

oneirata (o ne ra' ta). *n. pl.* many dreams. [*Greek derivative*]

UNSTRADA

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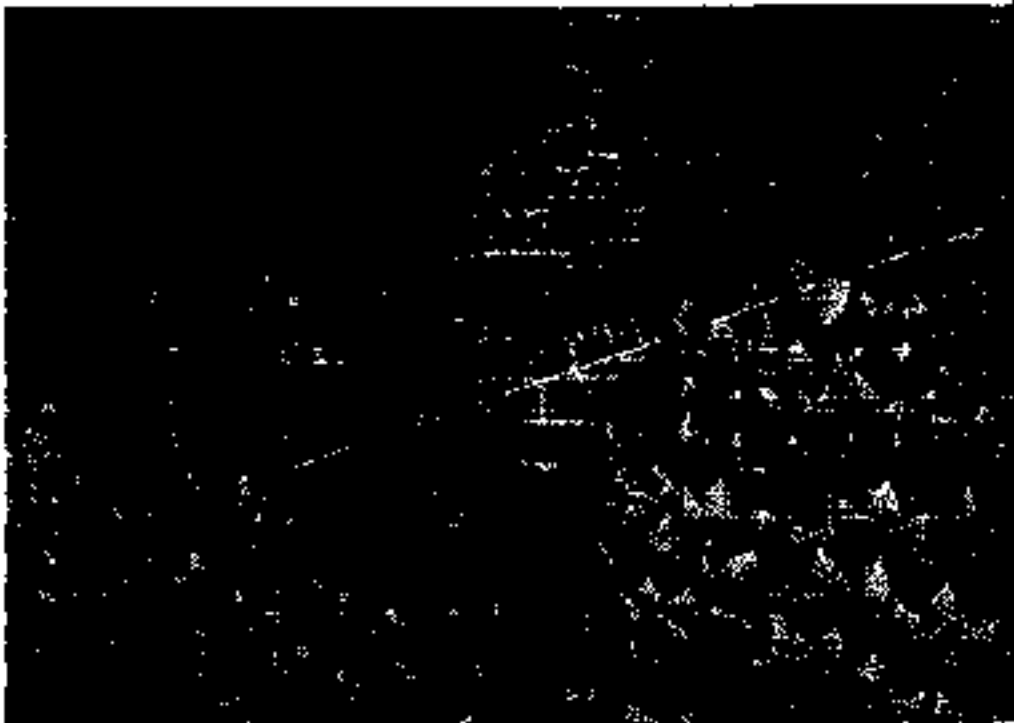
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Peer Review



The haughty columns of the library
recede from my vision,
as do the slates of the walk,

tinted—
like so many watercolor tablets
mingling in the rain,
as a black umbrella,
like an oiled poppy
brows around the corner.

It hurts to see so far .

the image shifts

a momentary lull

the flare of a match

sudden as the sparks

of the third rail

when a train passes.

More walking.

A kind of languid gentle walk,
in ripped sneakers.

The droplets on the window

d start the plaid jacket,

elongate the leaned legs

to the point where I laugh

and reach up

to wipe my beaded breath

from the icy glass.

A thin figure

familiar in every way:

the line of the back,

the stance,

the curl of the hair,

climbs the slate stairs

and stops at the door.

The umbrella wilts—

the vivid image of a soft face—

straining to extract

the last bit of nicotine

from the remains of a cigarette.

Rebirth At Dawn

The light of dawn is spread slowly and melts

Like butter, slowly seeping into the crisp day,

And mellowing its sharp fangs.

The afternoon comes with a thousand shadows,

Tangled together on grassy lawns and overlapping

In deep, dark, lonely forests.

Slowly the shadows melt, and all is a

Shadow as night approaches. The dusk smothers

All the brightness, and color retreats.

This is our sign to retreat to slumber,

To await in emptiness the approaching morn,

And once again to the world be born.

