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HSTQ: FALL 2025

Watching Trains
Damon Hubbs

Drinking Mad Dog on the stoop in Oneonta, NY.
Stoneonta, The City of the Hills.
Telling Tom about the Christmas morning
My Father hit a golf ball through the neighbor's window;
Telling Jones about lighting a cigarette
Off a lightbulb in Heather's bedroom,
Her pleasure dome postered with *Seventeen* and *Tiger Beat*;
About shooting fish in the Susquehanna
Doing coke
Watching trains.
Telling Jones about going to New Paltz
To visit a girl who'd already forgotten me;
Telling Tom about my three week vacation
In the Psych Ward, the hospital tuck,
The sun lobotomized, the beds bolted to the floor;
Watching trains
Doing coke
Playing the corner
Smoking 'Nam weed with Keith under the viaduct,
His father—damaged goods, a fly rink like Colonel Kurtz,
Handlebar mustache like an old pump trolley;
Falling in love with Kristin
And Nikki
And Lori, & Jen.
Telling Tom about Downtown Ian
And the dealer we called "the Id,"
The payphone by Rite Aid,
Circle Park, Table Rock, Easy Jackie
And her Heavy Metal jackets;

Remembering the snowfields as high as the house
Watching trains
And the hills hem us in
Falling in love with Kim
And Nikki (again)
& Tracey.
Marrying Lori.
Telling Jones about carrying a pitcher
Of Saranac Black & Tan
From The Oak
To Joel's apartment on West Street
And not spilling a drop;
Telling Tom about Rose's husband
And how he dragged his couch to the curb
On a summer night and lit it on fire,
How he lit Rose on fire two months later;
Remembering
This was no Fern Hill
Watching the trains
We knew
That death came for everyone.

Scarcity
Puma Perl

She always showed up with a suitcase and a story.

The rest of her luggage was left behind on a bus.

Or a man held her belongings hostage, refusing
to release them until she paid him or slept with him.

Or a livery cab driver rode off with all her possessions
packed away in the trunk and she didn't know his name.

Poor Karyn.

Poor Karyn with a 'y'.

Even in the rock n roll world, there are lonely men,
short on looks and long on cash. Or so it seemed
to poor little Karyn with a 'y'. One conversation
and they were taking selfies cheek to cheek.

The men appeared blissful in the photos,
wide grins alongside her fake toothy smile.

Another couple of shots and she and her suitcase
had taken up residence in their apartments.

A few days or a week later, she gave them the cold shoulder
and refused to leave until they paid her. If they didn't,
she said she'd cry rape. The men were scared. They paid.

She rolled into the Treehouse one summer night.
Informed my friend Don that she needed to put her
suitcase in the trunk of his car. Don knew better.

Not a chance, he said, and walked away.

She sat down on the settee, opposite the small
round table where I'd rested my shot of whiskey.

Gave me the smile and requested that I remove
my drink since she was newly sober and tempted.

Then get the fuck out of the bar, I said.

She's still up to her old tricks but not down here.

Karyn with a 'y' has finally moved on.

Sir, Your Denture
Daniel de Culla

I was walking with my friend Jesus
On the seashore of San Vicente de la Barquera
In Cantabria, Spain
One afternoon when the beach had a red flag
And there was no lifeguard on duty.
He took out his cock and started peeing, saying:
-Look, Petronilo, look!
Here comes Neptune, king of the seas
Strong, with a black beard and long tunic
Coming to manipulate my penis
6'5" long
With all the forms of masturbation
Trying to perform divine magic
With gods, deities, and sea monsters
Like tritons or nereids and sirens
Like Amphitrite, Salacia, and Venilia
Who are skewered by the slit on his trident
Like sardines on an inquisitorial skewer.
I answered:
-Jesus, it's not Neptune or Amphitrite, Salacia, or Venilia
It's your own imagination
While you were jerking off after urinating.
Afterward, we sat on a stone bench
On the seafront.
Jesus, who feels and remembers everything, said to me:
-Now I remember my maid Constancia
Who my wife Minerva hired
To do housework.
She was Colombian and a sight to behold.
One day, I promised her extra pay
For performing cunnilingus on her.

At first, she resisted
Because I could be her father
And she my daughter
But then, thinking it over, she said yes.
-Listen, Constancia
Your pussy is very cold.
I'm going to put some Anís del Mono (Monkey Anise) on it
To warm it up.
Constancia moaned at my licks and bites.
We stopped when we felt my wife returning
From her nightly worship before an altar.
The next day
When my wife went shopping
Constancia came to me
With a small plate in her right hand.
She stood before me said:
-Sir, here's your denture
That you left stuck in the lips of my vagina.
I answered her saying:
-Constancia, my heart
For you I lost my teeth.
Tomorrow I'll stick my dick in your pot
That's what I want most
With another extra paycheck
Being careful not to leave my balls inside
Indeed.

