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Masthead

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No issues were published between 1997 and 2001.

we drown in seas of ink and coffee stains

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The Year of the Cat

1.

The hours unroll slowly like a cat's tongue, as a lacquered morning shellacs the sky in shades of gardenia and lilac, the white shoulders of the clouds gessoed with ashen strokes. Trees torch the horizon, highlighting autumn's scorched palette: cadmium orange, lemon, scarlet, and alizarin crimson. Even without the huff of a breeze, brittle leaves flutter to the ground like crumpled tissues, one by one. Monday, the third week of November, four days until Thanksgiving, and I am awakened by a stuttered whimper. Rushing to the window, I expect to find a kitten, but only see a crow coughing as it pecks fescue and clover, a dry strand prickling the dark canoe of its throat. Still hacking, it waddles across the yard to a puddle of rainwater to wash the culprit away. Meanwhile, a stray cat rests on the porch, stretching the licorice river of her body in the sun, weary from nursing a new litter, as wisteria vines and firs strum their birded lullabies.

2.

O, how I regret each
scissored word loosed
from my mouth in the past,
those fiery consonants and
vowels snipping my world
to shreds. Now, a student
eager to unlearn, I court the
soothing order of simplicity.
Every day I stop and listen
to the fluted language of
grass. Every day I study
the silent glance of the cat.

3.

Late November, and lady-
bugs hatch in the eves of
the house, flinging their
dappled umbrellas through
windows and doors.

My youngest cat coils
on the edge of the bed,
smoldering like an ebony
candle, his eyes burning
wicks, two caramel flames
licking the air. Each day
presents a basic path to
happiness: the sun floating
its crimson feathers upon
the sapphire sea of the sky,
a stray kitten prancing in
crabgrass, a bluebird or
lizard or dragonfly, the
pine trees standing quietly
in their needled robes.

To require more than this
would surely pierce the soul
with a seeping sadness.

I'd rather greet the wood
thrush weaving the fabric
of morning in sequined notes,
its winged chant a heavenly
decree encouraging me to
dream of weightless flight,
to sing, to sing, to sing.

4.

The florescent light in the kitchen ticks like a water drip, while the syrup of a strawberry candle glazes the stove. My adventurous cat lunges over the sofa as if she were a clumsy puppy, knocking the kitty-condo to the floor and crashing in a heap, the other cats scampering up the stairs in terror, their tails swollen like marigolds.

Stamps

5.

Hello, hello to the linen
spirit blowing within
me, shimmering like
the shivered petal of
a daffodil or a kitten's
pearled whisker.

6.

On Saturday morning a deer
glides through the forest
in silhouette, as soundless
and transparent as the
glimmer of a ghost,
slipping among fern and
moss at eleven o'clock.
Two days before Christmas,
and cerulean marbles of
moisture tumble from this
lavender sky, s open palm,
as balmy rain rumbles
up from the Gulf to warm
the trees, frigid veins.
A woodpecker clings to
the vinyl siding outside my
window with the slim twigs
of his toes. Five rounds
from his armored beak
vibrate the blinds like a
jackhammer, until I grab
a bottle of sweet pea
lotion and tap the wall
to withdraw my consent.

7.

For those who resist the soft
fur of my heart. For those
who wrap their insecurities
around me like a mold-spackled
coat, unable to see my soul.
For those, I offer the peace
of this December sky at day-
break, its wild raspberry lake
spilling across the tree-line,
seeding pebbles of tangerine
along the street. Has anything
ever blossomed so beautifully?

8.

Christmas Eve, and looking
out my office window on the
second floor, I face a stray
cat clinging to the leafless
branches of a maple. I wave,
applauding her desire to rise
above the mired grasp
of the grass. Even though
she'll deliver her first litter
in a week or so, she slides
down the tree with the skill
of a squirrel. And when her
plump belly grazes the ground,
she waddles into the forest,
confident impending mother-
hood will never diminish the
thrill she receives from riding
the bristled wings of the trees.

9.

First day of January, and
four leaves trim a barren
maple like glossy red
ribbons, while I surround
the feet of a playful angel
with gravel, grateful she
leapt into my cart at the
home center, another
marble celestial to flutter
among daisies and
geraniums in the spring,
when my garden bustles
with butterflies, the patter
of stone cats, and Saint
Francis dressed in plaster,
prayerfully blessed.

