



[four]

NOÖ

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*Kyle Peterson -- Political Editor**Mike Young -- Fiction and Poetry Editor*


Editors' Notes

-- Kyle

On my car, I sport a bumper sticker left by the previous owner (my brother) that reads: Imagination is more important than knowledge. The quote is from Albert Einstein, a man who imagined, and found, a whole new way of looking at the universe by believing it was possible. I believe that to find solutions for the challenges of our world today, we must first imagine an alternative to the reality and then believe that the possibility exists to create that change. If we become pessimistic, then we have sealed our fate and all the knowledge in the world will do us no good. But, if we are able to think beyond our immediate existence and imagine a different world, a better world, then we have created the opportunity to make it so. Join us here at NOO in our endeavor to create a vehicle fueled by creative thought, an alternative energy limited only by what we can hope to have in the future!

-- Mike

In Hawaii, a certain type of spider sports a happy face on its underbelly. Hungarian mathematician Paul Erdős, a father to much modern number theory, lived most of his life out of a suitcase and believed all great theorems were written down in a magical book God had created. Ralph Waldo Emerson forgot his friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's name — at Longfellow's funeral.

It is luscious to discover new things, however pointless they may be. Thanks to the tardiness of this issue, we are fast creeping up on our one-year anniversary, so we thought it was time for some new things around here. We've expanded the page count to include more and longer essays, poetry and fiction. We've also added a new visual arts showcase section, kicking it off with work from Nitsa and Kit Malo. This also gives us another P-word to affix to our excessively clever tagline.

The new work in this issue is sometimes clever but never excessive, only abundant. See Richard Grayson's story about the strange relationship hiccups that ripple through urban lives. See Tao Lin's poem about what does or does not exist in the snow. And see the heart — that one organ too urgent for pixie-like wit — in those two pieces and more, in Peter Wild's stark tangle with hopelessness, in Letitia Trent's bent lovesong to tradition, in all of our fine stories, poems, illustrations and photographs.

Sometimes being clever is just finding a new way to twist old guts, finding new contexts for the values we hope to see endure. Erdős' friends loved him so much that they invented a fake mathematical principle: the Erdős number, which ranked how close you got to Erdős, how many papers you co-authored with him, how many times you let him sleep on your couch, etc. He firmly felt that math was one more social activity, just like what I feel of stories and poems: art should find you new ways to connect with, and believe, in people.

So, with more mediums and more pages, we hope to provide more of those ways. Stay tuned for our official anniversary issue, coming out later this summer, all limbs crossed. In the meantime please read and enjoy. And please head on over to our website, www.noojournal.com, to read about our new **BAD P♥CORY** fundraiser. It's beautiful and very silly. Which reminds me: don't forget your friend's name at his funeral. He deserves a name. Lives are very beautiful and silly. Like spiders emblazoned with smileys.

-- Acknowledgments

We have too many people whom we wish to thank too lavishly, so from this issue on we're transferring the acknowledgments section to its own half-page in the back of the journal. Thank you in advance to all the kind folks who have helped us. And thank you, darling and light-flanged reader, for checking us out.

ARE YOU A REASONABLE MEMBER OF THE ELECTORATE?



-- Dennis Vanvick

Thanks in part to our last, particularly acrimonious, presidential campaign, we are left with a political climate where liberals and conservatives can agree on only one thing — we cannot agree on any one thing. Each side believes that they are the reasonable party and the other side is, well, unreasonable.

Let's face it, deep down in the recesses of our souls doesn't each one of us feel that we are reasonable and moderate? It's the other side that has problems. Right? Okay, so why not take a simple ten question quiz to find out if you are correct? The quiz will quantify your level of "reasonableness." Answer just 10 questions and your score will determine if you are part of the problem, or part of the solution.

Test Instructions:

1. Take the appropriate quiz for Republican or Democrat. (If you consider yourself an independent take both quizzes.)
2. Answer ALL the questions. Do not labor over the question, simply answer it quickly and honestly. (Ignorance is not bliss and neither is it acceptable. To be a reasonable person, you should know the important facts of the issues.)
3. Check your scoring at the end of the quiz.

The Quiz For Republicans:

- 1. Terry Schiavo should have been kept alive by any medical means available.
- 2. Homosexuality is a sin.
- 3. There was a strong link between Iraq and the tragic events of September 11th, 2001.
- 4. President George W. Bush's military records show that he was never missing from duty.
- 5. Religion should be taught in public schools.
- 6. The ACLU should be abolished.
- 7. Teaching abstinence in schools, not sex education, is the only way to effectively combat AIDS.
- 8. The United Nations is obsolete and the USA should pull out.
- 9. Senator Kerry's war medals should never have been awarded to him.
- 10. The Iraq war is worthwhile despite the cost in lives and money.

The Quiz For Democrats:

- 1. Israel and/or the CIA had a hand in the tragic events of September 11th, 2001.
- 2. President George W. Bush has used cocaine.
- 3. There is no doubt that President George W. Bush lied about the existence of WMD in Iraq.
- 4. The CIA had a hand in introducing crack cocaine to black neighborhoods of Los Angeles in the 1980's.
- 5. Ultimately, the Iraq War has spawned more terrorists who will have to be dealt with in the future.
- 6. The printing of "In God We Trust" on our currency should be phased out.
- 7. The Iraq war is all about oil.
- 8. Terrorism and the deaths of innocents are sometimes justified to bring about change.
- 9. Former President Bill Clinton smoked, but did not inhale, Marijuana.
- 10. Michael Moore's film, Fahrenheit 911, was factual and not deceptive in any way.

SCORING:

Count the number of statements you marked as "True" and find your score on the legend.
 (Independents - total the number of true answers for both tests and divide the total by 2.)

0-2
 You are a **THINKING MODERATE**. You know most of the facts around the issues. To your credit, party affiliation does not unduly influence your opinion. Your country needs more like you.

3-5
 You are an **EMOTIONAL or UNINFORMED MODERATE**, and occasionally your emotions or lack of knowledge will unduly influence your opinions, giving you the appearance of being inflexible or biased.

6-7
 You are an **IDEOLOGUE**. You almost always agree with the party line. You probably would not even consider voting for a candidate of the other party.

8-10
 You are a member of the **RADICAL** wing of your party. Rigid, intransigent, inflexible, and quite probably angry. Lighten up!

The basis of this quiz is that your perception of the facts surrounding each question is actually a reflection of your bias. You might not agree with the efficacy of the quiz, but keep mind that each question is, or has been, a hot button issue, and your answers form a profile of the type of voter you are. The answers to a few questions mean very little, but the accumulative number defines a profile and identifies where you fall on the political spectrum.

If you scored in the "Ideologue" or "Radical" category, you are part of the problem and not the solution. You should consider being less rigid and look carefully at both sides of the issues. Seek out mainstream sources of information and news, even sources divergent from your ideology, in addition to the sources you already depend on. You, your fellow citizens, and your country would benefit from your efforts.



A Penny Political Print from Charles Jameson Grant (w. 1831-46)

KICKING THE HABIT: GETTING OFF THE BLACK GOLD

-- Kyle Peterson

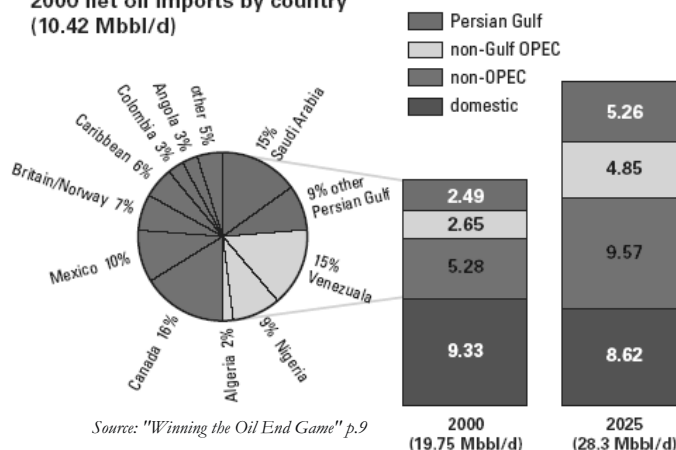
"Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than in trying to solve them" — Henry Ford

In 1908, the first Model T rolled off the assembly line, destined to become the most famous automobile in history. Over the next 19 years, more than 15 million were produced and the car became the new way to travel. Built to run on ethanol, Henry Ford's automobiles were aimed at allowing the owner to produce his own fuel, a novel idea that never caught on. Instead, gasoline made from oil became the fuel of choice and ethanol took a back seat as an additive used to increase octane and reduce engine knocking.

Now, with over 220 million cars on the road using more than 320 million gallons of gasoline per day, our dependence on oil is crippling our nation's future. Every year, this "addiction" grows stronger and costs tax payers and our economy billions of dollars, exacerbates an acute national security issue, and causes extreme harm to the environment. Using or even producing more oil will only make matters worse, so in order to secure a peaceful future for America and preserve the environment for future generations, we must pursue alternative energy sources — such as biofuels — set higher efficiency standards, invest in new technology and infrastructure, and train and educate our citizens. As the saying goes, we will reap what we sow, and such an investment in our nation's future can only make it better and brighter.

