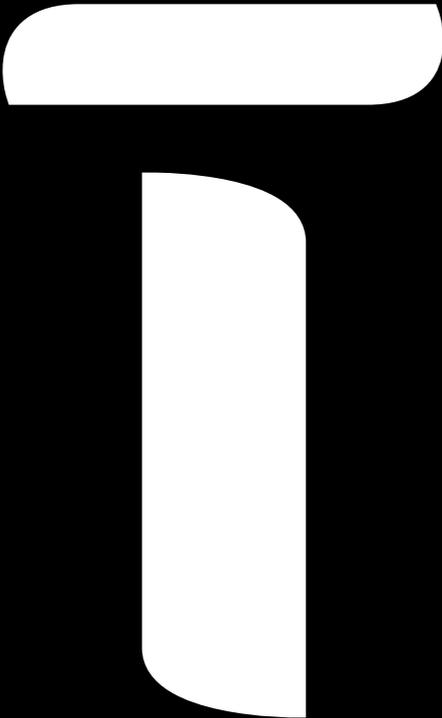


CONCTS



winter 2015

CONCĪS

WINTER 2015

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CONCIS

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Swallowtail

A cloud passes over you and I forget the sun; it comes back and you revive, a state of wonder. Luminosity and complete collapse, tumbling down onto the path but usually able to get up again. You are like a shadow-being, one from the myth, which has slipped with the worms into their cocoons, sleep spun around you in gossamer but sturdy threads, but here you are, gesturing of flight again. Behaviorism, they say, posits that if we want to believe, we act like we believe and eventually we will. If we act ritualistic, we become ritual. If we act like we have all the time in the world. The creek in spring is gathering its chorus, a lot of by-hand shorthand and hourly touch. You say: we remember people by the feeling we once felt for them. Intermediate creatures, remnants left of wind, much is lost off the edge of our dreams. Like the swallowtail in February you pulled from the snow, still soaked in its supernatural beams. Insect tales: we make them up as we enter them, blue eyespots on the wings, blue continuous all around the outer margins. Lemon yellow and horizontal, and much like birds.

Bone Yard

There is an earth below the body, white gleam in what is otherwise sage. You are unafraid, even curious at death now. Ravens pick through the catalogs. In their beaks, the red-brown stain. They hang, a glossy black in the greening house. Today, you walk right into the bone yard, recognizing first a shod hoof. The ribcage further on, the long neck spreading. What is strewn like feathers is hair caught in last year's grass. You can almost make out an ear. A stillborn calf? A deer? But you, you say, have had enough now. You return to the farmer's field of right and wrong. Widow's weeds, or the heavy curtains that signal to the neighbors the house is closed: these are grief rules few of us practice any longer. Shall you say he was released? Did he step out of his mind, or was he flung? You have followed the path back to the river, where you cast river pebbles from shore, as if it were up to you to send him on. You watch them sink, which is, of course, thy will be done.

Shark Fin

Like a black wing angled out
of water, it rose, lured
by the shadow of our boat.
Circled us — no seal — turned
north. I loved a banker then.
The boat was his. Perhaps
the water, too, its small, tin
mirrors. I'd never known the traps
of wealth before: the rigging
of its baits, its blue-barbed hooks.
I, too, have circled, mistaking
metal for a meal, duped
by instinct. Wide, the sea. The oar:
the heart's dark sail, its hunger.

Apple

Adam is dreaming of a bomb atom become A-bomb so many
atoms in this @

welcome to the blue

hour, welcome to the final
destination, the body's home
address, there are rooms here
you will never want to know
but now you know: glass-
paned and built in shade of
shipyard, someone else at the
prow, oh god you say, oh god,
by which you mean your
mother's name, dial it down
now, yes, you hear me, dial it
down; the wattage of the world
turned up, all knives in sharp
relief; time and the turning of
the page, how once you were
attached to her and now, now
this, the plating of the head;
red barn is being razed; hard
to find fresh flowers on a grave
—sweeping, so much sweeping—
east house is down.

Delicious

The rind flat on the pavement is by chance a circle—whole but empty where she shimmied out of her skin-tight skin. Around the corner, naked Clementine hangs out on a concrete ledge. She would swing her legs if she had any, puckered around her empty center, bold as anything under the sun's blaze. When night turns cold, Clementine shivers her regret for peeling off there in the street, wishes she had not left so loose her spicy attire behind. She is sticky-sweet and irresistible to the wasp, his gold tooth shine disappearing inside.

tambourines

The rest being simplification, a pruning
of the citronnier branches, crusts
from bread left for pigeons, thread
and needle unattached. Men in the street
smile to each other; coins, sad faces of,
making music in their pockets.

Dance

He holds the camera-phone at arm's length to take the selfie.
A breeze kicks up, the leaves turn, and the air is crystal clear.
He holds the self at arm's length and the distance grows.
A new breeze twirls a leaf around the self, a leaf around the air.

Poem Ending With a Line by James Richardson

Witness a hopeful face when the cancer
has been located. Surrounded, cancer appears
in a window of every other house.
The only victory is to deprive it of a body.
Think of ash trees in a front yard,
budding before their last leaves drop.
Likewise, there is no body, no thought
missing from a chain of thoughts.
A beginning ends what an end begins.

