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M.P. Powers
hitzewelle

the city is an inferno today
no wind no clouds no chance
of rain just a blazing bonfire
sun baking the trees the grasses the cars
melting bird shadows
turning my flat into a furnace.
it wouldn't be so bad if this place had a/c.
but all I've got to cool me is a fan
this bowl of chilled grapes
and a refrigerator full of Helles.

oh well, I guess it could be worse
I could be that man I saw getting his chest pumped
on the S-Bahn platform this morning I could
be the teen who turned up his toes in the Spree
or my Icelandic neighbor hyperventilating
while clutching a pink unicorn.

three days
it's been like this
three days and barely any sleep
a gluey substance
on my skin my brainpan boiling three days
since it began with an old man passing
under my window wearing nothing but green
underwear and pushing
a shopping cart loaded with insulation foam.

Dan Flore III
Conflict of Interest

she was very professional
she did my intake
at the mental hospital
she was a peer volunteer

I had dated her maybe 7 years before that
I met her in the nut job world
of group therapy
and being babysat

she filled out
endless forms
and asked me question after question

"Dan," she said,
"who is your insurance provider?"
but all I kept hearing
as the doors slammed
and automatically locked
was the memory of her voice

screaming
"Fuck me baby, yeah!"

William Taylor Jr.
Like I'd Miss the Sun

No one wants to read this sad sack poem
pouring out of me after two glasses
of white wine,
so I imagine myself a melancholy
charmingly self-effacing
country singer
with an old song about how
I wish I hadn't done you wrong,
and how I miss you
like I'd miss the sun
even though I'll never tell you so,
and how in another world
I'm a stronger and better man.
I would sing it at some little bar
in the Midwest on a Tuesday night.
I'd drink from my whiskey
and strum the first few notes
and the people
would whoop and yell because
it was their favorite song,
the one they listened to
after coming home from the bar
while pouring themselves
one more drink.

Some of them drove 40 miles
from their shitty little town just
to hear this one song.
I'd pause, tune my guitar,
and then really dive into it,
singing with a cracked little warble
in my voice like I always did.
The people would close their eyes
and sway and sing along.
Some of them would cry
as they drank their drinks
and when I was done
there would be a moment of reverent silence
and then enthusiastic applause.
I'd humbly nod,
pick up what was left of my whiskey
from the stained wooden floor,
shuffle offstage
and find somewhere quiet
to drink and cry.

Liz Craig
deeper because

For Caleb

I feel deeper because of you,
each splash of your tongue on my system
soaking through the car seat pores.

The top shelf behind my belly button dizzy
somersaults when my inner voice is yours
speaking about thrust, licking, all day.

My pants warmer and my phone loud for
two hands of freedom, for letting
gushing flow when I bubble over,
fingers pruney, toe muscles and cockpit cramps.

There is scantily a word for when
you've rubbed until it's see-through,
carving such a valley, peering over the edge –
one can almost make out my base.

Ben Newell
Shackled by Lust?

Jesus sets free,
reads roadside signage
supplemented
with a pair of hands
chained at the wrists—
Bondage imagery backfiring
as likeminded commuters
circulate on singles night,
raising countless cups
in the name of the Father
but mostly to show off
their ligature marks.

Martin Appleby
Paint-By-Numbers

Sometimes when reading poetry
I feel like a grumpy old man
scoffing at abstract art, declaring
“*a child could have done that*”

Lines and stanzas
pass over my head like
encrypted codes
I cannot crack

Somebody recently read my book
and described my writing as
“*the antidote for pretentious,*
indecipherable poetry”

I’ll take that

My poems may be more
paint-by-numbers than Jackson Pollock
but at least you’re picking up
what I’m putting down
Right?

James Callan
Beautiful Head

An opulence of cock
champagne foam
down the shaft
A bounty of boobs
and caramel thighs
caught in fishnet fabric
bursting with butt
pulsing with need
a moving muscle
in my pocket.
Crystals and mirrors
smoke and scents
perfume and sweat
Sit on my lap—
can you feel it?
Techno beats
and sweet teats
designer heels
on woolly feet.
Love that shade
on your lips
around my finger
on my schlong
and the rings are cold
like your ice blue eyes
that you insist are green.
Can we get a second opinion?
Okay, so they’re green.
I get lost in those eyes
getting lost in the heat
of the moment
and the throng of
limbs and giant asses
bumping my legs
and concussing your
beautiful head.