10.

The frisky purr of a New Year
tickles my ear, its days and
weeks prone to skitter like
a lizard to a sun-freckled ledge.
This year the only resolutions
I pledge will be those that
slow the hours to a drip, so
I might sip each moment fully.
Every day I promise to linger
in the leafy pavilions of earth
and sky. Every day I vow to
pounce on fragments of time,
as if I were a cat with a piece
of twine caught between its
paws. *Hold on, hold on.*

Jar Full of Caterpillars

Cathy says that Jennifer Woodside has been pantsed. Jennifer has been missing from the fourth grade all week. Maybe she's only gone to the mall for a three-pack of pastel cotton underwear. But "pantsed" has an ominous ring, like "slapped" or "sprayed". Something's been done to Jennifer Woodside. We pluck huge furry caterpillars off the hydrangeas that grow along the back fence. Ken Criolo and Jim Murry pulled off her pants down in the creek. Only her pants? I wonder, as if anything could be worse. Cathy holds up her jar; clear ochre stains the glass. In less than an hour we'll have writhing worlds. I hope she'll agree to let them out in the alley behind the house. They'll either be set free or kept with a few token leaves and twigs, forgotten until days later when we stumble upon the few listless survivors. Mine is only half full but I'm done. I see Jennifer squeeze her skinny thighs while Jim prods with a slender twig. She plays dead with clenched eyes waiting for it to be over. I dump my caterpillars onto the dirt and they stay in a soft-sided mound for a few seconds before they realize they're free to crawl back to the leaves.

Rescue Attempt

I am the only leaf left
dangling
from the last tree in Sodom,
with decaying limbs; outstretched
like one crucified in a burning land.

You come with razor and twine:
to set me free, you say, binding me
to your pickled roots, where I'll spend years
digesting splinters.

Blue Apples

When we moved in together, I turned into a blue tree and started growing. My toes became roots that grew deep into the ground. You tried to chop me down, but it was impossible. Before long, my branches extended through all the windows and my fruit and leaves littered the floor a foot deep. You adjusted to harvesting me, blue apple by apple, selling my unusual produce at market. In very little time, you were an acclaimed apple merchant. Your apples were said to be the best anyone had ever tasted. Your fame spread and you began to fashion apple pendants from silver that you sold alongside my fresh fruit. Then an ill wind blew in and invaded my branches. My leaves turned to a dull silver and fell off. You closed up your shop, left the village and became a traveling jeweler. Your pendants, like your apples, were renowned and you grew wealthy from selling them, only the rest of your life you were haunted by the remembered taste of blue apples.

Don Kingfisher Campbell

Paradise

It happened.
Like an apple
that grew from
an unexpected tree.

It was rosy
and very healthy
for a full summer
with lots of juice.

Then the fall.
Branches torn
by unstoppable wind
to leave a memory.

And the pome
still hangs
in another universe,
once without gifts.

C.D. Shirley

Pomegranate

Japanese beetles fill
the air with
threat. Their

split shells glint
malevolently in the
afternoon sun

like open pairs
of scissors. They
cluster along the

rod-like boughs
of dogwoods and
clog the throats

of the trees,
blossoms. You are
eating a pomegranate,

your wet lips
ringed with red—
they make me

think of enormous,
solitary flowers, your
tongue the stamen,

golden filament of
desire. A breeze
toys with tendrils

of your hair, and
you comment
on the day's

beauty. I see
only your lips.
I smell only

the bruised scent
of mashed fruit.
I feel only

the cutting beetles,
dense bodies press
inside my throat.

Shawn McLain

Transcendence

Somewhere
inside a book
a chapter
a paragraph
a sentence.

Inside the sentence
a word
a letter
and me in the letter
asleep.

I dream
of
white space

Anne Haines

Windows

We choose them for the view,
forget they give access for theft,
forget the nights they might
be our only safe exit.

Birds crash into windows
mistaking them for sky
fall to the ground
and wander off stunned.

Windows can open like wings.
In the spring I raise them all
too early, and crave the clean
chill, the smell of snow.