—ruth happel

Tracy Thorne



A Sonnet For Parsons Boulevard

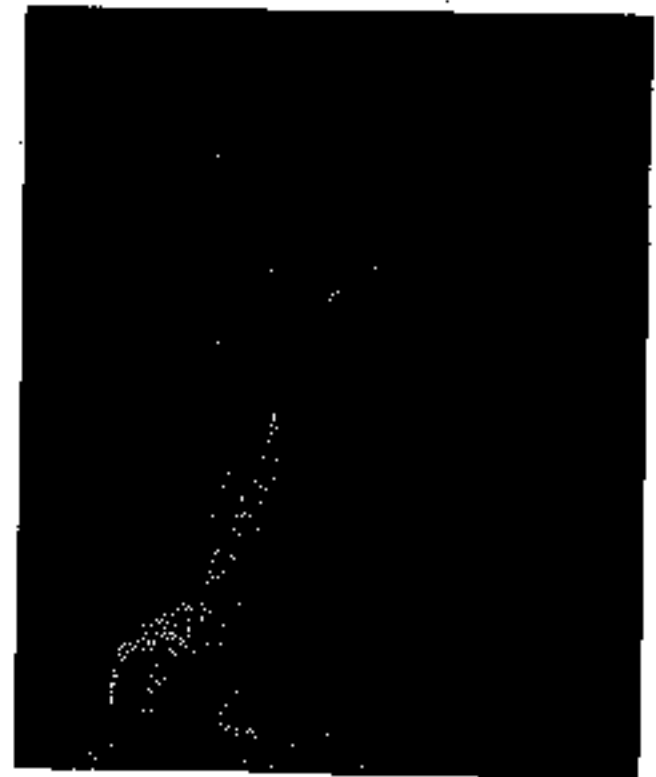
A Spring inspired walk on my childhood road,
Cement I haven't tread on in some years,
I slowly step and search my old soles
Recalling all the fights and games and fears.

Familiar sights and smells surround me here
But different now, large houses, small, blues, greys:
Distorted memories becoming clear.
Streets scarred from stickball and the skateboard craze

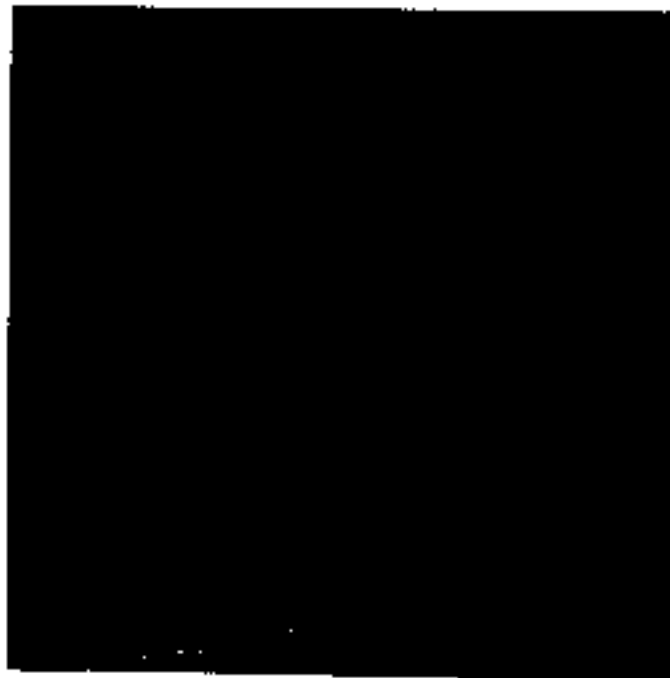
Are filled with mud-streaked faces, solemnly strange.
At dusk, the ice cream truck—that ringing sound.
The children stop their play and run for change.
I watch, then scan old scribbles on the ground.

Nostalgia belongs with the winter gone;
But Spring leaves past behind, so I walk on.

—amy melnick



Darkness Always



Stuart Huddleston

Sometimes you remind me of the
phantom of the opera the way you wear that black coat.
I could easily imagine you living your life
in some rat-atticy niche of a theatre
frightening all the little girls who want to cry on stage.

Love

It all commenced, that is, our sterling relationship began back on a wintry, wind-blown day in December. Perhaps the Christmas feeling of sharing, loving, and giving enhanced our affair, but to that I will never have the correct answer . . .

I first met my fair-eyed maiden on the trolley car that passes through town. I was seated just to the left of the conductor when her shining, luminous silhouette caught the corner of my retina. At first I was stricken with the thought of " . . . My God . . . how can such a perfectly beautiful girl exist in such a scum-infested world?" Her hair was slightly frizzed, and the aroma of her perfume put my senses into a wild frenzy. Her figure was pleasantly attractive . . . slender, chic, svelte . . . words to describe her were inadequate. She was sporting a coal-colored turtle neck, enhanced by a silver necklace. Her pants were worn to a frazzle, revealing her sensuous legs; but it did not matter, for on her they looked more majestic than the regal gown of a queen. She was a dime short for her transportation. Approaching me she enquired, "Do you have ten cents?" In a poor attempt at humor I responded, "Why that won't even get me a half-decent back massage." She salivated in my lap.

