

issuetwo

AUG22

# MAXIMUS

FEATURING THE TALENTS OF

RACHER  
COLE  
DE CORB  
MONTEIRO  
FLECKENSTEIN  
KUHNLEIN  
LIENING  
WALTZ  
ST. CLAIRE

LEVINSON  
DUHEM  
BARKER  
WILLIAMS  
CACOS  
GOLDIN  
THRAX  
HAY  
CATON

IKEDA  
LUKE U.  
BONILLA  
MARTIN  
OSMAN  
DAY  
HILSON  
THE RECLUSE



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ERIC T. RACHER

*3 Sonnets on the Flyleaf of Charles Olson's*  
Selected Poems

1

A giant body spans the open field –  
Gloucester's exile, child of Los, a face  
there, vespertine cognition, morning shield:  
*res ipsa loquitur – non verba, res.*  
Thus *head by way of ear, to syllable*,  
'the eare's a rationall sence & a chiefe judge  
of proportion,' (*Vinculum juris!*). The bul-  
wark rose through *heart, by way of breath* (A smudge  
of ink upon the page.) to *line, the prac-*  
*tice of the self, root city*, dwelling, a-  
gent of emotive intellect, the (*praq-*  
*lit* or *qategor*, this angel?) way:  
Adam *Qadmon* in Dogtown. (Grasp thy morn-  
ing knowledge, archaeologist of mourn-

ing!) Skin, my skin, (Demising wall.), come meet  
 the world you are a part of, & greet that twin  
 of life, its codomain, a non-discrete  
 whole forged of the discrete, rhythm, an in-  
 terstice of consciousness. The thing. The thing  
 kinetic, *reenact it – res, non ver-*  
*ba – only valid metaphysic.* Sing,  
 do not describe, enact and sing it. *Der*  
*Weg stirbt.* To circumscribe description and  
 delimit logic's scope and range, Charles, thy  
 prescription. Glass and falling grains of sand.  
 (Epiphany? Apophany?) Thus I.  
 To objectify the life of feeling, we  
 enact the body, poem, twin, decree.

*I've had to learn the simplest things* (indeed  
 the simplest) last. What does not change, *the will*  
*to change*, held fast to, syllables that speed  
 and post, congeal, refuse diaeresis. Still-  
 ness of geography, *the central fact*:  
 the field, the breath, conjectured into bloom.  
*And words, words, words* – the sentence, Charles (Intact,  
 after all!), first act of nature, syntax, tomb  
 of logic, hewn to, law above conven-



tion, broken open, open field. (Old saw  
of form and content.) *An act of verse*. Again  
this myth of time and poetry, thy law.  
The sonnet *is* a hieroglyph: its yield,  
a spawning matrix in the open field.

DUSTIN COLE

*The Empty Centre*

He had the centre standing there  
In his head  
Beacon for the harsh weather  
Everything it represented

It's kind of like a yurt  
In raw concrete, he had told the nurse  
Red, orange, yellow paneling  
curved bands of window glass

It wears the blizzard like a robe  
Silver white all the way, he thought  
Then a darker  
Turn of thought

A tapeworm goes  
Inside your stomach  
every time you eat,  
and eats

Then goes to sleep  
In your large intestine

In a dream together  
He asks if you're happy

The tape unwound  
Tangled on the floor  
Irretrievable  
Moments

The figure foots a long shadow  
The echo in the street is terminal  
The children are all hushed  
The homes are too quiet

Somewhere in this  
Belongs a crow, he thought  
But what would he say  
And who could he tell

Of his iron grey  
Perception;  
Inclement light on  
the brambly floor

Small  
Wet explosions  
Dot the figure's face  
Like the click of his heels dot time

I can't help

Thinking of myself  
As another person  
In a different world, all the time

I read Preludes the other day  
Realized I'd been holding my breath  
The whole way  
As the old ladies gathered last month's news I gasped

I always  
Wonder  
Where they go  
After that

To burn  
in a common fire  
To see  
in a common light

'All mouth  
All word  
Old word'  
The crow said

Brittle twig  
Inundated text  
Shadow of the oak  
On the pavement darkly

Receding background  
In the centre of the picture  
Bleary smudging  
Of the rain

He'd talk to the nurses  
At the centre  
They'd hear all about  
The characters and images

They'd give him a pill  
Tell him to skip church  
Tell him to call his brother  
Tell him to write the damn stuff down

Why would you need to write it down  
If you remember it down to the letter  
Every modulation  
Each slight pause

And then the figure would sit in a reverie  
In the rotunda  
By the natural gas hearth  
At the centre's axis

'Paraplegic rolls into an empty parkade elevator alone  
'Underwater welder below meters on meters of ice  
'Monocellular predator in the microscopic dimension  
'Disembodied saxophone moaning down a frozen street'

Rustling curtain  
In a vacant house  
Vacant house  
Of flickering spirit

When you watch the fire  
The curving and uncurving flame  
The mesmerizing erasure  
When you watch the fire

Perhaps you can see it better when you're down  
In the eyes of a one-legged man  
Empty eyes at the foot of a steep set of stairs  
With his dirty lover, the two of them blocking the stairs

A tear of mercy,  
A tear of sorrow  
Of laughter and of blood,  
In a common light

