check out your system?”

“The motherfucking Eagle has landed Houston!” Basement Man punches the accelerator and aims for the first exit ramp.

“One small step for man.” Hose gives the finger to a pink 57 T-Bird and starts to dance in his seat.

“The frickin’ sign said ‘food, gas, and lodging.’” Hose bangs on the dashboard until his knuckles hurt. “Fucking shit!”

The night is a black forest;

each tree a quiet whoosh passing.

Basement Man remains calm; soothed by the prospect of drink.

“Look. There’s a frickin’ bar.”

“Pay dirt.” Basement Man turns the wheel like he is steering a ship. “It’s fucking packed.”

The lot is a scene from a movie; vintage chrome and polish caught in the buttery glow of neon. A period piece gin mill gleaming over willies and roadsters, deuces and coups, with a spray of raunchy rock and roll pouring from the half-opened doors.

“What is this, fucking Happy Days?”

“No. It’s the Class of 59.” Hose points up at the neon sign where a pair of greasers dance, shirt tails sweeping back to form the letters of the club’s name.

“Jesus Fucking Alou.”

The hitch hiker is out and headed for the bar. Basement Man falls in behind him.

“What’re we gonna do with him?” Hose points to Mutley who sits oblivious in the car.

“Fuck it. He looks happy where he is.”

Inside, black leather and Bryllcreem. Smoke and motion. A snake pit of pony tails and DAs

lined up in the tribal rite of The Stroll.

The hitchhiker bellies up to the bar and sinks his fist into a bowl of peanuts.

“Whatcha drinkin’?” The bartender’s hairless arms are the texture of baloney; ass-kicking leathers hang absurdly on his Lou Costello frame.

The hitchhiker throws down a ten, running his free hand over its smooth mahogany curves. “Gimme a pitcher with three glasses.

Basement Man eyes him and whispers to Hose. “Looks like the System is breaking down already.”

“Sounds about fucking right

to me.” Hose leans back, elbows on the bar and studies the room with a satisfied smile.

They grab a booth of worn wood and carved initials. The hitchhiker pours out three beers then slams down the pitcher. A wave breaks over its side; foam tracing slow paths on the grooved glass. The umpteenth 50’s song that was playing ends and the voice of the DJ rides for a moment above the ocean of voices before being swept beneath the surf.

“That’s the same fuckin’ radio station we had on in the car.” Basement Man points in the general direction of the bar. “Probably can’t pick up

shit else around here; even with a good receiver.”

Hose eyes the crowd through the lens of his glass; trapping each person in turn in an amber bubble.

The hitch hiker smiles.

“This whole fucking trip has been weird from the start. Basement Man’s face is the color of urine in the soft bar lights. “First thing.” He downs his first beer in one gulp, wincing. “First thing, we get all bent outa shape and decide to take the show on the road on accounta this guy Blop takes the deep six in the river one night while we’re drinking. Then, on the night before we’re

supposed to leave, I lend Johnny Jholo my car to make a beer run, and he gets creamed by an ambulance. Now he's dead too, and the car is trash."

Basement Man has been refilling his glass while talking and now takes a small sip from the top, making a sour face. "This beer taste funny to you?" He looks from Hose to the hitchhiker as if taking a survey.

"Tastes damn fine to me." Hose beams. He starts to check out the crowd for women.

"It just aint goin' down right." Basement Man shakes his head and examines the glass as if looking under the hood of a stalled car.

Hose turns back around and eyes Basement Man up and down. He chugs another beer before speaking. "Hey man, you got any downs you been holding out on us? Your eyes look fuckin' glassy."

"Fuck you asshole." Basement Man turns halfway in his seat and glares at the bartender.

"Hose pours another glass. Basement Man gets up and heads towards the men's room. He trips and staggers to the left sending a ripple through the crowd of dancers.

"Christ ... You only drank one fucking beer." Hose holds up his glass grinning at its golden glow before downing it. Foam

runs down his mouth in a white Fu Manchu. He turns back to the hitchhiker and chuckles. "More for us." He refills their glasses and shrugs before settling back into the booth.

The two drink in silence until the hitchhiker gets up to get another pitcher. Hose looks around the bar. "Where the fuck is Basement Man? Must be pullin' his fucking pud in there."

The hitchhiker returns and says the waitress is coming with the beer.

They wait.

