

Breadcrumb Scabs: Issue 7

July 2009, edited by Lena Judith Drake

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DAVID WOODWARD
MARC CARVER
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ALICE PETTWAY
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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 Clockwise Cat, Underground Voices, and Yellow Mama. She enjoys Chinese buffets, hot showers, and sleeping.

Welcome to the July 2009 edition of *Breadcrumb Scabs* magazine. The magazine's still going strong!

It seems like I just started it last week, until I realize I've gotten submissions from over 1,000 people, and it's already the 7th month! We've had close to 1,500 downloads already, and the honor of getting chosen to be listed on Amazon.com. This is pretty good for a magazine started on a laptop in the middle of a crummy apartment. I owe thanks to all of you, readers and contributors alike.

Editor's pick for this month is "The People We Can't Abandon" by Alice Pettway. This poem has strong, dark imagery, and an honest, unconventional treatment of motherhood. Check it out.

Finally, thank you to Jeffrey Qualls for a generous donation to the magazine last month. I am genuinely grateful. Each donation helps the magazine keep running!

I hope the issue is an awesome read! Enjoy.

Dawn McSweeney is a 30 year old writer quietly seeking joy and enlightenment in her hometown of Montreal, Canada. She's tried to give up the pen for a variety of logical reasons, but is found narrating trips through grocery aisles, all too often out loud. Dawn is a periodic (i.e. when finances allow) Creative Writing Major at Concordia University, and her work has appeared in Circa 12/25, Lickety Split, <http://anderbo.com/>, <http://poetry.com/>, and her blog, <http://graspingatintangibles.blogspot.com/>. One of her pieces was also considered for the second volume of the Sundress Publications Best of the Net Anthology, but didn't make it. Shucks.

Long Gone

by Dawn McSweeney

Frosted night bus shelter
When I was 10 years younger
(Or more).

You were in your layers:
Band shirt flannel corduroy
(As always)
And you rubbed me warm
Through the hole in my jeans
While we considered what more our markers could say across the small turf of
our wind-block.

All of this was romance then;
Long before dramatic teen-aged heartbreak,
Years before the real world settled upon us and into our pores
Like a fine weighty dust.

After the bus pulled away with you I
Lit my cigarette in the safety of the shelter
Popped my collar and stepped into the cold.

Around the corner
Snow under foot and hormones cluttering my inner narrative
I rubbed cinnamon gum on my fingers
To hide the smell of tobacco.

Burnt Dream

by Dawn McSweeney

I dreamed of fire last night.
Nothing all encompassing, only my bedroom burned down
(a subtle reminder not to let visitors smoke in bed)
I ran headstrong into the smokescreen in a frantic daze
convinced as always that I
in my amazement and indignation
am in fact more potent than mere flame.

My only preoccupation was to salvage some of my favourite pieces
-- paper mostly, and that unfinished--
along with a few necessary props and personas to see me through.

Arms full of trash and trinkets
I ran into the street
into the wide open dark
naked and singed
and I woke up sweaty
holding you.

Return

by Dawn McSweeney

It's hard to remember how to glow
in the damp wind of a Montreal thaw.

The season is melting into something new
but for now it is melting into mud and the excavated floral deaths of last year
melting into the garbage thoughtless people thought snow could erase
and the disturbing trend of those who have pooped, scooped, and abandoned
the bags there
flying in the face of logic, manners, and the natural cycle.

It is hard to recall the taste of the ocean amid the funk of a rush hour bus
seeing this graffiti as though for the first time
underpasses where children have doodled their illegible and illiterate first
scratchings for attention.

They will not become the envied aerosol artists who paint downtown murals at
the request of building owners
nor will they spray their art like magic on a main street onto posters and
magnets for tourists and romantics
fresh right before your eyes.
No, for most the phase will pass or won't
but rarely will it grow.
Meaningless etchings only remain.

I can't find my source here anymore.
I pull no strength from concrete and averted eyes.
Where I used to feed on the flavors of these angry defeats
I now see the lack;
all that is missing that keeps us embittered
and I don't feel as solid
in metros and high rises
as I did when the ocean hypnotized me into vertigo
tossed me and left my knees bitten by broken shells.