**From The Storybook
Donna Dallas**

She prostituted while the husband
bled his lungs through his nostrils
at the paint factory fourteen hours a day
and for ten of those fourteen she fucked
then napped
then cooked

She had her baby girl
white as paper with raven hair
later when there was no heat
nor hot water
they wrapped the child
tucked her between them
burned their table and chairs in the fireplace
and watched their polar ends pull together
like yanking two continents to fit the jigsaw

The child became a woman at thirteen
longed for addiction and found it
in the bottle
that bottle
became the suckling for decades
even through the child's own pregnancies
two of which plopped dead in the toilet
the third born blue – survived
sickly and ugly
grew breasts at ten
gave birth to her own at thirteen

Found solace in a needle
and was content leaving her baby
with its alcoholic grandmother
as better the grandmother than her own
wretched hand

Later grandma
found dead – drowned in the bathtub
the grandchild then five
sent to foster care
to grow at the mercy of foster pervs
and at sixteen sought her own ruin
at the turnpike truck stop
in the parking lot
of the twenty-four hour diner
under the help wanted sign
tending to the boys as they cruised by
hungry and raring

Love Tentacle
Nathan Bas

Verge of a foam-white ocean
eating out insides like tidal
waves, tidal pools, muscle stuck
suction cups curved around nipples
near the jetty water pulling out
hot macaroni drip from hot lips
sea stars drop, gnawing out stubborn
flesh on a beach fogged in limbo
dimmer now the sun setting
a curve of a banshee beacons
some incomplete burning ritual
submitting Lovecraft to turn pale
blush like some rapeful barbarian bent
on spooning sand and injecting a
tentacle glistening in the mouth
nightmare of a nightcraft I pant
moan into a rock bleeding as
the inner thighs I'm locked with
wave over me toward the ocean
temple lights sing and lure
in only to encounter myself
altered, transformed

Flat Sausage ~ Ryan Quinn Flanagan

We were over at her place
watching Braveheart
when the idea came to me.

I'd always had a problem
with impulse control.

Walking into her kitchen
to grab the Panini Press from the pantry
and dropping my pants.

Sticking my cock into the middle of the press
and pulling the top down.

Trying to create some flat sausage,
a Scottish favourite, I'd been told.

When I pulled away,
the shaft was steaming.

A wonderful waffling pattern burned
into my squished dick.

She screamed like travelling banshees.
A single uninterrupted wail.

I figured the English must be coming.

*Quick, grab your makeup bag,
I need my war paint!*

She kept looking down
at the flat sausage between
my legs.

Now was not the time
to be hungry.

Scumbag Jesus
Jeff Weddle

What a lovely place for thugs
and Jesus we have become,
especially since Jesus is now
a killer and a rapist,
a scumbag of avarice.
The Lord knows we are very special,
since nobody knows more
about God and guns
than we do
and we alone can tell the world
to bow down before us.
Well, the world minus Russia,
since they own us now,
and maybe minus China,
since they also have a claim,
or the various Middle Eastern states
since they give so much cash
to our Dear Leader.
What a lovely stink we have
from our festering rot,
or maybe let's say
it's from the dirty poor.
Scumbag Jesus knows
the impoverished and their needs
are disgusting.
Their bodies are only good
for the pleasure of their betters,
and only if they have strong backs
or nice tits. Very young nice tits,
especially so.
Everyone dies at the end,
so why be concerned?
Scumbag Jesus sure isn't.

All the health care in the world
won't change that,
so let's just stop coddling the poor.
The very, very rich have to eat, too,
so we must be humane
and cut their taxes to nothing.
Scumbag Jesus knows a thing or two
about the burdens of wealth,
since he and his dad
have many mansions,
and the upkeep is a bitch.
So, he approves, just as he approves
of the president's secret police
snatching people off the streets
for torture and prison.
Scumbag Jesus loves that most of all.
Scumbag Jesus hates the libs, though,
as he hates the poor,
and he hates everyone
not born in America,
also most people born here,
since we are getting poorer by the day.
One more thing:
Scumbag Jesus told me,
when we were drinking a beer
the other night,
that he made dicks for stabbing pussies
and pussies for making babies
and getting grabbed by celebrities,
so the trans abominations
best stop their sinful ways.
Scumbag Jesus won't be taking your shit.
He has no fucks to give.
He'll see you in Hell,
waving the Stars and Stripes,
and swinging his holy dick
like a motherfucker.
Scumbag Jesus is proud to be an American,
where at least he knows he's free.