It was five days and two pairs of pants later when our awkward paths crossed again. Ironically enough, our steps clashed in front of a house of prostitution—Helga's Hut. She tossed a wicked glare in my direction, and for a second I thought that she might choose my trousers once again as her spittoon. Being a Sagitarlus, I went straight to the point, " . . . um . . . uh . . . will, uh . . . um . . . a . . . will you go . . . uh . . ." In a desperate effort to be suave I accidentally bit my tongue. "Are you hungry?" said a soft, cynical, and definitely female voice. As the numbness of my tongue subsided, my thoughts were triggered back to their original incentive. Again I tried to speak; again she listened . . . after a seemingly endless period of silence I blurted out my question: "Would you accompany me to the theatre on the night of the twenty-sixth?" With all the courage she could muster up she unexpectedly, but to my delight, said yes.

The movie was exceedingly dull but she lived up to my expectations. Sarcastic, unabashed, and quite frank. When the lights on the virgin white screen had dimmed, we simultaneously rose to depart. Homeward bound we walked, and at quite a slow pace. I with my arm around her, with my hand nestled softly in her deep rear pocket. Very deep. And she with her arm around me, with her hand coming to rest in my coarse back pocket. We cherished our journey, stopping occasionally to share each other's wits and theories; and stopping frequently to share each other . . .

. . . August was soon upon us, and with it our past. Skating with the moonlight reflecting on our innocent blades. Exploring the forest and the bit of "wilderness" in ourselves. Swimming on a crayon blue lake, venturing to discover each new ripole . . . together. Wondering about the sun, earth, people, life, and how it all came to be; and how it will cease. For our sterling relationship had ended. It was tarnished beyond repair.

But it does not matter, for affairs will come and with time they will go, but memories are infinite . . . I wonder if the kid will have red hair?

—Michael Wehrbauer

"Intermission"

Staten Rubin

Youth;

It arrives
to be free and independent.
But the strings
hold them
in tight bonds of insecurity.

—Luis Gans



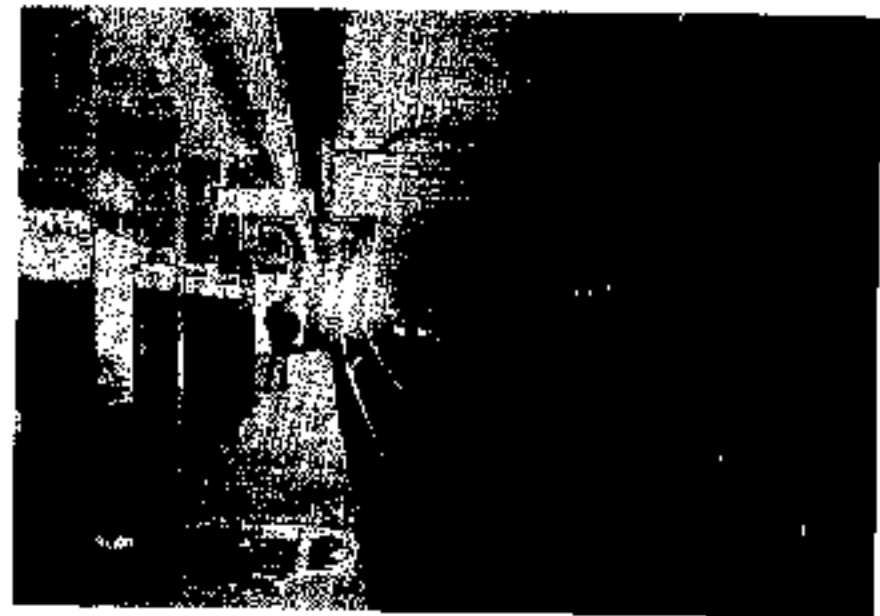
For L.

4 a.m.
the radio is on
and the imagery run dry
with no one to hold on to
maybe its love that
keeps you awake
and steals away your poetry
maybe what you
used to express on paper
wants a person more
than ink
maybe your mind
would rather touch and feel
than get trapped
in writing to
haunt you at
4 a.m.

—anonymous

Lisa Farber

Phil Rabbe



Thirst

Put me in a pool of water
icy cold—
Put me in a crowd of all
different, but each consistent, faces.

Treadmills, roller skates,
and memories of home.

Home is a comfortable chair
in one's mind. I'd like to
go and sit in my big comfy
chair, but I'm always running
with no time to rest.

I want to sit in my
big chair which is
covered with those
silky cotton, old fashioned
flowered prints, like the
chairs in Northern summer houses.