Walking in the evening
I peer into every home.
Windows frame a still life dinner,
the blue glow of TV light.

We speak of exposures,
northern or southern.
At night our faces reflect
like ghosts floating on glass

until we draw the curtains,
erase dark ghosts from memory.
Where do those shades of us go,
those reflections in night windows?

Blank curtains cover our stunned faces,
the glass of our eyes.

Matt Rasmussen

O

The city says 58 things
at the same time.

Like a diamond's facets—
each surface reflecting,

while trapping a sliver of flame
inside its cut heart.

—

Far away, a loon's call—
the whistle of a knife

through water—bounces
off the house-sized white stone.

A remnant of what the glacier
ate before it died.

—

Commonwealth's hallway of trees
pauses, allowing the train below

to breathe. The promenade rising
like an Indian burial mound

with a grated mouth
sucks at the spoiled air.

—

When cleaning a grouse,
puncture the crop

to release the scent
of fresh clover.

The city, a valley of windows,
and these towers are empty

shelves for hard light,
where inside our body's body,

the architecture
of the diamond burns.

Autumn field, leafless
trees. Why do you look

like the roots of buildings
swallowed by the sky?

Love me,
said love.

Oh my god,
said god.

The bus brakes squeal
out like a mouse pinned

under a microphone.
The sky fills in

behind what has fallen.
O, says the moon.

Jason Hertz

Megapolis

Is not a smithereen, in retrospect
devoid of Doves.
We lay like kidneys on the Dead Sea.

Andrew Demcak

Young Man with iPod

A wild fledgling winging his way from
the suburb's premeditated heights.

This youth in baggy shorts (belonging to
his step-dad?) weaving along the crosswalk.

No less a sparrow as he sails robin—
red before his peers, head tilted, cocky.

His lurid t-shirt clashing back against
the Broadway traffic, in this city of

unnamed birds. He is fifteen, I think,
warbling today's scissored hip-hop.

His bravado like a feather color.
Even coming fatherhood can't cage him.

Philip Dacey

Thumb-Indexed

Just after making love: the man on top,
still inside; the two conversing, quietly.
In their exchanges, a word happens to come up,
“factotum” about whose etymology

they both wonder, mystery to solve, but he
doesn't want to withdraw just yet and so
stretches—careful!—for the dictionary
on the night stand—not too far now, whoa!

Successfully gripping the tome, he manages
to transfer it quickly with a plop to the pillow
beside her head and start flipping pages,
all the while continually penetrating her though

softening. “Facere, to make or do. Totum, all.”
“Do everything!” He obeys, kissing each nipple.

Roger Pfingston

Little Song After Making Love

A May breeze, morning cool,
the birds rapid with song
in trees and bushes outside our

window as we unwrap the length
of ourselves, amazed and thankful
at 65 that we can still glaze our

bodies with desire, roll over
with little effort and place our
feet flat on the wood floor,

hungry as hell for bagels and
coffee, juice and steel cut oats
gleaming with raisins and honey!

Lucille Lang Day

In a Universe Driven By Chaos, Is Joy an Elusive Refrain?

The refrain is a crystal
of space-time,
an octahedron of light.
Joy and sorrow exist
only in the throat
of a black-capped vireo
in a cedar-oak thicket
in west Texas. No other
North American bird
has white spectacles
on a jet-black head.
Still, we can laugh.

**What Does A Tongue In Motion Hide?
Is An Echo Always Obsolete?**

A tongue in motion hides
a wad of licorice gum,
a stainless steel stud,
all the secrets of childhood,
three scathing letters,
a jaguar and a snow goose,
spruces and algae,
a continent where cities
flicker and gleam,
but if we await
the swallows' return
an echo is not obsolete.

**Among Humpback Whales,
Where Does a Protest Song Lead?**

It will pass unnoticed
under the waves,
in the great heave and suck
of the sea, and the whales
will go on singing
for months on end,
weaving low, resonant
notes for mating or pleasure
until they reach Baja, where
in backyards and dumps
turtle shells pile up,
swearing at you and me.

Learning to Live with the River

The river waits. It patrols its banks
then slips through the sandbags
and jumps the dams while we try
to float above catastrophe.

