



[sic] Volume II

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Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question...
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.

[T.S. Eliot]

Excerpt from 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'

Fantastic Beast Amuse Revival

[Chad Redden]

Outside of town billboards led to the fairgrounds.

White Magic
Cure-all TOMATOES!
Turn Now!

Before entering the tent we are pulled from the line by the stage assistant who assures that while the tomatoes can curb most maladies – ours is the exception. You return to the car disappointed and think we should leave. I still have hope and join the line. After I am pushed onto the stage, a clown ties a bib around my neck. The emcee asks me for my name and affliction. There is a rowdy applause.

I imagine you at the car, watching the blurry crowd in the grandstand cheering and laughing as we fantastic beasts eat bushel baskets heaped full of magic tomatoes. Bushel baskets full until we creatures can eat no more tomatoes.

On the way home we stop and rent that one movie about the girl and her boyfriend who turns into a cocker spaniel. At the end you tell me how my muzzle looks better, more defined.

Inheritance

[Clay Greer]

Tommy Jay watches a set of dragonflies dip down to the surface of Lake Katawabee. The dragonflies locked together in the act of reproduction. From the lake's clean surface a fish emerges and eats both dragonflies.

Tommy Jay's grandfather, known to the world as Taffy, cuts the trolling motor and throws the coffee can anchor overboard. Tommy reaches down to the boat's deck and picks up his fishing rod, opens his tackle box, selects a lure, and begins to attach it to the fishing line with a turtlehead knot. Taffy reaches into the white foam cooler and brings out two cans of beer. He hands one to his grandson and keeps one for himself.

Tommy, two days away from sixteen, stares at the can of beer in his hand.

"Go ahead. You've got it coming," Taffy says.

Tommy pulls the tab and takes a drink. Taffy picks up his own rod and begins attaching his lure using a Spanish bowline.

Still looking at his line Taffy says, "Well I guess that's not your first beer, but it's the first we've had together."

"Yeah," Tommy says, taking another drink. Tommy puts the beer between his legs and casts out.

Taffy pulls the lure and line, testing the knot. Satisfied with his work Taffy casts his line out onto Lake Katawabee.

"You didn't test your knot, Tommy Jay," Taffy says. "You're gonna lose your catch if you don't test your knot."

"Sorry, I forgot."

"Don't be sorry, Tommy. Just don't forget to check your knot." Taffy opens his own beer and takes a long drink. He looks out across the Katawabee, watching the Canadian Geese flying north overhead, heading home. He reaches in his shirt pocket for his pack of cigarettes, changes his mind and leaves them there, then takes another drink of his beer.

"Tommy Jay, we need to talk," Taffy says.

"Yeah?" Tommy looks sideways at Taffy. "There really isn't much to talk about."

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"Well, I'd like to know how you feel about things."

"I feel great, you gave me a can of beer. Maybe that means I'm a man or something. Other than that I don't feel nothin'." Tommy takes a drink and casts his line.

"Why don't you tell me what happened. Not what you told the police, what really happened."

"What makes you think there's a difference?" Tommy asks.

"There's a difference. Police think the truth is in facts, not emotions."

"Okay," Tommy says, crushing his empty can of beer and dropping it to the aluminum deck. Tommy reaches down into the foam cooler and pulls another can of beer from the ice.

"I've been drinkin' beer from the cellar since I was twelve."

"I know," Taffy says. "I was twelve once too."

Tommy reels in and casts back out. A turtle jumps from the log it was sunning itself on into the water. Taffy reels in, lights a cigarette, and casts back out. The lake swells and rocks the boat. Tommy finishes his second beer and gets a third from the cooler.

"Well I don't know...," Tommy says. "I was on the register at your shop and I was readin' a magazine when I can feel a person in front of me. I look up and I am staring into the barrel of a shotgun. There is a bread sack and he says put the money in the bag and so I do. It's funny, but I counted it out as I put it in there. It came to fifty-seven dollars. And then he says he wants the quarters, so I scoop them out and drop them in."

Tommy breaks and takes a drink of beer. Taffy does the same and pulls another beer from the cooler. *Shit I've been double lapped*, Taffy thinks opening his second beer as his grandson reaches for his fourth.

"Taffy, as soon as I saw that shotgun I looked up at the guy's face and even though he's wearing pantyhose like in a movie, I can see it's Mick Pullman. I play football with his younger brother Pete. Mick graduated last year and he was wearin' his letter jacket but he's acting crazy, yellin' at me to give him the money and I was thinkin' he's gonna shoot me and I was scared. But he took the money and went to the door. As soon as he got his hand on the push bar I say, 'Hey Mickey' real quiet but he turns and faces me and I bring up your .45 and shoot him twice in the chest and he dies and that's it."

[3]



"That's it, huh?" Taffy asks.

"That's it Taffy."

Taffy sucks on his bottom lip for a second. "Let me ask you something. Why did you shoot him? He was walkin' out; you coulda just told the police who he was."

"I know," says Tommy. "It's just I was mad about him puttin' that gun in my face, Mick commin' into your store and puttin' a gun in my face. And, I guess there was just some part of me that wanted to kill him. To see what it was like."

"Huh, so what was it like?"