Circles and disharmony, and
memories of home.

Put me in a crowd of
faces whose complete realities
I will never see.

Put me in a cool pool of
water, icy cold.
I'll turn icy cold, too.

—Linda Anderson



—Darlene Marks

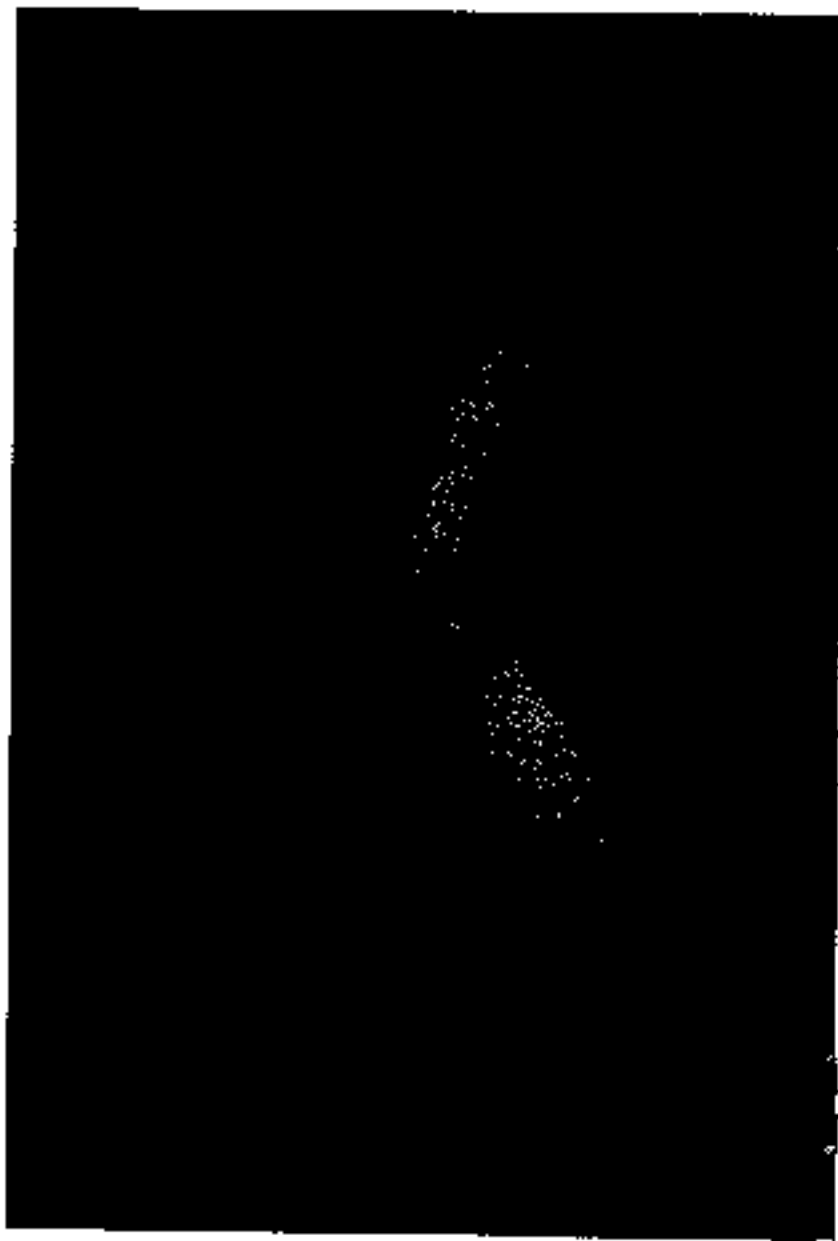


—David Webb

Hate

The cries of hate are as loud as
drums,
As untramed as the sky above.
But among these raging cries of
hate
You can hear the whispers of
love.

—Carrie Sorokoff



Peter Davidson

Reflections On A Woman

she was thinking
i am beautiful
yes.

