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Ho Ho Ho
Arthur Graham

Welcome to *HSTQ: Holiday Edition*! In this issue, we'll be featuring poems "Stocking Stuffer" and "The Naughty List", some gingerbread dildo recipes, the Randy Rudolph Petting Zoo, and a really nice piece about a gangbang with elves and eggnog at the North Pole!

Just kidding – not really.

Fact is, I always struggle with tying each quarterly to its respective season. And why should I even have to try? Somehow I still feel compelled regardless. Maybe that's what happens when you insist on including words like "Spring", "Summer", "Fall", and "Winter" in the titles.

In any case, as the big day draws near, I'd like to give you all a small gift – the swift and merciful end to this column.

HST in TWENTY-TWENTYYYYY!

Arthur Graham
Salt Lake City, December 2019

Ruthless Mutt
Thumper Devotchka

I want to bend her over
and fuck her
ruthlessly
like the dog
that I am.
From behind,
always from
behind.

I want to fuck her
into myself.
Her animal need
for my hands
all over her,
inside of her,
I, always.

Life is a cigarette butt
or the stars above.

Life is a ruthless mutt,
or it could be
eternal love.

More Than Expected
Anthony Dirk Ray

perusing the telephone
singles lines in the late nineties
listening to 20 second messages
a decade or more
before any dating apps existed
where pictures are seen
and locations are known beforehand
this was the Wild West
Russian roulette in a sense
a true gamble
you went by voice and actually
had to trust that the person
on the other end was who
they said they were
trust in humanity?
I know it sounds ridiculous
but I digress
I used to make actual
lists while talking to girls
as to why I shouldn't be
talking to said girls
but sometimes against
my better judgement
or out of sheer desperation
I would want to meet occasionally
so after a little while on the phone
one night with a cute sounding girl
I got her address and headed her way
it was about a half hour drive
with vague directions
roughly a decade before
regular people had GPS
I was somewhat familiar
with the area so I had that
going for me
as I made the left down
the dirt road into a trailer park

I started to get that
'what the fuck are you doing' feeling
and when I pulled up to the dilapidated
mobile home I audibly said
"what the fuck am I doing?"
I soldiered on
I got out of my car and
walked toward this movable home
I passed piles of trash
dogs on chains
and a beat up
El Camino on blocks
I knocked on the door
and a dirty kid answered
I asked for whoever
and the dirty kid screamed out
whoever somebody's here for you
as I peered through the door
numerous inbred looking faces
looked back at me
there must have been ten
people in that living room
finally she emerged
In all her glory
we locked eyes
and both gave a good
once over to each other
I was shocked
but the first thing she said to me was
"you are bigger than I thought you would be"
I was taken aback
and a little embarrassed
but totally confused at the same time
because as I eyed her I noticed
a well-defined at least eighth month
pregnant belly on her
I took a step back and said
"well that makes two of us"
I laughed and cursed all the way home

The Fix
Judge Santiago Burdon

I smoke rock
I drink scotch
I like hookers that don't talk a lot
And I smile from the pain
When the needle plunges through my vein
I don't need Jesus
to forgive me
My salvation would cost more than I can pray
Absolution can't be purchased
No matter how many
Hail Marys you say
A bottle becomes a victim
Another soldier bled to death
Tiny plastic bags lay full of empty
While the drug swims in the blood
Under my flesh
It would take more than an army
of Christian soldiers
On a crusade to save my soul
A futile quest to rescue an empty spirit
That's been ravaged, robbed, bought and sold
In twisted darkness
Or straightened light
Seeking the venom
Piercing fangs
The healing cure in a snake's bite
There's no trust
In a junkie's smile
No grief in his tear
Rusted words from an acid tongue
Spit out and insincere
Fate left no clue
Just a bruise
My apocalyptic tattoo
Was I the one
That made this choice
Or was it the addiction
Imitating my voice

Try My Best
David Boski

"Why do you do that?
Why do you constantly
push me away?" she asked.

"I don't know, I don't mean to,
maybe there's something wrong
with me," I said.

"No, I think you do. I think you
know exactly what you're doing
and it needs to stop."

"Okay. I'll try my best."