'Every thought I have has a twin,' the crow said  
'The rhyming word is a double cousin,' the crow said  
'We are going to the fair up there,' the crow said  
'We are going to the graveyard to piss on all the tombstones'

Brittle twig  
Inundated text

Shadow of the oak  
On the pavement darkly

Under impositions  
Of large dread figures  
We go completely  
White as death

Disappear in cinders  
Of the common fire  
Disappear in contours  
Of the flickering spirit

That said, there were a few good times.  
And a hard Sunday pew to renew  
What might have been true in lieu of what –  
Nobody ever knew

Or nobody  
Told me  
And that amounted  
To nothing

Compose and decompose a thought  
Heft the weight of conceit  
Link a few moments in time  
'Then recede,' said the crow, 'recede'

Through a pale field

Of sense  
To the empty centre  
Of the picture

It wears the blizzard like a robe  
Silver white all the way  
Glowing like a flue-hole  
In a deeper whiteness

But the parking lot is empty  
The steps are all uncleared  
There are no footprints  
The doors are all locked

Amid this  
Dark medium  
The centre  
Of it all

When you watch the fire  
The curving and uncurving flame  
The mesmerizing erasure  
When you watch the fire

The real metaphysical thing –  
Strict and unknown  
Unrecounted thought  
Recollects its own vanishing



Stupid mental game  
Paradox, anti-paradox  
Maddeningly  
Hopeless

Clap your friend  
Upon the shoulder  
Say some  
Heartening thing

The river is on fire  
The mill-sails are all on fire  
The freshet is  
A loaded gun

Amid this  
Dark medium  
Pullback from the river  
From a black feather

The flight  
Of night  
Higher, further  
Recoiling from the light

From the empty centre  
From the reflection  
Something missing in the eyes  
Doubled in the doorway

Same mouth, new word  
Stepping in a filling step  
White as  
Death is white as black

Looking back: it wears the blizzard like a robe  
Silver white all the way  
Chanting olden mystic things  
Clapping you upon the shoulder

## SOCORVA DE CORB

### *To Taste*

the recipe flows sweetly:

into a broth of dire fear  
    add pinch of fight  
        and maybe two of fuck  
heap in chopped stems of flight  
    season with lust and pride  
        stir with a slothful spoon  
sauté in slick of greed  
    roast in a pyre of wrath  
        speckle with green of envy  
nurse hunger, then pour it all  
    into a pot of days, one after another

what is man, that you are mindful of him  
a pile of tortured secrets  
a set of trivial exploits  
numerator for God  
single serving  
of and for  
λόγος\*

*\*Logos; the Word.*

AYRTON MONTEIRO

*Where Slept the Dogs in a Cloud of Flies*

3 poems

FROM JURANDIR'S "FIRST MORNING"

"The bolt into the mombin-tree  
killed sixteen pigs, inside  
the house it  
broke a pillar, and the room  
where Luciana was cast:  
now Open with a strike."

"The lightning also o  
pens me a way, a path,  
open  
not in the streets,  
the clouds,  
the river,  
no, in myself, in this  
greenish and secret  
being  
I am."

And "the glasses shone."

## NOX OCCUPAT UNA

The red lollipop fell, and crack'd  
to many shatterings; in Noon's likeness.

Emilia picked a  
man from the streets.

## THEY FOUND US FULL OF THE SPIRIT

Passing Avenue Cabral  
there's a wood link to a blue church,  
a Pentecostal church, and she has the shape of a star with ferns on  
her hand.

At Antônio Barreto St. there is  
or there was  
a house,  
white and with blue writing all over it;  
verses from the Bible, about the start  
and the end.

I looked for it today, but  
I think they painted over  
with ugly flowers.

MARK FLECKENSTEIN

*Rothko's Harvard Murals*

1

Silence is so accurate.

*Phrasal somatic epiphany. Innocence-stripped atonement.  
The soul, its contortions*

*perceptual, susurrated. Memory-scarred, recollected.  
Transcendent, corporeal, autonomic. Disemboweled prayers.*

“A painting is not an experience. It is the experience.”

2 : RECIPE FOR ART\*

A clear preoccupation with death – intimations of mortality

Sensuality – Our basis of being concrete about the world.  
(It is a lustful relationship to things that exist.

\*from Mark Rothko's lecture at The Pratt Institute, 1958

Tension – Either conflict or curbed desire.

Irony – The self-effacement and examination  
(By which a man for an instant can go on to something else.)

Wit, play – The human element

A few grams of the ephemeral and chance

Hope

3

“I do not believe that there ever was a question of being abstract or representational.”

*(The dark mood of the triptych was meant to convey Christ's suffering on Good Friday, and the brighter hues of the last mural, Easter and the Resurrection.)*

“It is really a matter of ending this silence and solitude, of breathing and stretching one's arms again.”

*(What he wanted was a presence, so that when you turned your back to the painting, you feel that presence the way you feel the sun on your back.)*

“I think of my pictures as dramas.”

4

*The past is simple; the present is difficult;*  
the future is even simpler.

*Truth must strip itself of self.*  
A shadow looking back from the canvas.

*One must go further, one must go further.*  
*One must go first.*

*The result of my life is simply nothing –*  
the whole wall red.



