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HSTQ: SUMMER 2017

**A Year of HST Quarterly**  
**Arthur Graham**

Well gang, here we are, four issues in and still going strong. Anyone who knows me knows that I'm not ordinarily one to make a big to-do when it comes to anniversaries (just ask my ex!), but I simply couldn't let this one pass without saying something.

*Clears throat, raises glass*

I never really know what to say on occasions like this, and I certainly haven't prepared a speech, but here goes my best attempt at marking this auspicious milestone on our collective road to hell.

When we first started putting together the first issue of *HST Quarterly* about a year ago, we had no idea how long it would last, whether we'd continue to collect killer poems, or whether you'd sustain any interest in reading them. Sure, we had *some* idea, but we certainly could not have guessed just how well our humble little publication would be received at the time. We're still barely covering costs at this point, but this has always been and will always be a labor of love, and honestly I'm just glad for the opportunity to publish so many great poets.

Who's to say whether I'll be repeating this ramble of mine in another year's time? I may not have the answer to that, but I will tell you this – you keep sending us your shit, and we'll keep putting it out there.

So, pop the champagne, spark up the bud, or get at whatever it is you sober people consume on such occasions, and join me in celebrating one full year of *HST Quarterly*. Here's to all you beautiful motherfuckers who helped make it happen!

Arthur Graham  
Salt Lake City, June 2017

**This Poetry Business**  
**John D. Robinson**

“Okay, so what is it?  
that some poems of yours  
have appeared in a  
literary publication?  
what does that mean?  
what does it do for you?  
so fucking what!  
who gives a shit?  
blow it up my ass!  
the world doesn't  
know or notice shit  
like that, it's far too  
busy!  
and what's the point  
of it all?”

“I don't know”  
I answered.

**one of those shits**  
**Michael D. Goscinski**

it'd been a while  
since i had to shit like that  
it was one of those cheek squeezers  
where you try to hold it together  
running for the bathroom  
hoping you don't let lose

fortunately i made it  
even had time to grab  
my copy of  
the complete works of william shakespeare  
though i will confess  
i wasn't really in the mood for theatre

it didn't take much of a push  
but christ  
the shit just wouldn't stop  
i thought for sure  
i'd find my guts floating  
when i got up from the pot

and to make matters worse  
it was one of those shits  
you just can't wipe off  
even if you stand up; get into it  
the more you wipe  
the more shit on the paper

it was one of those shits  
that stayed with me  
all day  
everywhere i went  
i could feel it  
rustling around back there

such is life  
no matter how much  
you try to wipe away the shit

or hide it  
with love  
religion  
politics  
it remains  
a deep dark secret  
clinging  
to your most private parts

**Juxtaposition Among Redwoods**  
**Flower Conroy**

They were not red. Not as in blood-  
red nails. Not red like apples, or corvettes.  
These mythological bodies, thriving upward,  
were welted rust, paprika-dusted, owl-  
brown, tigered in moss. They whispered shadows.  
This excursion before touring the vineyards.  
You wore a leather trench coat. I teetered  
along the pathway in fuchsia shoes.  
Alone along some trail, separated from human  
eyes, you took me to you with one arm,  
& with the other, a singular  
fallen limb. Said into my neck, *turn around* &  
I did. The sky opened small enough for a cloud to escape.  
It sounded like falling leaves, still clenched in the branches.

**Imagining Something In Her Mouth**  
**David Mac**

'I've had all shapes and sizes,'  
she said.  
'Of dicks?' I asked.  
'No. Of pasta,' she replied.  
'Oh, I thought you meant dicks,'  
I told her. 'Are you sure you  
didn't mean dicks?'  
'Why would I mean dicks?'  
she sneered. 'I was  
talking about the menu.'  
'The dick menu?' I said.  
'No, the menu. We are in an  
Italian restaurant.'  
I looked about: 'Oh yeah.'

My mind was always  
some place else when  
I was with her.

**Ideal**  
**Mather Schneider**

Daytime cab drivers  
work 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
and have to share their cabs  
with the night drivers  
who work 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.  
If you don't get along  
with the other driver  
it can lead to problems—  
you don't want someone  
who will short you on fuel  
or leave condoms on the floor.  
In an ideal world  
you would bring the cab  
to the other driver  
on time, clean,  
in perfect running order  
and with a smile.  
Of course in an ideal world  
you wouldn't be driving a cab  
at all.  
You would more likely be on a beach  
in Mexico  
doing a line of coke  
off the bare ass  
of a 16 year old hooker.