Todd Cirillo
The Greatest Bartender in New Orleans

For Jaime

I follow my bartender
wherever she slings drinks.
Over the dozens of years
I have sat and swayed across from her
at Boondock Saint, Jimani, MRB
and now, at her very own joint,
Schooner's Saloon,
corner of St. Peter and Burgundy.
Her bar is one of good time potions
spilled from taps of tender mercies.
Jaime has saved me more times
then she will ever know—
when my heart was on the rocks,
Christmas Eve lonesome late-nights,
twinkling hazy-eyed Christmas days,
the beginning love affairs of the moment
and the last call of the long-terms.
She offers comfort and care with a smile
and a strong one on the house,
not just to me but my friends,
fellow Quarter Rats,
strangers and service industry sweethearts.
If there was ever a serious candidate
for saint, sinner and savior
it is her.
In the golden age of piracy,
she would be captain.

So, when people get stupid and she yells,
only one person in the bathroom at a time—
and NO coke!
One of y'all best take the stash
and get the fuck out.

This city spills champion bartenders out from
the Lower Ninth to Pigeontown,
Gentilly, Algiers to Mid-city,
the Lower Garden District to Central City,
Seventh Ward, Treme', Bywater
to the Irish Channel
and every corner in between.
And I love them too,
I truly do,
but Jaime regains the title
each inebriated visit
because even after all this time,
the birthdays, break-ups, blackouts,
strong shots, cold beers and heavy pours
I still never have to wait
for a drink—
even on Mardi Gras day
and that goes
a helluva long way
in these parts.

Lyn Lowland
Watch Me

Marrow may have been
What created Eve
But no one has given up
Their ribs for me

Though I have tried
Seeking out penance
This emptiness always
Returns with a vengeance

I fear bone was required
To create one who is loving
For I have failed to be good
But I will at least not be nothing

I will climb higher
Than Icarus ever flew
I have no wax wings to melt
Sunburnt shoulders will have to do

Conversing with corpses
In their own mother tongue
I am a mockery to all I imitate
Give me someone interesting to become

I promise there is sweetness
Inside my patchwork soul
The apple tastes disgusting
And I will swallow it whole

Willie Smith
Dead Girl

I live inside the movie they are making.
A black and white low-budget indie.
I'd been dead a couple weeks,
maybe years,
when I spotted the flyer
down in the gutter:

Dead girl wanted,
age twenty to twenty-five at death.
No pay, no lines to say,
should look bad, but not gross.
Must be able, at all times,
to keep both eyes open.
No tattoos profaning the deity.
Must have full set of fingers and toes.
May have up to five teeth missing.
Slight stink okay.

I'm anticipating the wrap,
looking forward to the can.
The director guarantees I'll have a career,
soon as I let him do me in the rear.
What he does not know is a widow
spun her web in the hollow of my rectum.
And, um, oh – how I wait, sans anger,
for that soft head getting –
deep and juicy –
fanged.

Porter Stone
Random

it happens against my will, but never at a good time.
the signs of its affliction are always the same:
the front of my pants pulls,
underwear ride up,
the pressure from all the blood rushing to the tip
makes the whole thing pulse, throb.

right now my boss is standing in my cubicle, talking to me
about shit i do not give a single fuck about.
all thats on my mind is if his eyes
for some reason crawl their way
towards my crotch,
he'll see the bulge in my pants.

its embarrassing to still get random erections.
i'm an adult still struggling with
the same issues I had when I was ten and
i don't know if i should accept the random boners,
live to bust, and stop asking questions or dissect every
little vein on the shaft until I have a PhD in
blood and jizz interconnectivity studies

and when i say it happens at the worst times,
i mean *the worst* times.

and it doesn't go away until its pleased.

i've succumbed to its demands in places you wouldn't believe.
grocery store family bathrooms, my cum all over the floors beneath the
diaper station.
the basement bathroom at work, semen splattered on the walls and
handicap shower chair.
the driver seat of my parents' truck during Christmas when i was
twelve, me frantically scraping off dried splooge from cloth seats while
everybody else was inside opening presents.

It doesn't waste time on the basics like milf, big naturals, or anything
that has missionary involved.

no, no, no.

it wants to watch a cute boy suck some dick and i'm not even gay.
it wants me to aim it so the cum shoots into my mouth
while it watches either girls piss their pants in public or
femboys with a little tail plugged into their ass.

my boss is talking and talking and talking and there's no end in sight.

it throbs stronger, angrier.

it shows me visions of what it wants:
hentai, pegging, scat, armpit, bush, public.

it needs at least a dozen screens at once to satisfy every desire it has.

my hand slides towards my crotch like it's receiving orders from my
dick through a secret communication frequency.

my boss's eyebrows scrunch and voice dies as a small moan escapes me

while my hand gently rubs the top of my pants.