Darren C. Demaree has been published most recently in the South Carolina Review, Meridian, Prick of the Spindle, California Quarterly, and Caffeine Destiny. He is currently embracing spring in Ohio, and finishing his Masters in Creative Writing at Miami University.

Black & White Picture #9

by Darren C. Demaree

From the mud, this hanging tree,
turned from the face of death
& facing a new songline

has the purest of blood luck.
This malleable shape
has begun to stare at me

slowly, like the landing
of a helicopter in a Vietnam
movie with an ominous descent

& a threatened clearing.
If I were forty years older,
I'd be dead in Chan Tho,

my arms still raised,
welcoming the metal bird
to the torrid earth. Baby,

in this poem, I'd be willing
to travel time & die for you.
In this poem, I'm a father.

Luiza Flynn-Goodlett grew up in rural Tennessee before heading north to attend Interlochen Arts Academy and Sarah Lawrence College, with a concentration in poetry. Luiza is an honorary New Yorker, currently pursuing her M.F.A. at the New School.

Short History of A Love

by Luiza Flynn-Goodlett

I

She pushed me into the mud. It wasn't
pretty, but neither was I. I was thrust
against fire-escapes, dumpsters, back-doors,
I gasped. The light was so bright, my skin ached.
Spit-shined, she was older and I was cruel
about the freckles, I know. But she sucked
my bones red and hollow, and we swallowed
snow like whiskey. The wreck washed on dozens
of shores. In the truck-stop bathroom, I drove
my feet into maroon heels. I was all
stage lights, blush wild-firing my cheeks.
I was the gas pedal. That's how I came
back, my Twisted Sheet. Now, we kiss with teeth
of children: white, sharpened on desire.

II

She wasn't
pretty, thrust
against back-doors.
I ached.
Spit-shined, older:
I sucked
bones, swallowed
snow, whiskey.
Truck-stop
maroon, all
blushed cheeks,
I came
back, teeth
of desire.

III

She
was
dumpsters.

I
was
freckles.

We
wrecked
in

my
lights.
came.
teeth.
desire.

Isaiah Vianese is the author of Stopping on the Old Highway (recycled karma, 2009). His work has recently appeared in Ballard Street Poetry Journal, The Fourth River, and Oak Bend Review. He lives in Missouri.

Frank

by Isaiah Vianese

1.

Jane calls the bugs “Franks,” but as they crawl on the inside of my windowpane, I do not care what she calls them

but what they might do. They’re all Frank to her-- each a Frank of black body, six legs, and an orange diamond back.

Franks of flying and crawling, of leaf eating and nectar sucking, and of multiplying; a few Franks of many to come.

Franks that nest. Franks that have traded the cold outside for my warm room. Franks that lays eggs in the darkness of sheets

and the stuffing of pillows. Franks that can fill trashcans-- Yes, I’m neurotic; I know.

2.

It started with the washing-- always anti-bacterial soap, scalding hot water. Sometimes I would do it three times in a row.

A woman on television said I had to wash for ten seconds to kill every sneaky little germ, so I counted,

water steaming from the brass faucet, making a whirlpool in the sink basin. In the winter my hands would chap and bleed,

and my mother would make me coat them in her secret salve and wear mittens to guard against my furious scrubbing.

3.

I don’t want to kill Frank and Frank and Frank and Frank,

but I'm not sure I can trust them. I have a claustrophobic feeling
of invasion. I'm making this a war. I'm imagining them with little
helmets and machine guns. "Uncle Frank Wants You, Frank!"

I'm assuming they want take the bed, the blue sheets,
the melon comforter, the desk piled with books,

the lamp-shade, the dresser drawers, the closet with its rainbow
of shirts on plastic hangers, the half-empty tissue box.

What if I open my underwear drawer and, like Pandora,
unleash an evil storm? What if the inside of my clothes

become lined with little pulsing green pods, and one day
when the closet door is left ajar, a legion makes a grand exodus,

leaving behind their former selves to conquer the world?

4.

Tired of the bleeding, the salve, the mittens, I gave up on washing.
I wanted to have hands that smelled of fruits or mint, hands

I lathered smooth with creams and butters. Hands others
would like to run their fingers over, admiring the creases.