"It was like nothin'," Tommy says. "People keep tellin' me I should feel somethin' but I don't. Everyone keeps sayin' I should feel somethin' that I need to feel somethin'. This woman at the police station told me I needed to talk about how I feel and know that it's okay to cry and that makes me feel creepy because I don't feel anything at all about Mick. Except for I'm glad it was him and not me."

"That's good," Taffy says. "You didn't owe that boy a thing and you sure don't need to spend your life cryin' for him. He made his choice and you made yours."

Taffy reaches in the cooler for another beer. Tommy knocks a horsefly into the water where a fish immediately eats it. Taffy lights another cigarette. Tommy begins to replace the lure he'd lost on his last cast, attaching it via a hangman's knot, this time remembering to test his work before casting out.

"Did you know I shot a man with that same pistol?" Taffy asked, "I got that gun in the Army and carried it in Korea. Never shot anything but cans with it over there. I come back and my Uncle Jack was Sheriff and he got me a job as a deputy. One night I go on a call about a possible break in at the R & C hardware. I walk down the alley behind the building and a man charges me with a pipe wrench in his hand. I leveled the .45 and shot him through the head. Just like you, I felt nothin'."

Tommy hooked a Striper and brought it in. Taffy got the net under it, yanked the lure and threw the fish in the live tank.

"Kept your lure that time didn't ya," Taffy said.

"Yes," Tommy Jay said.

"You wanna know somethin'?" Taffy asked. "Whenever I think of your grandma, I think of this lake. We came here the summer before I went to Korea and had a picnic. We sat on an embankment under a willow tree and drank dandelion wine I stole from my grandfather's cellar. It was the first time we...the first time we well you know."

Tommy Jay closed his eyes as his brain produced an image of his Oma and Taffy locked together like dragonflies.

Taffy continued, "We lay on the blanket naked as jay birds and she ran her hand through the hair on my chest. We were drunk and laughing and she grabbed a little handful of my chest hair and ripped it out. I put my hand on her chest and told her if she did that again I would twist off one her tits and she spun around on her little butt, put her feet in my side and kicked me down the embankment into the lake. The whole time I'm tumbling down I'm thinkin' 'How the hell did she do that?' God, I still laugh thinking about it. We had over fifty years together and when I think of her it's always that day."

They sat in the boat silently casting out their lines. Taffy got another beer from the cooler. A snake caught a toad and ate it. A bass darted at Taffy's lure but then went for a minnow instead.

"I always think of that day because I don't like to think of a lot of what I did to her," Taffy said. "I never felt anything about shooting Cecil Lamont Bauer. I just did what I had to. Everyone kept at me to feel something, tellin' me to talk to a doctor or a minister until I started having dreams about the shooting. I never felt anything but I kept shooting Cecil every night until I didn't want to go to sleep anymore. I'd stay up late drinkin' whiskey straight from the bottle. Uncle Jack caught me drunk in my squad car and told me this was my one warning but I was a hot head. I threw my badge on his desk and said to hell with him, I quit. I just kept drinkin' more. It got to where I was drinkin' whiskey in the morning. I got into fights at bars. Your grandma asked me to stop and I slapped her in the face. She cried and I called her a cunt. For years that was our lives. Eventually no one asked about the shooting anymore cause no one cared and then the dream faded and I quit with the whiskey. Now I just drink beer when I fish. I'd like to look back on my life and be proud but I can't. I had a good woman and in fifty years I gave her one good day and it's all because of that bastard Cecil Bauer."

Taffy wiped his eyes and lit another cigarette. The wind blew dead leaves from the last fall out onto the water. A duck dove beneath the surface of Lake Katawabee and came up with a fish. Tommy Jay reaches in the ice for another beer.

Literary Critic

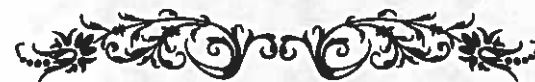
[Billy Arnold]

This pencil betrays me,
Black and marked with his name.
He whispers my secrets.
Blackmailed by his threats
To confess my pain.

I pinch his slender neck.
I plunge him into the grinder
Again and again
I dismember him,
Ripping off his head.

I have buried him,
But he will not be silenced.
I have marked him for death,
But he will not be rubbed out.
Pumped his body full of lead
He bleeds but does not die.

I get the point.
I have written the story a hundred times,
For a hundred years,
Tried to argue my innocence.

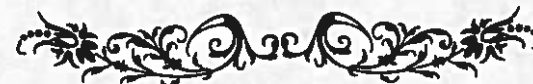


But his desire to destroy my lies creeps back.
Angry and determined to be heard,
His sharp screams pierce my ears.
Can't you hear him?

How is it you cannot hear
His pleas for justification?

Is it because you turn your head?
Refuse to acknowledge?
Don't want to hear?
Go ahead joke.
Make light of this demon.

Ghosts aren't real.
Ghosts aren't real.
Ghosts are not real.
If you say it enough,
You may avoid the sentencing.