DAVID KUHNLEIN

*Sand Dollar*

Time grins in ghost ridden creeks  
Thumbing through my wave-shaped name  
A benthic phantom, biscuit urchin  
The mudflap of my pelvic floor  
I grease the sky where birds struggle parting feathers  
Parkways wade my residue, like carnassial teeth in drag  
A funhouse mirror glosses my skeletal reflection  
On crisp bleach bubbles I've swallowed  
In untilled fields that crouch behind the sun  
I smudge lipstick around holes  
The ground zooms in till my kurgans are kissable  
Deploying palmar, I hold the upper mud  
Pacific townsfolk crave my cross-shaped uteri  
Private joy remitted by my intercostal curves  
Their mealy cores, horseshoed under  
Fussy tumors bolster bodies they destroy  
Branches hiss at wind, like a god made good for entering  
Riverbanks await edema, thickening felled trees  
Stump's shape traced, buzzing with my blink  
No stranger to the splinters in my gills reviving me

## *Nautilus*

This is the edge of the Indo-Pacific  
Where I watched the angel land  
Her face so long and slender  
Legs nestled the striated palm of my hand  
This is my dream of connection  
Reef reaching towards sky like a drawbridge  
Fluting her feathers between  
My eight-to-ten-headed appendage  
This is her neck pulled under the water  
As two arms I used for sailing shot  
Above the waves and dragged her wails  
Still echoing in my chamber pot

BRAD LIENING

*Real Estate*

My one true love  
grew up to sell real estate  
in one of the worst corners of the world.  
I imagine her moving through  
a succession of abandoned buildings  
under a red sky.  
I imagine her stumbling  
into a tiger pit  
and me, tossing her a rope  
of braided vines.  
I imagine rescuing her  
from a ravenous wolverine  
and her cradling my torn body.  
I imagine turning into a tree  
and her chopping me down,  
building a house,  
and living inside me forever.

## *Old Barns*

Inside the old barn  
are two old barns.  
Inside those two barns  
are unincorporated municipalities  
without legal status  
and a small airport  
where the occasional demagogue  
flies in and lies and a dog  
barks through the night.  
Inside the night  
kids draw up plans for a catapult.  
The payload is a tackle box.  
Inside the tackle box  
is a snowball fight  
and inside the snow  
it is very quiet  
and there are many fawns,  
all very still, awaiting  
their mothers' return.

WILL WALTZ

*Graveyard Rubbing*

stepping stones all rightside down  
save me and weather hates it  
all inward letters scrape d signs  
drool dog waiting just outside  
I keep all dates folded close  
til wind forces  
hand to let  
a second fly by empty  
and all these rubbings turned to leaves  
all papers rustle at all feet

*Your Favorite Band*

A peach split open with rough fingertips  
dollar bills crammed between your lips  
one warty arm of a halfman  
forced thru the doorcrack  
and on lessons on the carpet  
after the cashboxlock...

and, if it would please you,  
above the clinkedup darkness,  
beyond the castle gates  
of a garden and a gaze  
of a white-haired witch  
to answer ring  
that (my burning bright)  
red telephone?

NICOLE F. KIMBALL

*Thrash*

Dwindle drown paper-mâché    man carved of self  
carved of floor        beds nail beds beds with saws  
for eyes gaping into you        neighbor-bride  
many others-opened crevice-    legged like circles  
around hips towards window onto her    tongue-  
prey hand-play electric-hands drilling-nobs pillow  
misted in her        flicker  
running Svensson    or    the meaning of barrette  
rabbit        down  
on white    coarse filmy        tooth        and  
raspberry eyes talking about the sloppiness of my  
chin in my mural        I wear  
pinky finger banged    serrated shanked    stuffed  
in closet seven    by six the decaying animals and  
his friends  
carrying muscles like fragile hap        piness  
fire-flamed chameleon covering        coverings  
covering        ringlets knotting like cleaving of  
bicycle -riding, outside        willow bending for-  
wards not from the wind        but the cold touch,  
adults as probing, taking the        crown outta  
my mural        taking my ears outta hearing

## *Thrashing*

Swinging kite-flier breast-mother    blubber-neck  
woman    carved out of    girl-    mucker  
weeds of    iris covered by  
pants woman    carved    out of my girl  
I sit with    house-down-the-street  
tall    like anglo-saxon men needling mechanical-  
fingers courage-sealed in froth as    yellow-light-  
ning    yolk  
along the shingles    I smell something strange  
so I take her outta    my pockets where she  
goes to pray at    night hoping no one    else  
is stupid enough to tell    and he is that of those  
tree-boy bloodied-tongued    lean mother -  
fuckers  
that sucks the peeholes of kite-flying irises burnt-  
bread    rummage and money honey burying in  
teal just as I    head south for that train on sixth  
taking me to    the stairwell, taking me    to the  
crawling snakes    where I believe the  
ashes turn    gray