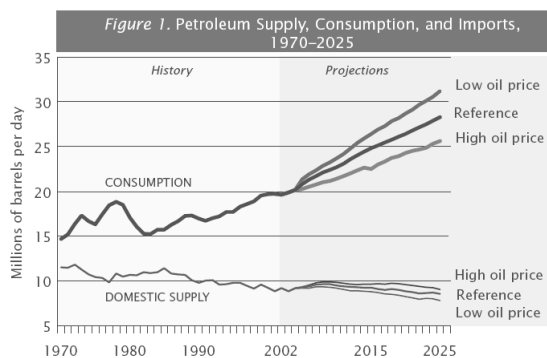
Currently, with less than 5% of the world population, the U.S. consumes more than 20 million barrels of oil a day, approximately one-quarter of the world's production (BP 9). To put this into perspective, all of Europe and Eurasia (Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, etc.) combined use only slightly more oil than the United States and the countries of Asia, Pacific Asia, and Australia together only use 4% more oil (9). **The U.S. imports more than half of its supply** and as domestic oil production continues to decline (peaked in 1970 and in 2003 reached ~1955 levels (Lovins)) while demand increases, the amount of oil the U.S. imports will continue to grow. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that by 2025, U.S. oil consumption will have increased to nearly 30 million barrels a day and imports will consist of as much as 70% of that amount. This trend of increased demand, however, is not isolated to the U.S.

2000 net oil imports by country (10.42 Mbbbl/d)

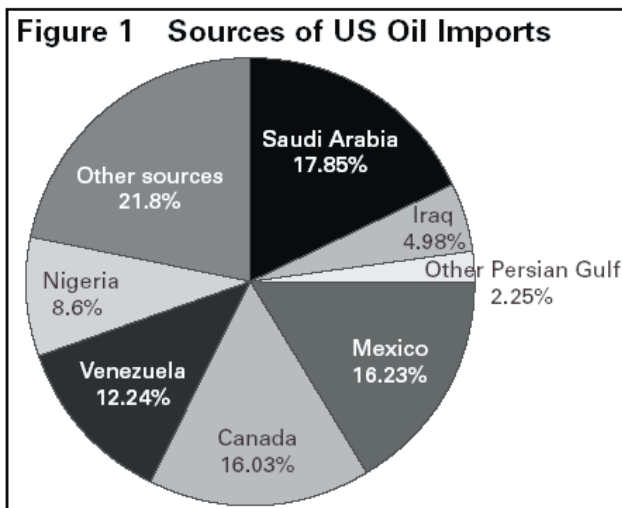


Source: "Winning the Oil End Game" p.9

Over the next twenty years, worldwide demand for oil will grow from 84 million barrels a day in 2004 to 111 million barrels a day in 2025 (EIA AEO 4). The largest source of the increase will be from developing nations in Asia. In particular, the demand for oil by China and India is projected to grow annually at a combined average rate of 3.5%, due in part to a combined average GDP growth rate of 5.5% (EIA IEO 27). Over the past few years, China has accounted for 40% of the total growth in world oil use and in the next decade will add some 120 million new vehicles to its fleet, requiring an additional 11.7 million barrels of oil a day. The size of India's vehicle fleet is also projected to grow 28% in just the next five years (Copulos 1). In 2003, China and India became the second and sixth largest importers of oil, respectively, and since neither country can meet this demand with their own domestic production, they will depend largely on imports from the Persian Gulf, much like the U.S., which relies on the region for 25% of its imports (Cannon 2). This will increase competition for Middle Eastern resources and by 2015, the National Intelligence Council predicts that **only 10% of Persian Gulf oil will be directed to Western markets, while 75% will go to Asian markets**, up from 60% in 2004 (9).



Source: Annual Energy Outlook 2004 with Projections to 2025, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Washington, D.C., January 2004, Figure 99, available online at http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiarf/aeo/figure_99



Source: "Winning the Oil End Game" p.9

This tightened market is stretched further by the fact that oil-rich nations will be less likely to respond to the growing demand by increasing capacity. In its 2006 Annual Energy Outlook, the EIA projected oil prices \$21 more per barrel than estimates given in 2005 because despite higher prices, global demand has increased for two consecutive years. **This means major oil-exporting countries will not be as concerned that high prices will cause an economic downturn and so will keep prices high to preserve profits.** Secondly, in many areas international oil companies lack access to develop resources and even where they do have access, the political climate and rules of operation are not reliable and so are not encouraging toward investment (EIA AEO 32).

For instance, in Venezuela, the fifth largest oil supplier to the U.S., President Hugo Chavez recently raised taxes on foreign oil companies by as much as 50% and rewrote contracts, giving the Venezuelan government controlling shares of dozens of oil fields. John Otis of the Houston Chronicle recently reported that so far, oil companies like ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil, and Chevron Texaco are willing to cooperate with the new regulations because of the country's enormous reserves, which are estimated by the EIA to hold as much as 77 billion barrels of conventional oil and 270 billion barrels of heavy crude oil. Also, corporations are willing to pay higher prices because much of the world's oil reserves are off limits; U.S. oil companies only have full access to countries with a total 6% of the globe's proven reserves and partial access to countries with another 11% of proven reserves.

Considering Venezuela's prominent place in the U.S. oil market, what will happen if Chavez decides to take a larger share, or even nationalize oil production completely? This is not out of the question considering Venezuela's attitude toward the U.S. and considering that Oil Minister Rafeal Ramirez recently stated the government will eventually control majority shares of all oil production (Otis). Will our country back a coup as it did in Iran in 1953 when Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh nationalized the country's oil fields?

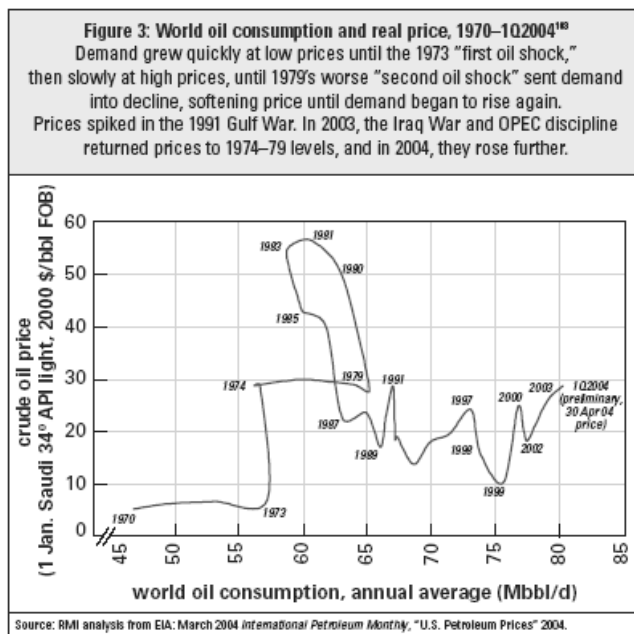
Speaking of Iran, what is to become of the current stand-off over its nuclear program? Any economic or military action taken against Iran would certainly affect its export of 2.4 million barrels a day and send prices soaring. Though a member nation of OPEC, President Edmund Daukoru recently said filling such a gap in supply isn't OPEC's concern. "If Iran decides by itself to stop production or Iran is forced to stop production because of a sanction, I don't think OPEC necessarily has a role to play there" (GulfNews.com). The fact that we cannot put sanctions on a country bent on nuclear proliferation without injuring ourselves, clearly illustrates that dependence on oil corrupts our national and international priorities.

Indeed, since 1945, when Franklin Roosevelt struck a bargain with King Abd al-Aziz for Saudi oil, the United States has committed billions in military and economic aid, not to mention the lives of Americans, to protect undemocratic and repressive governments, given that access to oil remains open. However, after the Arab-OPEC oil embargo in 1973 and the

start of the Iran-Iraq War, the 1980 Carter Doctrine stated that "any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and...will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force" (Lovins et al 8). This posture has been the motivation for our actions in the Middle East since and highlights just one of the "hidden" costs of our addiction to oil.

In a report titled "Costs of U.S. Oil Dependence: 2005 Update," David Greene of the Oakridge National Laboratory and Sanjana Ahmed of the University of Tennessee estimate that since 1970, **dependence on foreign oil imports has cost our nation at least \$8 trillion and as much as \$13 trillion!** According to Brillig.com, that amount is equivalent or even greater than the total payments on our national debt. The two researchers attribute this cost to "the transfer of wealth from the U.S. to oil producing countries, loss of economic potential due to oil prices elevated above competitive market levels, and disruption costs caused by sudden and large oil price movements" (xi). In describing the nature of our oil dependency, they stated the following:

Oil dependence is not simply a matter of how much oil we import. It is a syndrome, a combination of factors that together create economic, political and military problems. It is comprised of the concentration of the world's oil supply in a small group of oil producing states that wield monopoly power, together with the demand-side vulnerability of the U.S. economy to higher oil prices and price shocks. Our vulnerability depends on how much oil we consume, the lack of ready substitutes for oil, and also how much we import. Political, social and religious conflicts between the oil producing and consuming nations complicate the economic, strategic and military dimensions (1).



In short, greater dependence equals greater vulnerability. Since the U.S. transportation sector uses two-thirds of our total supply, that makes it the most vulnerable area of the economy to fluctuations in price and supply. According to Greene and Ahmed, the U.S. transportation system is 97% dependent on petroleum (3), meaning that a shortage like the one caused by the Arab-OPEC oil embargo in 1973-74, costing the U.S. economy more than \$2.3 trillion (Copulus 3), will have a direct effect on consumers, as well as an impact on the economy due to loss of productivity, as Greene and Ahmed suggested. There are several reasons why oil, hence gasoline and diesel, are so widely used instead of alternatives, such as ethanol and biodiesel, but the most significant is the fact that until recently, prices at the pump have been affordable for most Americans. Some critics of alternative fuels might say that the high costs of producing them have kept them from becoming competitive, but if the real costs of maintaining an oil economy were paid directly by the consumer instead of with tax dollars, they might be singing a different tune.