A few weeks later she was gone
just like the one before her
and the one before that.
I guess I didn't try my best
or maybe my best
just wasn't good enough.
I decided I'd have to find
a new woman and give it
another try.

Fuck You and The Horse You Rode in On
Gwil James Thomas

When you told me that you were posh
I thought you were being ironic,
but I really couldn't care either way –
nor does anyone care for your opinion
when you butt into conversations,
or your passive aggressive comments
and here's some advice
for your storytelling –
have a point with the stories,
or at least give them some feeling –
maybe it's just attention
that you've been after,
so here it is and
let me spell it out for you –
I couldn't care less if you were shot off
the edge of a sixty storey building
and fell
all
the
way
down
before you landed on a canopy
and were catapulted
into a contaminated hot tub
of Peruvian piranhas
and if I visited you in hospital,
it'd only be to unplug
your life support
so that I could charge
up my phone –
so fuck you
and the horse
you rode
in on.

Back
Stacey Z Lawrence

Late early
morning, smudged
charcoal sky.
You dip us in and out
murky sidewalk pools
like spender bristled
brushes, plunged
in tins of street oils.

All haze,
the air we sip, the strangers we fuck,
the steam, cumulus over the Bowery.
I straddle the arc of your back, my whore-heeled sandals
dangle unbuckled, nascent blisters
16th century pickpack
on my Ferdinand Magellan.

I wrap
my arms around your strong shoulders,
squeeze hard through slim alleyways,
curdled milk, vomit and spent diapers,
trash collection is tomorrow
heaps of black plastic
line the silken Manhattan sidewalk, sea-
polished stones on a Sussex beach.

I start
to slip, but you hold on
the raindrops are plump,
bitter against my bare neck.
An awning,
you come to rest, I slide down your trunk
soft lips dry my face, I nuzzle
the nape of your bristly throat,
sweep my nose through your peppery mop
and leap again.

Vision
Robert Beveridge

I'm at sail in a blue boat
in a red sea
in a strange land.
The hold is filled with dark snakes.
They cannot escape
Although the hold is full.
Black, writhing, poisonous snakes
Ruby orb-eyes
filled with fire.
The sea is calm as I lie on the boat.

Why do I lie?
Why am I still?

"Peace!" cries the vampire.

"At long last, I have found peace!"
His snakes are free.

Slowly, I open the hold.
The snakes emerge
And begin to fly.
The snakes devour me alive.

Peace!
At long last, I have finally
found peace!

Kiss Me, Again, Again, and Again
David Estrangel

The coppery taste of meat beneath your sweet breath lingers
like a penny on the tip of my tongue.
Heads or tails?
Can't lose—
Lucky me.
My equilibrium's fucked raw,
as my hands drink-in the warm curvature of your hips.
O, glorious spit—
a little dab will do ya—
streaked red and hot,
never take me from this place,
leaving me
haunted by the ghost of that breath—
your Heaven,
your Hell—
that leaves me...
quivering.
Words can't capture what's smeared on this cheek
by fingers,
sticky and sweet—
so why try.
Kiss me,
again,
again,
and again,
in that white muslin dress of thigh-stretched daisies
that roll and grin like morning shadows,
smiling at secrets hidden in dark places.

Ivory Lizards
Mitch Green

the tapestries are half done on
the walls above the open kitchen.
there are potholes spotting the
tile floor at where the worn
wooden table sits and the bare
heels of a woman in a bathrobe
stands. we slowly pan up, framing
pasty legs sleeved in tape and clay.
her lips are wrist wiped, smeared
boisterous up her left cheek and
down across her cold purple breasts.

towering above the threshold of her
crown, we see an unshaven phallus
half erect, sprung between her legs.
eyelashes flash blue irises to spear
brightly among mediocre makeup and
fibers of false hair falling out. there
are polished toes, chipped red and
another naked body on the couch in
the next room.

this one is frail, wrangled to the soles
of the vintage furniture, grain gouged
to expose poor complexion and a
broken fever. there blooms a garden,
green and yellow from tongue; wallowed
in wiry roots. contagious sensitivity is
all that exists. the third alive, hangs from
ceiling fans on fire with smoke detectors
for eyes. the box television on the night
stand speaks static noise to *ivory lizards*.