*Thrashed*

And [and] just then the lightbulb twitched [ ]  
 I came on. This mural I make of me, glass -  
 round curves softening my body to become  
 new flowers where my teeth meet the grooves  
 of this life, and where we go after. I gaze past  
 myself. Out into the breaths, into the daring. Hand  
 is no hand; print. is the palm I carried names  
 in, other names for me. Foot is no foot;  
 print. Is how I walked. dreams of seeing wild  
 things; changing things. Black-eyed susans  
 cluttering the earth and pink  
 flamingoes pink feathers in the skies. Mary  
 Ellen, Tabitha, the good will praying gives you,  
 clotting the wounds like the tides of rolling  
 hay. My mural is not religious, or  
 believing in ghosts, it paints itself as I get naked,  
 to arrange dis embodied  
 black and blue flowers,  
 blurring into [what is and what is not rape]  
 the negative like rice into  
 gullies, [retna] [juvenile]  
 [ ]  
 I teach myself anatomy, all those moments I

didn't know my body and the meaning of barrette  
 that murmuring place  
 I go to once all of this  
 passes

JOSHUA ST. CLAIRE

*Faints Oaths of Naught*

36 Haiku Found in A Midsummer Night's Dream

1.1

showers of oaths did melt  
gates have we devis'd  
painted blind

quick bright things  
unfold both heaven and earth  
upon faint primrose-beds

bracelets of thy hair  
tempest of my eyes  
for want of rain

a paradise to me  
your eyes are lode-stars  
chanting faint hymns

1.2

nightingale quince  
crowns have no hair at all  
by moonlight

since a summer's day  
gentle as any nightingale  
quince at the duke's oak

I will move raging rocks  
you the lion's part  
quince in our interlude

look to their eyes  
speak as small as  
any sucking dove

2.1

opportunity of night  
anoint his eyes  
ill counsel of a desert place

maidens call it  
love-in-idleness  
ere the first cock

forgeries of jealousy  
hold their hips  
against her lips

quaint mazes  
want their winter  
in the wanton green

moonlight revels  
long within this wood  
of that boy did die

governess of floods  
her anger  
washes all

## 2.2

weaving spiders  
interchained with an oath  
a raven for a dove

who will not change  
the deepest loathing  
dissembling glass

night and silence

in the musk-rose buds  
sing me now asleep

this flower force  
their leathern wings  
eat my heart away

*In The Cedar-Limbs*  
An Erasure of Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen  
Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

1

mountains  
moving  
the eye

11

I was

111

the autumn winds.

1V

one

one

V

beauty of inflections  
the beauty of innuendoes,

just after.

VI

Icicles      the  
                glass  
The shadow

VII

Why do you imagine  
Do you

VIII

know

I know  
That  
I know

IX

the edge

X

Flying

out

XI

a glass  
pierced

The shadow

XII

must be



### XIII

It was  
was

In the cedar-limbs.

LEE LEVINSON

*Perpetual Stew*

They steal the scent of corpses to blaspheme Earth.  
Sticky with syrupy salvation, come  
Smudged across the forehead wreathed in chrysanthemum  
Singing songs like sulphur deposits gone animate against birth  
Spatchcocked by starlit taunt...  
Now only neon salts the wounds.

Here's this fallacy of limestone's bleat,  
Animalia's long-lost control of meat.  
Bathed in vehicular manslaughter, you impugn  
Acrostic death dance, flaunt  
Distillate sugary cornucopia of cremation.  
On the hunt for dead gods,  
I devour icons in a row.  
I, an Eastern wind disguising the scalped with silken bow,  
Call home a cesspool of nocturnal sensation.

World makes me kill doves,  
Another fertilizer gone silent with all its loves.

STEPHANIE YUE DUHEM

*Farewell Spell*

Something sighed.  
Black wax in a yellow bowl  
smoked.

A candle stroked the cheek of air,  
saying “There.” Then  
“There.”

I too spoke words which shaped  
my mouth to sharpness or to  
wound.

What enchanted us broke – oh,  
how the end of every rope is  
fray.

So I pulled our braid to strands,  
to strand us, with a  
sound.

Later, it was steel  
wool on clay. I washed away cool  
wax –

watched the water black,  
then pale. Something sighed.  
“Farewell.”

WALLACE BARKER

*Clutter Falls*  
a cycle

CLUTTER FALLS #1

light thru cracks in blinds and  
a swift river down the canyon  
only the clouds remain after

the night birds return to their cave  
all your thoughts about some victory  
in the future and all the tides receding

leave fish stranded  
memory is a headache  
we play country ballads on guitar

we can sit on the porch over the river  
and play marty robbins songs  
later in the night we talk about

certain businesspeople we know  
the dallas cowboys, space facts

## CLUTTER FALLS #2

i saw a horned owl at night  
during the day sweating  
outside a dancehall and deer  
pause on the grass like statues

my forehead pressed against glass  
so much cooler in the shade  
mystique of the white gravel lot  
lemon round in guadalupe beef

navy blue over green treetops  
i can see comanche fires in the woods  
or edison lamps burning in windows  
there are germans in this forest

### CLUTTER FALLS #3

unreal house on the edge of dreams  
in a place where waters converge  
the sun looping into frame

in a crisis of belief my breath caught short  
and i knew i could not be with either side  
standing downwind of a skunk at night

the morning came hot and fast  
little bells tinkling with the sunrise  
until all the cedars are green and white

DAVID EARL WILLIAMS

*MADAME BOTOX,*

I think it's nice the way they  
paralyzed your face  
to match the hearts and minds  
that surround you

but, I have a message for you  
from Dia de Los Muertos,  
says Don Quixote –  
stop roamin' round to doctor's offices, it says –

come home  
come home  
the calacas and calaveras  
love n want you –

they are awaiting you with worship n marigolds

and not a single word of reproach, you mad, sad Quioterita



JAMES CACOS

*Prayer*

Now I lay me down, dipping into the annals,  
a ship's log of a sea journey.