Wolfgang Carstens
After the first cut

I looked
at myself
in the mirror.

I looked
pretty much
the same—

minus
a bit of lip
and some nose.

I'd been
so scared

but now

something had changed.

I saw myself
for what I truly was:

ugly,
imperfect flesh,

stretched
over bone—

hiding
behind the illusion

of a soul.

Scott C. Holstad
nightspawn fantasy

the dreams intensify
my mother
vomiting her
internal organs
into my waiting
mouth

The Man
they call
“friend”
“protector”
“Herr Orange”
pulling bullets
out of shattered
brain and
handing them to me
gray pulp
leaking down face

my father
in rented tuxedo
grinning at me
as i slit his throat
from ear to ear
with the greatest
hardon of my life

my god
they don't go away
the worms crawling
from my preacher's eyes,
my once-future
baby daughter

dropped headfirst
into the still beating
heart of digitized
diaries doing
de Sade ten million
better and now dead
faceless global
porridge pot
cum receptacles
like wraiths
shadow me,
entrails being
pulled from me
in tug of war
fashion,
to be ingested
as if Kubrick
delicacies,
the lingering
stench of
corpsicles,
rotting heads
on bamboo
posts glaring
at me,
of more tiny
shrunk
skin-covered
sand skulls
and it doesn't
won't never
ever fucking
end

nuke the system
in a final cum
drenched orgy
plz

George Gad Economou
Once In A Lifetime

we pushed each other to our limits
while we got high on everything we could get our hands on:
blow, junk, ice, rock, pot, PCP, acid, uppers and downers,
we took them all and created lethal mixes that for the longest
time expanded our souls, and strengthened our love.
it was during a PCP night we truly fell in love; when we knew
we were meant to be together, that that night at the bar we met
under the Purple Rain was the only time destiny worked in our favor.
crazy nights at the bar, driving poor Jim crazy
with our fights and our kisses,
our drunken eruptions and inebriated reconciliations.
he always welcomed us back,
often with a beer and a shot of bourbon on the house,
and we kept on returning, while we also roamed the streets,
haunting the dark alleys and the places
no sane person would ever visit.
down by the port we'd smoke pot, looking at the stacks of containers
and large vessels that were traversing the world.
smoking crack and drinking tequila at the beach near my apartment,
dead of the night and we'd make love under the blue moon.
sitting on my blue foldout couch,
chugging beer and hurling the bottles at the wall,
laughing at the colorful sharp waterfalls covering the floor.
we'd fuck all over the apartment, leaving no surface untouched.
we'd fight and scream at each other,
especially when high on different substances and the effects conflicted.
we'd lay in bed, shooting black-tar heroin and enjoying
our trips to flaming meadows; even though we were
in different universes, we could feel each other as
we chased monstrous dragons and fought nightmares.
we battled ferocious hangovers and excruciating crashes;
she'd go to work, I'd go to my language lessons
and cut blow on the side.

we were suffering but knowing we had each other,
knowing the night would be wild, kept us alive and going.
we pushed each other to the limits
but we also pushed each other forth; she's the reason I kept on writing.
she brought the best in me, even if I was opium-laced;
I still hope I managed to do the same to her.
the fateful night she embarked on her long journey to other realms
still remains imprinted on my mind;
I was nodding off when it happened, but finding her lifeless next to me,
her head resting on my shoulder is the image that haunts
my rare sober moments. her smile remains vivid in my memory,
and no matter how many women I've met since,
none has ever come close to replacing her. how could they, after all?
my Emily was unique, no replacement shall ever be found.
I've looked everywhere; in nightclubs, in dive bars, in sleazy motels,
and in dirty strip joints. I've searched in workplaces and supermarkets
and the train and everywhere.
never before, never again. she's gone, I'm drinking
her away for the fifth thousandth night in a row,
and tomorrow I'll remember her all over again.
at least tonight, in the bourbon haze,
I once more feel her phantom hand reaching for mine.
encouraging me to move on, to keep on going; I refuse,
and perhaps she secretly rejoices.