I clipped my nails, kept my cuticles clean, dipped my hands
in paraffin baths and let the liquid harden like an orange shell.

It looked like I had insect hands and I admired how harmless
they became wrapped in armor, dull of movement and sensation.

Then I peeled away my new husk like the pieces of an eggshell
and admired the beauty of my new skin-- its potential, my hope.

Jarrid Deaton lives and writes in eastern Kentucky. He received his MFA in Writing from Spalding University. His short stories have appeared or are forthcoming in Pear Noir!, Zygote in My Coffee, The Legendary, Six Sentences, and elsewhere.

Mistakes Have Been Made

by Jarrid Deaton

Here's me
sans shirt
sans pants
boxers with one loose button
like the sad eye of a paralyzed rabbit.

I'm eating Andy Capp Hot Fries
reddish-orange crumbs
flakes of edible rust
in my chest hairs
and looking at my short story
published online
at The Legendary.

I've opened a tab
and the browser anoints
me with a title
an Inter-Knighting
of sorts
that looks like
this:
The Legendary
space
Jarrid Deaton.

I think
yeah
I am Legendary
but I imagine that
the ghost of
Richard Matheson
arrived this month, confused
inside a DVD copy
of Duel.

My mind has Matheson
vomit afterlife alphabet soup
gobs of ectoplasm and boiling angry pasta
on my back
spelling out:
Don't screw with
my title
and put some clothes on
before I get sick again.

I frown
take a drink of a
Bloody Mary
and realize the combination of my snack
and the drink
is far too spicy
and that mistakes have been made,

Matheson's anger lingers.

Alan King's fiction and poems have appeared in the Arabesques Review, Warpland, The Amistad, and Fingernails Across the Chalkboard: Poetry and Prose on HIV/AIDS, among others. When the Cave Canem fellow and Vona Alum is not sending out poems to numerous journals, he's chasing the muse through Washington, D.C.-- people watching with his boys and laughing at the crazy things strangers say to get close to one another.

The Dive

by Alan King
after Terrance Hayes

In a white-tiled kitchen,
over a sink, my hands break
the salty surface like divers

maneuvering pass lemon slices
that surface like lily pads, or drift
with their pulpy tails like jellyfish.

Chunks of scaled and gutted
flesh shine like treasure
in a sunken chest,

or like coins the tourists tossed
from Caribbean cruise liners
at my father and his brothers

when they were boys--
their sleek bodies cutting
currents for what shined.

Dad lost several friends
that way-- boys overtaken
by the push and pull.

The ocean is a type of god,
he once said. The way it chooses
what's kept and what gets away.

Punch Line

by Alan King

Was it too late
to yank back what had
already left my lips?
There we were

in a stand-off--
your eyes could have been
razors slashing my face.
“So is that what you think

of me?” Your clenched fists
ready to drum my body.
Before that moment,
I thought laughter was

a type of bandage
for ancestral wounds
inflicted by an oppressive
history. I wanted us back

to kissing on your couch
and fumbling to undo
buttons on our clothes,
before the comedian

and his impersonation
of a cashier at a Chinese
carry-out in the hood.
What did I become

that night; what hurt you
most-- that the comic
looked like me,
or that I laughed?

Richard F. Yates is a poet, short story author, and zine maker living in southern Washington state, USA. He is married, has two daughters, and works in the writing center at Washington State University @ Vancouver. His work has appeared in such places as: Mad Swirl, The Salmon Creek Journal, Words-Myth, Vision? Nary! Magazine, and WordSlaw. He was one of the winners of the 2006 Ooligan Press Flash Fiction Contest and served as the 2005 poetry editor for The Salmon Creek Journal. Richard is a member of the Washington Poets Association.

The Horror of Memory

by Richard F. Yates

Memory=Loss

If you have to remember something
it's because you no longer have it

Remembering

is a kind of black magic
a necromantic resurrection

Clancy Jones is a nursing major living and going to school in southern Alabama. She has always had a passion for literature, but didn't discover a love of writing poetry until about two years ago. After writing her first love poem, she was hooked and has been writing daily ever since.

Overgrown

by Clancy Jones

A cement mixer churns too loudly outside my window.
I can't complain because I know how it feels--
the need to keep spinning to keep from becoming hard.
I've got all this extra time on my hands from not sleeping.

