

# *Breadcrumb Scabs: Issue 5*

May 2009, edited by Lena Judith Drake

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*Lena Judith Drake, editor-in-chief of Breadcrumb Scabs magazine, is currently a Creative Writing student at Grand Valley State University. She is Puerto Rican, a poet, a geek, and a feminist activist. Her own writing has been published or is forthcoming in magazines such as Pemmican Press, Underground Voices, and Halfway Down the Stairs. She enjoys Chinese buffets, hot showers, and sleeping.*

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Welcome to the May edition of *Breadcrumb Scabs* magazine! This month is another small issue, which I've found is sort of nice. No matter how satisfying it is to hold a thick stack of papers chock full of poetry, in the shorter issues, each poem gets the focus it deserves. (Not to mention the people in line at the printers don't hate me as much.)

My editor's pick for the month is "*the office*" by Audri Sousa. She presents us with truth in small details, refreshingly frank language, and a mundane pop culture allusion that actually works. Check it out.

Now, a reminder: keep the submissions flowing in! We're still shooting for publishing an issue every month, and with the support of all the fantastic poets sending in their work, this is going to happen.

In the same vein of shameless begging, there is now a PayPal donation button up on the homepage of the website. If you happen to be reading one of the free downloads of the magazine, a donation of even \$1 (or less) would be appreciated. This can help keep poetry freely available to whoever wants to read it. No pressure, though. Hard times for all of us, I know.

More than anything, just make sure to enjoy the issue!

*Patricia Murphy has a doctoral degree in English from Idaho State University and teaches college writing. She both loves and hates language and poetry, a relationship she hopes will continue for a long time. Ethos, CityArt, Arsenic Lobster, River Walk and Adagio Verse Quarterly have published her work.*

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## **The Story of Us**

by Patricia Murphy

Yes, I will pull you underwater.  
But not the cool slick time you  
Imagine in the back of your eye.

No, you will not think of sidewalks  
Anymore than you did in the glycerin night  
When they were building trains again

And the mouths of furnaces opened up  
On the western edge of town  
In a land of industrial darkness.

Yes, we are both gone to foothills  
With no mountains behind them  
And lakes with kerosene edges.

Our history isn't all frayed boundaries,  
Your story anxious as a time of drought  
Waiting for my oily fingers to return.  
Our story isn't lit by just one lamp

## homewreck

by Patricia Murphy

it's easy to imagine your body as a place as cartography with swirls for small mountains and landscapes that can tumble and metaphor it's easy to imagine your body as a house I want to occupy a window I can climb through an open door with want and need its threshold I don't define you through the lens of words enough I know you are all abrasion and rift sometimes and clanking door too I don't want what I want when I know what I want I can't lie as if a lily on a pond that's just not me I'm all poltergeist of words and thoughts the thing that scurries across the roof in the middle of the night I've never taken the real way out I've never really known "inside" I think that sometimes my tongue is waiting for a paper cut the way that razors wait to be put into door frames the way that fire waits to fill up a house the way that time waits to cut up my endeavors I'm in dog time howling at the infected eyes of cheap grocery store bouquets you're a dream experienced in stages

one is when I close my eyes

two when I open them a little

and in the third dream you're a little past the long cold tunnel that connects two parts of the same town

Here is a word I mispronounced once at a time when pronunciation mattered: apotheosis

Here is a time I wanted nothing and felt no greed: last Saturday

Here is the thing I wish I'd never touched: velvet

Here is the sound I love

## Winterish

by Patricia Murphy

As winter settled itself into winter  
we cut ourselves in two,  
into two, into two ones.

It has  
the burning of an exorcism,  
the jaggedness of shattered glass,  
the aching of an unbirth and  
all the false solace of a pile of ashes.

When the streets were ice packed  
and dreams were dirtied,  
people hid behind their turned up collars,  
muffled cold air with scarves and  
those robbery hats, and in a bar  
down by the railroad tracks  
I told a stranger the story of us.

The ripping didn't start 'til later  
when I drove home past the shut down town  
cursing Mormons and the nuclear family unit  
and smug, snug houses and chanting  
car, take me where you want to go.

