



No, Dear

Issue 8

METAL

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Paige Taggart

from *Gift Horse*

starve an eon to death
and what do you get
a Magdalena coated light
hit the stars so hard
that shattered copper
could grow into a champion
broken for us all to fall into
the ripple effect of the color wheel

Julian Brolaski

of *mongrelitude*

A bed of roses itself is no bed of roses. Nobody wants an e-book, they would sooner leave you in the lake, a den of mouldering slime for your coffin. Everybody calling it a recession—they're in a delusion. I am privy to these contradictory situations where I am told first the one and then the other bathroom is the wrong one. Madame, c'est là! and then o monsieur! je me suis tromper! If I powder my nose in the tudes, if I choose to walk barefoot in the small hours... you yourself are a healing property you know. You came home from the fair only to join the circus its festal moods, to feast on frost. So one learns to make their way among the multitudes. And know bliss as a cowperson.

I know I am the small fry here. Whose harnassed thot drove winter aback, gos wrastlin thir daemon underground. Tho the stirrups brinked and tha mud was broke, I looked down to the rivulet between the tracks, and couldnt tell if what I saw was a turd or twisted rust metal. & the rats rooting amid the black death and the typhus. One comes out steppin, their eyes fallen on the shores, cognizant only to the trash they mucked around. Suddenly you and your neighbours thighs are pressed together, accidental camaraderie or blunt eroticism. And neither of you move away.

We race toward the mounds of gravel, the morning star met with its wanderer.

Virginia

The sleep ends with slams from the old wood clock.
Virginia slips down like a nail file, looks at a wad of tea leaves.

In time she told me that the odd body is made by
Displacement. Colors are character.

Virginia doesn't live in Virginia, but she jostles pastels.
Virginia's mother sits in a paint can.

The churchyard where she breathes is on the Natchez.
Which is hard and straight and burns in June.

She took a bath in a bucket of hot brown sugar singing hymns.
She tastes like an old fashioned on the weekends.

She places in her moon the body of the right woman.
Virginia finds in the horoscope section the words for the day.

A Christian canvas is white and wide as wings.
The hand must move slow as a glove.

God paints us all in sharp angles, Virginia says in the mirror.
I'm on the pump organ playing the way she says no.

Tripod Sonnet

The night pulls my beam tight. I stop understanding how dazed each day grows outward. Cut back to noon: was that you normal or cut-throat? Was I screwed? My scope was under shutter—a light, I guess, to suffer under. But I didn't feel a thing against my cut. You justly didn't shut your mouth to cut the quiet. I tramped about, whole sky under-shoe. Meaning you were dumb too. Please let's close eyes quietly and without slowing, less my stain, lest I silence to et cetera. Here's the collapse: out here my skin is all synapse, but without you I've just my minus to strap to.

*Because this winter I am the same age
Otis Redding was when he died*

I have swallowed a very powerful magnet
on the shore of Lake Monona.

I've walked to the center
of the frozen lake to lie down.

The hard, smooth surface starts to melt
around my head, wrists, tailbone, heels.

Car parts, fishhooks, and nails
swim up through sealed thermoclines

until they press against the ice's underside.
They carve small tunnels in their effort

through this thickness that reconciles water to air
upon which I make another lake.

My Monona draws an airplane's worth
of crimped cans, gears, discarded knives.

The ice thins beneath my heat.
It thins because of spring.

My dark side cannot see what pulls it.
I'm held in place by things.

from *The Frames*

Sometimes it felt like the lake was sweeping its gunmetal
gray right up to my sill, those Sundays. I'd leave the door
unlocked. You'd come at 1, bring coffee. Those days we could
only manage to huddle inside; the frame was bare bones. Really,
I was a girl in a room. A girl in a restaurant. A girl in a dark
movie theatre. Wherever you locked me away. Those days you
could only manage. Kept your clothes on, drew my blankets up
to your shoulders. We watched samurai movies. Dreamscapes.
Faked stars on the ceiling. You said, "the meds" & cried.
Talked about doses & numbness & how many hours of sleep
& cried. I held you, my slowwalker, slowtalker, said I'm here,
I'm here. The wind blew cruel & you came Sunday after Sunday,
dropped like a sandbag & slept, sometimes most of the afternoon,
whispering sorry, sorry, while I waited for the weather to change.