Hose downs the rest of his beer. "Hey ... Where the fuck is that waitress with our beer?" The people in the next booth

peer over the top at him.

"What're you lookin' at?"

A waitress with big hair dressed like a cheerleader finally appears and sets the pitcher down. The hitchhiker tips her a buck, as Hose begins to sway in an attempt to paw at her. "Hey. Comere. Comere. Hose wiggles a finger as she tries to retreat. "This is damn good beer." He smiles like a lit-up pumpkin."

She laughs and turns away in one motion. Her twirling skirt gives the impression she has disappeared in a puff of smoke.

Hose turns back to the hitchhiker. His words are slurred and slippery. "You know that

thing sittin' in the back seat with you ... used to be Mutley? You might not believe it, but he was a semi-functioning human being before this trip. ... The room has ground to a halt as the radio announcer says something lost in static.

"Sounds like we're on the subway," Hose shakes his head and continues to drink.

Basement Man is all that moves in this still-life. He staggers and bounces like a pin-ball from table to table making the glasses ring and the patrons buzz. His head rattles like a blimp-size bee is trapped between his ears. His

skin is the color of caterpillar guts; eyes round plates of pale blue china. His fly is open. Vomit and blood streak his clothes. In this state he stumbles into a woman whose breasts protrude like missiles from pink mohair. He pours puke breath into her Colgate smile, stiffens like a hard on, then grabs handfuls of poodle skirt and ass as he topples like a felled redwood to the barroom floor.

Basement Man is in a feverous room of nausea. A tube of light shines a single beam on him like some sci-fi death ray. He is in a vacuum with stone

solid walls of silence and noise that follow his movements, trapping him ever in the spotlight; a center-stage prison that separates him from the writhing cast of undead extras that pound the invisible walls. Inside, visions and dreams, myths and realities play out on the translucence like ghostly films haunting his retinas when he tries to shut them out. Underwater. Deep brown splashing. A

deaths-head Blop grasping with Freddy Krueger fingers. He tries to rescue a girl who lives trapped in the house of her wicked father - Basement Man's father - beneath the soupy waters just north of the Yonkers Pier; a childhood dream. A dingy hotel room. Mutley in a chair, immobile, watching; eyes psychedelic pinwheels aflame, spinning rainbows in which his eyes are tiny Judy

Garlands, crone-thin,
focused on a landscape of roofs ... an
Oz, all chimney, angle and hallucination
three flights above
the French Quarter. The cameraman is
drunk and has lost
his normal lens. Everything is wide-angle,
askew, shot from the floor up...Mutley
pops tabs of acid, one after the other,
like peanuts from a bowl. "Time for a
fresh beer." Hose removes the warm
untouched can from

Mutley's hand,
replacing it with a cold one.
He grins with a bleeding mouth.
Fifties cars gleaming, their
grills sneering with chromium
teeth, guzzling down huge
outsized pitchers of gasoline
with frothing beer heads. They
toast Basement Man who is The
Thing caught in an electric arc
on some strange

planet, consciousness draining from his vegetable brain. A girl whose name, Rosalind, is emblazoned in the sky above her, laughs, Harpy teeth dripping slime onto her black-seamed stockings. He reaches out to her ...

Basement Man breaks the surface of thought as if swimming up from the depths of a vast sea.

He is confused, but it is a crystal-clear confusion; sounds knife-edge sharp, colors vivid. Above him, a convex mirror distends his small globe of real-

ity. He is the centerpiece, on a stretcher in the corner of a hospital hallway. He is curiously shriveled and old-looking in a starched white hospital gown. His skin is the texture of Silly Putty pressed on a yellow comic strip. The small sounds of a radio reach him like the scrapings of a mouse would a falcon.

The surgical green wall has one red stripe. The floor is beige tile with white lines like highway lane markers. They indicate his bed is parked correctly. Down the hall, just above the motorized double doors that open out from his direction, an electronic sign

displays room numbers. Number three flashes.

The door swings open. A doctor stands, white smock over a gray three-piece, pin-stripe suit. His face and hands are chafed red with cleanliness; features sharp as the creases in his pants. As he approaches, Basement Man notices one stray whisker on his clean-shaven cheek. His shoes gleam.

“Hello Brendan.” The doctor checks his chart, smiling with professional good humor.

Basement Man nods. Room three continues to flash like a silent scream. It’s radio continues to speak to all who will listen.