Donna Dallas
Being Born Bent

and knowing
even then
at a micro age
something was completely off
and possibly not fixable

The fights
cops
the disappearance of my mother
the dad who was not
my biological dad
knowing every time
I went outside
everyone balked
stared
whispered
but no one ever tried
to salvage my wreckage

It's always reassuring
when you're on the outside
of the cage
pointing at the dilapidated
worn beast

Dark circles formed under my eyes
by age ten they were permanent
from those early years of
sleepless nights
where sounds began as whispers
grew savagely into screams

And nights when they were locked up
or drugged out
Grandma at any minute – and mostly
in the wee hours
would wail endlessly
so guttural and piercing
from the poison of thunderbird
or whatever she was able to swig down that remained
.....I remained
in that house
for years after
as if I could repair it
the caved in roof
the cracked windows
my irreparable parents
and full-crooked grandmother

I remained so long
rooted
like a desperate weed
roamed the streets
begging for comfort
as if the streets
were safer
than my scarcely furnished home
as if

One For the Road
Catfish McDaris

“Do you realize what you
did? Do you remember?
Do you even care?”

My head felt like a throbbing
giant toothache, my tongue
was a thick coat of dog shit

“What am I doing in jail, amigo?
Last thing I recall is we were
going to your mom’s funeral”

“We got to the funeral home and
you dropped your laundry and
jumped on the coffin and tried to
force your dick into mom’s mouth,
in front of a roomful of relatives,
mourners, a priest, and the cops came”

“Your mom always gave the best
blow jobs, I just wanted to pay my
respects and say goodbye. Are
you going to bail me out?”

How to be a Small Press Success
Catfish McDaris

Take a newspaper cut it all up and pour
in the letters from a Scrabble game
mix two ounces of Mrs. Butterworth
syrup with water in a spray bottle

Get your woman naked in the bathtub,
squirt her until she’s sticky all over, then
throw in all the letters and an ant farm,
write your poems before making love

Get a Bowie knife shove it into the earth,
put your ear on the handle, listen closely,
all the magazine names in the world will
be whispered to you at the same time

Write as if your sexual organs are in flames,
until your fingers cramp, until your eyes
bleed, until you use the bathroom in your
pants, set fire to all your words, throw them
out the window, now you’re ready, proceed.

Meat
Arthur Graham

We hadn't been fucking
for very long that summer
before she asked if I could
help her out with something.

You see her mom was out of town,
and she wouldn't be back soon,
and the freezer in her basement
was slowly dying.

We left her mother's place with
two big coolers full of pork chops,
meatballs, chicken breasts,
and sausage links.

Some of it she didn't want,
so when she dropped me off,
I walked away with an armload
of pure slaughter.

Later on I texted her,
“Thanks for all the meat”

She texted back,
“Glad I could return the favor”

Everything's Fine
Wally Wright

I jerk off so often
My dick gets sore

I pretend it's out of love
When my cat bites me

I purposefully ignore
What looks like mold on the floorboards

I work on the blog or write poems
Instead of looking for a new job

I eat too many chips and fries and Sour Patch Kids
Cuz my cholesterol is OK for now

I took a break from reading the news
During Trump's first term
And never started back up

Yes
Don't worry about me

Everything's fine.

As the Sun Sets
Daniel de Culla

As the sun sets
Gazing at the afternoon light
I showed my beloved the penis,
Pleading with her in a state of excitement:
-I want to see it held between your hands
Until we reach an eternal ejaculation.
She, filled with joy, replied:
-Oh, holy and celestial cock
If you want me to give you a glorious handjob
You must come with me afterwards
To the Church of San Lesmes
To confess and hear Mass
Singing along with the officiating priest
To the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
-It's a deal, I answered.
Just keep milking this donkey's cock
Until we reach the radiance
Of spermatic glory.
I entrust my life to your hands;
We are sitting on a stone bench
In this San Juan Square in Burgos
Approaching a celestial
Earth-shattering ejaculation.
She wiped away my cum
Saying to the sperm:
-You are worthy of praise
For you are the seed
That brings life within our cunts.
Just as our cunts
Bring splendor to the universe
Your cocks are the joy of the world
The radiance of the glory
Of the eternal Creator.

We entered the church
Confessed and heard Mass.
She took Communion; I did not.
When it ended, as we headed for the door
To step out into the street
The confessor approached us, saying:
-I am happy to see
That you are two good young people
For you share in the glory of the Lord.
Because of the confession you made
I see you, Cosme, with the clarity of Easter
Your penis rising
Like that of a young disciple in search
Of the carnal sanctuary of your love, Damiana.
Carry on this way.
Live in grace
As children of light and love.
Continue your lives
Without meridians or borders.
Night closed over Burgos
Like a hairshirt of darkness.
We headed to a nearby bar
To sit at a table
And have some drinks
While Damiana, happy and content
Gave me another handjob
Beneath the tabletop.