Max Backwoods

[Mark Howard]

Lies and More Lies

[Rachel Wright-Summerton]

Home gets tough
Debt the squeeze
Not enough possessions
A scapegoat found
Faking reasons for war over there
Start a bloody affair
Punish them
Blow them to ashes
Sacrifice some more
A million homeless children
Struggling mothers and fathers
Body parts scattered on the horizon
Vegetables, paraplegics
Minds erased
Another lie
Corporations potent and impenetrable
Millionaires dining on desert islands
Jet setters racing through the sky
Politicians toasting pacts in secret
Over there
Bombs toward women and children
Water, food, clothing, buildings gone
Mothers covering nakedness with scarves
A sacrifice to the war god
Slow suicide



Minneapolis Beckons Migrant Youth



[Anna K. Wiley]

Give me your uncertain and your ambitious

Your emotionally on-edge and your 'financially secure'.

Who live layered levels high in the huddled masses of
apartment buildings off Interstate 94 at 15th Street
in the Loring Park area.

Where dog companions, fastidiously groomed and fed, are paraded
On Saturdays and Sundays when the weather is good and owners can
forget whatever it is they do from Monday to Friday, when cars
can't turn left from Hennepin onto Lake between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m.

Give me your youth,
who wander up and down between neighborhoods,
between landlords, between personalities, between their dreams
Their belongings in soft packs that hold the possessions
that sustain form and function for the days and nights that
define living in a place that is a stopover from,
A stepping stone to, a hedge against, society's expectations.

I'll take them in, run a credit check on them, help them survive,
Just as others survived when they came from who knows where
to the city, to escape, to succeed, to start again,
to drop out, to find a niche.



My streets and alleys, buildings and shops
that define the City, set the time and place for a new generation.

Old neighborhoods of elegant brick and stone
Give way to new lifestyles.

Ornate memories of the past have become renovated classical apartments.
A family mansion now leases to lawyers and insurance companies.
Small storefronts serve as massage parlors and veterinary offices.
Trendy bars, coffee shops, ecologically minded restaurants are
tucked here and there, havens for collective minds.

As one group moves out, other groups move in
And change the purpose,
Re-arrange the landscape,
Increase the pace or flow the beat,
Cut down the trees and add asphalt,
Tear out the asphalt and restore a park,
Add too many cars, but insist on bike lanes;
Hang silver rings from their noses,
Glide along on a single line of small wheels attached to molded footwear,
in headlong flight, yearning to be free to be.





Disposable Income
[CJ Savage]

[12]

Bio
[Billy Arnold]

I have been a stripper, a nurse, a homeless woman, a single mom, worked 120 hours a week. I have been a slave to freedom. I have been raped, beaten, molested and given away as a gift. I have taken LSD, heroin, cocaine, eaten mushrooms and attended drug treatment for addiction. I can swear like a drunken sailor. Pray like a nun. I am a Christian. I was raised as a heathen. I have been a mother to 27 children. My joy will always be called Jena, Justin and Michael. Adored. Loved. Appreciated. I have nearly died twice. I have lived always. I am full of fear. I am empty of shame. I am an outlaw. I am a servant. I live. I breathe. I write. I die. I live.

[13]

Haki

[Jim Amstutz]

Haki runs a punch press across from the plant's cafeteria. Whenever I walk past him he shouts, "Hey American," and waves for me to come talk to him. He is a Turk, about six feet tall and barrel-chested. He looks like a Russian weight lifter, like one of those guys harnessed to a chain, pulling a railroad car up a hill in *The World's Strongest Man Contest*. His head looks like it sits directly on his muscled shoulders. His color is bronze; his face is round but muscular. I didn't know until I met him that a face had muscles. I don't mean muscles to open and close your eyelids. I'm talking picking up boxcars with your teeth. His head is shaved and he wears a Fu Man Chiu moustache.

As I walk past Haki's workstation, he calls to me.

"Jim." By now he knows my name. He looks upset, but is smiling at the same time. I go over to him.

"The boss just called me an *Arschloch*," he says. "These people have no richness of mind, they lack imagination and passion. Their language, this *Allemanisch*, is limited and hideous; it is so ugly it makes the ears bleed. The worst thing the boss can call me is *Arschloch* or *Scheiskopf*. 'Is that the best you can do?' I ask him. 'Are these insults worth putting voice to?'"

"'What do you mean?' the boss asks me.

"'These words are so simple and bland, are they supposed to disturb me?'" I ask him. 'Here is an insult worth uttering, A donkey should have sex with your mother, at the altar of the blessed virgin,' I tell him.

"'You can't talk to me like that,' he says to me.

"'Yov tavaya mat,' I say to him.

"'What does that mean?' He asks me.

"'It's Russian, it means go fuck your mother.' The boss's face turned crimson and the veins in his temples pulsated. He looked like he was about to come apart at the seams. He did kind of a military about-face and marched stiffly away from me.



"He gave me a parting '*Arschloch*,' as he walked away wincing, and spitting bile.

"They look down on us, on you, on me, the ignorant fucking farmers. We are *Gastarbeiters*, *Kakelaker*, cockroaches. You are an American with a Swiss name; better than a Turk, or Greek, or Yugoslav, but a cockroach nonetheless. I come from Istanbul, a metropolis of six million, a city that contains delights and dangers that are beyond the capability of these farmers to imagine. A culture thousands of years old. I speak Turkish, Greek, Arabic, and Russian. These people don't even speak German.