Prince Albert

He feels like a rag-stuffed puppet
 foisted with picador's lances,
 his heart like a limp bull
 drug from the arena.
 And all at once he's grown old,
 a coffin gathering nails...
 that brightly painted kitchen
 a period of intimacy
 where he now sits drinking alone.
 Notice how the rankle of something unwritten
 holds a lantern for those days.
 Notice how the women
 pacing the streets
 in vulgar shoes
 add to the general feeling
 that a peach tree
 was raised up and destroyed.
 No one asks him
 why the stillborn moon
 sleeps inside a trucker's cab
 or why he wasted all those years
 stretching the skin of a day-old drum.
 No one reminds him of the night he punched
 Papadimitriou at the Jiffy Lube
 or snickers when the wide-brimmed hats
 of lonely Mariachi men
 fly-off like a woman's husky dress.

Pittsburgh

I was under the car
 when she kicked every tire,
 said she was leaving.
 I thought she meant the mall—
 I'da raised the bridges,
 burned a black fog.

City that never—what's wrong
 with sleep? Now that slippy
 Jersey transplant dago chump's
 got her locked in some high-rise,
 won't loan her the car
 and she won't walk—tunnels fulla rats,
 those shoes he lets her wear,
 do you blame her?

Maybe I shoulda known
 the day she quit baking,
 said her new nails
 might get swallowed
 by the knead.
 Or, if I'd fixed the faucet,
 washed the crud bowls
 when she asked, told her I loved her
 chipped ham on homemade bread.

These hills are sinking, the paper streets
 that made her calves so pretty crumble.
 Forty's mutt howls, the pipes
 steam and clang: Pittsburgh's lost
 its best girl. Pirates and riverhounds,
 what good are yinz now?

B.C. Edwards

from *The Standard Cyclopedia of Recipes, No. 818:*
How to Temper Knife Blades

There is a piece of iron between us
straight and hard at first
but we have worked it
time together, warped the iron
until it is curved now
to exactly us, fits the shape that lies in
us two embracing. A line that runs from where our faces meet,
the way we lay our necks at each other, the cut of embraced torso,
tempered hot iron hips, twine of legs
when we separate there is the piece,
grey thin strip barely shining
detailing the moment together
a whole new letter to the alphabet.
From this curve we can re-draw the outline of us lying there.
From this curve we can get it exactly right.

Gracie Leavitt

Backwards compatible

They pad your tow road down clear to
that riven pine bough weir from where
we abseil toward caught cowslip taut
in sluice gates stuck half shut as precondition
to his down-slope sawmill pond full
stanchioned off with red cords strung
between for keeping black swan problems
out, this log pond left unsucked; he stroke
delimbs, she plunges in, has gotten all
her gingham wet, so dries along your weir
though one hem snags a pin and slams
those sluice gates shut. Some like poles
in the field, I guess, for we who won't
have won if you don't want us.

Brian Trimboli

from *In Rilievo's Soliloquy*

"...I'm convinced the body never ends.
Acrylic teeth, false limbs, a human ear
grown in a petri-dish. What part of me
will they replace next? Heap
of a human, a single grain of salt..."

*

"...I shadowbox colors. The canal
outside frozen over with dandelion spores.
I spent that summer pulling lilly-lines
and crab traps. At any given moment
I am in love with the world I am imagining..."

"...Every desperation runs its course unparalleled.

A hill was in walking distance and then it grew to be
an unscalable path. Insanity loomed
like a sewing machine in the kitchen..."

*

"...the children are tangerine trees. Everything
about me is corruptible. The sporadic realization
something is about to or has already happened.
I am wearing the t-shirt I will later drown in.
The land around us is dying and then it is dead."

Contributors

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