**A Burned Past**  
**Craig Moffatt**

Walking through my old neighbourhood  
I arrive at the house I grew up in,  
there are two cars in the driveway  
the windows of the house are smashed out  
by the fire which is erupting inside.  
The curtains are burning with such violence  
The front door is bricked in.  
smoke is bellowing out of the windows  
I see my mother trying to escape the flames  
her hair is on fire, her skin black and scolded.  
My stepfather just standing there with a gun to his head  
continually mocking me with taunts and abuse.  
The dog has been hung by its neck in the lounge room  
with a tag that says "to Craig, I'm Max"  
The front yard is full of dead grass  
with children's bones scattered throughout.  
My Stepfather points the gun and has me in his sight  
fires hatred into my chest.  
In the trees are the hanging corpses of my ancestors  
swaying from side to side  
and spirits are mourning at their feet crying out to a dead god  
to save me, to shelter me  
from the burning house on a grave of childhood bones.  
The house is the only thing left standing  
while everything else has turned to rubble,  
the streetlights sag  
and the bicycles we rode around on  
lay rusted and tormented with age  
I turn away and I walk forward  
through this desolated street  
a familiar unchanged geography  
of where I am from.

once again I am standing  
out the front of the house I grew up in.

**Alaska**  
**Craig Sernotti**

He invites you up to Alaska.  
You spend the week  
wishing he didn't have a mullet  
and bending over so he can  
fuck your ass.  
When you get home you  
wish you had stayed.  
He stops calling and answering your e-mails.  
You try to forget him.  
Your husband fucks your ass  
but it isn't the same.

**When the Dick Died Inside**  
**Rebecca Gransden**

I think I went  
too far this time  
when I said I'd flay you  
and use your skin against mine.  
Maybe you thought  
it was to be close  
but I see it  
as funny.

I'll wear you inside out  
and your dick up me  
until it putrefies  
and I die of  
blood poisoning.

Suicide by dick  
just to show your  
irrelevance.

**Milk of the Poppy**  
**Vanessa de Largie**

Every day  
I  
fantasize  
about  
sucking another cock  
Line the men up  
outside  
my door  
and I'll welcome  
them  
one by one  
into my mouth  
on to my tongue  
up to my epiglottis  
I will breathe in their cock  
like I am breathing in life  
They will submit  
they will surrender  
to the vacuum  
that is my  
mouth  
I invite you dear bloke  
to circle your nob around my lips  
and fuck my face like  
it's the prettiest,  
tightest  
cunt  
you've ever fucked.  
Now,  
pull out and blow.  
That's right  
– face paint.  
Cover my nose, my eyelashes,  
my cheeks  
my chin  
with your cum.

Now look at me,  
lying beneath you.  
My face drowning  
in your spunk.  
You are deflated,  
lifeless almost  
and I am high  
– gifted.  
For once again  
I have fed upon  
the milk of the poppy.

**A Close Escape**  
**Harry Whitewolf**

As we humped and bumped on the hotel bed,  
I very nearly fell out of the seven-storey-high open window,  
Wearing nothing but a condom and her stockings.  
I guess if I'd have died that way, I'd have found it pretty funny.

**Multitasking**  
**Rodney Gardner**

I heard the other day of a study  
Devaluing the art of multitasking  
Ignoring its benefits  
I simply can not agree  
And belittle the exuberance  
Of riding my bicycle  
Talking on the phone  
Drinking a beer  
And pulling my member  
As I think of you  
And all of the bullshit you put me through

**Making Feminism Great Again**  
**India LaPlace**

Today a man spit in my face.  
Then, while he held my head in place  
Until my throat relaxed around his cock,  
And moved me into a position  
Where he could force a toy up my ass,  
I thought about how he had voted for Trump.  
I wondered if I was a disgrace to feminism.

And then I came.

**porn star**  
**J.A. Carter-Winward**

i don't look like a supermodel,  
but i fuck like a porn star.  
let me take that back—  
not quite like  
a porn star...  
i won't let you come on my face  
and i won't be faking it

when i come  
on yours.

**We Do Not Need a Pool Boy, I Will be the Pool Boy**  
**Ryan Quinn Flanagan**

She says we will need a pool boy  
if we ever make it rich and famous  
and I tell her that we do not need a pool boy, I will be the pool boy,  
for both our heated indoor and outdoor pools  
a full-time pool boy if necessary, in blue denim short shorts  
and tie dye muscle shirts if she prefers  
bending over just right

and she laughs as only she can,  
throws a brown stuffed squirrel  
at me

as she sits on the end of the bed  
before work  
checking her long black stockings  
for holes.