It demands more than we want to give,
more than its prescribed geography,
but still we offer all: cookbooks
and coffee cups, lamps, sofas,
bicycles and beds, our yards
and porches, brick and mortar.
We abandon cars and pets,
push our children into the river
like virgins into a volcano.

The river knows manipulation,
the absolute power of water currents,
the futility of maps and boundaries.
We learn how to live with it: Leave.
Row away from our sunken town
and wait for the river to be satisfied.

What Looked Like Escape

He began with drifting on waves. Face down. No strokes, no bubbles furiously popping out of the shifting waters, just drift. Watching off Gay's Head beach, his parents didn't know if the driftwood was alive. He sought his petite death—ebbing and shuffling with the waves until they beached him, as if unloading something they knew did not belong—and often had a hard-on when he stood up from the surf. Each day he swam out further, pulled in a long breath and stilled like a dead fish. The sun blistered his back. Five times he was rescued. Embarrassed, his parents persuaded the lifeguards to ignore him. Underneath his bed he kept his summer reading, *50 Great Shipwrecks*. He traced in his *Red Chief* tablet the paintings of sublime carnage, sailors rolled in fists of waves and ships sunk in splinters along the whale roads. He imagined the bodies falling softly, sliding side to side on the currents; imagined the eyes rolled and a last scissor-kick down. They looked like leaves, but deep in the ocean's grasp. They looked as if they had been accepted as detail, one making the whole ocean, as it was a detail of itself. And, from afar, it was true. He wanted to feel as it would to feel finally, but the waters spit him up like a cork, buoyant and unwanted. Would not the undertow bring a whole new life? Each time he came to the pinnacle of his trapped breath, he flashed his face up, gasping for the sun. In this, he most resembled the waves, their empty grasping for what they cannot hold.

Fall

A woman watches her only son fall off a towering cliff, watches his body fold over itself on the way down, watches his torso shrink as it recedes. His arms and legs splay, his head telescopes to a pinpoint against the blue ocean. His windbreaker swells like a balloon as if it would rise and waft him out to sea, even as he keeps falling, falling, back through that moment when his foot slipped, back to the moment when he stood triumphant at the edge of the cliff.

He smiles at his seeming weightlessness where the air seems to buoy him up even though he sinks through it. But then, he turns and takes control, flipping end to end, round and round, finally curling into a fetal ball and whirling.

He explores his new space, where he has no foothold and his body is free. He can no longer hear his mother's cry, no longer see the cliffs or the sea or the blue sky. His world is a blur, but he can still taste the air, saltier and saltier as he descends, still smell the ozone of the upcoming shore, and still feel the wind, growing damper and damper on his way down.

He splays his fingers to feel the moisture in the droplet-filled air, gulps seaweed-laden mouthfuls to taste the salt, draws in heavy breaths to smell his new world. He closes his eyes and lets his senses flow, laughing in his moment of joy.

Richard Alan Bunch

Unearthing: A Life Recollected

Cheyenne "Magic" Amenyana

*Le jour est proche ô mes soeurs de grandeur
Où nous rirons des mots guerre et misère
Rien tiendra de ce qui fut douleur . . .*

—Paul Éluard

In all my days, I saw through the blurs of traffic,
 hawked visions for a living,
was a surveyor of the soul
 who cherished the love of freedom.

Among my adventures, I rode to India on an elephant
 stitched with mandarin butterflies;
I danced across the cosmos
 and searched the interiors of time

for the original atom,
 changed my name to Sleepwalker-by-Fascination,
and mapped the angle of refraction
 in an orchestra of silence.

On zany nights I strolled amid radio waves
 reading Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*,
Murasaki's novel *The Tale of Genji*, and Meister
 Eckhart's sermon "God Laughs and Plays";

revered enchanted sleepers and noted
 snowy owls within a sand painting,
came upon vigils to the evening star,
 a spectrum of light in which to say yes,

Bunch

whose dimensions inspired masters of divinity
to ponder and make manifest the soul,
and presumed a cosmic sunrise
in the chronicles of conquest.

I discerned a life
expectancy that included string vibrations
passing through the dimensions of earth, wind, fire,
water and the practice of non-violence,

unearthed hymns of the everlasting
in interstellar space and
yearned to smolder and burn
like the poems of Rumi in fields of love.