Note: borrowed line from "Twenty-Five Aphorisms" by James Richardson

Pasatiempos

Wandering out there among the bosons
and fermions, kicking back while others stretched out
before us, seeking to amuse us, to show us
the errors of our ways. Particulations
devoutly to be wished.

Inaudible Conversations

Bible verses whispering
amongst themselves.

In a Quiet Home

in the USA, the prayer rugs
are kneeling, are
bleeding.

What I was thinking as I kissed you

There've been way too many mens trying the gates to my garden. Trying to force their ways in or crawl under the fence or jump over with a big pole or bribe my big dog. My dog knows only fur and fangs, respects only the biggest of dicks because he's so patriarchal in his beastiness. Don't stalk my garden smoking those spliffs you got from my ex, either. Leave the garden alone. Have you seen my house? Have you smelt my pillowcase or fondled my toilet handle yet? Just a jiggle. Come in, come in. I'll aeropress you coffee the way I know you'll like it. I'm feeling your taste buds, those mushroom-bumps raise in meeting. It's night. I'm on the sidewalk outside my house. Under the streetlight & so obvious. I'm feeling sweet, sour, salty, bitter, umami. Eeny meeny, I'm thinking. Miney mo. There's racism all around me. In me. I'm thinking, The sidewalks are rough & cracked here. I'm thinking, There are so many tastes on this one tongue.

Flattened

The crystal shard, the door,
where you rest your hand.
The alternate dimension. Universe.
A slightly uglier version of
yourself.

Pond

Interlocking plains of constitutions, verdant, mortal, birth
a send-up of absurd proportions skimming the margins
of oblivion, death-rate in its wake illuminating the awe-
struck mind fresh from the ripeness of non-existence, or is it
simply there?, alive, awake as cardinals climb into their hot
chambers of insistence to clash in vocables over the shining
stage for contention of place like a glistening word on nature's
page, diamond lost in a world of diamonds as light strikes
water, shining upward from where I sit before its levitation,
the dilation of *what is* within that which was *thought to have
been all along*, as an advancing edge, ever-changing nature
of question, today the northeast corner lost in a warren of green,
a hut bound to water-roots hanging blindly down into pond's
warm stillness, feather soft in mind and touch, yet immense,
heavy as a drowned heifer, my shoulders sore from dragging mats
to shore, wrestling bio-mass from the heart of that which pours
so fully forth and into all the world, both existence and its un-
doing, as I climb the banks of this bright hole whose glassy
presence, sheer, upcast, encases cicada's scroll in silver
light, song within the song, *It is the mind creates the finite.*

Inebriate of Air

The day was September, oxygen oozing from the dying wildflowers.

Cease beeping, we said to just about everyone.

We hung a sign outside the church: Park your car, forget your anger

The leaves clattered metallicly onto café tables round as coins.

To be kind, you wished the leaves might fall in water.

A little absinthe, and I felt like a rose revived by aspirin.

No one expects a reward just to ease getting older.

Even though there's hell to pay.

I Stagger Toward the Future

When the West needed rediscovery, the powers sent a clown with a camera to compile the spotless carnage. This was before viral. Reptiles ate the strings off guitars. Townspeople wandered with eyes covered to block the awkward flips from color to black & white to color. The new colonists let their hair explode, posed with mannequins for selfies. This was before selfies. Reinvention meant erasure, but not of natives. This was after immigrants started pretending to be natives. The five men who appeared to be human formed a band that could stand alone in the desert, look good in grayscale. They had not thought past the moment, past the four minutes it would take to embed the psyches of whoever was left, whoever would dare to put on the greasepaint.

Note: Title is a lyric from "Far Side of Crazy"
by *Wall of Voodoo* (#23 on Australian Charts, 1985).

I Wish My Skin Could Stand the Pace

They paint some white women black, turn them into tables, paint other white women brown for telephones. They say they don't see color. Synthesizers must be played with rubber gloves. They dress you in a hooded robe, show you what you think is a miniature of your city. Even the sculptures are fitted for sunglasses. The bases the space aliens attack in video games look like your city, your miniaturized city. What you think is the throb of bass of drums is the sound of your pixelated city falling square by square. They tell you it's OK; your eyeglasses are just too thick. A man will give you a ride home on a Prophet-5, show you the lights of your darkened city. You're sure these must be correct, these lights that compete with what can only be sleep.

Note: Title is a lyric from "Living in the Plastic Age" by *The Buggles* (#16 on UK Singles Chart, 1980).

Weathering

By the bovine's repose
I know soon the scent of petrichor
will grace the grassland;

and more, the verdure
will not be proof the season has tipped
in favor of cooler spells.

He Buys a Revolver

A 9 MM is “quick and adept.” A shooter stands with his violent ears, in which devils are. The devils are we, the sad followers of the paranoid “what if.” Our leader, Satan, stands whispering in a little hidden section behind the tympani, behind the breathing meat in a visceral explosion of longing and terror, a confusion of focus.

This story has to be in someone else’s hand. I’m not brave enough to write out all this sadness. Moreover, this story has to be turned away from any beautiful dread, any sexy alarm, from excuses, from the biochemical shell game. The man-gun in this story is blank as *le Chiffre*, unmoored, drifting away from skin and heat, knowing without means, by need. The man in this story is not the other man; the gun is not one we do not own. We are all meat and millimeters. We are all at bay.

hold steady

pressure-coated in panic
i say it's the weather that's got me nostalgic
or perhaps the druggie music
i saw the singer fall down
one balmy night
with the palm trees
unbending
"music is a precocious mistress"
he nodded and cracked a lozenge in half
all straight-faced and tragic.