## **Not On My Life**

by Patricia Murphy

From outside I could tell the birds were back  
And when I woke up my fingers were in my mouth  
You said it's like each moment leaning into the next and  
I started a catalogue of all the things that pass between us

The sky didn't come back big  
I didn't miss my flight  
The cat never lapped anything fallen or spilled  
There was no cat, no sky  
No resurrected syntax  
Just the smell of the Atlantic in my feet

One night I stood blowing smoke at an Idaho sky  
My cracked window its thoughtful swelling border  
And learned that metal comes from all of us  
Who know the rock and the hard place

**Dogs from Hell**

by Casey Pfeiffer

now I know I don't usually share  
the intimate details but well  
last night you looked stunned  
when you saw it was me  
that you woke up to, us  
draped across each other  
like dogs, you wiping the drool  
from the corner of your mouth,  
me wondering why I didn't leave earlier,  
earlier when I packed my stuff  
and by my stuff I mean the quarter  
I just bought, my cell phone and my keys,  
all packed and ready to make my exit  
after you took a call from your parents,  
which is fine, great, but after a while  
the show ended and it got quiet  
and your voice drifted down the stairs  
and I heard you talking about her,  
about how she still wants you, there  
with her in portland, she  
who has made it impossible for us  
to be anything other than this half-assed thing  
we've been doing for the most of this year,  
but still, you're talking about her,  
then you're talking about checking out baltimore,  
and I'm thinking about checking out,  
cause really, what is there for me here,  
with you, when finally you come back  
downstairs and the air has changed  
and I'm all ready to go and you apologized  
and took off your shirt and put a pillow  
in my lap and fell asleep, with my hands  
in your hair, draped across each other  
like dogs, stoned, to two hours later,  
realizing that just like every time,

in all your broken-ness, I forgot  
to leave, realizing the knee  
of my cords was wet with your spit,  
the pants we couldn't decide  
if they were pink or red (I said pink, you said red),  
realizing how all my knowledge  
of science and ways with words  
mean nothing in the wake of a girl  
who will only ever make the minimum wage,  
that two hours later, better part of a year,  
we wake with a start, and you look stunned,  
stunned that it's not her thigh  
that you pull your dizzy head from,  
weren't you just talking about her?  
you sit up and look around eyes wide  
from the pot and beer and shock of it all  
and I sit up and get my shit and go  
kissing your shirtless back twice,  
no, three times, because I never know  
when it will be the last time  
because I'm always so close  
to almost giving up on you.

*David Brennan lives and recycles in western Virginia. He likes it when the snow falls and nobody knows what to do.*

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## **Carnal Knowledge**

by David Brennan

When Tiffany and the neighbor girl  
get around to it, Tiff comes  
to realize the boys  
on the bedroom ceiling  
glow green like stars, the universe  
in those five repeated points adhered  
to their sky-- three, four,  
five times? Tiff loses count. Stars  
like nipples perked in autumn nakedness,  
like the bit of surprise in the flung spark of a kiss  
that only some long time later comes  
down to scorch the earth.

## **Transgender Warriors**

by David Brennan

“No way am I wearing this,”

Sex says. The costume  
is spread out on the bed:  
Viking helmet, fake  
beard, bra, quiver  
of arrows and bow,  
spandex, strap-on, garter  
belt stockings hunting  
knife and heels.

“Aw come on. It’s for Halloween,”  
says Queer, who can now foresee  
in the pruning of Sex’s finer features  
an unforeseen  
difficult evening.

“Halloween. When you let it all hang out.”  
Sex is sobbing. Sex pounds  
the bedroom door-  
frame with the soft  
side of a fist.

“This isn’t a joke,” s/he  
wheezes, stirring the space  
(Sunday morning’s red blood-rose)  
(night’s lash on her slave’s sleepy back)  
between them with a floppy  
forearm. “It’s not.”

The computer’s  
screensaver is building elaborate  
plumbing constructions.

“You can be such a shit.”

It gets dark so early now.  
Queer is sorry. Queer  
is putting on the helmet  
and hiding the beard.

*Brian Brown is a cultural historian and photographer in Fitzgerald, Georgia. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in Chiron Review, Vain, Town Creek Poetry, Roanoke Review, Caveat Lector, Velvet Mafia, Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide, and Santa Clara Review, among others. Please visit his photographs documenting the vernacular architecture and iconography of the Wiregrass Region at <http://www.vanishingsouthgeorgia.wordpress.com>.*

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## **My Men**

by Brian Brown

live their lives in doublewides  
on dirt roads named for their grandfathers  
in towns where semis buzz through  
carrying things straight people use  
to keep their lives straight.

They slide hairy legs into faded denim  
and their girlfriends do laundry  
every day, because my men  
work in grease and dirt up to their fingernails.