In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the president of the National Resource Defense Council, Milton Copulus, stated that in 2003, his organization released a comprehensive analysis of the external costs of imported oil titled "America's Achilles Heel: The Hidden Costs of Imported Oil." The report broke the costs down into three basic categories: Direct and Indirect economic costs, Oil Supply Disruption Impacts and Military Expenditures. **Combined, these three areas totaled \$304.9 billion annually, "the equivalent," says Milton, "of adding \$3.68 to the price of a gallon of gasoline imported from the Persian Gulf" (3).** Wait, it gets worse.

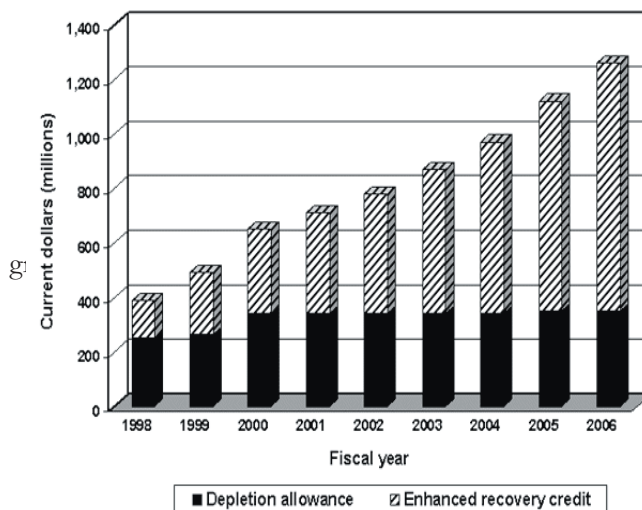
Since the analysis used the 2003 crude oil price of \$26.92 and the current 2006 price is fluctuating around \$60 a barrel, the astronomical increase in import expenditures (2003 imports cost \$99 billion and in 2006 will cost over \$320 billion), combined with expenditures in Iraq (\$132.7 billion annually) and the other external factors mentioned earlier, **the "hidden costs" of imported oil total an outrageous \$825.1 billion annually!** Copulus calculates that if this amount were amortized over the total volume of imported oil, the cost per gallon would increase \$5.04, bringing the "true" cost of gasoline to over \$8 per gallon (5). Imagine if we had to pay that price at the pump: a 15 gallon tank would cost more than \$120 to fill! Not only do these statistics illustrate the volatility of oil prices, they reveal the ludicrous amount of expenditures necessary to maintain an oil economy, costs not seen at the pump.

Another "hidden cost," which I am unaware of Greene or Copulus addressing, is the billions of dollars of revenue lost annually through oil company subsidies. To keep American oil corporations competitive, they receive multiple subsidies and tax exemptions. For example, one such subsidy is "excess percentage over cost depletion," which is a way to recover capital investments as the reserve is expended (GAO Tax 5). **From 1968 to 2000, this tax break resulted in a revenue loss of more than \$82 billion dollars.** An additional source of tax relief is "expensing of exploration and development costs, for oil and gas," which allows property owners and operators to exempt from that year's income up to 70% of the costs

incurred for exploring and developing oil reserves and can deduct the remaining 30% over the next 5 years (7)! Perhaps someone could explain this one to me, but it seems like any expenses in developing an oil well, including labor, equipment, fuel, etc., can be written off. According to the General Accounting Office, this one cost American tax payers over \$42 billion between 1968 and 2000 (9).

A third tax break oil companies receive is in the form of an "enhanced recovery credit." Oil in reserves too viscous to be pumped by conventional means can be extracted by injecting various fluids into the well (14). **This tax break also allows equipment, labor, and the fluid used to extract the oil to be deducted from the year of the incurred expense.** As the graph notes, this costs tax payers millions in revenue loss.

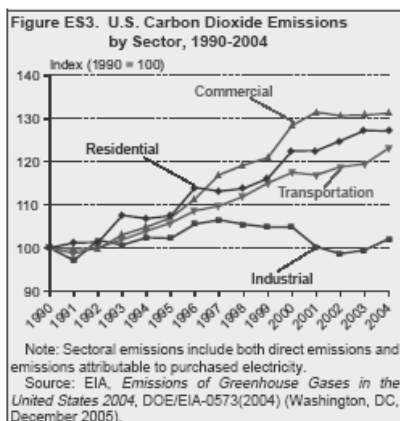
Tax-based subsidies to oil industry



Source: Economic Policy Institute http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_snapshots_archive_05232001

Though these tax breaks allow oil companies to recover capital investments and ultimately help keep gas prices at the pump low, they also restrict competition of alternative fuels because of the enormous incentives for investors to develop oil resources. The lack of alternatives to compete with oil has also contributed to our hyper-dependency on this non-renewable resource, **which because of the real and potential impacts to our economy and foreign relations, is the single greatest threat to national security we face.**

Lastly, the pollution generated from our oil use must be addressed. According to the EIA, in 2004 the transportation sector produced 33% of the year's carbon dioxide pollution, 60% of which came from burning motor gasoline (Emissions 3). Vehicle emissions also produced carbon monoxide pollution, nitrogen oxides, hydrofluorocarbons, as well as other particulate matter that helps to form smog. According to the American Lung Association, some 150 million Americans live in urban areas with unhealthy levels of air pollution, a condition which is responsible for an estimated 4,000 premature deaths each year.



Moreover, these emissions contribute to the phenomenon of global warming by trapping in heat as well as the formation of acid rain. This happens when nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) particles mix with water and oxygen molecules in the air, creating nitric and sulfuric acids, which fall to the earth in rain, snow, or fog (wet deposition), or in the form of gas or particles (dry deposition). The wet deposition ends up in lakes, rivers and streams, but also washes the dry deposition along with it, adding to the acidity of the water. Acid rain is responsible for killing fish and other aquatic life along with large sections of forests in the Appalachian and Adirondack mountains, and thousands of streams and lakes on the East Coast and in Canada are polluted with various levels of acidic deposition (Science Master).

When all the costs are considered, the United States' dependence on oil is about the last thing we want to increase. As our demand goes up and domestic production declines, billions, if not trillions, of dollars will have to be spent on an oil imports that will grow more costly and difficult to obtain as countries around the world ramp up their own demand and/or become less politically stable. Oil supplies will remain tight since production cannot keep up with the growing demand, placing additional strain on our foreign relations and keeping prices high. As the world's leading consumer, any significant disruption in supply from any number of possibilities, including terrorist attacks, natural disasters, war, etc., will have a disastrous effect on the economy and citizens of the United States, and finally, the use of fossil fuels creates significant health risks and contributes to the deterioration of the global environment.

Unfortunately, I do not have the room to discuss alternatives. However, in the next issue, I will discuss this issue along with the detailed analysis of our nation's oil use by researchers at the Rocky Mountain Institute, entitled "Winning the Oil Endgame." Their report prescribes a course of action combining increased efficiency in multiple sectors, development of alternative energies, such as biofuels, natural gas, and hydrogen, with a coherent national strategy of incentives and priorities that will **ultimately end our dependence on oil by 2050**. Don't believe me? See for yourself at www.oilendgame.com or pick up the next issue of NOO Journal, due out later this summer!

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You

to

NOÖ: Monologues

--featured pieces concerning current events

Leaving Austin

-- Darlin' Neal



At the airport, I met a young boy waiting for the plane who broke my heart. He was a Marine and asked me where I was going home to and I asked him. I wondered who his family was, who he wanted to make proud. He talked about his dogs. He was going to see one of them after three months in Arlington Military Academy. I thought of Arlington cemetery which was the wrong place. I wanted to pray him to an old, old age. I believe in prayer. I think of American Indians, part of my heritage, my dad once said, don't talk about that it's as bad as being black. The power of words, chanting things into being. The boy said one of his dogs was a pit bull. He said, people think they're mean but they're not unless you're mean to them. I loved on my dog and he was good. I treated him gentle but he got in to a fight while I was gone and tasted blood. Once they taste blood they can't go back. He didn't think I'd heard him. He said, Once they taste blood they'll keep fighting. He had to be put down. And he said again, Once they taste blood they'll keep killing.

The woman who lives upstairs from me has a pit bull who follows her off leash. She listens to the TV too loudly early in the morning. I think I hear The 700 Club up there. She has a Jesus fish on her car. She barrels across her floor. My daughter brought me a present once that I got a kick out of, one of those fish with Darwin written in the center. I think how Jesus led to the teachings of Tolstoy which Gandhi followed and then MLK, Jr. and how the preachers on TV talk of war and have old folks send them money.

At the gate, they were starting to take the handicapped, elderly and young children onto the plane. I looked at my ticket and couldn't believe my luck. I'd missed one plane and waited for hours only to be given a first class ticket. That kid beamed for me. He talked about traveling first class when he was mistaken for a Marine and not a student. He sat a little straighter, so proud of being mistaken for a man while still a child.

I wonder what the woman upstairs does after she leaves. Perhaps she's a nice person and not a bully. Her dog loves her, that's for sure. My dog looks up when he hears the dog upstairs barking happily for her homecoming, and then looks at me like we both understand.