I use it to grow.
I'm already too big as it is.
I was born with bones made for dinosaurs.
They never bend enough
and I'm stuck with oversized lungs--
(fit for someone with twice my heart)
that are corseted tight in brittle ribs.

I've gotten used to the struggle to breathe in,
but I'll never not want the grace of something small.
I go blundering through the world
wearing rooftops to keep my head warm
and falling in love with delicate things I can see--
but not touch for fear of breaking the beauty.

I am a giant.
With too big hands to wipe away too big tears
from my too big eyes that see so clearly
that the world wasn't made
for those who take up too much space.

Serpent

by Clancy Jones

His paradoxical lips suck the life out of my smile.
So, I keep a convincing upturned grin in my back pocket.
(For emergencies. Like when he comes around.)
He doesn't notice the difference.
I'm sure he has more important things to see.
Like the snake scales growing over his corneas
or the pretty girl walking up the stairs in a skirt.

But, when he looks at me--
that is when the confusion leaks into my vision
and weaves itself through my jaw bone
threatening to melt my impostor smile.

Because I see his heart
like a small animal left on the side of the road,
I want to protect it, and love it.
Most of all,
I want to own it.

His words are still that of the serpent coiled in the corner
spitting venom and waiting for an attack.
I can distract him with a lie or two,
but I can never fully mask this heart of a mouse
that flutters at dizzying speeds behind my ribs.

Melonade

by Clancy Jones

The boy next door leaves moon-shaped ideas in my palm
when he lets go of my hand and tells me he'll see me later.
I tuck them behind my ear with a loose strand of hair--
the same one that plays with sunlight like a child's toy.
In the afternoon glow the world looks washed with melon tears.
I was born thirsty and the thirst only grows with age.
I'm a shy girl with ribbons for braincells.
I never learned how to tie up loose ends but I love knots.
That's why I fall in love with concepts I'll never understand.
I'll always be the little girl who plays with fire
like she doesn't know what the word "hot" means.
Because I burn in sentimental shades of melon
in afternoon firelight as the sun, like the boy, says goodbye.
But only until later.

A wildlife biologist by trade, David Woodward now spends his days writing and teaching. So far, he has poems published in Word Catalyst Magazine, one short story in Menda City Review, chapter one of his novel, Weeds Are Wildflowers, in Wilderness House Literary Review, and a flash fiction in Glossolalia Flash Fiction.

Consummation

by David Woodward

As I lie in you
I dream of me;
As I wake
I tickle you;
As you laugh
I cry out loud;
As our love turns into anger
we turn to sex;
As I stab inside
you punch yourself;
As you change from white to blue
I lie with you;
As you cry
I laugh;
As I die
you live--
as I lie in you.

K.J. is as much of a kind tanuki as he is a man. He currently dwells in different spots in Orange County (California). Beards grow on him in odd shapes. Sometimes he shaves them off carefully. He has a University education of some sort... He has an invite-only blog: <http://illegalfunk.blogspot.com/>.

Weepy Head

by K.J.

Cracked, wiry, tendrils
encircle the purest egg whites
and I cannot foresee what comes.

Screens scoot up. Children look uglier.
Trees have less leaves.
Nights never stop unraveling.
All things stay on TV,
blur together into one sad
chuckle. Pass the remote
before passing out, please.

Choke on my conscience.
Choke on my conscience.
Gag on this reduced fat popcorn.
Toss the bag out.
Have another. Have another. Have another.

“Oh we kidders.
We don't care.
We breathe easy.”

I am not like them.
These squid eyes do not quit.
I need an eye dropper because
I am a tear dropper.
Whale?! Whale?! Wail.

Drop, eyes! Droop, eyes...

Dream eyes.

arts and crafts day

by K.J.

One doll made of a mix of the sundry fragments of two.
A new life to live because nothing old will do.
A paper cut I will dress with glue.
Because I feel like a free arts and crafts workshop.
Where people make the same beautiful thing
and then share it with nothing except
their coffee tables which remain as present
to them as the family cat that sleeps
on the couch with a gut distended
by dry food that resembles the
components of whatever this untrue
birdhouse is that I have fashioned with a handful
of Popsicle sticks and my sticky blood that
I left on this sheet of brown construction paper.
Please look at it when you're here for coffee.