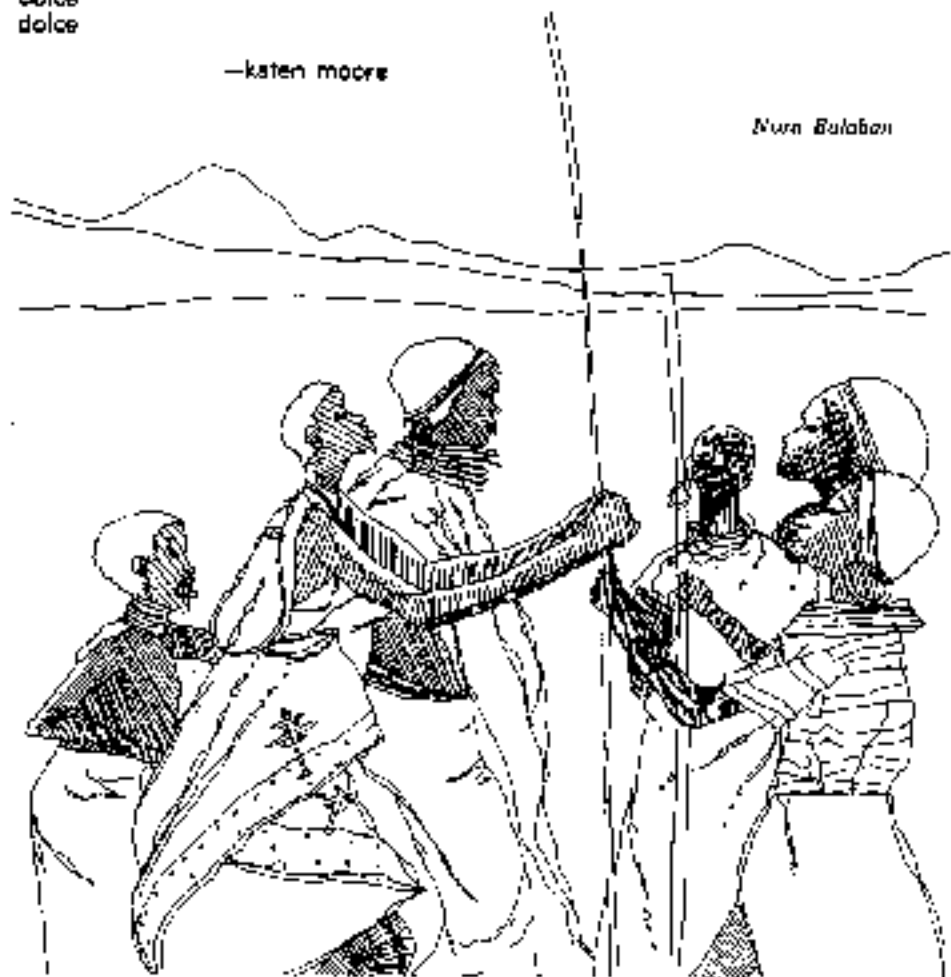
a child softly cried
footsteps
shhh it is alright
just a dream

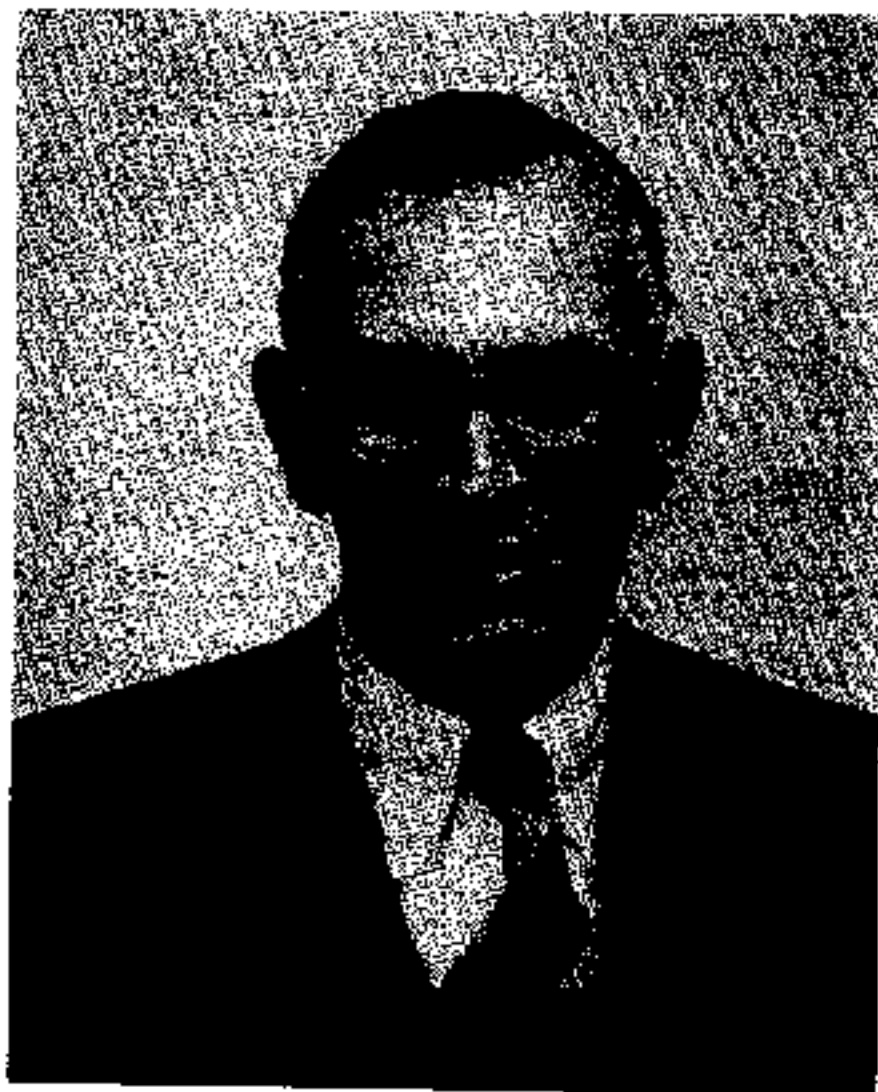
looking straight on herself
childlike last naive
innocent
large eyes that filled with tears
how alone how sad she
felt reflecting on herself
comfort me and kiss my head
put me to sleep with lullabies