“Here’s to all you folks from the Dairy Queen Corvette Club ...”

“Brenden, I am going to talk straight with you ...”

“... the Johnny Angel Vintage Car Club ...”

“You are very seriously ill ...”

“... and Roy’s Racing Team ...”

Basement Man cannot stop staring at the red three flashing above the doctor’s head as if it were some bizarre advertising gimmick of a hat.

“I could go into all the technical reasons you passed out in the bar ...”

“... I tell ya, you guys looked great out there cruisin’ the

highways and byways, playin'
the oldies sounds of WDEL!

“... but the bottom line is
this ...”

“And to all you strollers,
ponies, and lindy hoppers ...”

“... you have Hepatitis C.”

“... out at the Class of 59.”

“What that means is a long
rest ...”

“Man you cats and chicks
looked great struttin’ yer
stuff.”

“... about a week of which will
be spent with us...”

“And to everybody out there
at home ...”

“... and after you recover ...”

“... or work ...”

“... drinking is out for good.”

“... or in your cars ...”

“And by that I mean not even
a social drink now and then.”

“... who joined in our tribute
...”

“I know this is a little hard
for most people to accept ...”

“... to Buddy Holly, Big Bopper
J.P. Richardson, and Ritchie
Valens ...”

“... but believe me, it’s no
joke.”

“...and the rebroadcast of our
programming complete with com-
mercials ...”

“The damage to your liver is
extensive and irreparable.”

“... as it ran February 3,
1959, the day the music died.”

“Do you understand me? Am I

perfectly clear on this?”

The three has stopped flashing. A single nurse enters room three, her starched white uniform almost as puffy as a poodle skirt. She is there only a moment before rushing out. She returns with a team of doctors, nurses, and equipment rushing like firemen.

Basement Man nods. He looks the doctor straight in the eye for the first time. His face is not unkind.

The radio plays the first words of a song, “A long, long time ago, I can still remember when ...,” before someone turns it off.



A DREAM JOURNAL POEM

Sujash Purna

Tens of millions of suns revolving around the black bedspread the
covers the unknown

I as a sailor on a night sky film my itinerary that is serpentine and
shaping up around the torso of certain Galapagos

I wake I forget

I hang from the cliff

I lose my teeth

I lose my mom

I lose my dad

I lose them all

I am on a mission to save the world

I am constantly drowning and resurfacing in the ocean in an unknown
country where women give birth to snakes and I am spoiling my
appetite with dead birds but I am constantly hungry for something

Sometimes I can look at myself from a telescope or from a camera
in an independent movie

The lightning strikes and never subsides. It is there like the reproachful look of loved one who leaves you behind.

The lightning is the light like the sun and the moon and the stars and all the city lights.

No noise from the thunders but you can hear the boom in a muffled way from a distant place as it slowly creeps beneath your feet and shakes you lightly. I slip and fall on my stomach.

I am wrapped and unwrapped in my blanket and I notice the curious and frightened face of my roommate.

THE BUS RIDER

Veronica An

It is exhausting - shaping your mouth around those unfamiliar sounds after a long day of work, taxing your brain to recall, trying to sound as intelligent as you know you are but in this alien tongue. Still he tried, tried to remember to “thankyou” the bus driver and say “excuse” instead of “*pardon.*” But it certainly wasn’t easy.

He wasn’t one of those naïve *imigrantes* who thought the streets would be paved with gold or that his *jefe* would care about his college degree but he just never thought it would be this

tiring.

Even waiting for the bus felt like an eternity because this city gives you nothing.

He watched the cars, lined up like rows of sparkling beetles, from the grubby bus window and tried to stay awake. It was the end of another long day, a Tuesday, he knew because he had done the laundry. He marked the days by the old lady’s schedule. It was hard to believe what he had been reduced to - caring for a frail *vieja* because her own children were too rich to be bothered.

Sure, they stopped by every once in a while. But even Jorge could tell it was all for show, all to impress the old lady and secure a good place in her will. They never stayed for long, just enough time to dirty some dishes for him to clean and get annoyed when she began to repeat herself. *Senora* Carmichael was now his responsibility.