Jason L. Huskey writes poetry and fiction. His work has appeared in a few journals, including Keyhole Magazine, Thieves Jargon, Word Riot, and Zygote In My Coffee, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Links to his work can be found at <http://jasonhuskey.blogspot.com/>. He lives in Virginia.

Don't You, Honey, Sugar, Sweet

by Jason L. Huskey

She runs fingers along her new purse,
chewed nails fidgeting with the buckle
as a bronzed Romeo,
such better than John,
chats her up from the
climate-controlled Camaro.

Inside:

condom, condom, Certs, condom,
mace-- sucker only knows the mist.
Eyes burst with *My God, My God*,
as a Subaru squeals off
in the near cacophony,
and the glass sprinkles into sand
to the *tic-tic-tic* cadence
of a handful of hot lead.

Fifty dollars to help
kill a lonely official,
blow-job free.
Never imagining the heat
of splitting metal making love
in the cold marrow of bone.

She squirms and squirts
above the cement,
pupils peeling back
in the glimpse of a child
rummaging through the contents
of her new purse.
Tiny fingers flail over
the few things left that whisper
the story of her life.

He straddles the blackberry slope,
focused on the crumpled green,
a handful of baby pictures
never to be held again.

Marc Carver was born in 1966 near the Thames barrier in London. He has been writing poetry seriously for about a year now. He regularly performs his poems in London at various locations. He has a featured slot in an arts centre in East London once a month and he has had 20 or so poems published in the last 4 months. He is now looking to publish a first collection and has more than enough published poems and/or unpublished poems.

Poundland

by Marc Carver

I looked at the man in Poundland.
On his neck
he had a tattoo.
The tattoo said Emma.

For a second,
I could not help but wonder,
if he was still with Emma.

When I got to the till,
the man
with the Emma tattoo was in front of me.
I looked down at his purchases.
He had two porno films,
I guessed they were a pound each
and I guessed that he was not with Emma anymore.

That's what I thought, as I left with my envelopes,
that cost, of course, one pound.

Gorgias

by Marc Carver

I lay in the sun next to the pool.
I notice the woman who lies in front of me.
She has big sausages for legs
and wears a Popeye hat.
When she gets up and goes to the toilet I take a look at the book that sits on
her table.

The philosophy of art,
that is what the words say on the cover.
I imagine myself striking up a conversation on her return.
I even go through it in my mind before she comes back.

What an interesting subject, I might say
and she might go on to tell me about the theories behind art.
I can see myself nodding as a reply and smiling.
She might go on to tell me of Plato's ideals.

Again, I might nod my agreement and smile at her.
But I cannot bring myself to lie anymore.
I have more interest in what she is doing in the toilet.
I don't need to know what art is because I already know.

The way that I know that I will not talk to her
on her return.
She has been gone a very long time.
I wonder if she likes spinach.
Maybe her name is Olive.

Grizzly

by Marc Carver

I sit with the toilet poem for half an hour,
but cannot get it right.
I decide to leave the toilet poem.
Maybe when I come back, I will have done itself,
made itself.

As I run along through the woods,
I see a dog
but it is so big
it looks like a bear.
A big black bear.
It even walks exactly like a bear.
It hindquarters stride from side to side.

As I pass the dog that looks like a bear.
I say, are you sure that you are a dog,
you look like a bear.
The dog who looks like a bear
looks at me.
For a second,
I think that he is going to ask me,
Who I am,
to question what he is.
But he does not,
he just sticks his tongue out and runs like a bear,
towards his master

Lee Stern lives in Los Angeles where he's working as the manager of a Lincoln Towncar service for as long as the economy allows. He tries to write a poem a day. It helps him dilute the poisons.

Dogs

by Lee Stern

I feel really bad that I told you that you have an ugly dog.
You have a beautiful dog.
You have one of the most beautiful dogs that were ever created.
And all you have to do to get me to say that again
is tug on my collar. Or else remove it.
And place it near the bundles you stored
in the room where I learned how to sit.

Richard King Perkins II is a state-sponsored advocate for residents in long-term care facilities. He has a wife, Vickie, a daughter, Sage and five adult stepchildren. His work has appeared in hundreds of publications.