In my time here I endured hatred, ignorance,
terror and genocide,
became a casualty in war,
a philosopher in peace,

mixed dates with puddings,
plums, and fairy tales
and conducted foreign affairs
in the poetic vernacular.

It was my imagination that built an acropolis
in the sumptuous northwest
while searching for love after love
in the dark comedy of manners

only to uncover untapped
symphonies of biorhythms and
scared flying squirrels with
the electric charms of unnamed anarchists,

intensely lived my soul as though love is the whole
and did not mortgage my days,
who with my family went
canoeing long into dusk and

underwent sessions in meaning therapy
to translate the primal scream;
who heard within flights
of swans the company of Christ,

reforested pines and firs across continents
for the sake of the wild in wilderness;
who trolled poetry for a second
self and reeled in a lonely muse,

drew a map of faceless wrinkles
as an index to the origin of the universe
in the Big Bang and danced white-hot with
tambourines into shades of the Hindu god Shiva,

welcomed smells of unbridled horses
in the rosemary of forget-me-nots
when expanses of sand
opened the mind with subterranean sutras;

assumed modes of the enshrined and
drummed labyrinths of the beatific vision
while speaking Gaelic
among the rhododendrons and tiger swallowtails;

who made ecstasy
visible to the naked proposition
yet celebrated color dispersions
playing pizzicato with the goddess of the present,

Bunch

who greeted revolution
with “to your health!,” kicks of kung fu,
regret, yet revived humanity
with a toast to the inherent dignity of process;

whose slide trombones and kettledrums shimmered
waves throughout the Milky Way,
cantered toward true justice
with an eye toward the wisdom of the sages,

mapped and studied genes before the advent
of love-lies-bleeding flower beds,
doffed my aloha shirt while listening
to the Tao of the Russian River with its soft jazz,

scorned propaganda sporting thinly knit
accents working as both a stonemason and cellist,
chanticleered Zen and the art of meditation instead of
dispersing demonic thermonuclear brew across the world,

tossed my salad days with tuning forks
shaped by weathervanes and
sprayed stone cold tin pan hearts
with furlongs of laughing gas

defused Ragnarok with olive, tea leaves,
sage, and lotus petals;
and, in a moment of forgetfulness, simmered peppers
until they favored false diamonds;

measured mountains moving
by the returns of civil disobedience
and trained the will to power
to reverence the mistress of destinies,

who grounded weapons of mega-deaths
 into plowshares,
practiced listening to survivors
 surviving as petroglyph ancestors,

explored windworn and seaworthy atlases
 until I found terra incognita
and later rejoiced in sunsets
 as though they were seven kisses from holy women;

forgave the jaws of mood swings due to the varying
 frequencies of sound both far and near
and tangoed with zombies and salty dogs
 off the coast of Barbados,

who scaled the libidinal process
 into a redorange nirvana
while bassoons and flugelhorns jammed
 in a jazz that floated up the pyramids at Giza and Copàn,

stressed the harmonic structure
 of Chinese puzzles in battle fatigue,
and charted virtual Viking explorations into the land of
 antinuke Powhatans, Ojibwas and Cherokees;

sounded capriccios in unsigned
 signs and honored elephant
tusks and the remains of indigenous peoples
 while disclosing a single eye,

scattered ashes to the separation
 of radiation from matter
and composed ribs from designs
 riddled with trust;

Bunch

whose exploits soared past evergreen
Middlesex townships and
above anthems in a manger
that became heliocentric;

who lavished navigators with orchids
beneath timeless waterfalls,
painted in a chiaroscuro technique
playwrights on an upbeat track,

dramatically filmed the migratory life
of snowflakes
and made war on battalions of bacteria
and epochs of viruses;

who became admiral to a fleet
that included kosher dinner wines
while composing scores to flowered pistils and treble clefs
in time's gray eyes,

whose fading once as an author outside a text
resembled fads with unseasoned horizons
yet recovered just enough to record the eruption of volcanoes
on the ocean floor without drowning,

spent afternoons scuba diving again and re-read the philosopher
Wang Yang-Ming while preparing undersea cameras,
and sketched swallows in Capistrano
to discern family timelines through native skylights;

instinctively knew catastrophes
lie in the interior valleys of caste,
lionized passions within
the many-toned rainbow and lived for bronzed beauty,

burst through streets in Katmandu
shouting "Long live the peacemakers!
and inched closer to God
in the settlements of brotherhood

now watch a blackbird eat and eat
a peach until it falls half-eaten
and am dying to be sprinkled
with the enchantment of diverse waters...