Chomping
Maté Jarai

I've got holes in my skin
where feathers used to be
mind full of wisdom
full of verse
but she's been cursed
it was a witch on a volcano top:
Gypsy warlock, new-age mage.
No coins, no water, just plastic
like all the other body parts
chowed down by ocean worms
microscopic danger-like premonitions
chewed up body parts and chipped faces
no lips and noses, eyes and ears,
holes, crevices, craggy forms,
plugged up feather holes
filled with a million dead rabbits
from a million false-bottom
top hats as only the ancient
chuckle onwards and clap
in sweet oblivious ignorance.

Adult Teenagers on DMT
Jane-Rebecca Cannarella

Adult teenagers on DMT
are first dates where we fucked
fifteen minutes after speaking to the “entities,”
behind the gas station near the Olive Garden.
And later on we ate breadsticks with dilated eyes
like earth angels.
In and out of both experiences, inhabiting the bone,
we were spaghetti jesters, crested like a crown. Then, after,
both of us pissed in an alcove near the subway
trying to get home, and we couldn’t be cool or carefree
but we could disassociate deliciously while
while the rolling tongues inside of our mouths
were bowling balls
like how teens used to actually bowl, like,
in the 1950s or something,
but you and I keep the bumpers down
so no matter what we’re always winners.

Explosions of Molten Rock and Teenage Flesh
Benjamin Blake

Beer-soaked dreams
of topless girls
And dormant mountain tops
suddenly awakened

Ash drifted down
upon the old town streets
As we walked arm in arm
a newfound love
amidst impending cataclysm

But I take what I can get
In this doomed life

Mean Debbie
Puma Perl

After Debbie Harry was mean to me
at her book signing
I drank some whiskey
and complained about her
to a guy I know in LA,
during our usual discussion
of black leather strap-ons,
wasted nights, and the hours
we should have spent fucking
instead of driving around in circles
the one time he ever visited
He was bewildered by all
the people walking
and crossing against lights
Not a drop of New York City
runs through his desert blood

From the beginning,
I'd been the more willing partner
Apparently, he'd possessed a set
of boundaries, a condition unknown
to me but not entirely unexpected
A few hours spent in a low rent
Queens hotel out by the airport
and we still write poems about it
a decade later; if we'd spent a week
we'd have a three-act play
or a Greek tragedy
Not sure which of us would die

When I finished talking
to the LA guy, there was nothing
left for me to do except
drink more whiskey
and get fucked in the ass
by a New York City guy
so entrenched in urban life that
he'd never even learned to drive
As soon as he left my apartment
what did I do but call the California
guy to tell him all about it
Mean Debbie, the New York guy,
the fucking, the whole thing
I only told two people how mean
Debbie was to me that day,
the guy who fucked me
and the guy who didn't
My only comfort is that
I probably had a better night
than Mean Debbie.

right on a red light in NYC
Jack Henry

they say
you shouldn't turn right
on a red light in NYC
but i am not from NYC
and didn't realize
that at 2am that rule
remained valid

she said
'what if a cop saw you?'
i said
'i guess i'd get a ticket
i'd never pay'

sitting on the couch
she asked permission
to suck my dick
and i smiled
'why ask?'

it should have taken longer
but i'm impatient
in many different ways

we agreed to meet up
again
in three days

i found my car
and drove away
headed toward Connecticut
but not before
i turned right on a red light
one more time

As Much as We Are Able
James Diaz

I wanted a poem to carry me
Thus far
I have only been hurled
By every sentence I could not give full birth to

My friend has cancer
And has lost her sight
Lives alone in a cold trailer
Hasn't spoken to her son in years

I can't make that okay

I wanted a poem to carry her
But she is only thrown
Closer
Every day
To her end

I can't make sense of it
Why we're always given more
Than a poem (we) can carry

Why nothing makes anything okay
Why we're just thrown
Every day into our lives
Like a bullet with no one's name on it

We carry as much as we are able
And we are not able to carry
Very much at all.