Edge of Forgotten

by Richard King Perkins II

A man named Moon, an eagerly helpful guy
we only ever knew him as Moon
he rented a room or an apartment from my parents
he didn't work maybe he paid the rent in weed
maybe he paid in some other way.
When I imagine his face it looks so much
like my younger brother's does now, not like me
certainly not like my father who was gone
for a very long time once when I was three
maybe the hospital or jail or he just needed
to get away for a while.
When my dad returned, Moon soon disappeared,
permanently eclipsed. I'm sure my dad killed him
and stole his baby son, not from jealousy or anger,
not anything petty.
It was just his way.

*Shreya Sanghani is a 19 year old student of English Literature in Calcutta (Kolkata), India.
She is currently involved in learning, seeking and growing, and hopes to be able to maintain
her sense of wonder in order to do the same all her life.*

Stuck

by Shreya Sanghani

I come from the land of multiple floating broken dreams
Millions of them, little bruises smudged like kohl under
Women's eyes-- I wear this kohl proudly, defensively.
You are gentle. A gentle stranger from a faraway island
Who sailed across the world, so magical and beyond the
Reach of my small long fingered hands.

You are endlessly fascinated by the kohl lining my eyes.
Perfect when freshly lined against their almond shape,
First thing in the morning, smudged a bit after an
Impulsive happy shower in sudden tropical rain,
Flowing out when I am sad with little rivulets down
My olive cheeks, as I silently weep on your chest.
You wipe away the extra marks later, carefully--
The faulty black lines that wander aimlessly,
Your fingers trace the shape of my cheekbones.

A little house at the edge of the woods lights up
With warmth and fire at night, I am suddenly
Drawn into this magical world that I used to
Touch with my fingertips on an atlas, places
And names that fascinated me, called out to me
Until it seemed like my heart would burst
Out of being stuck on my little patch of land
You pry open my defensiveness, like slow
Kisses on a cold winter night, warming me,
I am like a melting candle that burns brightly
In the last few seconds of its life, in the final
Irrevocable, brutal sign of rebellion-- I
Mean to hurt you with my words, but you are
Always smiling and I can never resist you

I wonder if I will forever be stuck between
Islands and peninsula, the physical shapes

Of things inevitably interfere so pointedly
In a way that formless dreams can never
Hope to compete with.

Alice Pettway's chapbook, Barbed Wire and Bedclothes, is forthcoming from Spire Press later this year. She is a former Lily Peter Fellow, Raymond L. Barnes Poetry Award Winner, and two-time Pushcart Prize Nominee and has published work in The Bitter Oleander, The Connecticut Review, Crab Creek Review, Di-Verse-City, Lullwater Review, The Mid-America Poetry Review, Women's Voices for Change and others. Alice's full-length manuscript was a finalist in Four Way Books' First Book Contest, and she holds an M.F.A. in creative writing. She and her husband will leave for Mauritania with the Peace Corps in August.

The Christmas Eve Sermon

by Alice Pettway

The preacher told us the girl found the Lord
when she bled straight through her Maxi pad

after she'd dragged herself out of the clinic,
past the line of leering abortion protesters.

He said that even sinners can be forgiven,
that Jesus peered from behind her closet doors,

saw her bloody sheets and comforted her.
He said all of this while calling the children

up to the plastic manger with paper hay,
Joseph and Mary, and all the shepherds and sheep--

but no soiled robe and no bloodied rags.
He told us about the wise men and the gifts,

the baby, pristine under a blinding star,
but never how Mary, alone after angel visits

and immaculate conception, was swallowed by pain
as she slid down labor's throat. He did not say

God's word tells us that women are meant to bleed.

The People We Can't Abandon

by Alice Pettway

I have nothing
for you, my love,

the runts have sucked
my tits dry.

These parasites
latched onto me

far earlier
than I care to remember,

and I have come
to crave their suckling.

Pick them off.
I'm drained, shriveled,

unable to crawl
away from the hoard.

If you can feed
yourself and fend

against the predators,
I will share

my small strength
and sharp eyes,

and learn to walk
without the crutch

of their constant,
groping need.