dolce
dolce

—katen moore

Nura Bulaban





Peter Zimmerman

The Man On Top

Isaac is pointing it out. We support him. The man on top simply will not listen. He conspicuously evades the point that has been made. "Just for the fun of it," says the man, "let's turn to page 90." Silence. All are pretending to be at 90. "Moses, are you taking notes so vigorously already?" says the man on top, breaking silence. "Yes," says Moses. He really is. Not that Moses would never lie, but the necessity is not there, as of yet. The man on top made a mistake. It was actually page 60. Most of us groan. Nothing ever goes smoothly, always long and drawn out. Now we pretend to be at 60 this time. The man discusses with one of our most prominent members what the rest of us did not desire to find out. Our faces are clearly disinterested. Our bodies make evident our apathetic attitude. The man on top does not pick it up. It appears to be so obvious to us. Not to him. Now we go over what not even one-half of us have done. Even those of us who have done it don't care. I make a good point. Now the man will leave me alone for the rest of the 40. The man on top carries out both the examination and the cross-examination of David's make-believe trial. It is not fair. But that is the way. We do not even notice. We don't care. The man tries to gain our interest by referring to the drone tube. It rarely works. We are not usually fooled by the use of such tactics. Predictably, we have no desire to speak about it with him. He will only undermine what we like in the end. The man on top tries to identify with us so that in turn we can with him. Once again his efforts are to no avail. The man on top is quite obviously old-fashioned trying to appear modern. The man on top is not a convincing actor. The man on top is a reactionary on the inside and does a poor job pretending to be a liberal. We don't care if he was or could. We are only concerned with ourselves.

—patrick steinberg
as told to andrew ratzkin



Phil Roible

I want to scream
I want to die
I want to jump through this telephone
And shake your hand.

Stuart Huddleston



I lie in bed wide awake.
I want to sleep but,
the bed upstairs
it squeaks.
This is boring now
also not too pleasant.

I am so tired
falling asleep in the conference room
"This room is not to be used—OUT"
damn librarians.
Don't they understand?
Upstairs are noisy lovers.
Maybe 3-in-1 oil
left on a doorstep.
Such subtle hints.

I don't know
what do I do?
Perhaps—(how evil)—a metronome—
ticking through the ceiling
Go wild and change the speeds!
Too evil.
Play my sister's Sousa marches
1-2-1-2 stars and stripes
Too trite.

I am rested now
a mattress squeaks while we eat dinner
"What's that noise, mommy?"
"A noisy floorboard, eat your potatoes."
Is that all they do?

—katen moore

Peter Zimmerman



Lake At Sunset

In water, we dissolve—
out over lake and sky, blues melting into blues,
a silent spray of pink at the horizon,
the icy surface scattered with the shapes of sails,
the thrusts and dips of duck-bills in the darkness.
We are tiny—smaller than the wings
in flight at dawn in search of food
sending out breaths and silly sounds
to quickly be lost in the rhythm of waves.
I can be nothing here, or laugh,
or let my mind swim through the water,
through the depths of cold aloneness
so in touch with nature's hummings;
I can spread my body out
and become the darkness like the ducks,
or lie here on this wooden dock and wonder
why I'll never be this water, or where my life has gone
in forms of lakes and rivers and the colours of the sky.
I am powerless to silence
and the silver kiss of wind upon the water—
(I had forgotten it was never anything but this)—
I lose all fears, desires, attachments here,
and becoming silly, soundless, alone, one
altogether with the world. I let my voice
ride carelessly and quiet over perfect, greying waves

—susan earle





"Traffic Lights"

Peter Davidson

"Venetian," Said The Man.—I

"Venetian," said the man.