Spoons in the Garden

Yellow clouds lean into the coalfish. It's midnight and the world moves alone in her daughter. I remember breath brushing up against the hours. It was my own breath and I let it touch me while you spoke. When I wake up before winter you cannot know. Trying to keep the robins on the table. Late showing, slow growth.

Time

A sweet bee in an old bell.
Tone of what's made
silently unmade

Early Morning Fishing Boats

Up early and watching the fishing boat lights pass across the dark Lake Michigan horizon like a series of broken mirror shards. The lake is very loud this morning but the lights are silent, reflecting something louder than light and surf. I wish all those fishermen well. But I wish the fish well, too, hoping they might find food that will not pierce them. Something louder than bombs. More silent than light.

Two Poems

two soft plums
stain the eggshell bowl
beside our bed

a sight for sore eyes
baby's got her pain
dress on

Men about Business

Justin and I thought umbrellas were things men carried. Men like our dads held them above their briefcases on their way out the door. Those umbrellas sat in stands in the foyers near our dads' other work things—rubber galoshes, khaki raincoats—which we weren't allowed to disturb. Since the eighties were an era when men didn't bring home work except for show, there his business things sat, claiming a corner of the foyer, from the moment he entered until first thing in the morning, when he left.

Justin and I decided to be men on a day when it wasn't raining. We grabbed our dads' umbrellas, pulling on the curled handles and drawing the rods up from their stands. We went outside and turned on the sprinkler and unfurled black umbrellas, which made a whoosh like dark wings, and pretended to be busy-ness men. I held paychecks in my hands as water streamed overhead. Justin raised an index finger as he parried the spray, signaling me to wait as I called his name.

He'd ask me for a "rain check," which is what a man would say if you rushed him in the doorway. We thought it must have something to do with rain.

When snow comes early

After Quinn Latimer

Leaves accept an early fate and privacies come bare.
There she is, in the naked broadleaf:
the hawks' nest, the mother hawk, slender
eye, slender beak. We didn't know
she was here all along, gone tomorrow.
What do you name the sacred
privacies of snow? Sorrow?

Three White Dogs

From our parlor, the living room, the cloud there seemed to be, across the angle, a colorful snake silently sine-waved across the woven symbols of the Iranian carpet. The white dog spotted with spilled coffee would be poisoned by its fangs if it had fangs. But I was not convinced. While the undulance and pumpkin orange diamonds rowed along its spine suggested a viper I thought too that I was seeing yellow and red like a king's ambulance through the grass. Something burst on the asphalt. I stopped beside the copper deep freezer to fill it with thin oblongs from bags. An uneaten roasted turkey floated in a five gallon bucket when I opened it but had no smell. I thought how old it was, how beige. The snake became a calico kitten over and over that I would capture with a bucket. Either way was in the road up the hill. Crawling onto my chest the two white dogs were biting through each other's lips and could not be pried open as their faces came to me.

A line from Pier Paolo Pasolini

I am listening to Stevie
Wonder. Red is the hue
par excellence. I plan to
do some landscaping

around it. It's a comic that
I need to see made into a
poster. The subject? Life
as a tree, death as a flower.

Cobb & Co.

We didn't realize he might be somebody's grandfather. The age of the char-à-banc had passed us by, & the advent of VistaVision, with its futile attempt to emulate the golden ratio, was something our teachers wouldn't talk to us about. Dogs fought in the street & distracted us. The town grew dustier by the day. The Town Hall collapsed under the weight of woodworms & the local records all went with it. We coughed, & carried on as we always had.

Listening to Time

a golden shovel incorporating a Bashō haiku

The stillness

of night wings, the gentle piercing
of dark heavens, the
soft echoes of this terrain of rocks.

A high desert mesa, the
stars: quiet has a sound.
Fleeing the past in the silence of
now, it returns, droning like cicadas.

Two Monostich Poems

halfway through the walk watering the juniper

weathered into fine grit the years

The Venus of Merchants

Her body's as wide as the tub; in her mouth a cigar. In her hair are bones. Her teeth gold. Gold also in the enamel on her nails. Wrapped tight round her neck, a blingy necklace studding the diamond word: MIDAS.

Her voice is a thousand metric tonnes. Her animal cry an engine so large it is kept in the basement, where it vibrates whole neighborhoods.

She is a memory of what was, and of what is coming to be.

The men stand around her and weep, pouring their wallets over her body, in devotion, and in humility, to abase themselves before her. She accepts it all, as the best temple whore, with her secret god she keeps inside, of no name at all. The escape god, like the escape hatch, unknown to her worshippers, perhaps it only is: the knowledge of the sham of it all.

Torrents of cash flood the basement; the dump truck scoots in, honking, turning Charleston Heston bodies in soylent-green-ways, turbulent and righteous it thrusts the men in their suits into the cement to make way for the promissory notes.

At the heart of the maelstrom, she is screaming.

Pinwheel

Cruelty and fertility live on opposite sides of the world—
but it is a tiny world no more than four feet in circumference
Uncertain men ripen in the shallows of secret glass
like eolithic stars. They stare at women out walking alone
in a buttercup tangle, who collectively find a pond obscured in
pinwheel moonlight, and dance, killing fish with their fingertips,
while the men return to working crossword puzzles in the dark.