Rod Peckman lives in the Pacific Northwest, surrounded by beauty. In winter, when it rains all the time, he says the view outside his window looks like a Chinese painting, ever changing, depending on the light. His poems have appeared in Barnwood, Thieves Jargon, Juked, Dark Sky Magazine, Bable Fruit, Clapboard House, Silenced Press, Willows Wept Review, tinfoildresses, The Argotist Online, The Sylvan Echo, The Houston Literary Review, and The Tonopah Review.

Underground Garage

by Rod Peckman

Believing in all things at once, I flake like shale.
What I've written, the pendulum moods I leave,
those rituals conjuring timid subversions, safe against the padded walls
of an insanity never truly earned, a properly prim pretence to frenzy.
But I swear I'm flaking like shale; and before I lose every bit of myself
I'm determined to polish you once again into an agate,
a mirror reflecting my dear dreams of forgetting this ever happened.

These memories of you pass the blood-brain barrier with ease,
like a benzo, like a trigger, like a hammer to pin.
Here's my shout out to those lone suburban junkies in withdrawal
of simple intimacy, prone and trembling, sheets wet with flop-sweat
in that infamous separate bedroom. A shout out to the haywire brains,
the tongue biting silence of encased rage, dangling like marionettes
kicking wildly in the slipstream. To my chagrin, even after

my umbilical tether had been bloodlessly severed, the audience spots
the filament suspending me in space, divining the trick to my magical thinking.
And how the blood then flowed. Oh Universe of such quantum physical
speculation, do not be mired in theory. I only want to know: if I jump will I fall?
Is terminal velocity truly terminal? If I sink my hand to the wrist
into the wet cement sidewalk on the Hollywood Walk of Fame,
how many packs of Marlborough reds

will I smoke until the concrete sets?

A semi-tragic handprint of this thing that was almost me.

How does my Punch and Judy regional theater stack up against the elaborate
production billed as $E = mc^2$? A blinking marquee, less your 2 consonants
and 3 vowels, flaking shale to slate now in sharper flickered dreams
at 24 frames a second, a mise-en-scene of rock, strings and staid theorems
speculating the existence of a deeper sleep than amnesia.

Warning: This May Impair Your Ability

by Rod Peckman

You never truly die in your dreams.
They say.

I saw myself split
like a gourd,
spilling seeds and pulp on asphalt
beneath
a four-way blinking light,
in a feeble drizzle
nobody
would dare
mistake for rain.

As I remember this
I was not dead.

Compelled
to watch myself from a distance,
I could not escape
my own character assassination,
rolling like a foreign film:

I sang
each subtitle with a bouncing ball:

French films of lust and betrayal;
Satyricon stories of gluttony and decay;
the entire oeuvre of Michael Douglas,
swallowing scenes with manic indifference--
the supporting actress dispatched
like a well cooked mutton leg,
ground in the rotting molars of king Henry VIII.

Locusts loose upon the fields of corn
outside the house we shared.
Locust loose upon the fields,
so like a firestorm. Fields swept away

(locusts, my love, were let loose into our green bounty)

consumed by blue flame.
A clean blue flame
of mind, you see:

locusts are loose upon our once silent fields.
(how can you take this back? beating against
the wings and)

I sang this raucous silence through mandibles.
Insatiable spiked thighs
bounding forward,
ever forward,
searching
more of this easy fodder.

Hands, clawed in a prayer
that never left my lips at
3:00 A.M.

A chemical balance
to this chemical mayhem.
A charcoal to neutralize
bad dreams.

Rick Spuler's poems and short fiction have appeared in numerous literary magazines, including WordSlaw, Poetry Super Highway, Best Poem, Wizard of the Wind, Autumn Leaves, Miranda Magazine, New Mirage Quarterly, and forthcoming in Ugly Cousin, Unfeigned Coffee Fiend, South Jersey Underground, and The Houston Literary Review. He is currently working on a collection of short stories and poetry (Memorabilia and Other Assorted Forgettables). For nearly 20 years he has served as Senior Lecturer in German at Rice University in Houston, TX. He enjoys music and reading.

French Criticism

by Rick Spuler

Your marks on the page,
between the lines,
hold my breath,
embrace me in the
compelling silence of your margins.
Shall I shed my ink here too?