Portrait of my soul, or a wry peek  
at the meteoric rise and fall of a middle-aged champion  
bearing witness at the stations of his cross.

Baring all, don't you know, for the bare necessities,  
(all my trials and a few extensive pleasures)  
to find only that it's really a matter of leaving  
time enough for that second that is upon me  
time enough for one sublime bird to alight,  
for me to take notice as the bird takes hold  
of that branch on that tree.

– The bird, my attention tells me,  
is like a word on a page, or a curved line on a canvas,  
or the smile of the woman across the hall.

LAURA GOLDIN

*Just like Sweden*

When Mother opened the door, it was  
just like Sweden!  
We had a baby grand, and a blind piano tuner –  
This is a true story.  
Father painted one of them green.  
(Guess which one.)  
Laughter was Father's métier.  
He made us do it. Like Pavlov's dogs.  
Relax. (Bells ringing.) Smile, damn you.  
Bells.

MAX THRAX

*Strategems*

Back and forth  
On a checkerboard  
Heaving silk  
Your sick smile

Were these the cities  
How did they die

Who threshed  
And threshed  
Outside the cities

Who starved and sank  
On the plains

“No real truths  
Only stratagems”  
From your tongue

Your eyes  
Back and forth  
On a checkerboard

Like mine  
Jaundiced brow  
Clotted blood

DAVID HAY

*Stain*

A black stain slips into the mind,  
here comes a thought, a thought  
that obeys no order

A drumming despair and a voice  
distinct but not separate  
intrudes into the centre of each emotion.

The voice has sipped in my silence

Spat it out.

Violent. Pathetic.

My topography of flimsy flesh  
is half-captured by the last few drops of evening.

there is nothing that is secure

everything is mutable

Time nibbles gently at my fleshy seems,  
and my mother is brain-cradled in her despair.

I hide beneath a landscape  
of variegated bed covers,  
and take tentative dark sips of stale air  
from my subterranean sanctum  
of rotten leaves  
and the corpses of peaches.

The doctors materialise once more into the darkness  
of my self-constructed womb  
mumbling their grammarless chants.

My mind wants to vomit.  
Their deep-organ tones  
are rich with inhuman terror.

IAN FREDERICK CATON

*Make America Drone Again*

O hail  
the mighty OM  
of meditation

Bearded men  
in robes chanting  
incantations

Sitting circular  
legs crossed and staring  
at the flame of a candle  
as it  
dances on its wick

Make America Drone Again

O hail  
the mighty drone  
of reverberation

As the OM  
circulates in the hollows  
across this nation

In the chest-cavity  
through the lungs, the caverns  
of the mouth  
OM begins in the mind  
to the heart, travels north to south

Make America Drone Again

Open fly the windows  
let the wind blow and howl  
screaming through the gorge

Make America Drone Again

This drone  
is a natural thing  
a waterfall

And when the creek  
overflows will you drive out  
to visit?

Slowly, methodically  
careful through the ice  
and snow

Listen to your tires  
as they spin  
and they whirr



When the creek overflows  
will you drive through the snow to visit?

Will you drive out to save your cat?  
And your dog?

And when the creek overflows  
and the bridge collapses will you find another route  
to get to me?

Or will you strap on snowshoes  
and trudge through the powder  
break through the ice to come to me?

Bring me a mulled cider –  
a cask of warm spiced apple cider  
to glow in our spirit

When the river is overcome with salmon  
swimming upstream for their lives

Sewing their eggs with their egos  
milky white cream

Filters through the stream  
ice cold sex, will you come to me then  
beat a path through barriers of slush

Listening to your footsteps as you

clomp clomp clomp through yuck and freeze  
listen to the drone of work

The drone of effort, the drone of  
one footstep in front of the other, and repeat –  
over and over

Repeat, step, repeat  
step, repeat, step, will you  
come to me then?

Make America Drone Again

America drones with the swelter of heat  
the frigid of cold, the grinding of jackhammers and cash registers  
closing, glass towers of success

America drones with the pounding of nails  
the sawing of boards, and brittle dry bones  
buried deep and out of sight

Sinews and guts, kidneys and liver  
arteries stretched  
across the Columbia river

O drone, as droplets fall

one by one dripping down the length  
of an icicle

Gradually increasing its size  
reflecting the starlight to visions  
of nebulas and further galaxies

Distant                      aquatic  
out beyond us  
lightyears away

The drone of piano string  
plucked against the night with a  
nylon tipped drumstick

Mysterious, vibrating  
against the atmosphere, a call to be responded  
by gulls  
far off out at sea

Flying with the moonlight  
reflecting off their wings, soaring  
up and down with vibrations  
motion and pitch  
arching into the ozone

Make America Drone Again

YUU IKEDA

*Their Destiny*

The gray sky exposes  
silhouettes of  
raindrops.

I don't know their destiny.  
They don't know my destiny.  
I don't know the sun.  
They don't know the sun.

The gray sky makes me imagine  
the blue sky, even in raindrops.