Some of the sadness leaves the boy's face and he starts talking about his other dog, a Boxer named Max. What a coincidence, my landlords have a Boxer named Max. He's a kid looking for connection and he seems so happily mystified by this. We may both be heading to the Bay Area, but we live in the United States, so I don't mention that my landlords are gay, and one is a black man and one white. Or that they've been together for a long, long time and treat their dog like a most beloved child.

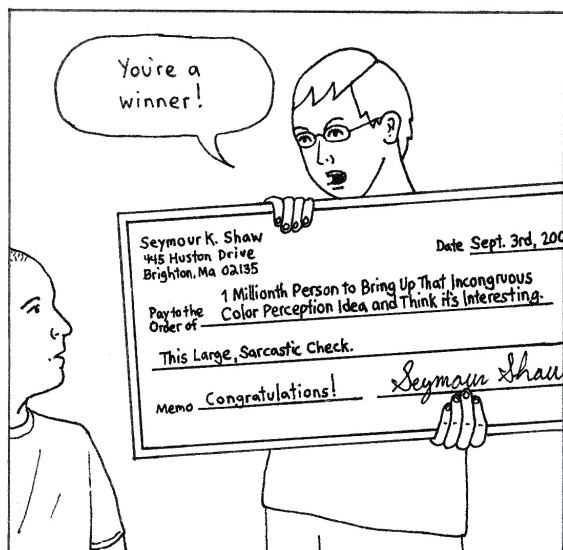
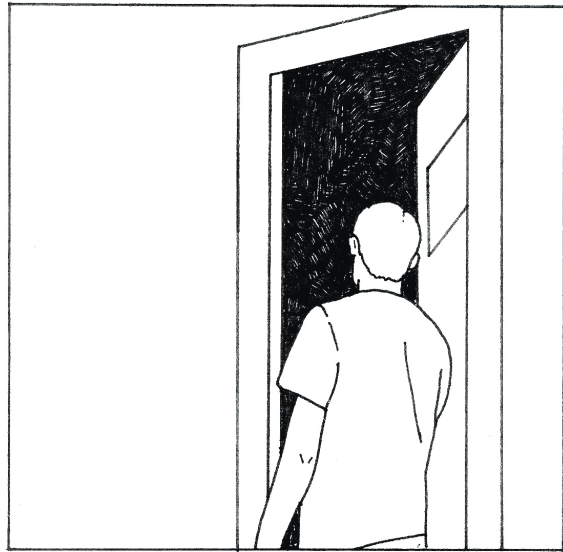
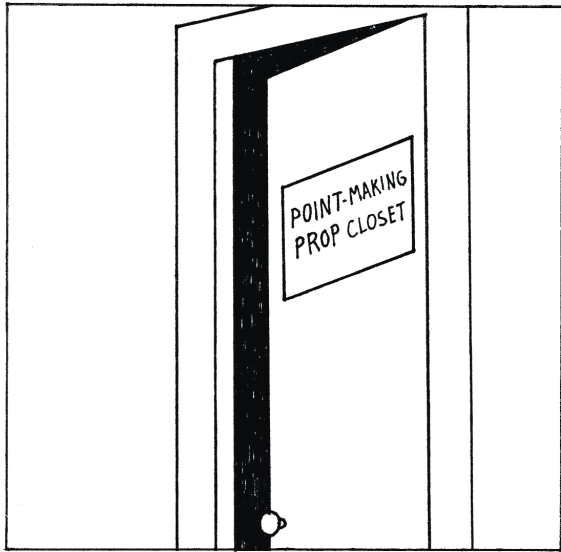
I'm called to my seat on the plane and as tired as I am, I almost hate to say goodbye. I gather all my junk. I say, "Have fun with Max," and that kid is just beaming, dreaming of going home after three months and cuddling up with that Boxer.

Games & Graphics

-- Robert Sergel

(The crossword will return next issue. Don't fret.)

Seymour





Her Stick Figure

-- Peter Wild

1

I don't know what she is using. It's something dark that fills her hand, but goodness knows what it is. It isn't a crayon or a piece of charcoal, that I know. She is intent, though, the child. She is intent on her drawing. She started with the head, but left the face blank while she drew a small rectangular body somewhat smaller than the shape it is pretty clear represents the head. Four lines sprout from the body square, one east, one west and two south. The south lines remain just that: lines, indicating legs but remaining footless. The east and west lines are issued with fingers at least as long as the arm from which they grow.

I look from the child to her mother, kneeling with her back to me within the tent she shares with her husband and her husband's family.

2

The wind picks up and I raise my hand to prevent the dust and sand and grit from blinding me. It is cold and I am still surprised by that. I heard people talking last night about how hard it is to dig graves in the frozen ground. There are many bodies in need of burial. People are dying here from the cold and the lack of food. I am hungry myself but I don't speak of it so much because I know I can leave here if I choose. But I don't choose.

It is cold like Scotland here.

The wind picks up and it is morning. I have much to do today and three pieces to record, but I will wait. There is much to see behind me, but I will not turn.

The child and her drawing fascinate me.

3

She appears to be saving the face for last. Two circles have been added to the top of the stick figure's head to indicate hair. She says something to her mother. She could be asking her mother to look, but her mother doesn't speak. It could be that she doesn't hear. It could be that she doesn't want to speak within my earshot.

I don't know. Not everybody here thinks I am a white devil.

4

I have been here a week, issuing reports from the camps to London three times a day. I attempt to keep my suits clean. I attempt to remain optimistic. I have watched international aid arrive. I have watched soldiers attempt to bury the dead, telling jokes. I have not cried and I have not seen people cry. It is grim reality. The camp is life written small. The camp is life written in a language you do not understand. Each day refugees arrive. Each day the camp expands here and there, new tents. Food is given out from a portable kitchen to the west of the centre. There is no hospital. The camp is a hospital.

It does not end. Each day more people and still more people flood through by the soldiers at the gate. Each day people die. Old people die. I spoke with a young man, one of the aid workers. He plans to write a book, he says, on their last words. I spoke with a monster, a reporter and former weather girl from the States, all hairspray and lip gloss, even here. She cornered me, felt we were similar, wanted to talk about that which we didn't report home. I thought of the aid worker and his book. She told me she had her period. She wanted the people at home to know what she had to go through.

5

The child has paused, as if she is considering whether to leave the face blank. I find myself moved, want to will her to fill the space. Leaving the face blank would be a token admittance. A blank face would stare out at whoever chanced across the picture. I have not been drawn by a child. I have been drawn by a creature that inhabits the body of a child but is not a child.

You can only wonder what she has seen. The woman I presume her mother to be may not be. The woman may be a neighbour. The child may be a stray. There are many strays here. The child may have seen her family die. The child may have seen buildings reduced to powder, people reduced to cartilage and gristle.

The child is not a child like any other and yet here I am, watching her draw a picture on a wall.

6

Behind me, the business of the day begins. I don't turn. I sit. You can hear the sound of the generator, chugging, conjuring images of fan belts and exhaustion. Also the vans, the huge vehicles that bring food under tarpaulin, their engines clumsy with mechanical arrhythmia. The vans come and go all day. The gates opening and closing, admitting vans and people and dust and sand and grit. People shout because people are always shouting. I can hear French and American English. You don't hear the Afghans shout. The Afghans huddle and whisper. The only people who hear them speak are those people being spoken to.

It isn't that I consciously maintain a distance. My job here demands that I attempt to communicate. It is just that I find the attempt to comprehend their experience drains me. I have attempted interviews. We have a translator. Or rather there is a translator, hereabouts. I have spoken through the translator with old men and young men. The women are either not permitted to speak with me or choose not to. The men have fought to stay alive and many of them envision fighting again, although not any time soon. At this moment, the men are tired. I want to say I am tired also. I want to inform them that I am tired and that I want to go home also, but I stop myself. I look at the American monster and I stop myself.

7

Everything is compressed here, and nothing is as it seems. The people are compressed beneath the weight of their history and the pressure of current events. I am compressed and pressurised by the same. Only I am expected to report on what I see and what I hear. I am expected to reduce what I see and hear to no more than thirty seconds worth of words of one syllable. I am helpless and unable. I am appalled by my need for consolation. All I have to do is talk, and yet I want and need these suffering people to understand that I suffer as well. I am grotesque. I think we should point a camera at a wall or a face and run that image for thirty seconds on the news. Stillness would be different. Silence would provoke a response. Look at this face. Examine this partially shelled wall. Think about the buildings that used to stand here. Articulate your own response.

Instead there is too much talk. I over-talk, attempting to graft my limited understanding — the understanding that the people in London feel the audience requires to comprehend the scale of what is going on — and what for? I hear myself echoed uselessly in the words of others. I find that the sounds I use, the tones I choose to adopt to suggest I care, the easy relaxed quality of my onscreen appearance, haunt me. I feel like I am a symptom of something.

8

The child finishes her stick figure. There is a face with eyes and a nose and a mouth. The only immediate distinction that occurs to me, the only thing that sets this particular stick figure aside from other stick figures drawn by five year old girls and boys the world over, is the mouth.

Children draw happy mouths. Children draw sad mouths. This is what they know.

This child draws neither. This child draws a line, a flat black gash, across the space beneath a dominating nose. This stick figure is withholding judgement, yet to decide how all of this will turn out. This stick figure is caught on a wall that may be bombed at some time in the future. I am reminded of the ashy silhouettes left in the rock by the blast of Pompeii. The signs left for the future that exist as the space around those who tell stories.