Read and listen, read and listen.
Barthes must have been right:
writing is like fucking.

J. A. Tyler is the author of the forthcoming novellas Someone, Somewhere (ghost road press) and In Love With a Ghost (willow's wept press) as well as the chapbooks The Girl in the Black Sweater (Trainwreck Press) and Everyone in This is Either Dying or Will Die or is Thinking About Death (Achilles Chapbook Series). He is also founding editor of mud luscious/ml press. Visit: <http://www.aboutjatyler.com/>.

holy holy

by J.A. Tyler

Hymnals in holes, down deep in veins, wallpaper. A choir sings. A chorus of praise, a singlet of surreal idle melodies. Off-tones and dissonance. How we all became soldiers. How they all dropped down into the armaments, arms gripped by the launchers of rockets, hands missiles, bullets and verbiage. The standing lyrics, the moving lyrics, the going. How we knew nothing. How the moon broke and fell. How the whole thing tarried out of balance. If there was a way out it was buried as pipeline, laid beneath us in structures only x-ray accessible. The next movement, the second time through. Winded soot and every shaft of air a chimney. If someone had told us, if someone. We were so good. We always answered these questions. We spread our legs for these ideals, we satiated, we opened. The sun too close. No stars. Sing, sing. All praise be. In his name we sing. Sing. Sing.

Kimberly Ruth is a recent graduate from SUNY New Paltz where she received a degree in photography and a degree in journalism. She plans to attend graduate school in the fall, where she will work towards an MFA degree in Fine Art. You can view samples of her work at <http://kimberlyruth.blogspot.com/>.

One morning on Center Street

by Kimberly Ruth

The earthquake upstairs
woke me and I closed my window.

As parts of the roof were thrown
away by men who apologized

for knocking my grandmother
face-down,

I shrugged.

She's been dead for five years
And the cat at her feet

has finally torn the last bit of flesh
from the bone.

Sunlight illuminated through the hole
in the ceiling.

Hélène Deroubaix aka Helenina considers herself a poet. She is a French artist. Her work breathes and lives poetry in depth. She's a painter/freelance illustrator and she also creates visual poetry with several cameras. For now she has a compact Sony Cybershot DSC-W1, a Polaroid and a Nikon D80. She sell her paintings and photographs worldwide, and has been exhibited in Belgium and in the U.S.A. for now.

With her coined term "Phoetry", she is mostly working on self-portraiture, not as a matter of ego or mere narcissism but as a way to express her different personas or create characters out of herself to tell stories, to share emotions and reach others, who can relate and feel understood in her work. For painting she either begins with words, poems in her mind, an emotion from inside or around her, and she begins. She never really knows which character she is going to face but most of the time she can find pieces of herself even if it's not a self-portrait. Surely because with her art she wants to reunite with others, and to show how we can all relate, how we can have the same dreams or disillusionments. To show we may have been through the same pain and lived or wished for the same Bliss.

Mythology, mysticism and poetry are her big Muses. Her art knows no limits; this is the place of deep freedom as utopic as it sounds. It is a true liberation of her introversions and neuroses. It is the place where she can be both the healer and the mind that needs healing. She loves to play with her personas, characters inside her, pieces of her born thanks to meeting, to new inspiration, new path of amazing thoughts. That's also why people often define her work has a mystery because they cannot know who she am in this. She is never where she is expected. She loves to create things that will be thought-provoking for viewers, which will awake something in them, make them react or remember something about them, like a catharsis sometimes. She often loves to work inspired by music, text, quotes and she also loves to merge different kinds of art together to feel whole.

She also write poems inspired by the pictures and they are like body + soul or twin flames that cannot be severed: the words and images make love together to generate all this poetry of emotions. She is a Piscean artist; she indulges in dreams and passions and her work is made of her soul dichotomy which can also be osmosis. Each of her sides balancing one another, each of her characters and muses merging together, healing her, saving her and making her grow as an artist.

Links to her websites: <http://thefairyattic.free.fr/>, <http://helenina.com/>

Her Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/people/electricache/>

Her blog: <http://helene-deroubaix.blogspot.com/>

COVER ART: "I won't be okay with a no" by Hélène Deroubaix.

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. Poems that make 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.

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