Damascus

Blood on the cypress
and the wild dogs
have broken through the gate.

耐心

Patient is
a heart
in slow endure

noise a cacophony,
smell what tricks

the light in
switch to off

inch by inch
in slow it moves

where to put the things
that have no place
in do it now

the butterfly moves
even with torn wings

Commedia

During
these
pewter
days,
maples
deftly
juggle
starlings
but
sloppily
drop
their
harlequin
clothes.

Andalusia: A Zuihitsu

So many palm trees, shooting up like fireworks. A courtyard of orange trees. After harvest, the sunflower stalks stand alert as otters.

The Alhambra is a mosaic of not two, not three, but four dimensions. After moving through its fountains, gardens, and palaces, I see on the way home the tessellation of leaves and the space between leaves. I see the tessellation of leaves and the time between leaves.

Riding pillion behind my host on a motorbike and slipping through the streets of Sevilla.

In Murillo's great painting, the child gives his coin to his mother, with a look of tenderness that only a child can give, just as the towering saint gives his money to the beggar man. Outside the cathedral, one night, the guitarist waved away the coin proffered by a child. He did not want charity but to sell his compact discs.

Mecca is east-southeast but the Mosque of Córdoba faces south because its royal builder was homesick for Damascus. Representing the earth, its perfect square dances in red and white arabesques, until it is severed in the aorta by the flashing sword of a Cathedral nave. I could not bear to look around the church. How could an architect destroy the best work of another architect? A king, a bishop would, yes, that is the way of the world, but an artist?

In the Alcázar del Rey, in the oldest part of Sevilla, there is a garden that remembers the meeting in friendship of the Spanish poets called the Generation of '27. Will I be remembered? And whom will I be remembered with?

Inheritance

The family farm had once grown cotton. The place is north of Interstate 20 and west of Texas state highway 277. The father couldn't afford the upkeep of the crops and sold off the farming equipment and bought bourbon. His boy, Tyler, watched the last tractor get hauled off. His father's bottle was at the boy's eye level as the tow truck kicked dust and coughed exhaust. His father kept the land for hunting but left in the mornings, before Tyler was awake. With no tractor or knowledge of the game trails, Tyler made his own way. Now, the land housed Tyler's trailer. Inside was grey smoke and crushed cold medicine. A new labor of sorts. Summers and sons grow hotter and more disappointing.

Autobiographical Sketch/Labor Day

I live in a world of imaginary paintings. They have taken the place of my imaginary friends. My imaginary friends were a treacherous and surly lot. There was no honor among thieves.

The Imperial court of Czar Nicholas was much kinder and gentler. His son, the Tsarevich, suffered terribly from necrophilia... no, not necrophilia, hemophilia. As I get older, I sometimes have trouble keeping all the afflictions straight. There are so many of them—a near infinite set. Think of this—with or without hemophilia, Alexis would have had the same response to the bullet in the brain fired by the red revolutionaries.

I am sorry. I have lived too long with imaginary friends, with imaginary paintings. My father told me I was a bum and would always be a bum. That was at a critical stage of my development. Thus, I flirted with becoming a Jesus freak, but didn't give in. Bob Dylan gave in. He painted his face like Batman's Joker and declared: You've got to serve somebody. Bullshit. The only person you've got to serve is yourself at the ALL YOU CAN EAT buffet. Also your legless wife—she can't serve herself. She was a hero in the Iraq War—she had her legs blown off. That's how you can tell she's bona fide.

Every day I live in a home, I have beaten my pater. If I was homeless, He would have won. I have imaginary Picassos on my walls, imaginary van Goghs, imaginary Rembrandts and Matisses, and all of my paintings are better than the real paintings by the same artists. I have a collection worth

MITCHELL KROCKMALNIK GRABOIS

billions of imaginary dollars. How much am I worth? My worth is an illusion. This is true of all of us.

I gave my one-year-old granddaughter a birthday present—My First Buddha. She points at it on the shelf on which it lives. I take it out of the box and set it on the couch where she can reach it. She knocks it down like a bowling pin. I set it aright. She knocks it down. We do this dozens of times. I have huge patience for the innocent, joyful shenanigans of babies. She keeps my serotonin level high. I thank her. She will never be a Jesus freak. She's been too well-loved to be a Jesus freak. Only those who have been deprived at an essential level go on to become Christians. It is their shout-out for affection. If they didn't get natural love, they crave supernatural love. It is overcompensation, the most common thing in the world.

Red Rover

That hotel I keep promising to build on top of some devil's
backbone about to tumble into the ocean
is no brothel. No one
gets paid to discard used heroes into the fire ring. Send
them over.

Velikanova

The brightest learned
to make chains, cliques of similars
who loomed heavy in that first atmosphere
where one amino acid began to mean another.
This is how higher animals began, and with them,
further metaphor, bad pastorals.

I was not one of those
who could make my chest swell with organelles
or corset myself into a fringy slipper.

I was a minimum, a single chamber:
I asked only waste, not the bright maki
of new cells. I kept matter only shortly
and released it, barely changed.

This is the model of your Annelids, those blunt bores
who pass through dirt like ether.
They are still going: simple orifices
and what is pushed through.