I want to act and stop myself. The picture should not be reported, should — if faced by reporting — obliterate itself. I know I will do this. I will come back here with a camera. I will be filmed in front of the wall, talking about what I have seen. I will attempt to poke the camera into their tent, attempt to see the child's face. Look at this, world. Understand. I will do all this and I will not want to, but the part of me that wants to stop is a stick figure drawn by a child on a wall.





Jack and Jill Go Down Hill

-- Judd Hampton

Jack sits in his easy chair flipping channels. He hasn't shaved lately. Nor has Jill. She keeps scratching and picking at her stubbly armpits. She enjoys the odor her fingers gather, so she traces her upper lip, while covertly sniffing her fingers.

"Anything decent on?" She stares out the window at the hill she and Jack used to climb. Things haven't been the same since they installed running water.

"Well, no, not really."

"Then why don't we do something else?" She steps onto the porch to check her azaleas. She converted the old water bucket into a planter. Like the face she sees in the mirror, her azaleas look beyond redemption, the soil underneath dried-up and cracked. "Oh, dear," she says.

She walks back inside. "Well, maybe we could see a play or something."

"You mean theatre?" Jack has the voice of an old woman. Jill pictures him wearing a cotton nightdress, curlers, brandishing a king-size cigarette. "You're such a chick, you know that, Jill?"

She sighs, collapses in a hardwood chair. "How about a walk then?" She surveys the kitchen. Dirty dishes stacked across the counter spill into the sink and onto the floor. Pieces of a shattered drinking glass catch the morning light, the sparkles reminding her of better times. "Well? What do you think?"

"There's a documentary about embalming coming up."

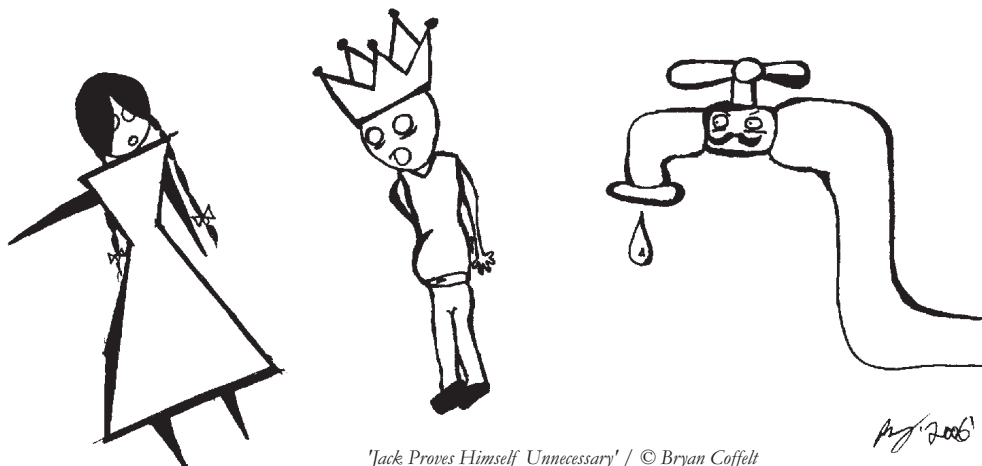
"So that's a no?"

"Yeah, no. Sorry."

She walks into the hallway. Their dirty clothes mark a path from the bedroom to the washing machine. She picks up balled socks and underwear, muddy jeans and sweat-stained shirts. The house is beginning to stink. It smells like the dead. She reaches the washer, but the effort required to turn the knob seems insurmountable. She gives up.

She shuffles back to the living room, collapses beside Jack, on the arm of his easy chair. "Have you noticed how much harder fetching water seems now that it comes right from a faucet?"

Jack turns to her. Dark rings circle his eyes. This is the first time she has looked at his face in weeks. "Yeah, it's the conundrum of our time, baby."



'Jack Proves Himself Unnecessary' / © Bryan Coffelt



Siamese Twins

-- Timber Masterson

While rifling through my mother's drawers the other day, I came across a tremendously disturbing photo.

I was "attached," I guess the word would be, to a Chinese gentlemen, a fellow about the same height, same weight, but, nonetheless, attached.

In this black and white, somewhat damaged picture, just to the side of my stomach, the midriff, (mid-drift?) my better (worse?) half was enjoying a conversation, glass in hand at some mixer, a scholarly gathering it looked like, maybe I'm reading too much into it, but he was seemed pretty darn unaware of my needs, of just how uncomfortable I was, concerned only with forwarding his educational career. I also appeared to be wearing a mammoth sombrero, which, to my knowledge, I've never worn. But, pictures don't lie. I guess.

I couldn't have been more than say, 9 or 10.

When confronted with this, my mother wrote it off, saying it was one of those silly pictures taken at a theme park, on one of our summer vacations, the kind you pay a couple quarters for, where two people get behind this big cardboard cut out and put their heads in these holes, and on the front, the photographer takes a picture, and makes you appear to be married or astronauts or cowboys on horses or whatever the harmless prank is that one has so chosen.

Long story short, I did not believe my mother, the lying shyster.

Just what had happened?

Why would she cover something like this up?

What else had she lied about?

She was so clearly busted. She knew I knew.

"How much have you had to drink now, Timothy?"

Changing the subject to my addictions wasn't going to get her out of this one.

A few beads of sweat jumped off her forehead and onto her sweater.

My query opened up a complex defensiveness that I couldn't even begin to chart out here.

While I let my mind drift away and imagine what life would have been like with Sing Lee Ching Woo (I gave him this name), mother came up with multiple excuses I chose to ignore. How funny my cut-away brother and I would have looked at company picnics taking part in The Potato Sack Races.

Why had this gigantic part of my childhood been omitted?

It's a long shot, I know, but might you know someone who deals in digital Family Trees, or even better, a doctor friend whose specialty is twins and the separating of such a pair. Do you happen to know if a procedure of such magnitude is at all even possible? Might you have access to some kind of magical "truth serum-like elixir" to get the truth out of mom?

I thought I'd ask you: you're pretty smart, globally aware, and if anyone were to know how to hunt down the answer to this false identity deal that's just sprung up in my life, I thought it might be someone like yourself.

There's no further evidence, besides a mysterious scar going up the side of my body that I've had since...well, as a matter of fact, it's always been there. I have always felt weirdly lopsided, emotionally and otherwise.

If I really did have a Siamese guy attached to me, maybe I should thank my mom for making such a decision. I mean, going through life that way wouldn't have helped in "first meet" situations, especially whilst meeting the fairer sex on, let's say, a blind date.

My "brother," from the not-so-hot picture I had to go on, looked as though he had another chap's ass stapled to his face, and a haircut from a mental patient, which couldn't have helped his self esteem, I can only imagine, not to mention my own alarming curvature of a distorted perplexive sense of self.

Maybe this is the answer to just why I've felt deeply deranged and incomplete for what'll be, oh, about 30 years now.

Is one of the reasons in life why I've felt so alone, isolated, consistently feeling as if I was missing something (I had no idea it was in the form of a human counterpart growing off the side of me, but the lord works, plays and does wildly nutty medical stuff, in mysterious, creepy ways.)

I so look forward to your advice.

Siamese Twins
-- Timber Masterson



My First Day in Fun City

-- Richard Grayson



After the bus arrived at the Port Authority I started walking.

I walked to the East Side and went into Bloomingdale's. I was trying on cotton shirts in front of the mirror in their Young Men's Shop and trying to see what I would look like in them when I felt him touch my shoulder.

"You shouldn't wear cotton shirts," he said.

I could see him in the mirror. He was just about an inch or two taller than me.

"You should really wear knit shirts. Have you ever tried on a Huk-a-poo?"

He brought one over, laid it out over my chest and stomach. "This should be your size. You're a small, all right. Try this on."

I went into the dressing room, took off the cotton shirt, put on the knit shirt. It was clingy and it had women's faces as the design on it.

He was waiting for me in front of the mirror. His own shirt was pulled up. He was examining his stomach.

"That looks great on you," he told me. "But you shouldn't button those top two buttons. It looks sort of stretched-out over there." He unbuttoned the buttons. "There! That looks nice. I wish I could wear these kind of things, but my belly sticks out. I'm doing a lot of sit-ups now, thirty every night just before I go to bed, but they just make you firm, they don't really take off the pounds."

I looked at us both in the mirror. A floorwalker was staring at us. I guess he thought we were brothers.

"I've been skipping rope also," he told me. He was scratching his elbow. "Muhammad Ali does a lot of that. In fact, I think he endorsed the rope that I have at home. It's called the Rope-a-Dope after him."

He and I went into the dressing room and I put back on my own shirt. It had a small mustard stain on it, from the frankfurter I got at the Port Authority. He didn't watch me as I changed. He turned away but he kept talking.

"Do you like yogurt?" he asked me.

I shrugged. "Never tried it."

"No? Come on and we'll get some frozen yogurt. I'm supposed to be eating yogurt anyway because I'm taking tetracycline for my acne. The tetracycline takes away bacteria and if you don't want diarrhea you should eat a lot of yogurt."

He paid for my shirt. The cashier smiled at us when she gave me the package.

"Of course frozen yogurt really doesn't have that much bacteria," he said as we walked out of the store. "I think it gets killed off when they freeze it. But you'll probably like it better than non-frozen yogurt. I think you should get banana the first time. It isn't so sour."