Sometimes, the language barrier was a blessing - but mostly it was a curse. He would become fascinated by the sounds the *vieja* made, even though he'd heard them millions of times, her strange cooing voice held him transfixed. She talked

while he made the bed, cooked her meals and pushed her around the garden. She never seemed to care that he didn't answer. But that's how it was with most people, to the general population he was pretty much invisible.

Only the *cholos* down the block and his family in their cramped apartment gave him a passing glance - and sometimes not even them. Strange as it seemed, he savored his hours with the *vieja* he felt strong and alone enough to think, her half-lucid presence gave him enough space to remember. In her small garden apartment, he was free to dream, to revisit his rosy

tinted past and forget - just for an instant about the smog-filled city surrounding him.

He held his backpack close to his body as he walked the 4 blocks from the bus stop to the apartment he shared with his wife, daughter and the Lopez family. Each step brought a mixture of bitterness and joy - he never grew tired of looking at his wife or caressing the small baby they had made together but he balked at the squalid conditions they lived in, the room barely big enough for one and the barbed wire gate surrounding their home.

Lupita usually came home before him, she worked as a

salesgirl at the local mercado, not a glamorous job by any means, but much better than cleaning some stranger's house all day.

Unlike him, Luptia had no education; she grew up in a farming village and met Jorge on a chance excursion to the big city.

Two short weeks after the biggest *boda* in town, they left the comfort of their small home for the United States, for the city of angels. Maybe the air wouldn't be cleaner or the fruit juicier but there they could dream big, together they could turn their faces to the sun and make a new life for

themselves. Or so he thought.

But here, nothing was as it seemed. The crippled beggar got up from his wheelchair to grab an unopened bottle of beer, the corner bodega sold fruit that was rancid in the middle and the dreams to which he had clung so tightly seemed to vanish in a poof of car exhaust. It wasn't that there was no home, Jorge reminded himself, it just wasn't here- he hadn't found it yet. Maybe under the next palm frond or upturned milk carton, he would be able to find what he promised

Lupita all those year ago.

He was even too poor to afford the wedding bands. Lupi-

ta said she didn't mind but he knew she was secretly craving that thin metal band of acceptance that told the world she was his. She was being a stoic for his sake. On a whim one day, Jorge decided to get her name tattooed onto his left wrist. This painful process cost him more than he liked to remember, not only his savings money but also his pride, when he quietly sobbed under the burning pain of the tattooist's pen.

This self-imposed mark served as a constant reminder of his love for her but was also a bitter thorn that poked at his inadequacy.

- - -

Michael could feel the writing disintegrating from underneath his fingertips. Really?, he silently asked himself. Another one of 'those' stories?. He expected better of himself and of his writing. It couldn't be more by the book, if I tried, he thought. Frustrated, Michael slammed his laptop closed. He looked up at the steel-beamed ceiling as his eyes adjusted to the real world - focusing on something tangible rather than on the imagined world that played out on his computer screen. He caressed his cup of overpriced coffee, long since cold, and let his eyes wander over the crowd.

High-topped tables, young people clicking away on their laptops - some encased in their headphones, others not. He was just one of the crowd, another person who made, or barely made, their living while tied to a laptop.

Here he was, a “free spirit.” At least that’s what he told himself. But giving birth to a novel was not as easy as anyone imagined. “You’re a writer, Michael. So write,” his editor’s words played on loop in his head like one of those musty old records his girlfriend collected from yard sales on weekends. He sighed and took a mouthful of pungent

coffee. This is what you wanted, he reminded himself bitterly and rubbed his nearsighted eyes. Michael examined the story from every angle possible but his mind constantly turned up blank.

After an eternity of staring at the blinking cursor on his laptop screen, he decided to put Jorge’s story to rest, for now. He drained the coffee from his mug, to the bitter end. He shuffled his papers together and slipped qhis laptop into his leather messenger bag - no, imitation leather, he silently reminded himself. Along with a car, a leather bag was on his dream list - tangible

signs that he had “made it.”

Michael shuffled to the bus stop as he plugged himself into his phone. Suddenly his world was awash with music, soaring arias, trembling sopranos and tender piano lines. His guilty pleasure.

Michael lost himself in Puccini’s opera as he waited for the bus that was late, as usual. He went through the daily dance; phone-wallet-TAP card-sunglasses, as he shuffled himself onto the bus. Michael chose a seat near the front and flung his bag at his feet. As classical music pounded in his ears Michael took a cursory glance at his fellow passen-

gers. It was a diverse though an unequal representation of his city. No stars graced the bus seats, no filmmakers sat under bus shelters’ insufficient hoods.