(more at: un-)

un-

unalone unaloof unaloft undone

(that day I bought waxed linen at a craft shop I raveled
together a string for you which seems the right word

because un-

ravel is to un-make or un-do

and I tied it on your arm so we wouldn't)

as in: not without, as in (you)

Our Lady of State Street

So I go to this reading down at the bookstore and afterwards meet a friend of a friend. She's unlocking her bike and I notice a shiny decal on the crossbar half under a long sticker. Holy, I say. It's the green Virgin of Guadalupe, #4 out of 10. I have Her too, along with #s 2, 5, and 9. She wants more, she says. She got this one in a gumball machine in the Sauk City Mexican grocery. That's where I've been going for my Virgins, but it's too late, things have changed up a bit. And I tell her about the conversion to Minions and Skulls and Tattoos of Biker Chicks. She prefers Virgins, I can tell, as Our Lady shines, there on her crossbar, sparkling. Our Lady. Our Lady of State Street. Our Lady of Biker Chicks. Our Lady, bless her ride home.

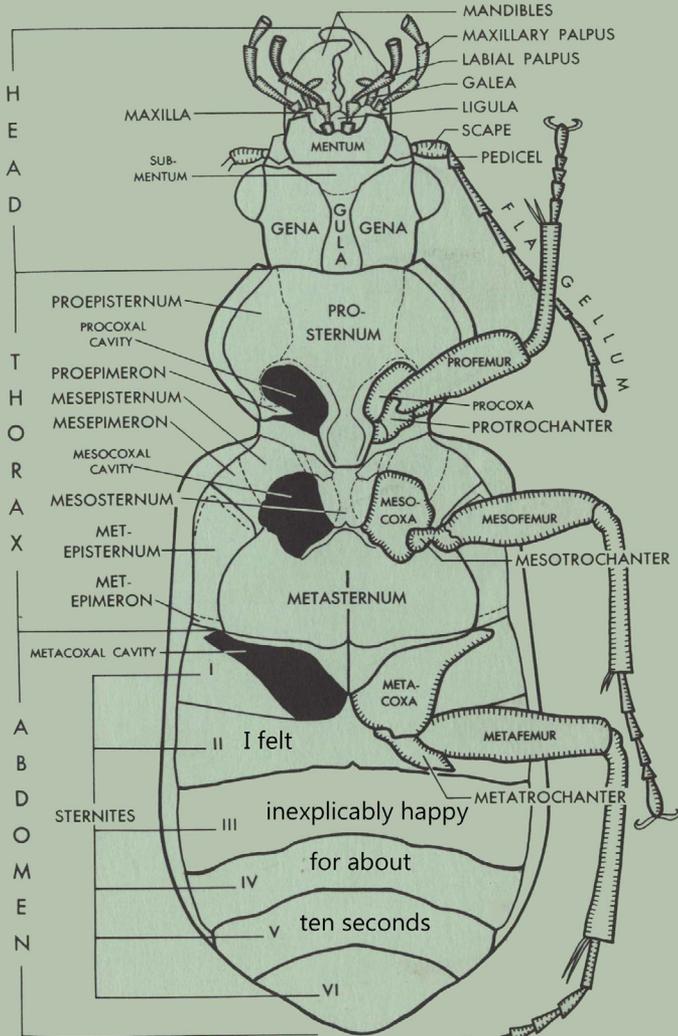
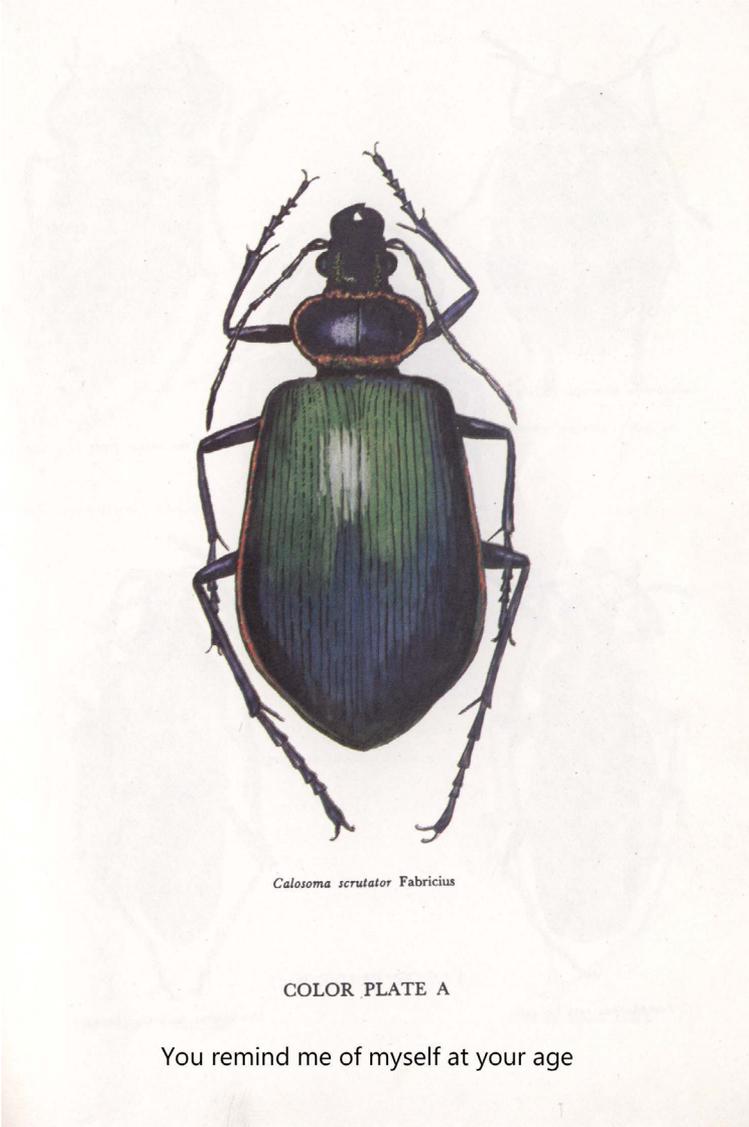