Restless Thoughts, Lustful Somnambulism
Josef Desade

Oh, to taste a thousand deaths upon bended knee,
Eyes wide; drowning within temptation's sea,
Head lowered; bound by this devilry,
Tasting the bittersweet honey of debauchery,
Butterfly kisses; lash of the belt,
Euphoric tears; heavenly welts,
Rising and falling; a tide between spread legs,
Whispered pleas; for blissful sensation beg,
As the stage is set; the curtain drawn,
Flesh, the canvas, carnal desire is bestowed upon,
A shudder, a whimper; spent and sighing,
A little death; a ritual, purifying.

Big Joke
John Grey

If there were humor in violence,
he'd chuckle at the set-up,
crazed fingers roped around
that marble blade festooned
with the goatish grins
of fat-tongued Babylonian gods,
and the telling would have
him in spittle-splashed stitches,
the hand jerked back.
like pulling on an invisible bow,
blade rising above his head
in tittering expectation,
mouth pulling hard against
a stiletto-toothed grin,
and the punch-line would
shatter his violent calm
to such an explosive degree
he'd be rolling on the floor
in a zephyr of flesh and bone,
writhing beside her,
move for move, note for gargled note,
swimming in the laughter
of her blood.

**Cartoonist
Bogdan Dragos**

Dad was fat all his life
Obese
He couldn't do a lot of things.
Walk without special help
Bathe
Climb stairs
Sit in a normal chair
Drive a normal car
Sleep in a normal bed
And say "I love you, son."

To draw those words out of his dad
he became a cartoonist,
but that also failed.

And now that his father
was dead,
collapsed face down
on the kitchen floor,
blood seeping out of a head wound,
he struggled to turn him over
on his back
and dipped his finger in the blood
and drew a speech bubble
next to his father's head
and wrote in it the famous words.

Finally.

"I love you too, dad."

**Bachelorette Party
Bogdan Dragos**

The driver:
He's got the best chance
at survival in a car crash.

That's why he made it
and the other three didn't.

Having the seat belt on
also helped immensely.

Knowing that the accident
would happen was also
a plus

Yep, the only minus of the situation
was having to pretend
he had PTSD and depression
and whatnot
for causing the deaths
of three close friends

who had talked his fiancé
into a gangbang
the night before

**Another Twenty
Arthur Graham**

I've reached the age
where all my friends
are buying houses
getting sober
and just cleaning up
their acts in ways
I likely never will

I take a look around my room and say:
"A 38-year-old man lives here"

Books in old beer boxes
Clothes in garbage bags
And not much else
besides this mattress
on the floor

Somehow I suspect
that there's no way
it could be true

But the signs are clearly there
and getting harder to deny:
Bad liver, thrown-out back
Growing longer in the tooth
At least I still have got
this head of hair

They say you lose
a half an inch
of cock length
by your 60s
but I can spare
and I might skip
those years regardless

Won't I be surprised
if I should last another 20
but then again I said
the same thing
at 18

**Stiletto Woman In My Kitchen
Mendes Biondo**

brian setzer rockin' on the radio
corn jumpin' and jivin' in the pan
chili slowly cooking in the pot
nena was out for her daily sunbath
I was looking at the bubbles
of sauce in the pot
when in came
the stiletto woman

carmen calavera was her name
but people used to call her
many different ways
the reaper
the hell bell
the light at the end of the tunnel
or simply just death

she once told me
to call her carmen calavera
it sounded good and right
so I did

what's up buddy
she asked
it's been a long time
since we've seen each other

yep
I said
hot chili now splattering
the counter

meat and corn huh?

so it seems

why so long since last time?

I had issues to solve
my car broke down
and a lot of people passed
another happy day
on this earth

bullshit

yes maybe you're right

I saw you were happy with nena
I didn't want to be a pain
in the ass as always

I smiled
she smiled

she dipped the spoon
into the chili
blew on it
tasted with pleasure

tell me honey
it won't change right?

she looked sorry
then took another taste
of the chili

you're gonna die
one of these days
she said
politicians will lie forever
rivers will flood and run dry
and fools will rule the world
along with those who love
stupid parties
cheap beer
and poor choices
big money no taste
do you remember?

I nodded

we stood in silence
till the meal was done
stileto woman took a dish
of corn and chili with her
as she left

you already gained
another day on this earth
she said
blinking once before
she disappeared