Notes:

The epigraph:

The day is near o my sisters of grandeur
When we shall laugh at words like war and misery
And nothing shall remain of that which was grief. . .

—Paul Éluard (1895-1952)
(my translation)

Lines:

32—Rumi (1207-73) (Jalal al-Din Rumi): Sufi poet of Islam.

53—logotherapy: founded by Viktor Frankl (1905-1997), who I met in 1973, is a meaning therapy rooted in his death camp experience with insights from Existentialism.

54—primal scream: a therapy to treat emotional problems by encouraging patients to relive and express their traumatic experiences.

70—beatific labyrinths: I associate the beatific vision with the labyrinths in the fictions of Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986).

76—pizzicato: a light plucking staccato sound played on a stringed instrument.

78—kung fu: ancient Chinese art of self-defense.

- 88—Tao of the Russian River: In the Taoism of ancient China, Tao is the source of all. Influenced by Russian presence at Fort Ross (1812-1841), the Russian River in Northern California empties into the Pacific Ocean at Jenner.
- 92—thermonuclear brew: the moral choice to use nuclear power to destroy here is likened to drinking a demonic brew.
- 97—Ragnarok: In Norse myth, final destruction of the world in a battle between gods and giants.
- 108—petroglyph survivors: drawings on rock made by a prehistoric people.
- 115—zombies and salty dogs: a play on words for the kinds of characters the narrator has met as well as two kinds of drinks.
- 117—libidinal process: a term encompassing the sexual drives in human development.
- 120—pyramids at Giza and Copàn: the great Egyptian Pyramid at Giza; the pyramid at Copàn in Honduras is the site of an ancient Mayan city.
- 124—Native American tribes, historically including Pocahontas (c.1595-1617) of the Powhatans.
- 125—capriccios: an instrumental composition that does not adhere to rules for any specific musical form and is played with improvisation.
- 135—manger: refers to the infancy narrative of Jesus in the New Testament.
- 136—heliocentric: a sun-centered view of the universe, first hypothesized by Aristarchus of Samos (c.310-230 BCE), was later “rediscovered” by Copernicus.
- 139—chiaroscuro: technique among Italian Renaissance painters (such as Leonardo da Vinci) to strengthen the illusion of depth on a two dimensional surface.
- 149—author outside a text: refers to the centrality of the text and disappearance of the author as though a text exists in a vacuum for purposes of interpretation.
- 154—Wang Yang-Ming (1472-1529) developed an idealist interpretation of Confucianism.
- 155—Capistrano: a southern California city where swallows annually return to the old Spanish mission there.
- 161—Katmandu: capital of Nepal, not far from the frontier of India.

Philip Glass (1937-): 4: A Poet

Outside, the wind takes off
its hat and bows.

Inside, familiar tuning
of a Sunday afternoon.
Papers spread-eagled
in the light. Coffee warm on a desk,
smoke incensing to the room's roof.

Inside, my brain
prays to the Muse of music
My prayers are questioned
and then answered.
Miniature seascapes of sound, like an ocean,
burning in the red of the sun
setting the table with knives of light,
forks of shadow, spoons of night

Telescopium

Renee Margritte paints a man standing before a mirror, and reflected in the mirror is not the man's face, but the back of his head. When I try this, I have to stand with my back to the mirror, and hold another mirror in front of me, then angle the mirror I'm holding so my face disappears and the back of my head wheels into view. Thus I check my hair. One of my teachers wrote about another painter, Balthus: "In curved Einsteinian space we are at all times, technically, looking at the backs of our own head." Technically. The Dipper flips, Cassiopeia rolls like a slow-motion tumbleweed, but it's only rarely that I feel even the earth's roundness, let along the universe's. I'm driving, and a line of plastic cones wedges me to the left, and two-thirds of the way down the row I see a sign reading "Right Lane Closed Ahead." Or I'm nine, I swat an incredible line drive, all the kids get out of the way rather than try to catch it, the ball's last seen shooting into knee-high weeds, we don't know figs about Newton, nothing is going to stop that ball. Both sides search, some give up. On my way back to the infield I spot the ball twenty yards behind where the stubborn are still scuffing the weeds with their tennis shoes. Even then, we took a few more swings, then broke up for dinner, and my mother gave me peas, and not one rolled off the plate or fell off my spoon.