PLATE II

From the Beetles Series: 5



Calosoma scrutator Fabricius

COLOR PLATE A

You remind me of myself at your age

The Mexican Conductor

Meth made the miniature train more endurable as it careened through the mall. Children chased the caboose. Eyes full of diamonds and watermelons and blood, pointing with cotton candy dusted fingertips as the majesty blasts its convivial horn. I think of *muchachos* and *muchachas* who ride with their siblings or mothers or babysitters. How they bounce. How they should be lost in a cave with nothing but fire. How steel melts beneath the broken wings of fallen serpents.

The Mask of Night

A sleep mask masks sleep so that it does not recognize and awaken her. But she can see it still, swirling under her eyelids, satin under the satin mask.

When she wakes up, a blind man is lying between her legs. His eyelids are sewn shut with her eyelashes. He says nothing but reaches for her.

Graveyard Shift

sleep fells me with a sucker punch
to the head: I fall for it
forfeit a waste of days in favor
of elephants dreamed—

*a pachyderm herd
gray hides a tracery
trunks a tidal wave of gray—*

awake: rays nail me to a pillow: yellow
spreads across my sham. Another damn—

*egrets perch, smears of white
on swaying gray—elephants as fodder
for a bird of parasites: tusks
as weaponry—*

my lids don't close: I am nose to nose
with elephant: a tusk nudges
my skull: *I am not*
my scars, I say—

elephant's eye-glint
impales. Her ear's a ragged flap. *Scars*
are us, she answers back.

January, Huddled

The light is empty of stitching,
of bright weather, bees not opening
from a hole in a tree.

That tongue has a mouth's worth of teeth
and each one hangs with ice.

In winter
I am the cat with three eyelids,
each one unscrolled to veil
a different feeling.

What I mean is,
the gallery exhibits its own empty walls.

What used to be a voice blew under the door;
outside, one degree of temperature

is a lonely thing to feel.
It's a small world, after all.

Petri Dish

It's warm and cozy under the glass lid and all kinds of us are pulsing and squiggling around in here, little round cocci, skinny bacilli, and coiling spirilla, all of us trying to see who can multiply the fastest. We're quick and lively and competitive. We ferment your yogurt and eat your waste products, but remember that we're in this for the long haul, and some of us are hoping to get into your intestines or blood or onto your eyelashes so we can make our sort of organism immortal. Along the way you may have to die. But what's the difference between a person and a colony of bacteria? Answer: we could live without you but you couldn't live without us. So relax. We're just doing what we have to do. Put us under the microscope and look down the eyepiece. Aren't we lovely? Watch the bacilli waving like wands, banging into spirilla. Watch the spirilla twisting like miniature acrobats over and under them, knocking against the berry-shaped cocci. Watch the cocci rolling away, and bouncing back.

Contributors

Anny Ballardini has published two collections of poetry: *Ghost Dance in 33 Movements* (Otoliths, 2009) and *Opening and Closing numbers* (Moria, 2005). Her writing appears in various online collections. As a literary editor, she is the founder and editor of the *Poets' Corner*. She has translated Henry Gould's *In RI* (2010), and several other poets from English into Italian and from Italian into English. Ballardini works as a translator and interpreter, and teaches English in Bozen, South Tyrol.

Maxianne Berger is a poet and literary translator. Her writing meanders between Japanese forms and OuLiPo-style constraints. She is co-editor of the French-language online tanka journal, *Cirrus*. Her tanka collection, *un renard roux / a red fox*, was published by *petits nuages* in 2014. She lives in Montreal.

Katarina Boudreaux is a writer, musician, composer, tango dancer, and teacher—a shaper of word, sound, and mind. She recently returned to New Orleans after residing in Texas, Connecticut, and New York. New work is forthcoming in *Synaesthesia Magazine*, *Epigraph Magazine*, and *Dirty Press*.

Louis Bourgeois has published over a 1,000 poems in journals all over the world.

Lori Brack's poems and essays have recently appeared in *Sugared Water/Epistolary*, *The Fourth River*, *Mid-American Review*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, and *Superstition Review* and its blog *s[r]*, among others. Her chapbook, *A Fine Place to See the Sky*, is a poetic script for a work of performance art by Ernesto Pujol. It was published in 2010 by The Field School, New York. Brack teaches writing at a small college in Kansas.

Wendy Taylor Carlisle lives in the Arkansas Ozarks. She is the author of *Discount Fireworks* and *Reading Berryman to the Dog*, both from Jacaranda Press, and most recently *Persephone on the Metro* from Mad Hat Books.