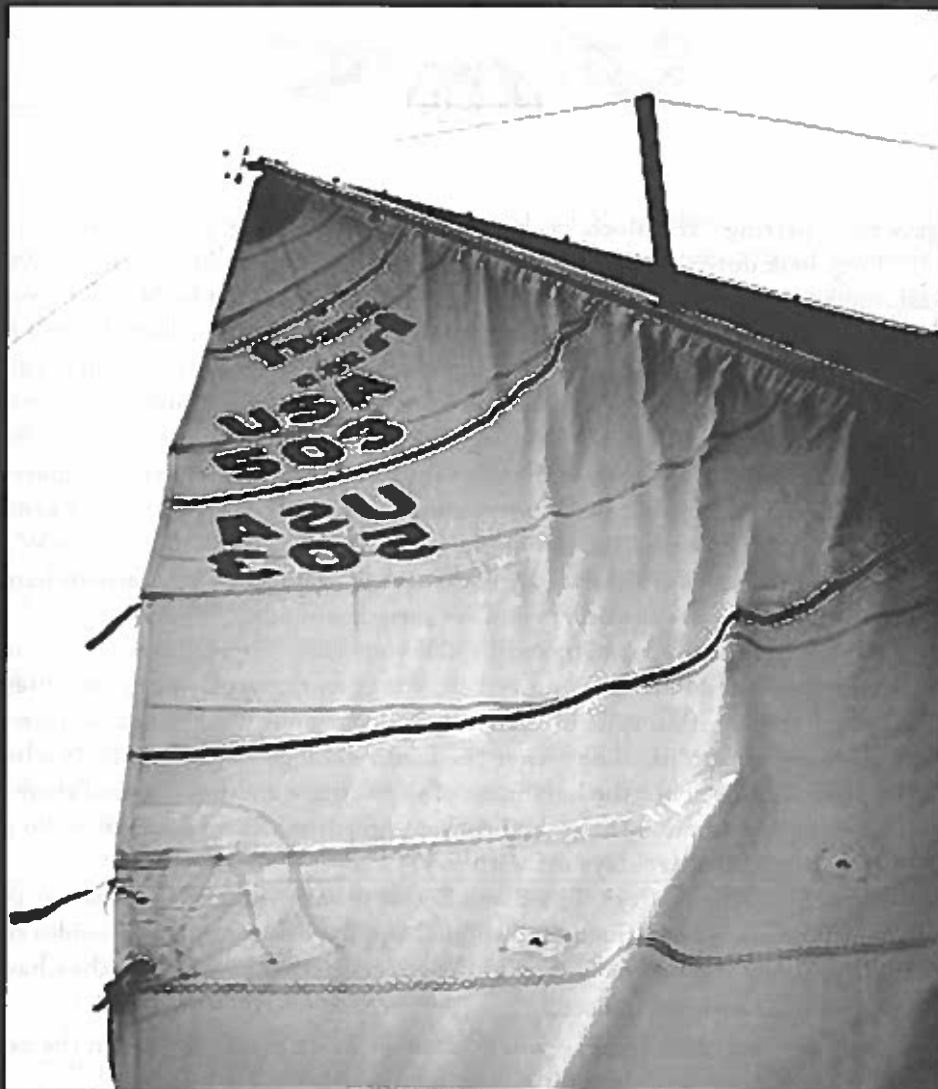
"This is how it is. They are the ones in the lab coats. They are the masters; after all, it is their country, but the country runs because of us. We are their arms, and legs and muscle. We produce the world famous German quality: the BMW, the Mercedes, the Porsche. It is all made by cockroaches, untouched by German hands. Like in the army, they give the orders and we carry them out.

"But we have the last laugh, and I'll tell you why. These Germans feel so superior, but all they can do is talk about *Arbeit*, work, work, work. They are obsessed with it, traumatized by it; in spite of their thirty-seven-hour work-week, sixteen holidays and six-week vacations. They leave the factory and go to the beer halls where they whine like infants about the harshness of the climate and the stress of their work. They sing sentimental songs, and they comfort their comrade Axel, who got a hangnail and had to take two days off with pay.

"But what is the reality? The Black Forest is beautiful and the weather comfortable. The Germans are affluent and spoiled and have fat on their backsides from their easy life. They should be dancing in the streets in thanks for what they have. Not drowning their sorrows in beer.

"And we—we cockroaches—what do we do while these men are in the beer halls singing their songs and drowning their sorrows?

"We go into their homes. And fuck their women."



I Am the Helmsman

[Sarah Wilson]

[16]

A Frida at the San Fransisco Museum

[Asher Z. Crow]

From my porch I saw a man run into a low wooden bench and curse and limp away. I know the kind of pain that everyone feels in their skin, on their flesh, upon their limbs. The best part about these pains is that they go away—the paper cuts, the incisions, the burns. These pains are even comforting in knowing that they depart. Unlike everything else, they are not forever. But anyone will tell you that when you've hit your head on the cabinet: it hurts.

And yes, I know heartache, and many people know it too. I see this particular pain in the eyes of people who stop by me longer, look at my fountains of eyes—not just my breasts and broken column. And even this pain is comforting for me now, knowing that no one else feels like this. Yes, I'll say you know how it feels. But you don't know how it feels.

I understand the pain of looking out, seeing only broken landscapes; being the only thing interesting around. But the interest is generated by contrast—and the only thing different with me is the sheer volume of pain they replaced my sickly blood with. I've become the only one worth looking at, but I'm not the only one he sees.