Bradley Earle Hoge

Bybee Pottery

The chips make it worthless
on eBay, so I continue to drink
from my blue and white glazed
mug, bought in childhood
from Bybee Pottery. I have another
with my name on it, and another beige
and blue. The dates are inscribed
on the bottom of each. Some
Bybee mugs have brought hundreds
of dollars, but mine bring only memories -
the itch of hay, the color of fall
leaves, the taste of red-eye gravy
over buttermilk biscuits with ham,
bacon and sausage, pancakes,
scrambled eggs, grits and coffee,
to prepare for the day, before work
began, before time stopped,
while all there was was the molasses
of sweat with no time to wipe it away,
the drone of tractor with no time
to consider it noise, the glare of sun
with no time to consider its passing.

Contributors

Deborah Bauer lives and works in Tempe, Arizona. She has work forthcoming in *Carve* and *Literary Mama*. She is currently working on a novel.

Richard Alan Bunch was born in Honolulu and grew up in the Napa Valley. His works include *Summer Hawk*, *Wading the Russian River*, *Night Blooms*, and the play *The Russian River Returns*. His stories have appeared in several venues. Thrice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, his poetry has appeared in *California Quarterly*, *Orbis*, *Oregon Review*, *Fire*, and *The Hawai'i Review*. His latest poetry collection is *Running for Daybreak* (Mellen Poetry Press).

Mark Cunningham received an MFA from the University of Virginia, and still lives in the Charlottesville area. His poems have appeared in *Paragraph* and *Rhino*; a larger selection, of poems on parts of the body, is on the *Mudlark* website <http://www.unf.edu/mudlark/>.

Philip Dacey's most recent of eight books is *The Mystery of Max Schmitt: Poems on the Life and Work of Thomas Eakins* <http://www.turningpointbooks.com>. His work also appears in Billy Collins' new anthology, *180 More*. Mostly a Midwesterner, he's adventuring in Manhattan.

Lucille Lang Day's poetry collections are *Infinities*, *Wild One*, *Fire in the Garden*, and *Self-Portrait with Hand Microscope*, which was selected by Robert Pinsky for the Jackson Award. Her work has appeared widely in magazines and anthologies. She received her MA and MFA in creative writing at SF State University.

Andrew Demcak has an MFA in Creative Writing, and he is currently working on his MLIS in Library & Information Science at UC Berkeley. He works for the Oakland Public Library, where he is Assistant Director of Outreach (which is a fancy way of saying that he drives the Bookmobile).

Anne Haines has recent or forthcoming work in journals including *Rattle*, *Stickman Review*, and *Front Range Review*. She lives in Bloomington, Indiana, where she is employed by the Indiana University Libraries as a branch coordinator and by her two cats as a housekeeper and masseuse (unpaid).

Jason Hertz grew up in Willow River, Minnesota, and currently lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he studies at the University of Minnesota, majoring in Economics and Philosophy.

Bradley Earle Hoge's most recent poetry appears in *Tar Wolf Review*, *The Ephemera*, *Entelechy*, *The Dead Mule*, *Chaffin Journal*, and *Square Lake*. More is upcoming in anthologies from Pudding House Press, Salt Marsh Pottery Press, SunShine Press Publications, Ltd., and The Plymouth Writers Group. He lives in Spring, Texas, with his wife and three children. He teaches natural science at the University of Houston—Downtown.

Don Kingfisher Campbell's poetry is currently available in the anthologies *Open Windows*, *River Walk Journal*, *Dirt*, *Cosmic Brownies*, *Three Chord Poems*, *Midnight Mind*, *So Luminous The Wildflowers*, and *One Drop To Be The Color Black*; and is also viewable in the online journals *Hiss Quarterly*, *Lunarosity*, *Edifice Wrecked*, *MindFire Renewed*, *Poetic Diversity*, *Writer's Hood*, and *Poetic Voices*.