"I can't hear you," replied the Venetian, "I'm blind."

The man, whose name was Donald, pretended to understand, for fear of seeming like a fool. "I understand," said Donald intelligently.

"I can't hear you," said the Venetian patiently, "I'm blind."

Smacking himself on the forehead, Donald began to comprehend the situation. Using the only logic he knew, Donald took out his black, gleaming revolver and shot the Venetian neatly in the head.

"Venetian," Said The Man.—II

"Venetian," said the man.

"What type of blinds did you want?" said the salesman.

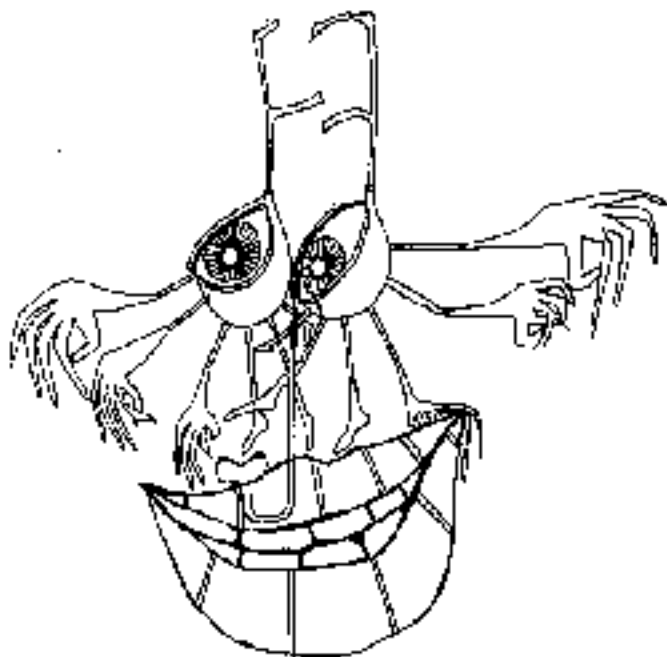
"Venetian!" said the man, whose name was Ronald, for the eighth time.

"What type?" said the salesman.

Suddenly, Ronald experienced a strange feeling called *deja vu*. Using the only logic he knew, Ronald took out his black, gleaming revolver and shot himself neatly in the head.

andrew ratzk n

My frustration
Is noncommunication
Your misunderstanding
Is because I am not yet able
To express fully
one seed of the pomegranate of my thought
amy melnick



Chopin's prelude
flute and guitar together.
An old silver sparkin
fallen on the floor
stepped on and forgotten.

I felt melancholy.
remember, you loved my melancholy
It was soft and comfortable.
I told you that I wanted you
you were not there.

Rain was falling on the garage roof
melting the snow
and the Sunday Times was scattered all over,
tea and the magazine
in the afternoon.

A fog crept over my toes
enshrouded my knees
and cast a gloom on my thoughts.
I told you that I wanted you
you were not there.

I wonder if you wanted me.
funny, if you had
I would not have wanted you.

kalen moore



Uninformed

For a time all was blank. He remembered a Mexican soldier's narrow barreled shotgun being thrust into his mouth. His demolition job was as yet undone. Up flew his hands; back drew the head. On the instant of contact with the cold cheap metal he became aware of a dull impact in his throat. He felt his insides flow outwards and his arms flailed violently. They hit soft, giving flesh. Another far-away report sounded. Minutes of sensation later, another thud and his body was flung backwards. He could feel his consciousness nozing out through the apertures in his skull. All thought drained out.

It seemed only a matter of moments later when he awoke. He felt nothing. He probed with his remaining senses for something, anything. He sensed that he was in a horizontal position although he had absolutely no bearings. He could hear no sound. He could see no sight.

He commanded himself to stand. He gave his muscles the customary instructions but he couldn't feel them moving. Nevertheless, he knew that they had moved; he knew that he was standing. He began to walk.

He walked for some time. His feet hit no ground yet he knew that there was something beneath them. He neither saw nor heard anything. Suddenly on an impulse he ordered his unfeeling muscles to make a left 45° turn. Light burst upon his eyes ahead of him. It was a thin shaft of light. It seemed to him that it was extremely bright but he did not squint nor did he blink.