They unbutton their jeans  
when they come home from work,  
peel sweaty shirts from their backs,  
sit in their recliners and take off  
their work boots, one at a time,  
just like everybody else.

They smoke homegrown  
and crank up 80s hair metal,  
go outside and tend their gamecocks,  
feed their pit bulls.

My men like to ride in July cornfields,  
run over stalk after stalk,  
slam on brakes  
and forget their lives  
as they lay back for me on the tailgate.

My men are your men.

## **Midlife Crisis**

by Brian Brown

The changing smell of his deodorant  
first roused suspicion, then regret,

at the passing of another memory,  
a familiar sensual landmark

lost to time. Damn middle age  
her heartless handmaidens.

You try to remember his theme song,  
tap it out with your foot

while you wait to pick him up  
for a night out in the clubs,

but too many others have come and gone  
since you broke up.

He peeks out the window  
as you pull into his driveway,

and he's already chugged two beers,  
done poppers to ready himself.

You know this game too well,  
already wanting it to end,

until he introduces you to the boy  
he met online, reassures you

he's versatile, he'll do anything.

*Dawn Dupler, graduate of the University of Missouri, has been writing poetry, fiction and music most of her life. Her works can be found in Glassfire's print anthology, Loch Raven Review, The Flask Review and others. She soaks herself in politics and the occasional existential bubble bath.*

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### **Across a Table in the Desert**

By Dawn Dupler

Bitter? Honeyed? I plan my assault -- to lunge  
Past the thinly parted lips so I might know  
His taste exactly ten minutes after his first Somalia coffee.  
I set my watch but I won't need it.

Ragged-breaths ago  
I red-lined a performance stick and  
Fought God at every hairpin  
On my way to a box top fast club.

Those tuchstones of mercy,  
Redolent, rising mists mingled with  
Howls and growls that played the room as  
Dark-maned jackals teased my thighs.

Across a table in the desert  
An arabica blend's steam eddies alongside this thought --  
When two people, so long dead, quicken,  
How long before a tendriled specter offers an apple?

## **Liver Candy**

By Dawn Dupler

Valtrex looks like propoxyphene  
Looks like Lithium generic.

Thorazine masks as Motrin while it  
Dances with all the other liver candy

And serrated knives strewn across  
My cold bathroom tile.

Mmm. Valium yellow dissolves sweetly on the tongue  
Thrusting its stamped V chest like Superman's S

Until it disappears into my mind just as  
Many disappear from it.

I dose myself and call off the hunt.  
Running wears down the soul.

*Jason Fisk lives in Chicago-land with his children, and dogs. He tries to find time to write between changing diapers and cleaning up poop. You can visit his website at [www.jasonfisk.com](http://www.jasonfisk.com).*

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## **New Car Smell**

by Jason Fisk

I sat in the back seat  
annoyed by the extra starch  
the occasion called for  
I could plainly see the hearse  
that carried Dad's body

Drained by weary conversations  
and well worn family interactions  
I stared blankly out the window  
My wife squeezed my hand  
*Are you okay?*  
I just looked at her and smiled  
*I know, I know*, she said

I leaned my head back on the seat  
shut my eyes and tried to enjoy  
the new car smell  
of the funeral home's limo

*Emma Prestwich is a first-year creative writing student at the University of Victoria. In Canada. She is vague, open, and only really likes poetry that makes her think of pictures. She has been published in community writing chapbooks in middle school. And in church magazines. That's all.*

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### **Olfactory Cantata in F**

by Emma Prestwich

An odour makes eight bucks an hour in the CanWest mall parking lot,  
Men's sweat and thick wedges  
Of hamburger in oily white paper,  
The edges folded and tucked in like the comforter of a pink, working boy.

The man resting his back against the streetlamp,  
Hair crow-black oatmeal on his shoulders,  
Is one of the scent's engineers.  
I suck in the tart reek through my teeth,  
Remember the fumes of collared polo shirts, and fry drips  
Wiped on them with half-moon fingernails.  
It smells like this man, Langford, God, cows  
And me, too.