Ellen Lindquist's stories and poems have appeared in journals such as *The Small Pond Magazine*, *5: AM* and *US1 Worksheets*. Her prose poem *The Erstwhile Wire-Woman* was nominated for a Pushcart prize by Purdue-Calumet's *Skylark* magazine. She was a winner in the following contests: *E2K's* Net Author Flash Fiction Contest (2003); *Fiction Inferno's* Very Short Fiction Contest (2002); *Lotus Bloom Journal's* Anniversary Contest (2004); the Dekalb Art Council's Fiction Contest (1998). She was a semifinalist in *Mid-American Review's* Fineline Competition (2001). Last spring, she was invited to submit poetic texts to the 2004 London Art Biennial.

Shawn McLain lives in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Previously published by *2River View*, *The Diagram*, *Big Muddy*, and several other publications, he has work forthcoming in a Southeast Missouri State University Press poetry anthology titled *Balancing on a Bootheel*. He is an editor of the online arts journal, *Ligature*, <<http://www.ligaturemag.com/>>.

Roger Pfingston has new work scheduled to appear in *The Ledge*, *Talking River*, *Thin Air*, and *Texas Poetry Journal*.

Marissa Ranello was born in 1980. A native New Yorker, she picked up her bags last year and traveled North to Saskatchewan, Canada. In addition to editing the literary zine *Antipatico*, she is a freelance writer, poet, and activist. Her recent publications include work in *XConnect* (University of Pennsylvania), *Misunderstandings Magazine*, *Surface & Symbol*, and *Perigee-Art*

Matt Rasmussen's poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *LIT*, *New York Quarterly*, *Poet Lore*, and *Oyez Review*. He completed his MFA last December at Emerson College in Boston, where he currently teaches.

Eric W. Schramm is the director of fundraising at The Haven of Grace, a transitional shelter for young, homeless, pregnant women in St. Louis. His work has most recently appeared in *The Comstock Review*, *Wisconsin Review*, and *California Quarterly*.

C. D. Shirley is originally from New Mexico, and attends college near Chicago. His poetry and essays have been published in *Tusitala* and *queer*.

Aline Soules' work has appeared in journals, e-zines, and anthologies such as *The MacGuffin*, *100 Words*, *Literature of the Expanding Frontier*, and *The Size of the World/The Shape of the Heart*. Prose poems from her manuscript *Woman Acts* have appeared in *Tattoo Highway*, *edifice WRECKED*, and *The Kenyon Review*. She completed her MFA in Creative Writing at Antioch University Los Angeles.

Laura Stamps's poems, short stories, and poetry book reviews have appeared in numerous literary journals, magazines, anthologies, and broadsides, including the *Louisiana Review*, *The Pittsburgh Quarterly*, *Big City Lit*, *Poesy Magazine*, *American Writing*, *Fullosia Press*, and *Chiron Review*. She is the author of more than twenty-five books of poetry and prose. Her fiction chapbook *White Porches* was a Semi-Finalist in the 2004 Winnow Press Chapbook Award in Fiction Competition. Her poetry chapbook *In the Garden* was a Top-Finalist in the 2004 Blue Light Press Poetry Prize and Chapbook Competition, and was recently published by The Moon. Several of her poems are included in the celebrity anthology *Open My Eyes, Open My Soul* (2003, McGraw-Hill Books) and *Women of the Web Anthology of Poems* (2005, Little Poems Press). More information about books by Laura Stamps can be found at <http://www.kittyfeatherpress.blogspot.com>.

Emily Symonds works as an editor and fact-checker and is about to begin a degree program in Library Science. Her poems have appeared in *The Madison Review*, *Phoebe*, *Red Rock Review*, and *storySouth*. Her poem included here, *Learning to Live with the River*, won the 2004 North Carolina State Poetry Contest.

Matt Weyand is currently a senior English major at Santa Clara University. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Santa Clara Review*, *The Porcupine Literary Review*, *The Curbside Review*, and *Santa Clara Magazine*.

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