But he knew he wasn’t one of them, he was a starving artist. Michael’s stomach rumbled at the thought of the pad Thai noodles, Kelly left in his fridge last night. She ate half ate the noodles sitting cross-legged on his couch, her small feet propped on the table beside her. Michael closed his eyes and tried to find a comfortable way to sit in his seat.

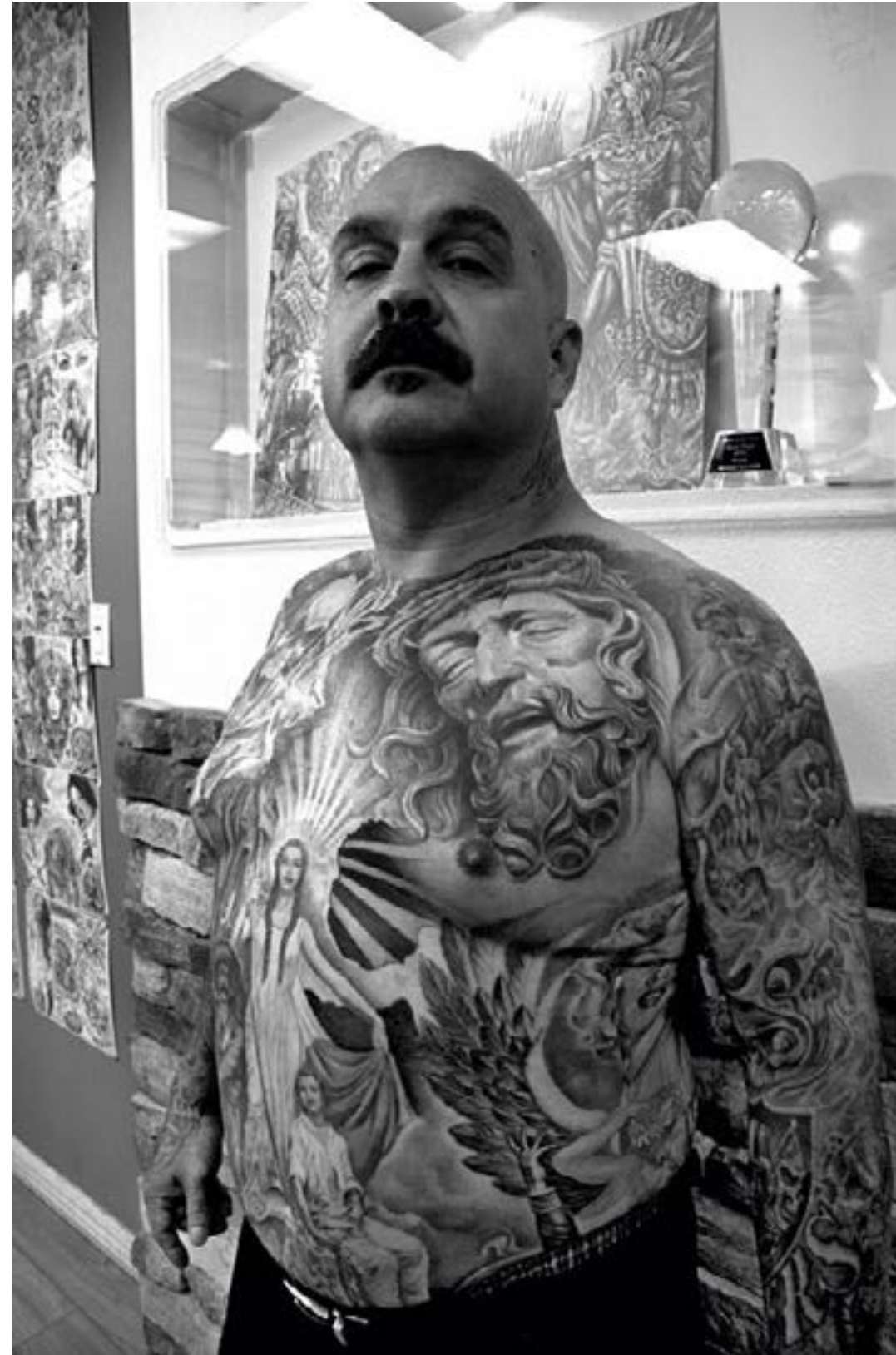
He nodded awake after a jar-

ring stop. Three men shuffled onto the bus all looking like windblown leaves. A young, coffee-colored man with crumpled clothes sat in the aisle seat-across from Michael. He carried a single red rose. That's sweet, thought Michael. I should get one for Kelly... would she even like that?, he wondered. Sure, he and Kelly had been together for just shy of two years but there were still some things he could never understand about her. His mind wandered to her thrift-shop wardrobe, her stubborn refusal to wear dresses and her affinity for ugly shoes. "Practical" was what she called them. But she