And I know the pain of healing which requires time. So much time, too much time. Time does not heal all wounds, it does not heal any wounds. I know this because each doctor has a cut for me to carve out my pain. They have never given me a bottle or a knife of time. You can cure so much these days by cutting, they say. But I cannot cut you away, and cutting hurts.

Then there is the pain of a body that won't obey your wishes. I should be used to that by now with you. But I am distressed by the betrayal of my own organs, my own bones, my heart, and this is the pain I bear. Just as the wall bears me in my frame with a little pin, I bear my pains with these tiny crucifixions. And I hope that it hurt the wall to feel the hammer pound. Because if it did, I will get to hear the sigh of relief when they take me away. And I so rarely see someone feel better.

[17]



Wandering Star



[Chad Redden]

I worry that the village magicians cannot pull you from this test tube and into life again. That you will stay as gold sparks, the five I could catch after your wicked ex-step-mother disintegrated you. I worry that I will never hear you sing again. I will miss your songs to me. Songs that helped me sleep. You compared me to a wandering star that drags its lips along the ground, uprooting trees, leaving lake beds dry, forgetting keys in ignitions, giving cats flea dips, and other things you thought I thought romantic.

I fell for you because of your songs. You were the only woman ever to sing to me. My grandmothers never did. My babysitters didn't. My school bus drivers didn't. Not even my mother. Had she, she may have sung about vegetables and composting.

Both subjects were very important to her.



Zander Scott - Charleston, South Carolina

[Mark Howard]



House of Mirrors



[Christine Brandel]

I see the picture of me, separate,
bouncing from glass to glass,
I watch myself eat another person's heart.
As older, I am gruesome.
I was hoping by now to be in New Orleans,
unable to get away,
not living in this house of mirrors.
I ate another person's heart.
Sometimes I can't believe the things I can't
stop myself from doing.



Around
[Billy Arnold]

Las Vegas Illusionists

[Ashley Bayer]

When I was young, I loved them.
They were the Magic men on television.
Their stage a thick stretch of tinfoil
and glints of tinsel that coiled
the light around their bowties.
With slight of hand they deal but
don't reveal the secrets of cheap tricks.

Me in PJ's with Jacob Ladder legs
folded beneath as I leaned with
shoulders hunched toward the screen
while I crunched popcorn in
concentrated admiration. My smile
a gleam of two crooked teeth

like French doors open and shaken by peals
of laughter soon after the Magic man
appeared in the back of the room.
Applause a mushroom cloud
of thunder that boomed quiet as
his hand tuned down the audience sound
to a rush of wind through wheat leaves.

The Magic man was once the one
who ran from the tick of time
coming to a close. From the final
breath beneath the waves of a water tank
or the pressure of dirt on a fresh grave.
The sword swallows with iron insides.



Now they remain nameless. My brain unable
to recall faces that escaped once again.
I wanted to be one of them. A magic woman
armed to uneven teeth with illusions.
I strived to disappear knives into napkins
and napkins into sleeves. To squeeze dollars
from my ears to keep the peace between parents.

But the Magic men merely call out "Suspend,"
and women float like maple seeds,
their hair a spray of seaside foam,
scented skin like bitten nectarines.
Beautiful assistants under control.
And I could see they left me alone.

Because my face is flat, and my
body was a bundle of matchsticks,
underdeveloped, I didn't like dresses.
My hair cropped short like tinder because
of the head lice, compliments of my kid sister.
With bruise blossoms on my knees, my mom asked
how I would ever be the beauty queen of the Philippines.

Sawed in half, I saw a rabbit hop from Mother's hat.



Overlappings

[Greg Mitchell]

Verses of Frank O'Hara, flittering through Manhattan,
took me deep into last night, while the smooth
polished horn of Coleman Hawkins figure-skated
around my just ordered room.

Like steam from a downtown manhole, rising
into the lighted night, I scale the vine of my memory.

My neighbors, in their second-story living room,
across my weeded yard, warm their wintry bones
before a crackling hearth. He picks at newsprint,
she sketches at a drafting table, looks up, as if at a crack
on an opposing wall, then lifts a teacup to her lips
like a thorny flower stem,

such as the ones that prick into the legs of young boys,
who, by day, retrieve overthrown baseballs from their yard.

Absent-mindedly, I finger the scar on my calf I earned as a kid,
and am reminded, for some reason, of the ages of my siblings.



Foil Boy - Monroe County, Indiana

[Mark Howard]

Knocked Up in Grantham

[Jim Amstutz]

There is nothing like a great dinner and a few pints at the Chicago Rib shack to fortify you for a night's drive to Lincoln. From Raphael Street past Hyde Park and Speaker's Corner. Then a straight shot up Edgware Road past the North Circular and onto the M1. Just follow the motorway signs that say "The North," like there is a vast uncharted and mysterious land mass somewhere up there awaiting discovery by those Londoners bold enough to attempt it. And what of London? As you motor away from it you see signs, London 78 Miles. As if it is necessary to know how far London is behind you. Or maybe so you will be aware of where you are in relationship to it.

The M1 is a black empty ribbon this time of night. I'm doing ninety; even the police here don't care about speed limits. England is designed for speedy travel north or south but going east or west is brutal. I'm reminded of this as soon as I leave the M1 and begin plodding through small villages and country lanes heading northeast towards Lincoln.