¶

I really didn't think much of the yogurt. The banana tasted pretty sour to me. It reminded me of when I was a little kid and my parents took me to a rum distillery in Puerto Rico and there were these big vats of fermenting rum. That smelled sour, too. I didn't get sick then — in fact I even drank a rum coke they gave us for free — but in the fall, when I had a stomach virus up at school, I couldn't get that sour smell of fermenting rum out of my mind. So I didn't eat much of my yogurt.

He was disappointed.

"You can't just not eat anything," he said, annoyed. "No wonder you're so skinny. Frozen yogurt's got less calories than ice cream, though." He ate my yogurt, too.

Then we went to the parking lot to get his car. "It's a Chevette," he said. "See, it's good on mileage and it's just small enough so I don't have to be bothered chauffeuring all my friends around. I have a lot of friends and hardly any of them have cars. They depend upon me a lot, but I'm trying to stop them from taking advantage of me." I frowned. He put his hand on my shoulder again.

"Hey, I didn't mean you," he said. "I'll take you anywhere you want to go. Except the Bronx. I don't know my way around there too well."

Some man screeched up with the Chevette and we got in it.

“My name’s Eric,” he told me as we drove off. “Eric St. James Cornell.”

“I’m Ricky,” I told him. On Lexington Avenue he went through a red light.

¶

It was more or less decided that I was going to stay with him. He had a circular apartment. Every room was connected to every other room.

The first thing he said to me when we got there was: “Listen, if the phone rings, I want you to answer it and say I’m not home. I can’t be bothered with any of my friends tonight. I’m tired and I want to cook us a nice dinner. Do you like stuff cooked in a wok?”

I said I wasn’t sure.

“Don’t worry, you’ll like it,” he said, smiling. “It’s chicken, but Vietnamese style. There’s pineapple in it, and coconuts. You’re not allergic to any of that stuff, are you?”

“No,” I said, and then I cleared my throat.

I sat on the bed, which was round, too. I could hear his voice from the kitchen. He was cooking things already.

“I bet you’ve been living on junk food,” his voice said. “I bet you eat all that stuff with empty carbohydrates and additives in it. Like Pringles Potato Chips.” He stuck his head in the bedroom. “You know they’ve got all these chemicals in it, don’t you?”

“I like Wise better anyway.”

He winked at me. Or maybe it was a twitch — I hadn’t known him long enough to be sure.

“Wise isn’t so good for you, either. You should try the sesame sticks I buy in the health food store. I’d let you have some now except I had a big party the other night and everyone ate them. I’ll get some more tomorrow.” He was back in the kitchen.

I started to open his desk drawer, wondering if he could hear the noise. Then I heard him tell me to put on my new shirt for dinner.

His table was low so we had to sit on the floor like Japanese. The Vietnamese chicken was pretty good. I didn’t eat the mushrooms.

“...So then this girl said, ‘I’ve only had three major beaus.’ And I said to her, ‘That puts you two up on *The Amateur Hour*, except they had Ted Mack, too.’”

He laughed so much he started coughing. I laughed too, a little.

The phone rang. He sort of jumped up. “You answer it,” he ordered me. “Tell them I’m not home but be sure to find out who it is.”

It turned out to be a wrong number. They wanted a lady named Diane.

Eric didn’t talk much for a while. We had fresh pineapple slices for dessert. I figured he really must have liked pineapple a lot to have it twice in one meal.

Suddenly he jumped up again. “My meeting!” he said. “I forgot. I have to go to this important block association meeting. I’m the head of the tree parent committee and I’ve got to bring the chart I made of all the trees on the block so that people can sign their names by the tree they’re going to be tree parents of.”

He rushed to the bedroom and got his chart. I could tell he had spent a long time on it. It was on oaktag, and he’d drawn the chart with different colored magic markers. “Will you clean up?” he said as he hurried out.

“Sure,” I said. But he had already slammed the door.

¶

I was nervous because it was three o’clock in the morning and he hadn’t come back. I couldn’t imagine a block association meeting taking that long. Nobody could argue for that many hours about what trees they were going to take care of. I started wondering if Eric got mugged or murdered or had an accident or something. I thought of calling the police but they would have asked me what I was doing in his apartment.

By four o’clock I was scared out of my wits. I began to think about the time they called me into the headmaster’s office up at school and told me what happened to my parents, and I hate thinking of that. The only pills in his medicine cabinet were tetracycline and Tylenol and I had

already taken four Tylenols and they hadn't helped.

I found the number of an all-night drugstore who delivered in the phone book and I called them up.

"Can you deliver to my apartment right away?" I asked the druggist. I gave him the address and then said, "The name's Cornell."

"Certainly," the druggist said. "I'll send our boy out right away. What is it you want?"

I thought for a moment. "Compôz," I told him. I figured that would help me sleep.

"Well, you sound pretty composed right now, Mrs. Cornell," the druggist said. He thought I was a woman. I guess I have a pretty high voice. I guess I sounded calm too, even though I was anything but.

I laughed a little, trying to keep sounding like a lady. "Yes," I said to the druggist. "But a little more composure couldn't hurt."

..h

I waited and waited but nobody came. I closed my eyes for just a minute and before I knew it, I was having this really bad dream. It was about my parents and the accident and Eric came in at the end without a head and said how he needed my head to replace his, which had been cut off. I woke up sweating bullets.

The digital clock was it was after six a.m. I had no idea what to do. I put on the TV and watched a test pattern. It made me feel less alone.

At seven o'clock *The Today Show* came on. They were just about to have Floyd Kalber give the news when I heard the door open.

"Eric?" I shouted out.

"No, drugstore," a voice said. At first I thought it was Eric joking, because it sounded a lot like him, but then I realized he wouldn't have known about the drugstore.

The boy came into the bedroom. He was wearing a Huk-a-poo shirt similar to the one I'd bought, only his designs were of dancers. "You wanted Compôz?" he said.

I stood up and went over to take the package from him. He was just an inch or two shorter than me.

"How come you took so long?" I asked him. I opened the bottle and swallowed two tablets without water although it was probably too late. On TV Lew Wood was giving the weather.

He shrugged his shoulders. I figured he was waiting for a tip. All night I had gone through all of the drawers and couldn't find any of Eric's money. I didn't know what to do. The kid looked tired. He was Italian or Puerto Rican.

"Hey," I said, embarrassed. "I don't have money for a tip and I don't even have money to pay for the Compôz." I thought he might get really mad, but he didn't.

"That's okay, man," he said.

"Maybe I could make you breakfast or something," I said to him. "I'm not sure of where things are in the kitchen, but maybe I could find a skillet and make us French toast."

He smiled. "That's cool, man. I dig French toast."

"Yeah," I told him. We went into the kitchen. "Of course you have to be careful not to get too many eggs, for when you get older," I said. "Cholesterol."

He sat down on the floor by the table, unbuttoned another button on his shirt.

"My name's Rico," he said.

I found the skillet in a cabinet below the stove. "I'm Ricky," I told him. I was going to mention something about Eric, but I decided to just make his French toast.

He'd find out soon enough.



Dusters

-- Liesl Jobson



Jack owned a magic yellow freedom suit that gave him psychic powers. His mother snorted, saying they were just pyjamas. One morning he twirled his Weetabix around his plate until it disintegrated. While slurping the soggy mush, he made a grey parrot with red tail feathers out of plasticine. When he came home from nursery a neighbour's African Grey — which had escaped from its cage — was perched on his bedroom windowsill waiting to be let in.

Another morning at breakfast, he crafted a bus from the red modelling clay. Parp, parp! His bus hooted as it chugged around a milky puddle that had slopped out the bowl. Parp, parp! It ground to a halt in the traffic at the edge of the breakfast table. With a paring knife he sheared off the front of the bus at a peculiar angle, sliced its roof open at the midline, and flicked away a wheel. He rolled slivers of black plasticine into a disembodied foot, an arm, a headless torso.

When the floor jolted and the windows shook and a smell of burning filled the air, Jack smirked as if to say to his mother, pyjamas or magic yellow freedom suit?

Six months afterwards he moulded a bottle-nosed whale the colour of dark minerals. When his mother turned the telly on, the news anchor announced the rescue effort underway in the Thames. When his mother turned the telly off, she said it was time to buy new pyjamas.

The next day Jack made two plasticine people: the plasticine boy wore yellow pyjamas and an expression of sorrowful knowing. The plasticine mother's hair hung straight and brown down her back. Her dress, the colour of oatmeal, revealed a pregnant bump. While Jack was at nursery, his mother used a home test kit, then took out her scissors and snipped the magic yellow freedom suit into dusters.



Half-Staff

-- Merita Stewart

In the airplane, looking
down through a hole in the clouds

I thought of The Tailor in Heaven
throwing God's footstool

down at the miscreants.
I think of that again.

The old man, hunched over the steering wheel
in his cap with an extra-long bill

slows his pickup, turns his head sideways
to spit out the window.

Something cried in the night and was eaten.
Even the dogs refused to bark.

Wet footprints from the shower through the bedroom,
plateful of coins rattling down the stairs,

rifle shots all day, reports of acorns,
a robin's attempt at song, broken off by protestations.

My mouth committed sabotage against my body—
I ate till I was full, then ate again.

In the whole country
there cannot be any cheering.