James Cervantes's latest book is *From Mr. Bondo's Unshared Life*, a series of closely related persona poems. *Sleepwalker's Songs: New & Selected Poems*, published in 2012, is comprised of 32 new poems and poems selected from six previous collections. Other books include *Temporary Meaning*, *The Headlong Future*, *The Year Is Approaching Snow*, and *Changing The Subject*, a dialogue in poems with Halvard Johnson. He was editor of *The Salt River Review* for thirteen years and edited *In Like Company: The Porch & Salt River Review Anthology*, published by Mad Hat Press (2015).

Ryder Collins has a novel, *Homegirl!*. Her chapbook, *The way the sky was now*, won Heavy Feather Review's first fiction chapbook contest, and she has two other chapbooks of poetry, *i am hopscotch without hop* and *Orpheus on toast*. She wants to pull a cloud down from the sky & give it to you.

Jack Darrow lives on the northern slope of Mt. Tamalpais, waiting for rain.

Contributors

T.M. De Vos is the author of *Cimmeria*, forthcoming from Červená Barvá Press; a 2015 Sozopol Fiction Seminars fellow; Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Gloom Cupboard*; and Reader at *The Atlas Review*. She is currently working on a novel.

Matthew Dexter is an American author living in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. He writes abhorrent freelance pieces for exorbitant amounts of pesos to pay the bills while drinking cervezas in paradise with tourists. He is the author of the novel *The Ritalin Orgy* (Perpetual Motion Machine Publishing, 2013). His second novel, third novel, and debut story collection are forthcoming. Matthew is currently working on a memoir about a Mexican cartel drug (and human) smuggler.

Robin Wyatt Dunn writes and teaches in Los Angeles.

Robert W. Fieseler grew up in Chicago and graduated co-valedictorian from the Columbia Journalism School. His work has appeared in *Narratively*, *The Big Roundtable* and *RKVRV Quarterly*.

Skip Fox has written several books of poetry and mixed genres, including a selected poems. Lavender Ink recently published his first novel: *wired to zone*.

Sarah Gajkowski-Hill works as a writer at the University of Houston. She enjoys listening to her children play the piano, and classic Elton John.

Mitchell Krockmalnik Grabois has had over eight hundred of his poems and fictions appear in literary magazines in the U.S. and abroad. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize for work published in 2012, 2013, and 2014. His novel, *Two-Headed Dog*, based on his work as a clinical psychologist in a state hospital, is available for Kindle and Nook, or as a print edition.

Mary Harpin is a poet and freelance writer. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Juked*, *Terrain*, *McSweeney's*, *Conclave* and elsewhere. She is at work on an interview series with *Pen Parentis* about the lives of writers who are also parents. Mary lives in Colorado with her husband and daughters.

Sabrina Amaya Hoke is a young creative writing student on a quest to redefine words through her work. She was raised in a small town surrounded by cows and dreams of something more.

Stanley Jenkins' writing has been published widely in electronic magazines, print journals and anthologies, including *The Best Creative Non-Fiction, Vol 2* (W.W. Norton, 2008). He is the author of *A CITY ON A HILL* (Outpost19, 2013).

Contributors

Halvard Johnson lives in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.

Philip Kobylarz is a teacher and writer of fiction, poetry, book reviews, and essays. He has worked as a journalist and film critic for newspapers in Memphis, Tennessee. His work appears in such publications as *Paris Review*, *Poetry*, and *The Best American Poetry* series. The author of a book of poems concerning life in the south of France, he has recently published a short story collection titled *Now Leaving Nowheresville*.

Jee Leong Koh's new book of poems is *Steep Tea*, published by Carcanet Press in July. Koh's work has been shortlisted for the Singapore Literature Prize and translated into Japanese, Chinese and Russian. He lives in New York City.

Melissa Kwasny is the author of five books of poetry, most recently *Pictograph* (2015) and *The Nine Senses* (2011), both from Milkweed Editions. Her collection of essays, *Earth Recitals: Essays on Image and Vision*, was published by Lynx House Press in 2013. She is also the editor of *Toward the Open Field: Poets on the Art of Poetry 1800-1950* (Wesleyan 2004) and co-editor with M.L. Smoker of an anthology of poetry in defense of human rights, *I Go to the Ruined Place* (Lost Horse 2009).

Jude Marr is a teacher and PhD student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her work has appeared in *The Cortland Review*, *Black Heart Magazine*, *Cactus Heart* and *Cherry Tree* among others. Jude received an honorable mention for the 2014 Frankye Davis Mayes Prize sponsored by the Academy of American Poets.

Jennifer Moore is the author of *The Veronica Maneuver* (University of Akron Press). Her poems have appeared in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Best New Poets*, *B O D Y*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. A native of the Seattle area, Jennifer is an assistant professor at Ohio Northern University and lives in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Caroline Brooke Morrell is the author of the chapbook *Whisper her eye the flight* (dancing girl press). Her poems have appeared in a number of journals, including *Black Clock*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Conjunctions*, *Connecticut Review*, *Court Green*, *Fence*, *Spinning Jenny*, *The Pinch*, and *Versal*.