the harrows of toil
Marty Shambles

now that the gnashings
of locomotion
come to the terminus
of the continent—
now that the pacific's
cold waves douse the
fires of the republic—
now that destiny is fully manifest,
and all the ruckus of
infinite growth comes
thrashing against a finite world,
there we find a fella
with his palm out,
asking for a dime. he,
like everyone else, is
selling something to
survive. he's selling
alleviation of guilt,
as the holy man does.
a holy man
is a beggar with a
compelling story:
promising eternal reward
for 10% of your earnings—
promising that you
are a good person despite
what you do—
a holy guarantee that you
are justified.

a beggar has his bag of
tricks too:
he has stories he can tell
and myths he can propagate
about the great western man
and his lurch into the american
century. he can say that there's
a woman back in his hometown
that's waiting on him to make good
on the promise *of* the century,
even though he knows that she's
probably long ago moved onto
greener wallets. *a girl's gotta eat.*
and yes the world wants him gone
but have you considered that he's
bigger in heart than all the goons
on wall street combined and simply wasn't
built for this economy? an economy
that requires lumpen destitution to function.
if it wasn't him, it would be somebody
else, here with hand outstretched,
waiting for a dime.

Magic Fingers
Leah Mueller

Iowa City's massage parlors
catered to forsaken gentlemen
of all vocations—truckers, day laborers,
shift workers, nervous students who
didn't have time for girlfriends.

I perched on a couch between two other women
and waited for patrons to make their pick.

Some guys liked blondes, others, brunettes.
Each chose a masseuse as casually
as he might select a six-pack.
A one-girl back rub with extras cost the same,

no matter who supplied it. I started with
shoulders, running my fingers
along stringy muscles, squeezing flesh
like overripe fruit, eventually working my way

downwards. The men liked to pretend
I was an innocent conquest, perhaps
sipping beer at an off-campus haunt
on an awkward first date.

"Are you a student?"
"What is your major?"
"What do you do when you're not working?"

They finally emitted milky streams
of pleasure, grunted a couple of times,
and wiped themselves off with a hand towel.

Afterwards, I joined the other women
on the well-worn lobby couch, and we
watched Rockford Files reruns until it grew so late

that Iowa City's cache of lonely guys
had all gone to sleep: solo in a single bed
or curled beside their unsuspecting wives,
but alone either way.

**This One Time We Held Hands
and Watched the Dawn Rise Over a Strip Club
Justin Karcher**

A dancer leaned from a window and let her hair fall.
Southern Ontario never felt more like a fairytale.

Years later you sent me a text out of the blue.

“If you fuck someone tonight
try to love them less than me.”

I didn't respond but maybe I should have.

If you're reading this, I still hope
for the future we talked about

having sex while Bernie Sanders is giving
a victory speech, to really roll around naked
in grassroots where the beautiful voices are

where none of them feel trapped.

**Outside the Tiny Bookshop,
This Methhead Is Feeding Her Dog Noodles
Justin Karcher**

She tells me his name is Bullshit.
I watch them walk away
through a construction zone
toward the park.

I know I'll never see them again.

Inside, there's an employee arranging
a tiny table of Bukowski books.
When he catches me staring, he confesses
he doesn't even like Bukowski.

His name's Calvin and he misses
West Virginia. He wanted to get away
from the drugs but they usually find you
in the end. All I can say is, “You're not wrong.”

Leftover Cherry Pie
Misti Rainwater-Lites

got a goddamn brilliant
bestselling nonlinear novel
burning a hole in my hot little pocket
but I'm too enraged and engorged
to pull it out
no one would believe me
"you're old, sit down"
"it's probably a self-indulgent memoir in disguise"
"you shop too much"
"you're gravity's whore"
so I wallow in the four of cups
stone cold sober
feeling superior to writers with agents
and Paris infused selfies
"LOOK AT ME DRINKING CHAMPAGNE
ON THE EIFFEL TOWER, BITCH!"
oh sweet constipated Jesus
the purity of obscurity!
baby let me tell ya
it is more delicious
than leftover
cherry pie

Breakup Number Forget
Willie Smith

I go alone to pick a bone with the lady
gives me the strength to
tear myself apart.
In her eyes lies the art
to give and to take.
But make no mistake,
she gives one, she takes five.
Broke with her last week.
Tonight we meet
like sea lions
to seal the deal.
She says the only seal be with a kiss.
And I learn what is obvious
to anyone not in love with hell:
walk away once,
come back to make sure,
is twice as ever
hooked on the bait of kiss the witch.
And when you taste the tongue,
you know it's done.
Oh, my dear god in hell –
can you not just cut me
one break?