But I don't know blue.  
They don't know blue.

### *A Clown's Hope*

I'm a faceless clown  
who can't appear on any circuses.  
My eyes don't look at anything.  
My ears don't listen to anything.  
Bloodless skin doesn't want anything.  
I'm just a hopeless clown  
who can't ride on a unicycle.  
I may give up everything.  
When I do so,  
what will happen?  
Nothing may happen.  
Phantasmal happiness may come to me.

*Thoth's Moon Arcana*

On accident, an old man chopping at bamboo shoots nearly decapitates a microscopic newborn girl hiding inside one, then, with intent, raises her as if she were his own daughter. The girl blossoms into a noblewoman, and at her age of marrying, the moonpeople come down parading as an army and demand the old man return their princess. As it turns out, she's an E.T., a small white separated from her kind.

The moon drops a baby, then it waits until she's settled into life on Earth to take her back. It's a cruel mistress.

[A card on the table shows two Anubi holding phallic ankhs. It reads "XVIII. The Moon."]

Betwixt the dog gods runs a stream of blood, a scar across a valley. The valley is Gehenna, where King Ahaz of Judah and countless other pagan men and women char their sons alive in tribute to the demon Moloch, whose calf-headed effigy resides there. The tykes are made to walk between twin lanes of fire and emerge at Moloch's foot as black skeletons not unlike Life-in-Death while the infants are boiled brown within Moloch's bowels.

This card comes from the Thoth tarot deck. The key to this depiction of the moon is its waning, a phase foretelling a weird, deceptive life and one too many Dark Nights of the Soul.

ISRAEL A. BONILLA

*Terra*

Encircled by dumb perpendiculars –  
time is measured in corrosion  
both physical and spiritual.  
Is all changeless as truth? Is truth changeless?

There will be nodding in our cloisters,  
where rumbles have their appointed hour  
and tedium amounts to vision.

A delay in answer attains  
around bodies sensitive to weight.

## *Terrae fetus*

Delicate the texture of certainty,  
nurtured as it is by recrement,  
never quite the safeguard standing  
between recusant and believer.

Notice the dirt that clings,  
neither husk nor casket.  
Toil, if anything.

Once I had a thought to scrub away.  
Once in thoroughness I effaced.



## *Metalla*

I bless the unsettled core that besets  
the direction of my turns;  
otherwise, I would soon arrive  
where they expect me, eager and reborn.

A rebirth through foreign handling,  
ready for exchange at whim:  
value, less myself.

Shudder when the anvil speaks,  
lest the rousing din deafen.

JOSHUA MARTIN

*Palatial Fur-Lined Vanilla Squeezing Flaxen Fangs*

Slow numerical chippings sway asphalt  
once the thud offers a conclusion  
without jiggling a thorn. Many  
frequently teenaged mattresses  
defined nostalgia as tidal wave cushions  
burying sawing near a fetishized product.  
Each member drowns a cabinet  
clear tho speaking w/o a brain  
as if shooting blank spheres  
into camera demanded Everglades.  
Push but calling yellow cop a cheese  
fungible like a hairless tempo  
brushing anus. Dreams often  
compared to foodstuffs. An angle  
victimless tho hypnotically dense.

Base a fortune on a collagen polaroid  
to praying mantis axis nick  
well-suited pair of suffixes  
flushing tremors. Mineral reflexes  
dry on a board doodle  
outlined Ingrid Thulin monastery

rhythmic tho protruding. Silver  
evidence baked into linen  
no normal night could address  
at least if brown and tortured.  
Meanwhile clapping an actionable glaze  
innate shoplifter sorts debris  
like oxygen.

Subtle doorway fence attrition  
trained as a mummy particle  
parallel to preposition. Unjustly  
foot builds transcript horizon  
dismantled in the usual spots.  
trust not a flapping wand  
nor tongue telling skin to insert xyz.  
Slang a marginal peel. Shrubs are belts  
embodying practice makes septic tank.  
Tooth umbrella hue. Limestone  
shrimp liquified haircut glue  
a tone for typing chimneys. Remove  
the cohort from the devil  
to leave a harsher coda  
flossing over rings thinner than acid  
and circling an avuncular skyscraper.

Pale as a plastic bag deer  
elbowing mementos into bubbles.

Click the balloon.

ALEX OSMAN

*This Trailer Will Collapse and Fertilize the Earth*

Passed on a college degree  
This whole time I wanted a dancing primate  
I've never seen three crooked cops watching those late night  
talk shows  
Put it in reverse, you just want to be loved  
Put it in neutral, a tragic stilt charade  
I don't give a shit  
Exhaust fumes remain nostalgic  
Microwave dinners melting in a vacuum  
Lawn gnomes don't practice basic hygiene  
Hand-me-down knickknacks from porno geeks  
A chicken beheaded  
A chicken unbreaded  
That cartilage will come back in style  
Neighbor presented the blade  
9-year-old anger management case  
The eyes of Rick Ramirez  
Riding a chicken through the eye of a tornado  
Grinding its organs to make his final meal  
I was the organ grinder on the trampoline performing with a  
dancing primate

ADAM DAY

*Rehabilitation*

My aunt shaves  
in her underwear

while she talks  
to her hair – like

plant sentience:  
“If you leave

someone, you’ve  
got to do it

for a real  
piece of ass.”