It's two a.m. and my ass is sucking wind. I feel like a whipped dog. I pull into Grantham, Maggie Thatcher's hometown, looking for a hotel. I follow the signs to the town center and spot a hotel with its lights on. I park down the street, walk to the hotel entrance and ring the bell. Eventually a night porter answers the door. He greets me with, "A bit late aren't you, Sir?" I must have woken him; he looks worse than I feel.

"Sorry," I say. "I'm on my way to Lincoln and can't keep my eyes open. Can I get a room?"

"Certainly," he says. "You will have to fill out a registration card, and I'll need to see your passport."

I follow him to the front desk, register, get my key, ask for a six a.m. wake up, and go to my room.

I walk into the dark room, fall onto the bed with my clothes on, and I'm out cold.

In what seems like a millisecond there's a loud crashing sound at my door. I don't exactly wake up, I go from unconsciousness to a kind of delirious daze. I don't

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know where I am or why. In a few seconds I'm awake enough to know that I want to be asleep so, I roll over and go back to sleep.

Bam! Comes another crashing sound from my door. I'm awake enough this time to know that this is my wake up call.

Damn, that was a short night, I thought. "Okay, I'm awake," I yell and look at my watch. It's four a.m. "What is fucking wrong with these people?" I pull a pillow over my head, roll over, and shut my eyes. Bam! Again. I lurch towards the door in a trance, and open it.

Two Bobbies are standing there. Behind them is a man in long black leather trench coat who looks like he just stepped out of a Humphrey Bogart movie.

One of the Bobbies says, "You're driving a Ford Cortina Estate."

"Yes. I am. Am I parked illegally?" My answer doesn't amuse them.

"You have ammunition boxes in the rear," one of the Bobbies says.

"Yes. They make good tool boxes."

"We know. We opened your car.:"

"If you've already opened my car, why are you here?"

"May we come in?" The man in the trench coat asks in a heavy Geordie accent.

I don't think no is an acceptable reply, so I nod my head and they come into the room.

"You also have steel tanks in your car," says the Geordie in the trench coat.

"Yes, they have Argon gas in them for welding stainless steel."

"You're an American."

"Yes."

"The car is registered in Ireland."

It doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to see where this is going.

"Yes, I work for an Irish company. I'm on my way to Lincoln to install a kitchen for Worldwide Hamburgers."

"May I see your passport?" The Geordie asks. He leafs through it slowly, stopping after every page to look up at me, contorting his face and making grunting noises. I hope he doesn't notice that my Irish permit isn't current. If he does, he doesn't say anything, and he doesn't ask why I have a German work and residence permit. He stares me in the face for about a minute while he holds my passport in one hand and taps it against his other, then he scrapes it against his neck from his collar to his chin, like he's giving me a particularly unfriendly Italian gesture.

[27]



"Screw you, too," I think to myself.

"We've taken down your information; we'll be keeping an eye on you."

He hands me my passport and then just like nothing had happened, or like this was an every day occurrence (maybe it was for him), he walks out of the room, followed by the two Bobbies.

Over his shoulder he says, "Enjoy your stay in Grantham."

"Not bloody likely," I say under my breath.

I go back to bed; now, wide-awake, still whipped. No wake up call comes at six. I get up and take a shower, and go down to the breakfast room before seven. When I pass the front desk the clerk gives me a look like I'm John Dillinger. I pick a table against the wall and sit facing the entrance with my back to the wall. A habit I probably picked up from watching too many cowboy shows as a child. After last night's visitors, this looks like a good habit to hold onto.

I notice the waitress and some of the other staff peeking at me through the window of the kitchen door. Never seen a desperado like me, I suspect.

I order bacon, eggs and sausage and coffee. I'm beginning to think Grantham isn't the friendliest town in England. I wasn't crazy about Maggie Thatcher before I came here; somehow, I like her even less now. I finish my breakfast, grab my bag and head to my car happy with the prospect of putting the village of Grantham in my rear view mirror.

On the way out of the hotel, I grab a paper and stick it under my arm as I search my pocket for my car keys. When I get to my car, I notice that I'm parked next to a high brick wall topped with razor wire. I look over the wall and there are people hanging out of the windows of the building behind the wall, all looking at me, and all wearing police uniforms.

I throw my bag and the paper onto the front seat and jump into the car. I burn rubber coming out of the parking spot and shoot down the road. I don't think they'll come after me for speeding. Not if they are so happy to see the end of me as I am to see the end of them.

I take the first roundabout northwest following the A 120 toward Lincoln. As I pull out of the roundabout, I glance down at the newspaper beside me. The headline reads: "Belfast—Van Explodes at Police HQ—Three Dead."



Freedom's Reward

[C.J. Savage]

Consecution

[Ginger Ko]

I.

He was driving me I forget where and it was gardens all misty wet with rain out and it was very odd to me that with all the digitalis of my soul there could still be places like this, roads without stops but many bends and densely dropped all around us trees and their bending thin tree babies. And amidst all that unfettered upwarding, everything darkened with damp, every now and then a short bush like a vertical-spoked flower with pale petal leaves sentientious.

II.