**Bloody on The Floor**  
**A. Lynn Blumer**

“What is that?”  
The guests ponder  
& I couldn’t utter an answer.  
My dog had thrown up  
A white lump presented  
For a living room of  
People to gawk at.  
As the third one hit the floor,  
I saw the string flop mid-wriggle  
Aside the soggy glob in question.

That night was the first time.

It was a total of five  
Gash-swollen sums with  
Kind of chewed dog food  
& internal fluid pooling  
As I turned white.

Then it was one,  
Two,  
Sometimes  
Three.  
You hacked  
Me up like  
This act  
Somehow  
Made us one.

Anything to be closer, right baby?

Now the moon is  
Almost full again  
& I know what’s  
Said once they have  
A taste for blood.

I’m not bloody yet,  
But I’m clearing out a space  
Under the sink for the bin,  
Saying:

“I can’t afford a vet.  
I can’t afford a vet.”

**What a Day**  
**Johnny Scarlotti**

after we got drunk  
and after we fucked  
some dribbled out of her butt  
to the bathroom floor  
and she slipped  
on the jizz  
and hit her head and  
got knocked out  
and like a good boyfriend  
I carried her to the bed  
tucked her in  
and let her sleep it off

she wakes up  
in the middle of the night  
and I ask how she's feeling  
she starts screaming  
"WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?"  
and I try to calm her down but  
she pulls a can of mace  
from her purse  
and sprays my face  
and the dog is barking  
and biting my ankles

she runs out of the house  
screaming  
"CALL THE POLICE  
HELP  
THERE'S A RAPER IN MY HOUSE"  
I can hear neighbors opening their doors  
and a commotion  
dragging the dog by my ankle  
I try to follow her outside  
to explain the situation to everyone  
and a neighbor has a shotgun  
pointed at my chest

so I go back inside

and then the cops come  
kicking down the door  
I'm standing with my hands in the air  
"GETDOWNGETDOWNGETDOWN"  
before I can register what they're saying  
I get tased, three times  
and her dog fried to death  
but I'm alright  
she remembers who I am now

what a day

**Drunk**  
**Johnny Scarlotti**

I curl up on my favorite bench  
in my disgusting blanket  
I take another swig of the rancid liquid  
A car rolls by playing a familiar song  
with that catchy chorus:

*I just died in your arms tonight,  
it must have been something you said*

I sing along as best I can—

*I'm  
Just  
Dying*

*I'm  
Just  
Dying*

Then everything fades to black



**My Little Death Boy x\_x**  
**Casey Renee Kiser**

I may have ripped your heart out  
but you weren't using it anyway  
...And YOU DID say...  
you preferred the lights out.

I may have rearranged your bones a bit  
but you weren't very organized anyway  
...And YOU DID say...  
you liked my style.

I have to admit  
you look better than ever,  
sitting across the dinner table.  
You're speechless,  
you keep your hands to yourself.  
And you can't take your eyes off me.

**Moving Sale**  
**Changming Yuan**

A whole box of human hearts, each  
Still pulsing like a fresh-skinned toad  
Two rows of shining skeletons of unknown gods  
All with fingers longer than legs, skull-sized toes  
Three sets of enchanted knives, possessed  
By evil spirits (need sharpening)  
Four giant alarm clocks, guaranteed  
To wake the dead in a five-mile radius  
Five wine bottles filled with pickled souls  
As colourful as the rainbow over the Styx

How much for just the reddest heart?

**Talking to Myself in Public**  
**James D. Casey IV**

I once was lost  
But met someone that  
Showed me the right path  
Even if it was left

A thought provoking madman  
That lived under a tree  
With an antisocial fragrance  
Day drinker blues and  
A walking stick  
Made of old stale bread

He muttered words  
That smelled bad  
Behind a candy corn smile  
In between sipping  
On broken dream gumbo  
And thick black death coffee

While pointing the way  
With nicotine stained fingers  
Twisted and gnarled by time  
I made friends with the bird  
That lived in his beard  
A talkative little fellow  
With better breath

I thanked them for their time  
Shook both their hands  
And I was on my way  
With a completely different view  
Of our evanescent world

When I finally made it home  
I splashed my face with water  
And looked into the mirror  
Only to realize that man  
Was me the whole time

Just talking to myself  
In public

**real tough guy**  
**Arthur Graham**

i've drank my own piss  
& i've wiped with  
rocks and cacti,  
& i've wrestled  
with rattlesnakes  
what were  
longer than  
my dick.

i've frozen  
in forests &  
i've roasted  
on roadsides,  
& i've howled  
with coyotes  
while drunk  
amongst the bones.

but of all the  
scrapes, scraps,  
& scuffles  
i've been through,  
there's little  
i've survived  
worse than  
her.