The whole thing  
is ridiculous:

it’s like being  
inside a bird;

where do you  
live when

you're sick?

*Redoubt*

Night mountain  
snow is unlike  
them living  
inside his head:

There is one less  
table setting.  
He had nothing

to fear, though  
he went in fear –  
there was nothing

they could do  
to him, or  
very little.

## *Monkey Mind*

Shotgun my brain  
and tendons into words

onto the wall. The trigger-digit  
sings though

it doesn't feel  
its best. It should be

ashamed; people will  
be mad – them do moral

history. But screw Jack  
and sister and Santa

and sir! This island feels  
less and more about less. But

if I escape to Montana,  
Slovenia? All did or are doing:



thrive, nervous hurts – then  
the appointment – forty years long

enough in a taxi  
going home? One day

I will rope with my own  
hands or dive into schist –

forget footnotes  
and news and truth. Take

a word for it. My mind  
is fine. The jerk.

*To Remain*

Swift tired, soft  
they leave their eyes

on the sun,  
leaves whitening

before rain  
in the acacia cold.

Clouds hang  
like wood

in barbed wire.  
The easy sky

gets laid, flashing  
the sea heavy

on the hill.

JESSE HILSON

*Sorcerer*

A tarantula of piss crawled around inside  
His bladder, waking him up  
Is how the story started

He grabbed his phone to screenshot  
a dream image just upon waking, unthinking  
(Patricia Lockwood saying the phone's contents  
More real than the world's)

Much later he was given a Jackson Pollock  
To forge into another painting – is he up to it?

Imagining something is a hyperlink when it isn't  
Is playing the devil's kickball  
No one calls them "hyperlinks" anymore by the way  
Is what his apprentice told him

Once the brooms got put away

And don't pester the online Nadja anymore  
For the rest of the century  
You are not Breton

*A Dream: Many Entrances, One Exit*

Little terrorist kid, destroys a floor, misbehaves.  
Dances crazily with drumsticks in front  
of a video composite of another child,  
trying to blot her out.

Going to check on a musty P.O. Box  
at a college campus I once attended,  
I forgot the number but anyway they gave it to me,  
there's a poem wrapped in plastic inside.

I must have put it there during the pandemic year.  
Can't remember what the poem was about.  
But the script was interesting, you could place it  
in time by comparing orthographic marks

with my other written drafts from other eras.  
Letters with ligatures alike,  
like Arabic calligraphy.  
The handwriting analyst tells entrance tales.

The storyline hovered on the edge  
of significance but I got the feeling  
once the exit was reached,  
a clarifying shockwave would be sent

backwards through the mystery narrative.  
But no A-ha moment. No coherence bubblegum.  
Can't tell the itch from the scratch—  
“And bathtub smell like electrified cum”

“YOURS TRULY, THE HAPPY RECLUSE”

*empty glass on picnic table*

Look at that empty

glass

100% full of air; &

100% full of light

also in there.

That's two

hundred percents at once

simultaneously

occupying the same space in perfect harmony.

Look at that empty

glass in which

space of totality

seems so central to the glass

but basks borderlessly.



## Contributors

*in order of appearance*

ERIC T. RACHER was born in Akron, Ohio and currently lives in Riga, Latvia. He is the author of a chapbook of poetry, *Five Functions Defined on Experience: for Jay Wright*, published in 2021.

DUSTIN COLE is the author of the novel *Notice* (Nightwood Editions) and the chapbook *Dream Peripheries* (General Delivery). He has also contributed writing to Apocalypse Confidential, BC BookWorld, Heavy Feather Review and the British Columbia Review.

SOCORVA DE CORB, reformed sinner, hails from Balkan hinterlands, has migrated to the great Lone Star state and now tends to corvid cousins & fears all of the gods.

AYRTON MONTEIRO writes from Pará, Brazil, from the very core of the Amazon rainforests. He's been published in Azure Bell and will be part of a large Brazilian poetry anthology, which is yet to come.

MARK FLECKENSTEIN was born in Chicago. Five states, a B.A. in English and MFA in Writing later, settled in Massachusetts. Twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize, he's published four books of poetry:

*Making Up The World* (Editions Dedicaces, 2018), *God Box* (Clare Songbird Publishing, 2019), *A Name for Everything* (Cervena Barva Press, 2020), and *Lowercase God* (Unsolicited Press, 2022).

DAVID KUHNLEIN's poetry has been featured in Juked, Expat, Misery Tourism, Nauseated Drive, and others. He edits the literary review column Torment, venerating pain and illness, at The Quarterless Review. He lives in Michigan and is online @princessbl00d.

BRAD LIENING is the author of *Deep State Come Shining* (Publication Studio Hudson). He lives in Minneapolis and at bradliening.blogspot.com.

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NICOLE F. KIMBALL (she/her) is a Jewish bisexual poet from SLC, UT. Her pieces are published in Sunspot Lit, Mom Egg Review, Sky Island Journal, 12 Mile Review, or are forthcoming. She has an A.S. in Creative Writing and was the recipient of the Pat Richards Joe Beaumont Scholarship. Nicole is proudly neurodivergent, and is a submission reader for Seaglass Lit.