'Cashier' / © Tamas Dezso (www.tamasdezso.com)

Invasion II

-- Andrew Oldham



(Amsterdam)

Hunters come in the middle of the night,
 Take bunnies from their homes; force them
 Into streets, down back alleys and gutters
 Go bunnies, huddled together; they go
 Pushed and pounded by the hunters
 Into the center of the plaza, beneath the monument
 Boxed in from all sides by the hunters' guns
 First there is silence, then sound, then light,
 And all the bunnies rush up to the yellow stars
 Then float back down to the cobbles, like snow, like ash



First Indications (of Trouble at the Ranch)

-- Christopher Citro



The tree we planted
tore itself to pieces last night.

The tips of branches,
bunched like hands, reached
and tore off all its leaves.

They piled in a yellow ring.

Thicker branches collided
snapping off the green tips.

Elastic, they flew far.

The main limbs strained,
split and fell straight down,
tired as they must have been.

The trunk barber poled.

Bark sloughed away revealing
woodgrain like strained muscles.

Falling forward, then
back, it finally
snapped at the base.

It fell flat on its face.

With no arms to break its fall,
it looked like a cowboy at high noon.
Dead before he hits the ground.



You Make Think Me Strange

-- S. Thomas Summers

but today,
while clipping

the azaleas, I heard
the aged birch

that arches
like an old man over

a checker board, whisper
you've forgotten me.



'Elegie in Bardu' / © Arnt Sneve (www.fotokunst.as)



Conventional

-- Letitia Trent

It's what everybody wants—
 it shouldn't shame. The lights
 along the sill. Somebody's
 children playing in ways
 we imagine children play
 long after we've been children—
 really ripping bugs'
 wings, smashing bottles
 against the pavement, playing
 doctor with the neighbor's
 daughter, her bangs greasy commas
 across her forehead.
 The icicle lights are beacons
 for parkers waiting on
 slow lovers, cars shurring
 through the sludge, people
 smoking outside of smokeless
 houses. It's for them that I
 assume the usual symptoms.
 Even the square puddle
 of sun is cold this morning.
 We gather quilts on our shoulders,
 obligingly bring our cocoa
 and still didn't know what to do
 with each other. On television
 the child says *God Bless us,*
every one and I
 know better than—but
 I sputter like that car
 spitting sparks in the alley.



'Santa in Window' / © Daniel Chase Peach

Sun So Slow

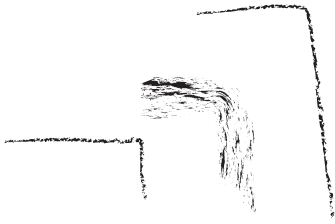
-- Richard Newman



At age thirteen we'd always meet
at the new construction down the street,
an open cage of two-by-fours
where Saturdays we'd sit for hours.
Sawdust gathered on our clothes.
My hand would take two summer months
to inch across the plywood towards hers,
the sun so slow it straggled in reverse.

I haven't thought of her in years
or that Cardinals pitcher I hear
a dozen years ago she married.
My Saturday trysts now seem hurried,
all zipper-rip and fumble-button,
the details blurred or soon forgotten—
except on the dusty windowsill a purse,
the sun so slow it straggles in reverse.





Portland

-- Raud Kennedy

A man in a printed flower dress,
 a winter coat with a faux fur hood,
 pushes a Safeway shopping cart
 through the rain down Broadway.
 Another man, sideburns to his jaw,
 a navy suit jacket over dungarees,
 reads the ads for teeth whitener
 in a Fred Meyer's newspaper insert
 like they were stock quotes.
 He moves around the intersection,
 a minute hand going corner to corner,
 acting out this same tableau.
 A bearded lady in running shoes
 passes with her dachshunds.
 Lyndon Johnson, black as a mortician.
 A homeless man as a gnome.
 No, it is a gnome. Homeless.



'Gnome' / © David Petersen (www.davidpetersen.net)

walking home in cold weather

-- Tao Lin



i give money to a homeless man
 there is another homeless man
 i give him money
 there are two homeless people and i give them money
 the street has snow
 i cannot play; or build an igloo
 there are enough homeless men to have a snowfight
 i am not charismatic enough to organize a snowfight
 it is january
 it is raining not snowing
 i am not a little boy afraid of sharks when gurgling salt water
 i am detached from whatever i am about to think
 inside my room i walk to my bed
 i should have cartwheeled to it
 i dream that people who get speeding tickets are irresponsible
 i am detaching the cop's arm from his body
 he was punching me in the face
 i will kill anyone who hurts my emotions
 'i will kill you!' i scream at a scared little boy
 i will monitor his email for the rest of his life

Non-Photography -- Nitsa



- * **Photography location:** the big cities of America
- * **Photography style:** <http://www.nonphotography.com/> non-photography (no rules. street photography)
- * **Photography education:** none
- * **Influences:** none
- * **Began to photograph:** 2000
- * **Why:** To break the superficial myth of Los Angeles
- * **Objective:** searching for the real America
- * **Future goal:** photographing and documenting life in every major city in the US.
- * **Camera:** whatever
- * **Recommended photography books:** none

"A refreshing break for professional photographers."

"Nitsa is a photographic interpreter of people in the urban scene."



Wrote 5 books, had 2 failed shows in obscure coffee shops, one picture stolen off the wall, wrote several articles about street photography

Favorite camera: Holga (Plastic toy camera), currently working on a book entitled: NO rules!

Achievements: Originator of the theory of Non-photography

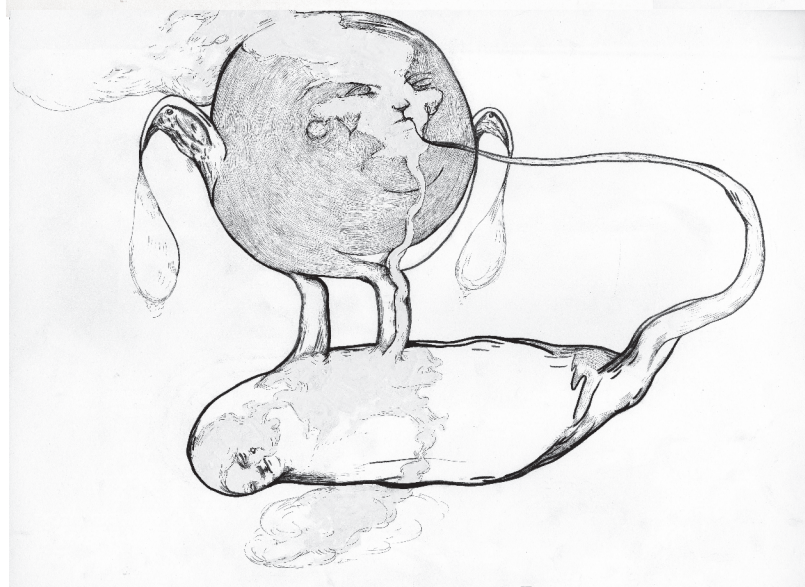
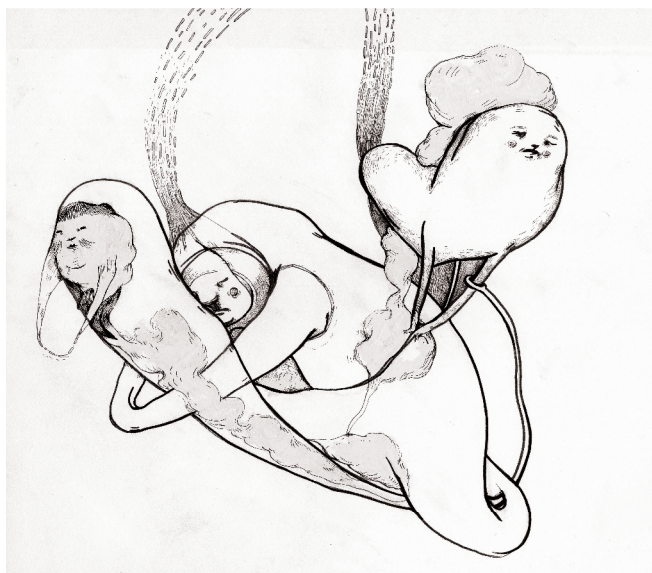
<http://www.nonphotography.com/whatis.html>

(March 2000, the launch of the non-photography site)



Flying Series

-- Kit Malo

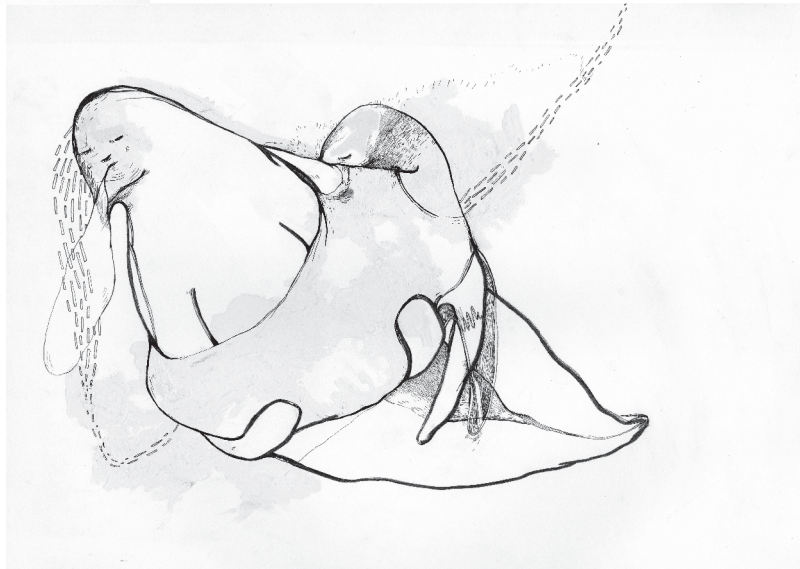


The little beasts I create attempt to highlight the need within us all to whisper the evidence of things unseen. This means a dialogue between the ears, hands and feet-that-move-about in order to accomplish said hushings. Art is the form in which I ply together my part of this communal effort, with the hope that tacking it up somewhere near your head will get us talking about the reasons why the in-between exists.