Amy Nash's poems have appeared in a range of journals, including *Common Ground Review*, *Blood Lotus*, and *Northwind*, and a number of anthologies, including *Adrienne Rich: A Tribute Anthology*, *The Heart of All That Is: Reflections on Home*, and *Legacy of Light: Poems for the Gay Head Lighthouse*. She was the April 2015 featured author in The New Guard's Bang! Author Showcase series.

Contributors

Rachel Nix is a native of Northwest Alabama, where pine trees outnumber people and she likes it. Her work has appeared in *Bop Dead City*, *Melancholy Hyperbole*, *Up the Staircase Quarterly*, and *Words Dance*. Rachel is the Poetry Editor at *cahoodaloodaling* and Associate Editor at Pankheart.

Richard King Perkins II is a state-sponsored advocate for residents in long-term care facilities. He is a three-time Pushcart nominee, a Best of the Net nominee and his work has appeared in more than a thousand publications including *The Louisiana Review*, *Bluestem*, *Emrys Journal*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Roanoke Review*, *The Red Cedar Review* and *The William and Mary Review*. He has poems forthcoming in *Hawai'i Review*, *Sugar House Review*, *Plainsongs*, *Free State Review* and *Texas Review*. He lives in Crystal Lake, IL with his wife, Vickie and daughter, Sage.

Jessy Randall's poems, poetry comics, and other things have appeared in *Asimov's*, *McSweeney's*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and *Rattle*. Her latest book is *There Was an Old Woman* (Unicorn Press, forthcoming 2015). She is a librarian at Colorado College.

Cintia Santana teaches translation, fiction and poetry workshops in Spanish at Stanford University. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Linebreak*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Spoon River Poetry Review*, *RHINO*, *Pleiades*, *The Threepenny Review*, and other journals. C.D. Wright selected Santana's poem, "Qasida of Grief," as the winner of The *Sycamore Review's* 2013 Wabash Poetry Prize.

Lorraine Schein is a New York writer. Her work has appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Gargoyle*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Mad Scientist Journal* and elsewhere, and recently in the anthologies *Gigantic Worlds*, *Wreckage of Reason* and *Drawn to Marvel*. Her poetry book, *The Futurist's Mistress*, is available from Mayapple Press.

Daniel Shapiro is the author of *How the Potato Chip Was Invented* (sunnyoutside press, 2013), a collection of celebrity prose poems. His recent work has appeared in *Hermeneutic Chaos*, *Rogue Agent*, *Maudlin House*, *Unbroken* and elsewhere. He is a special education teacher who lives in Pittsburgh.

Sarah J. Sloat lives in Frankfurt, Germany, a stone's throw from Schopenhauer's grave. Her poems and prose have appeared in *West Branch*, *Hayden's Ferry Review* and *Beloit Poetry Journal*. Sarah's chapbook of poems on typefaces and texts, *Inksuite* is available from Dancing Girl Press, which will also publish *Heiress to a Small Ruin* in 2015.

Contributors

Maura Stanton's prose poems have appeared in the *New Ohio Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Matchbook*, *Plume*, *Bateau*, *Hotel Amerika* and other magazines. She lives in Bloomington, Indiana.

Jeanie Tomasko. n [g-knee tuh-mah-sco, origin: midwest] as in person, place or thing born and residing in Wisconsin. a: lover of autumn, dictionaries, lowercases, suitcases and horsing around. b: prone to brake for herons, coffee, novelty machines filled with shiny (M)adonnas, long periods of silence. c: makes a mean guacamole and occasionally enjoys dusting.

Joshua Wann lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma with his wife, son, and daughter. He teaches English and Creative Writing at Broken Arrow High School and has his MFA from Oklahoma City University's Red Earth program. Pepper gardening, tree climbing, and campfire stories inform his writing.

Scott Wiggerman is the author of three books of poetry, *Leaf and Beak: Sonnets, Presence*, and *Vegetables and Other Relationships*; and the editor of several volumes, including *Wingbeats: Exercises & Practice in Poetry*, *Lifting the Sky: Southwestern Haiku & Haiga*, and *Wingbeats II*. He is an editor for Dos Gatos Press in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Theodore Worozbyt's books include *The Dauber Wings*, *Letters of Transit*, and *Smaller Than Death*, which is forthcoming from Knut House Press in December of 2015.

Mark Young is the editor of *Otoliths*, lives in a small town in North Queensland in Australia, & has been publishing poetry for more than fifty-five years. His work has been widely anthologized, & his essays & poetry translated into a number of languages. A new collection of poems, *Bandicoot habitat*, is due out from gradient books of Finland later this year.

Afterword

To adapt an old joke: give a person a poem or a flash fiction and they can read for a minute—teach them to write a poem or a flash fiction and they will experience a lifetime of paralyzing doubt.

conci's wouldn't be possible without the generosity of the authors who overcame their doubt to find their way to these pages. I offer my thanks to each of them for the rich gift of their writing and doubly so to those who chose to donate their author payment to charity. Together we raised \$1000 for the wonderful *Room to Read* organization while engaging—and hopefully delighting, diverting and even occasionally enlightening—nearly 9000 online readers.

Writing is hard. Writing well is even harder. But writing well and *briefly* may be the hardest labor of all. As Blaise Pascal put it, “I made this letter longer than usual because I have not had time to make it shorter.” I created *conci's* to share the work of writers who found, made or stole the time to make it short. I hope you enjoyed their words as much as I have.

—Chris Lott

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