**Priorities**  
**Arthur Graham**

I'll bet if I  
kissed more ass  
& sucked more dick,  
I'd see more success  
as a writer.

If I could  
just stay off  
the women  
& the wine,  
I might even get  
some work done.

But what fun  
would that be,  
anyway?

**Stepdad**  
**Scott Emerson**

The bug  
was waiting for Gerald  
when he came home  
from school

six feet tall, mandibles  
chittering as he sat at  
the kitchen table

Mommy said, *Gerald*  
*This is your new Daddy*

to which he replied  
*What happened to my*  
*Other Daddy?*

The bug clicked  
his great sticky jaws  
again, patting  
his knee, *Sit down,*  
*son, I'll explain*  
*everything*

Gerald went to bed  
confused, scared  
by the noises that emerged  
from Mommy's room  
moist gasps, the paper-flutter  
of wings, wondering why

she called him Daddy  
too

**Ben John Smith**  
**Art**

Art is trying to use a burning  
cream  
To sooth a wound  
You can't see

A wound very close to where  
You shit from

Art is the burn that the cream  
Leaves when none of your  
Ailments are soothed

Art is a very funny lie  
You use to be insane.

To get away with what you can.

Art is a burning asshole.

**Dumb, Poor and Benign**  
**Michael Marrotti**

When it comes  
to my writing  
I'm not expecting  
comprehension

Nor am I expecting  
you to make a  
credit card payment  
when publishers  
avoid my poetry  
like it's infected  
with hepatitis

After all it is  
an acquired taste  
capable of  
upsetting your  
sensitive stomach

It's oftentimes  
offensive like  
purposely not  
flushing the toilet

If you're seeking  
something that'll  
warm your  
sentimental heart  
don't waste your time  
this right here is like  
unprovoked anal sex  
you'll be limping away  
a victim of penetration

I'm not holding  
back any punches  
I'm at war with all  
things categorized  
as benign

I'm that  
marginalized  
asshole who  
has the balls  
to say what  
other cowards  
refuse to  
acknowledge

I'm that genius  
with a general  
education diploma  
who had an  
epiphany  
while his  
significant other  
was shoplifting  
lube at Rite Aid

The truth  
when lubricated  
is a comfortable  
approach for  
passionate poetry  
that was written  
in vain

**the art of false emotion**  
**Adam Schirling**

Very few people these days  
Understand the fine art form  
Of the erotic dancer  
Radical right wingers  
Will sneer and call them whores  
While calling for the Christ-god  
While  
Bleeding heart liberals  
Will cry and blame society  
And its illness  
Housewives will warn sons  
About such women  
Citing herpes and drugs  
Father will nod in agreement  
Then sneak away to see themselves  
These drugged and diseased beasts  
The mouth breathers around the stage  
See huge glitter covered fake tits  
And a shaved pink pussy dripping  
And more makeup than a clown  
And a shiny pole  
Like a beacon for hardons  
And they grunt  
And yell  
And fantasize  
About these women  
But I see it deeper  
I sit there with my 8 dollar drink  
And stack of George Ws  
And see inside  
I look beyond the fake blowjob  
And winks and kisses  
I see the clever pain under  
The false emotions gleaming  
I see the brilliant genius behind  
This cunning cunt  
She is not the victim my friends  
We are

**Listen To Me Son**  
**John D. Robinson**

Back in the day there were regular  
poetry readings in the back-bar of  
'The Pig In Paradise'  
and I became a part of  
the junkies and drinkers  
and artists and poets and  
wasters and dreamers and  
burnt-out hippies and one  
night my proud drunken  
old man came to see his  
son read and he witnessed  
the obligatory and polite  
applause and the nods of  
the heads and whispers  
of bullshit  
and then he shuffled  
onto the stage and  
slurred a sexy dirty-ditty  
and I witnessed a reaction  
I had never seen or  
heard;  
voices were raised in  
protest; boos and hisses were  
heavy; beer bottles were  
thrown: I ushered my father  
off stage to safety and we  
were both laughing hard and I  
realized that he's delivered  
something that was seen  
as unacceptable, a punch to  
the face of decency; seen to  
be way  
below the sterile stagnant  
standards  
and all without a sense  
of humour;

and on this very rare  
occasion, my father  
became  
my teacher  
and  
my hero.