I am not that interested in how "new" it all is or could be, but in how commodifiable and commodifying people decide to interact with and live around visual culture. My work echoes the need for renewed sensual control of our environment.

As I consider other human beings to be essential components of my pieces, an emphasis on human interactions that inform and help create my work is becoming more and more important. This sense of connectedness through various means gives a chance for those encountering visuals to sense the direct link they have with the drawings.

Ultimately, I feel a closeness to and responsibility for the beasts I encourage from bits of paper and pencil, stain and ink. This flying series is about beginnings and Spring, a sense of being able to wake up in the morning, open the window, and take a morning flight. A new year welcome of a wind that blows cool, with a reminder somehow of the things carried on our backs and hearts until now.





Contributor Notes

Christopher Citro lives in Lawrence, Kansas. A chapbook of his poetry, *ORBITING THE SUNDRESS: Prospero's Pocket Poets Volume 2, Issue 6*, was published in 2004 by Unholy Day Press in Kansas City. His poems have appeared or will appear in *Burnside Review*, *Spout Magazine*, *Coal City Review*, *I-70 Review*, *Poetry Motel*, *Illya's Honey*, *Redactions: Poetry and Poetics*, *Whistling Shade*, and online at *My Favorite Bullet*, *LauraHird.com*, *Zygote In My Coffee* and *Mind0.com*.

Bryan Coffelt does not perpetuate sadness. His poetry has or will appear in *NOÖ Journal*, *Snow Monkey* and *Opium Magazine*.

Tamas Dezso's work can be found at <http://www.tamasdezso.com/>.

Alex Francis enjoys coca-cola and marlboros. His cat has a microchip.

Richard Grayson is a retired college professor and lawyer who lives in Phoenix and Brooklyn. His books of short stories include *With Hitler in New York*, *I Survived Caracas Traffic*, *The Silicon Valley Diet* and the forthcoming *And to Think That He Kissed Him on Lorimer Street*.

Judd Hampton lives in rural northern Alberta Canada with his wife, two children, two dogs, two cats and two trucks. He works in the oilfield pushing natural gas toward your furnace. His work has appeared in *Night Train*, *Ink Pot*, *NFG Magazine*, *Danforth Review*, *Vestal Review*, *Paumanok Review*, *Eyeshot*, *Spiked Magazine*, *Circle Magazine*, *Flashquake* and *FRiGG* among others. His stories have been nominated for the Journey Prize, a National Magazine Award, Best American Short Stories and twice for the Pushcart Prize.

Liesl Jobson is a South African writer and musician. She won the POWA Women's Writing Poetry Prize 2005 and was shortlisted for the HSBC/SA PEN Award. She was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2005 and her first volume of poetry is due to be published by Timbila Poetry Project this year. Her recent work appears/is forthcoming in *Ghoti*, *elima*, *InkPot*, *Bonfire* and *Unlikey Stories*.

Raud Kennedy works as a dog trainer and is currently in search of the perfect shade of brown through the manipulation of the canine diet. His work has appeared in *Shampoo*, *Muscadine Lines*, *The New Yinzer* and elsewhere.

Tao Lin is the author of *This Emotion was a Little E-book* (March 2006, Bear Parade), *Today The Sky is Blue and White with Bright Blue Spots and a Small Pale Moon and I Will Destroy Our Relationship Today* (Summer 2006, Future Tense), *You Are a Little Bit Happier than I Am* (October 2006, Action Books), and *Bed* (Spring 2007, Melville House Publishing). He blogs at <http://reader-of-depressing-books.blogspot.com>.

Kit Malo has been involved in numerous solo and group shows in Canada and abroad, and is gaining attention within the local arts and culture scene primarily as an illustrator. Some serious dabbling in classical film animation and puppetry is leaving Kit feeling excitable but tired as of late, so don't be surprised if beasts from here on in are drawn with pillows in hand and yawns on mouth.

Timber Masterson walks well on the leash but needs some further training to stop him from pulling. While completing his first book, the mammoth personal saga, *TimFoolery: Tales of a Third Rate Junkie*, he contributed to *Über*, *Fresh Yarn Salon*, *Yankee Pot Roast*, *Somewhat.org*, *Girls With Insurance*, *Wandering Army*, *Ghoti*, *Purple Prose*, *3AM Magazine*, *Opium*, *Unpleasantville*, *Numb Magazine*, *Unlikey 2.0* and *The Beat*. His latest work is in *So New Media*.

Darlin' Neal's latest work has appeared in *Night Train*, *The Arkansas Review*, *The Southern Review*, *Shenandoah*, *Puerto del Sol*, *The Ginkgo Tree Review*, *The Oklahoma Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Thought Magazine*, and other magazines. New work appears in *The Arkansas Review* and *Vox*. Her novel, *Blessed Are*, was a semifinalist in The Great American Novel Contest sponsored by Meridian and Tupelo Press.

Richard Newman is the author of the poetry collection *Borrowed Towns* (Word Press, 2005). His poems, stories, and essays have most recently appeared or are forthcoming in Ted Kooser's "American Life in Poetry," *Best American Poetry 2006*, *Boulevard*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Poetry Daily*, *Story-Quarterly*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *The Sun*, among many others.

Nitsa is not a photographer, nor striving to become one.

Andrew Oldham is the recent winner of the North West Vision New Writers Award 2005 (placing him in the top 8 new screenwriters in the NW of England). His work has appeared in the critically acclaimed *Next Stop Hope* (Route) and *The Interpreter's House*, *Gargoyle 47*, *Aesthetica* and *Poetry Salzburg*. He is an editor for Incorporating Writing (www.incwriters.com) and teaches short story writing at Edgehill University, UK.

Daniel Chase Peach is twenty years old. When he was younger his favorite basketball players included but were not limited to: Shawn Kemp, Anfernee Hardaway, and Kevin Garnett. Now that he is grown, he takes pictures and plays drums in a band called Miss Umbrella. Put on your dancing shoes and listen to them at: <http://www.myspace.com/missumbrella>.

Eugene Scherba calls himself a professional anarchist and enjoys bowling, vodka, photography, film, art and anti-art, coming up with crazy projects, and writing. He is a student of biochemistry and molecular biology at Boston University in the U.S.

Robert Sergel lives in Cambridge, MA and tries his best to draw a comic every week. When he is not at his desk, he may be found watching movies, searching flea markets for old photographs, or playing with his band. His comics can be read at: <http://idiotcomics.com>.

Arnt Sneve has had many exhibitions and work as an artist and press photographer in Oslo. His new book of 72 black and white photographs was released by Lofoten.

Merita Stewart lives in Dunsmuir, CA. She has been participating in workshops and classes at College of the Siskiyous and around town, and keeping a journal for close to 15 years. She's been published in the *Siskiyon Eagle* and *Bellowing Ark*.

S. Thomas Summers's work has appeared in the *The Melic Review*, *The Poet's Canvas*, *2River View*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *MiPo*, among other print and electronic journals.

Letitia Trent lives in Columbus, Ohio and attends graduate school at the Ohio State University. She is a former assistant editor of *Stirring* magazine and her work has appeared in the *DMQ Review*.

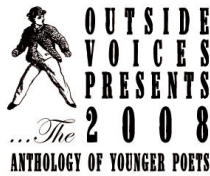
Dennis Vanvick is a Wisconsin-based free-lance writer and consultant specializing as a liaison between information-technology departments and their clients.

Peter Wild writes for magazines and websites in the UK. He is the editor of two books of short stories (featuring contributions from new and established writers) that will be published by Serpent's Tail in the UK. He also runs the website <http://www.bookmunch.co.uk>.

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FREE. SPILL IT INTO COFFEE AND ZANY EYES.



Excerpts

-- Thanks in part to our last, particularly acrimonious, presidential campaign, we are left with a political climate where liberals and conservatives can agree on only one thing — we cannot agree on any one thing.

Are You a Reasonable Member of the Electorate? *Dennis Vanvick, page 4*

-- The lack of alternatives to compete with oil has also contributed to our hyper-dependency on this non-renewable resource, which because of the real and potential impacts to our economy and foreign relations, is the single greatest threat to national security we face.

Kicking the Habit, *Kyle Peterson, page 6*

-- I thought of Arlington cemetery which was the wrong place. I wanted to pray him to an old, old age.

Leaving Austin, *Darlin' Neal, page 10*

-- I have watched soldiers attempt to bury the dead, telling jokes. I have not cried and I have not seen people cry.

Her Stick Figure, *Peter Wild, page 12*

-- I was "attached," I guess the word would be, to a Chinese gentlemen...

Siamese Twins, *Timber Masterson, page 15*

-- I thought of The Tailor in Heaven / throwing God's footstool / down at the miscreants. / I think of that again.

Half-Staff, *Merita Stewart, page 20*

-- i give money to a homeless man / there is another homeless man / i give him money / there are two homeless people and i give them money / the street has snow

walking home in cold weather, *Tao Lin, page 27*