did have beautiful feet, his attention drifted to the long, thin lines of her calves... thoughts of Kelly filled his mind while opera played in his head.

Michael opened his eyes in time to see the man with the rose standing to offer his seat to an elderly woman. She wore a faded floral dress and orthopedic shoes. As the man shifted closer to Michael, he rolled up the sleeves of his rumpled denim shirt. A muscular forearm emerged and snaked around the bus pole. Michael intently focused on a spidery tattoo on the inside of the man's wrist. The name "Lupi-

ta” seemed out of place - the delicate swirling letters caressed his wrist. Michael blinked three times trying to focus his nearsighted eyes on the man’s tattoo but before he could confirm what he thought he saw, the man brusquely rolled up his sleeve and unceremoniously exited the bus.



A LITTLE BLACK DRESS

Thom Young

1)
the last dead American hero
wrote it all down
before he died
and no one read it
except the half Mexican girl
born in the stars
and she laughed and cried
because the dream was over
the great I am
had become unaware
of the jack boots outside
if you boil a pot of blue crabs
they will all stay together and
die
because they pull each other
down

if one tries to escape
and some of the tv sets
were left on.

2)
the bugs are crazy around here
they build nests everywhere
and come up through the floor
and live in the sugar bag
the phone rings
and it's the bugs
they will be out of town until
next Tuesday
there must be something import-
ant
going on and I'm missing out

but I'll be ready when they get
back
then we can both dance on
the sun

3)

i want to die.
i want to live.
i want to cheat death.
i want to kill.
i want to defeat life.
i want to taste the gun.
i want to put it all down.
i want to eat the rich.
i want to love her.
i want to hope.
i want to feel the rain
in a simple house with a chance
to step off

the box with a pretty noose on
my
neck
i want nothing.
i want it all.

8)

beware her smile
for that
is when
she kills
the most

18)

she sat alone at
the bar lighting
cigarette
after cigarette

using the burnt
end from one
to light
the other
she wanted to burn
them all
the men of her
past
from Daddy
to her ex
they had all tasted
her fire
pure and warm
and deadly
for her next
victim.

19)
take
me to the beach
sedated,
oxygen mask
watch her
in plastic cellophane
and then you'll
know
my love among
the oceans
and dreams on the
the midnight wave

21)
I found her
head on the beach
the eyes
black and dull

with
the days
we spent smoking
cigarettes and holding
hands
watching our youth
grow old
in the fading
sun
forever

24)
they can't put out
anymore
fires
the old ones
still burn
and burn
and smell of

perfume, dirty sheets,
and
nicotine.

31)
sometimes
they
keep coming
back
their beady
eyes are a dead give away
black and midnight
hued
they seemed nice
at first
but now they are taking
over
last night one was in bed
with my wife

I don't really like the bitch
but it's the principle of the
matter
anyways, this thing had fangs
and a grin from ear to ear
although it didn't really have
ears
they were more like holes
and this green slime dripped
from its mouth
getting all over the bed and
on my wife as well
funny thing is I think she en-
joyed
it.
I never found out what they
were
aliens perhaps or giant
lizards
well, that was three years ago.

I left early one morning,
leaving the things with my wife
last I heard
there was a baby on the
way
although I'm not sure if one
would call it a baby.

41)
it all could be
different
but she has the sickness
and every night
they put her in a sealed
chamber with an oxygen
mask
breathe in and breathe out;
the same song and dance
as the rag man

all
she needs is one
more chance to roll
the bones

52)
she wore many things
a mask with a sad
smile
and
a little
black dress
called
madness.

THE LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF LOS ANGELES

Made in Koreatown,
June 2016

Copyright the respective authors.

lareviewofla@gmail.com
<http://robindunn.com/lareview.html>