*Joshua Bouchard has written a chronological collection of encounters and experiences during his time at a mental health facility.*

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**jan. 9 - jan. 23**

by Joshua Bouchard

a.

one of them thinks that i am his mother, brother, father, sister  
he asks me to take him away from this place on a plane  
sometimes he packs his bags but he is not allowed to leave  
his linings are hemmed with gold as he converses with no one

b.

barry is a schizophrenic who asks me to teach him philosophy  
i say things about free will, existentialism, and buddhism  
when i finish he asks 'now did you learn anything?'

c.

they try to put him in solitary confinement -- a locked room with a mattress on  
the floor  
he thinks it is the gas chamber and that he will die -- fighting and screaming,  
they bring him to the ground  
as he screams for freedom from an imaginary death, the needle enters his arms  
offering warm sleep

d.

the women like when i attend group meetings  
they say i don't say much but when i do it is good  
when i am gone they speak about me  
but when i am there they are quiet  
i only speak the truth when i am called and that is enough

e.

my psychiatrist is from india and he is a good man  
he recalls a proverb in his language then again in my own  
we sit smiling at its wisdom all of a sudden the same

f.

the walls here are lined with puzzles  
all of them are completed and perfect  
all of them done by minds scattered and gone

such is life today

g.

if i could smile on a piece of paper the page would be empty

h.

smoking a cigarette with a psychotic

he asks 'do you want to go to toronto to become a buddhist?'

i finish my cigarette and leave

i.

after hours we go to the bathroom to smoke cigarettes

we go low to the ground to keep the alarm from going off

as we smoke he recites a plan to steal the pills from the pantry

the more he speaks the more clever i consider him to be

two days later he approaches me with 50 morphine pills

he offers me three of them free of charge but i decline

the next time we go to smoke he says nothing

j.

my roommate talks in his sleep and says strange things

one night he says 'put that cock in my ass'

the next night he says 'burn it, pour it down the sink, and share it with the world'

he tells me he is here because of a woman who makes him say strange things

but to him ordinary, familiar, and of utter importance

k.

a schizophrenic says to me 'i have figured out everything and because of that, they put me here'

he thinks he has no soul and it could be the truth

soul or not he is everything as i am everything

l.

here i meet a 27 year old woman with a son

we talk about why we are in this place

one night she kisses me and i kiss her back

the next night we have sex in the shower after hours

today she leaves me her email and i decide whether or not throw it away

O.

i wish to take a photograph of the shadows of birds over the white bank of  
snow

failure feels good but conviction feels better

*Danielle Jackson has been published in issues of All Things Girl, Horace Magazine, Sheffield Star, Gothic Fairy Tales Ezine, Origami Condom, The Delinquent, Argotist Online, Word Riot, Birds on the Line, and Bent Pin Quarterly.*

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### **Someone I meet at the park**

by Danielle Jackson

He tells me  
He has to wash dirty plates  
four times over before  
placing them in the dish washer,  
and dust the house from top to bottom,  
put all books in alphabetical order,  
colour coordinates all clothes,  
click the light switch  
three times-- on and off, on and off,  
on and off-- or the world will stop  
spinning, the oceans will dry up,  
and the sun will fall towards us

I think,  
What an important job he has

## **I wear white**

by Danielle Jackson

If you have the time  
I'd like to be reprogrammed  
Before I carve a hole in my head  
You have heard the stories:  
Brains scraped from skulls  
And left in buckets  
I've got a bucket and spoon  
And no patience,  
Because my habits  
fester and multiply,  
like mice, procreating  
fur balls,  
running up the walls  
in my room and no one can catch  
them,  
they are invincible little fuckers.

*audri sousa was born to bedouins, raised by wild foxes and captured by pirates. actually she is still in captivity on the red sea. maybe you could send money. fortunately the pirates have internet and while in captivity she has appeared or is forthcoming in word riot, decomp, the corduroy mtn., juked, keyhole, elimae and robot melon. her sad nascent blog is audrisousa.blogspot.com.*

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## ***the office***

by Audri Sousa

my dreams are full of water made by my brain  
sometimes we wade sometimes we drown  
water made for the inside but sometimes it gets outside  
depending where i am looking  
my fingers are full of chords  
callused like the junkie sprawled over three subway stairs  
his eyes mad like deaf pianists  
his arm waving a closed umbrella  
while screaming 'don't fuck me in the ass!'  
my mouth is full of blood  
and when bitten my colour lasts longer  
my ears are full of cat power  
which at two in the morning makes me hate you  
my eyes are full of milk and the same semaphores  
as the night we crossed the oakland bay bridge  
talking about jeff mangum  
and i didn't let you in my red mouth  
until safely in the parking lot  
because we took a class together  
you wrote about robots  
i wrote about people  
but i am more like a robot  
and you are more like people  
my lungs are full of elements  
which are mostly nothing  
i want to be an ugly vessel  
temporarily to house feeling in all places  
and one day robot archaeologists will dig up an ugly vessel  
in ugly little parts  
and make stupid little conjectures about my generation  
and tell from creases that my generation invented  
television without a laugh track