When you fling the reel and feel the spool spin do you sense the tender pockets beneath your lashes flicker? I stretch my fingers and flex against the water, the showy chops about my ears. You would bend your body upwards away from the dark of the earth beneath but it's only the sun revealed allowing you to remain strange from the things somewhere under with lit antennae and mutely guffawing heads. Yet you can hear all the movements one upon another and altogether it's like a hazard hum, the sound of many hearts beating and each finning of your body in the water gurgles. Lately there's no trees no enclosure nor shade, it's an infinite jawswallowing in every direction.



III.

He had a newly-shorn head and at the ending of his thin legs juttet long feet, he was so wonderfully holding the book with a dangleribbon bookmark. One day we would provide for each other's dark-haired heads with our arms in a black-and-white photograph. He would sing and strum lightly and the hem of his pants would hold grassblades in the cuffs and he would be damp on the shoulders from the summerclouds outside. I feel disloyal with daydreams of who he used to be, the first summer we were together and it was not the long squinting heat of the second summer, it was the quiet noise of wetted insects, hissing leaves brushing together in the whisk before a storm. I learned about his hands and the wonderful summers he grew up in, the lakeshores and satisfying isolation. But there is still the second sandcracks summer, he grew up with those too, the awful-hearted people sneering on rotten porchstairs and the relentless brightness beating down. There will maybe be a good year and a bad year and a good year and a bad year. Something in my hand still grabs the fingers along the edge, I wait to see if the skin on the palm will slip off the rock.

IV.

How do a man and a woman survive the aftermath?

The large kerchief is snatched up from around your cage and you turn to look with hatred upon your audience. When nothing will remain unaltered even after the waves of the pond fall asleep on the stones. As if you are looking upon the ashes of a tree with a jingle in your ears.

When you look to each other and promise to survive this to hold the other, do you lose your love when it is over? What if you have flexed your body into every turn and never really settled into the pace? You have given up a part of yourself to these last years as you had been prepared to do, but now you are ready and must go on as you have never been as the delta spreads out before you.



Bison - Monroe County, Indiana

[Mark Howard]

A Shark in the Bathtub

[Chad Redden]

I have a shark rusting in the bathtub. This might inconvenience most people, not being able to shower or bathe. I use an assortment of sponges and cups in my kitchen sink and smell fine. It is the little things you must overcome to reap the real rewards of a shark in your bathtub. Imagine you have a priceless memento your father bought you at the World's Fair. Simply open the shark's mouth and place that treasured pewter replica of the Space Needle inside. Completely safe.

My shark is rusting because it must be continually watered. He is too long for my bathtub and cannot fully submerge. I spend a few hours each morning shaving rust from my shark's fins and sprinkle cool water along its body. Really, I have not stored much inside of the shark, my family's genealogy and a few baseball cards from the seventies. Some would say what I did to my cat is murder, but I know she is safe.

Go Home Choctaw

[Ashley Bayer]

The round raw sound of *Choctaw*
Dripped from drunken, lips
Into a sloppy, scurvy kiss.
With a hiss it burned my throat.
Their eyes, drawn as hot pokers
Were shoved beneath my sienna skin,
My Fingertips. I seized them into fists,
Feeling helpless against it.

"Go Home Choctaw."

Sir, the booze must have confused you.
Or is it new to know the news that
The Philippines exists.
Yes, we've done quite a bit
Outside of Mississippi, but
This confederacy disappoints me:
The Delta still a pit of human
Potential turned to shit.

Your reasoning circular, round
Like the sound *Choctaw*.
How do you opt to talk like they
Ought to be gone, gone, gone?
You are wrong in long successions,
In each assumption, in stumbling steps,
If you think the melanin in my skin
Makes me less than human.



But it's not just your ignorance,
A blunt medieval instrument
That cuts through bones like
An awl grinding holes in boulders.
No, I've been Indian, Native American,
Mexican, too. So maybe it's not you.
Or your ignorance. It must be
The unexpected existence of it,

Squirming silent and sick
A train of maggots in the stomach
Of a snake, it suns silent in the grass.
And me barefoot and bare-ankled as your
Fangs broke my skin, broke my trance.
I might suck out the poison,
Stop the spread, stone you still,
But you won't stay dead.

Fear shaped round, the taste raw
Like the sound you made for "*Choctaw*."



The Lowboy

[Clay Greer]

My wife forbids me to smoke in the house and forbids me to drink Wild Turkey anywhere. Because of this every afternoon at sunset I tell her I am going to work in the garden and she pretends not to know that really what I am going to do is pull a not too well hidden bottle from a milk can and sit in the garden and smoke and drink. I was sitting in my garden drinking bourbon and smoking camel studs and watching a fat polluted sunset and listening to the cawing of greasy crows who were circling the new shoots of corn when my long time friend and neighbor began to chop the chest of drawers in his backyard to splinters with a splitting maul. The black walnut lowboy had sat ignored for a cycle of seasons and something about that day made Zig decide he could ignore it no more.