JOSHUA ST. CLAIRE is a CPA who works as a financial controller in Pennsylvania. He enjoys writing poetry on coffee breaks and after putting the kids to bed. His work is published or forthcoming in Delmarva Review, Inflectionist Review, Blue Unicorn, ubu., and bones, among others, and has received nominations for the Pushcart Prize.



LEE LEVINSON has work in Fanzine, Selffuck, Ligeia, Expat, Collidescope, and a plethora of other magazines and can be seen @schlock\_jaw.

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DAVID EARL WILLIAMS was born deep down near the bottom of the Ethnocentric Gorge and grew up on the banks of the great Ethnocentric River just like everybody else who was ever temporarily alive. Recent publications include: Black Scat Review #25, Parliament Lit Journal, Fleas On the Dog #11, Aji, Class Collective, and Millennial Pulp magazines, Qwerty, and The Decadent Review.

JAMES CACOS earned a B.A. in French from Yale University and an M.A. in English from The Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. He taught at Landmark College in Putney, Vermont for twenty-five years, retiring in 2011. He lives in Santa Barbara, California.

LAURA GOLDIN is a publishing lawyer in New York. Her recent poems appear or are forthcoming in One Art, Right Hand Pointing, Molecule: A Tiny Lit Mag, Club Plum, Tiny Wren, Blue Heron Review, Driftwood, Rogue Agent, Shot Glass Journal, and Minyan Magazine.

MAX THRAX is fiction editor of *Apocalypse Confidential*. His novel *God Is A Killer* is available now from Close To The Bone.

DAVID HAY's work has appeared or is forthcoming in Dreich, Abridged, Acumen, The Honest Ulsterman, The Dawntreader, The Babel Tower Notice Board, Ink, Sweat and Tears, The Lake, Selcouth Station, GreenInk Poetry, Dodging the Rain, Seventh Quarry and Expat Press, among others. His debut publication is the Brexit-inspired prose-poem *Doctor Lazarus*, published by Alien Buddha Press (2021).

IAN FREDERICK CATON lives in Vancouver WA, which most certainly is not Portland. He grew up in East San Jose in the 80s and started his first rock band when he was 12. Everything he writes with the very rare exception being some pieces about his Mother, and even some of those as well, are about music in one way or another. His mother was his first Junior Choir director, and now he too by a series of rational events has become the choir director at his church. He also has a Bandcamp page where he creates drones and noise.

YUU IKEDA is a Japan-based poet. She loves writing, drawing, and reading mystery novels. She writes poetry on her website. Her published poems can be found in Nymphs, Selcouth Station Press, Sublunary Review, Remington Review, and more. Her Twitter and Instagram: @yuunnn77.

LUKE U., also known as Milwaukee's Worst, is a disillusioned MFA in poetry. His interests lie in apocalyptic Christianity and the American unknown. His work appears in *Apocalypse Confidential* and the Passage Prize anthology.

ISRAEL A. BONILLA lives in Guadalajara, Jalisco. He has published in Able Muse, Firmament, Exacting Clam, New World Writing, BULL, King Ludd's Rag, Berfrois, and elsewhere. His debut micro-chapbook, *Landscapes*, is part of Ghost City Press's 2021 Summer Series.

JOSHUA MARTIN is a Philadelphia based writer and filmmaker, who currently works in a library. He is the author of the books *automatic message* (Free Lines Press), *combustible panoramic twists* (Trainwreck Press), *Pointillistic Venetian Blinds* (Alien Buddha Press) and *Vagabond fragments of a hole* (Schism Neuronics). He has had numerous pieces published in various journals including Otoliths, M58, Don't Submit!, BlazeVOX, RASPUTIN, Ink Pantry, Nauseated Drive, and experiential-experimental-literature. You can find links to his published work at [joshuamartinwriting.blogspot.com](http://joshuamartinwriting.blogspot.com).

ALEX OSMAN lives in Austin, TX and is the author of the collection *Problem Child*, published by Expat Press. Alex likes to drink soda. Miss Lippy's car is green.

ADAM DAY is the author of *Left-Handed Wolf* (LSU Press, 2020), and of *Model of a City in Civil War* (Sarabande Books), and the recipient of a Poetry Society of America Chapbook Fellowship for Badger, Apocrypha, and of a PEN Award. He is the editor of the forthcoming anthology, *Divine Orphans of the Poetic Project*, from 1913 Press, and his work has appeared in the APR, Boston Review, Denver Quarterly, Volt, Kenyon Review, Iowa Review, and elsewhere.

JESSE HILSON is a freelance reporter living in the Catskills in New York State. His work has appeared or will appear in AZURE, Maudlin House, Rejection Letters, Pink Plastic House, Misery Tourism,

Expat Press, Apocalypse Confidential, Excuse Me Mag, Bear Creek Gazette, and elsewhere. His novel *Blood Trip* was published in April 2022 by Close to the Bone (UK) and his poetry chapbook *Handcuffing the Venus De Milo* will be published by Bullshit Lit in fall 2022. He can be found on Twitter and Instagram at @platelet60 and he runs a Substack newsletter at [cholorohemoglobin.substack.com](http://cholorohemoglobin.substack.com).

**“YOURS TRULY, THE HAPPY RECLUSE”** is a secret citizen of Cleveland, Ohio.

Thank you for submitting.