and that television without a laugh track  
must have deeply confused and angered baby boomers  
but i will be elsewhere  
my stomach is full of tabouli and orange  
because i forgot i am allergic to orange  
i will vomit orange i will empty myself of cigarettes and voices  
i will break into orange hives and throw off my clothes  
i will go into anaphylactic shock alone on orange carpet  
in a pool of light made by *the office*  
and my father will walk in unsure how to react  
to *the office*  
but it's been so long  
i wanted to remember  
what sunspots taste like

*Debrenee Adkisson is a Master's candidate in English literature and Women's Studies at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. She enjoys modern and contemporary American poetry (especially that written by women), white wine (boxed or otherwise), and pretending to know how to do yoga. She is as of yet a fledgling writer, but hopes to change that soon.*

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## **Miteinander**

by Debrenee Adkisson

I'm finding who he used to be  
in flashes,  
facing two directions,  
graceless as a child.

Pain denotes his profile, and sometimes  
in a masochistic mood  
I stroke it, rubbing  
tender palms against some old agony  
buried beneath five o'clock shadow.

We do our dance this way, ache to ache.  
It is not uncommon for him to lead.  
Standing on his feet, neck-level,  
I follow, swaying,  
woman-child in a party dress,  
Our Lady of Sorrows.  
We mingle memories of tears.

Often when he clutches me, I imagine he is  
grasping something other than  
a tightened shoulder blade:  
long forgotten losses,  
the same, tired question never answered.  
The same strange ghost with cruel eyes.  
I answer him with hot breath,  
my mouth to his throat.  
I stop words at the source.

Whenever he drapes me backwards  
over an arm scarred by emptiness,  
my hair drags the floor in whispers.

That is how we know to end it.  
We stay in stillness for a moment,  
our palms swapping secrets,  
finale to each other's silences.

*Maude Larke has spent most of her life trying to find herself. No one told her it was under the rocks that she had to look. That's what she gets for walking away from music. She's making up for it and for lost time with lots of writing. So far, she's been e-published on Bird's Eye reView.*

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### **Burst It**

by Maude Larke

What is the grape  
to the water drop that slides  
up the stalk?  
Its home? Its purpose in life?  
Its god?  
Its fuck?

Breaking into that violet pulp  
should be allegory  
or a sort of outer space.

There may be a door to open,  
there may be an altar to kneel at,  
there may be a dark bed waiting  
for that heavy ounce of pressure.

(So silly; it's only  
a water drop.)

*Daniel de Cullá, de origen castellano aragonés. Poeta, escritor, pintor y fotógrafo, miembro fundador de la revista literaria Gallo Tricolor. Es miembro de la Asociación Colegial de Escritores de España. En la actualidad participa en espectáculos que funden poesía, música y teatro. Dirige la revista de arte y cultura, Robespierre, moviéndose entre Burgos, Madrid y North Hollywood (USA). Correo electrónico: gallotricolor@yahoo.com.*

*Daniel de Cullá. Poet & writer. Painter & photographer. Member of the Spanish Writers Association. Founder and editor of the reviews BodyArt, Gallo Tricolor, and Robespierre. He participates in cultural acts of theatre and performance. He's living between Burgos, Madrid and North Hollywood. Email address: gallotricolor@yahoo.com.*

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COVER ART: "Untitled" by Daniel de Cullá.

Call for submissions:

Confessional poetry. Love poetry with unflattering, pessimistic imagery. Poetry that makes us think politics with personal, tiny snapshots. Poems about fighting against oppression and repression. Poems about guilt. Poetry that makes us feel nauseous. Sentimentality distorted with grittiness. Anything with strange and interesting imagery. Get your hands dirty with real human emotion. Dark is okay here, as is political, or erotic, or absurd, or poems that can't seem to fit in anywhere else. We'll give them a try.

Since we know from personal experience the lack of spaces for voices of women and/or LGBT writers, those are especially encouraged, but anyone is welcome to submit. We don't care about your credentials, only the quality of the pieces you submit.

To submit, check out the website, peruse the guidelines, and send in your work.

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Questions? Comments? Email *breadcrumbscabs@gmail.com* today!