The black walnut dresser was ageless in my mind. An heirloom of Zig's family built by his Great Grandfather the Greek immigrant who had built custom furniture for Boston blue bloods and had made and drank away a fortune, according to Zig's Grandma. And when she died the dresser went to Zig and the antique appraiser had said it was worth ten grand minimum in the right market and I had said that he should sell the lowboy because ten grand beats moving the heavy bastard and Zig said we were too old to be strong but too young to admit it and when the time came he would sell it to help pay for Kinsey's college. Later that day Zig is on his knees on the blacktop holding Kinsey's head and with each breath out I can see pink bubbles at her nostrils and I can see the blood vessels in her eyes swelling and popping like fireworks until the whites all turn red and behind the screams and the cries and Kinsey's Mom yelling and my heartbeat in my ears and the sirens and behind everything is the unsteady tempo and warble of children's music played too loud though a cheap tin speaker.



So it was a bad idea because college was not meant for Kinsey or Kinsey was not meant for college. Any Ice Cream Man can tell you rich kids go to college and poor kids get ice cream or rich kids become rich adults and poor kids become poor adults or rich kids get tomorrow and poor kids get today. So Kinsey should have gotten an ice cream from the truck and she should have been pregnant by sixteen and have got married to a boy with calloused hands and gone to work at a truckstop or mill and done the things our people do and have always done and Zig should have sold the goddamn lowboy.

I watched the maul punch holes in the polished wood tearing apart in minutes what had been months in the making and was built to last the ages as long as the bloodline and was now decades older than the maul or the man who swung it. Destroying what had sat emotionless through the winter buried beneath the same foot of Midwest snow as Kinsey's grave and my garden and what was unmoved and blameless while I drank bourbon in the garage and thought and worried over my friend who had gone to bed in late summer and had not been awake yet this winter.

I sat in my garden with my studs and my whiskey in a white plastic lawn chair from the stack on the back deck and watched. I smoked and drank and watched my friend scream as he smashed and cut and split the drawers. I listened to Zig yell murder murder and cuss until his voice gave out and I watched him rid the world of the black walnut lowboy until he couldn't lift the maul and then he knelt down in the ruins and put his bloody hands to his face and cried.

And when I saw Zig was done with the splitting maul and that he was only going to cry I dumped the whiskey into the tilled black soil and crushed the stud under my right heel and I drug my plastic chair back to the porch and went inside because there are some drawers a man has to empty alone.

Patrons

Dante Gabrielle Rossetti Award for Non-monetary Gifts

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Ivy Tech Community College

[sic] would like to thank all who supported the magazine and Creative-writing Club this year.
Without you, we wouldn't exist.



I Wish I Were a Bird

[Sarah Wilson]

Author Biographies

Jim Amstutz

Jim Amstutz is a student of Ivy Tech Bloomington and a member of the Creative Writing Club.

Billy Arnold

Billy Arnold is an Ivy Tech student

Ashley Bayer

Ashley Bayer once thought she ate a peanut butter sandwich that sent her back in time. She lives in Bloomington with two cats, some friends, and a large pile of dishes that refuse to clean themselves. She enjoys yelling "boom baby!" while playing basketball, watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and "getting pitted, so pitted".

Christine Brandel

Christine Brandel is a British-American writer whose fiction and poetry have appeared in UK and US journals, including the Iconoclast, Stand Magazine, The Hiss Quarterly and Moodswing. She is a columnist for the online journal Incorporating Writing and is currently living and teaching in Bloomington, Indiana.

Asher Z. Craw

Formerly a projectionist in California, Asher Z. Craw now lives in Bloomington, Indiana, with a cat and a sourdough starter.

Clay Greer

Clay Greer is an Auto Worker from northern Indiana. He currently lives in Bedford, Indiana, with his wife Tara, and three children, Kaiya, Isaac and Zadia. (And for some reason he found writing the preceding two sentences nearly impossible.)

Mark Howard

Mark Howard, originally from Oakland, California, is a student and an educator in Bloomington, Indiana. He enjoys traveling, taking photos, riding motorcycles, kayaking, fishing and volunteering.

Ginger Ko

Ginger Ko received a degree in English from UCLA. She is currently completing a Biotechnology major at Ivy Tech and IUB. She plans to enroll in an MFA in Creative Writing Program next spring.

Greg Mitchell

Greg Mitchell is an Ivy Tech adjunct instructor.

Chad Redden

Chad Redden once thought he heard a banshee wail, but then remembered that he lived in Bloomington, Indiana, and determined that the sound was made by his garbage disposal. His work has been published in Fiore, Biannacle and Sore Zine.

C.J. Savage

C. J. Savage , freelance photographer, writer and publisher, teaches photography as an adjunct in the Ivy Tech Bloomington Center for Lifelong Learning. He makes his home in the beautiful limestone hill country of Stanford, Indiana.

Anna K. Wiley

Anna K. Wiley: born a Hoosier. She received an A.B. degree at Indiana University in Theatre and Speech, English, and Secondary Education, and an M.A. at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in English Studies. She has taught in high schools, at Longwood College in Virginia, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Ivy Tech Bloomington.

Sarah Wilson

Sarah Wilson feels most at home behind her camera and loves to frame the nitty-gritty of life in unconventional ways through the viewfinder. She seeks to find beauty in all landscapes, moments and faces.

Rachel Wright-Summerton

Rachel Wright-Summerton is an Ivy Tech adjunct professor who has taught in the School of Education for five years. She is a graduate of Indiana University with a B.S. in elementary education and an M.S. in Educational Psychology. She writes poetry, short stories and is working on a book. She is also an award winning artist.