Phil Spector Says
Mark James Andrews

I'm the first to pull
a gun on John Lennon
I tried to build my wall
of sound around him
brought him into
my echo chamber studio
gave him the right amount
of balance & reverb
but John was too far gone
on his lost weekend
amateur drinking
with the Hollywood Vampires
at the Rainbow Bar & Grill
on the Sunset Strip
I showed up at the studio
wearing a surgeon's gown
not quite right on
my perfected five drug
cocktail of Prozac
Neurontin, Klonopin
There's a total of five
so I'm missing two
but I'm ready to get John
on tape but Lennon
could not deliver
and that bullet did not
graze John's ear
Don't buy that scam
I was sending
a warning shot
I love the echo
It's like garlic
You can't get
too much

Monster
George Gad Economou

no better seat, better than cageside, better than front row,
away from all prying gazes yet observing them all,

noticing the dogs and the howling hounds the sheep unaware that
the slaughterhouse's right around the corner, the banshees
screeching and the whales spouting and the elephants and the rhinos
dancing and the monkeys fucking the circus's in town baby

clowns are dead deemed too frightening too many phobias around
hearts palpitate at any sound, any light, all words banned
communicate with contracts

sign this, please, good, now you can tell me "hello" but don't
ask how I am, it's violating my privacy

no touching hands,
no smiling unless four consent contracts are submitted,
filed, here are the contracts they each detail every move and word
you may say and here's the list of forbidden words and actions
and pronouns
take your time twenty pages I'll be over there waiting for you to read
and sign here, here, here, and here, yes thank you

refusing to sign is a violation of some rights must be I approached you
you are not allowed to refuse just sign here, here,
and here, yup precisely

that's good fantastic yes I'm allowed to say no
no you're not you don't get that because you're privileged
of course you are I don't care

bourbon and tequila are you insane, you'll drink soda
it's right here in clause #173 in the bottom corner of page #6
alcohol's not allowed while I'm around I'm against alcohol and have
every right not to be tempted and offended I don't care if it's a bar
I have rights! damn it, you signed no I did not coerce you
claiming that violates clause #43 on page #3 didn't you read it
what do you mean too long and boring? you think I'm dull?
that's offensive according to clauses # 125 on page #4 and #217
page #8 are you blind deaf dumb

no, I'm smart, everyone says so
yes, it's illegal to call me stupid—I'm intelligent!

you can't tear this up, you can go to jail I'll call the cops
no I won't leave you alone I approached you and you'll talk to me
like you would to anyone else as long as you follow some simple rules
read them
again you've already violated several clauses and...don't touch me there
only three inches around the knee look it's stated right here
anywhere else and it's violating my space and body
I've made it clear enough

no you can't drink, I told you
my god what are you what kind of a monster are you?
horrible, horrible monster! you're smoking and drinking and touching
and joking and everything I told you not to!

monster, monster!
mon,
ster! mo
ns
ter

where are you
going? we didn't talk as I wanted
us to didn't tell you
why alcohol is bad
why smoking is bad
why everything you do is bad

you have to listen
you have
to listen
to
me I know

better than you

another drink? you're a drunk, an alcoholic
a disease-ridden monster
MONSTER

I'm leaving you just lost your chance to change
your life for the better

I was your angel
MONSTER

Twenty-One Grams
Catfish McDaris

A gigantic seagull soared above
Istanbul, blue diamond sized
snowflakes fell out of the sun

She was a Manchurian beauty
driving a sixty-six powder sapphire
sexy Lincoln with suicide doors

We drove up a curving mountain
road that overlooked the sea cliff
to a mansion, they said “Come in

Where the dark shadows will soothe
your soul, most souls weigh twenty-
one grams unless you’ve sold yours.”

Maenad Chorus 1 from *Dionysus in Digital*
Karina Bush

He has the code of pleasure in his cock.
Follow the cock. Follow the cock. Follow.
Rave demons into the hot meaty soup.
Tripping meaty ecstasy in the woods.
Golden skin and songbirds everywhere.
Sunburn your genitals in the throbbing
Zeitgeist. Zeitgeist. Zeitgeist. Zeitgeist. Perform.
The soft aesthetic mindless trancey porn.
Mad cocks. Mad loveliness. Cunt loveliness.
The dilating dirt with all its secrets.
The warm dirt circling hoofed and screaming.
Scrotal dirt. Cock dirt. Womb dirt. Cunt dirt. Dirt.
Dirt is the currency. Tweet. Tweet. Tweet. Tweet.
The mangled dirt beat. The Temple of Meat.