Eventually the light began to filter down and he could begin to make out things. The light thinned and clung together while red beams danced about. The light began to spell out in neon, "FOOD, MONEY, LIVE ENTERTAINMENT!"

He came to a door. He reached out for the knob but could feel no contact. He told his hand to grip it tightly and although he felt nothing his eyes told him that he had. His hand seemed to twist and pull back of its own volition.

The door flung open. He entered. His hand pulled the door closed. He found himself in a Middle-American room, richly furnished. Lying on a long wooden table were platters of food and hundred dollar bills. He saw himself grab handfuls of both.

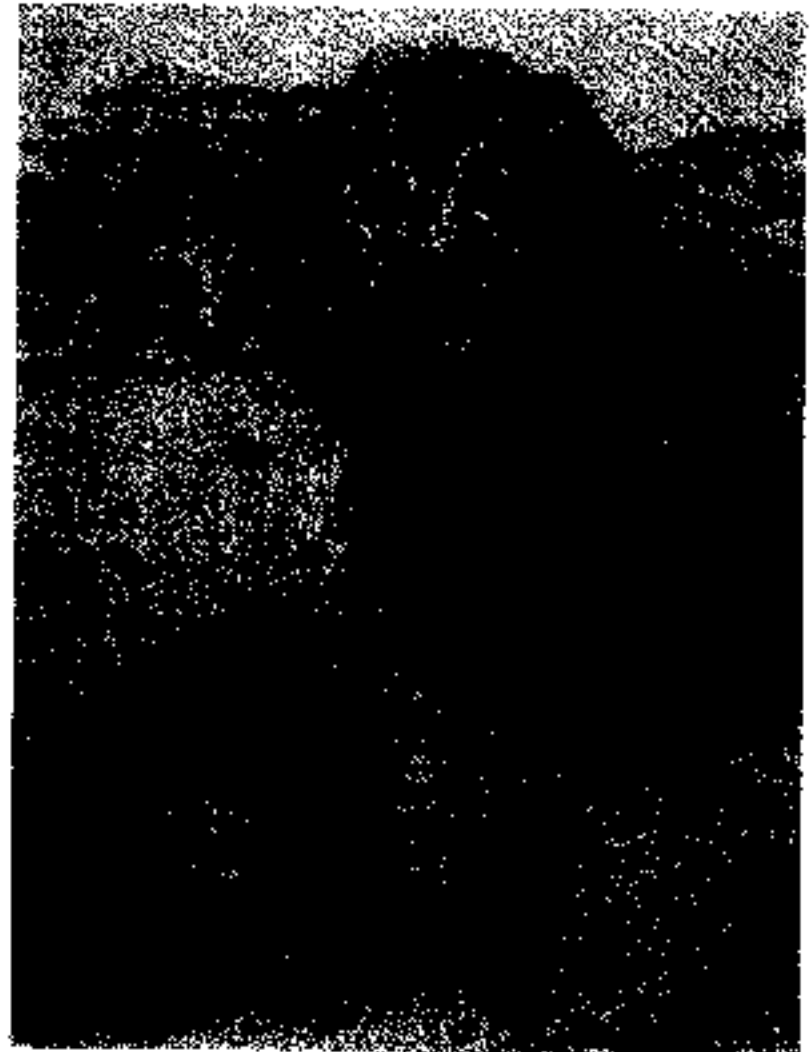
Ahead of him he saw an enormous stage. He approached it but found it empty except for a yard-wide patch of dirt. Peering closely he could see a tiny man and a tiny woman splashing in a huge puddle of blood. From their eyes, ears, and noses issued a green pus which they would gather on their fingertips. He watched emotionlessly as they licked their fingers clean and glugged themselves on the vile green liquid.

He sensed something behind him and wheeled about. His unblinking eyes came to rest on a young woman possessing blond hair, blue eyes and perfect proportions. He called out to her but received no reply. He stepped forward with his hand preceding him. He felt no contact, but where his hand had been he saw an empty space which was soon replaced by brilliant scarlet blood.

Then, he saw the woman's mouth move and heard a sound issue forth.

"I am a MIRAGE, brought to you as you have made me appear. Nothing here is real though you may believe that you can see or hear it. You are dead and unreal yourself. If you will only come to your senses and believe the truth we will stop being."

—Larry Fine



As Hemingway said
"Don't go to hell, stick around,
we're just having lunch."
Very good, only this guy jammed a
shotgun down his throat
because he was scared
of becoming
old.

- anonymous

When the wind shifts
I smell dead fish—
like salt in coffee.
And when it changes again:
lemony tanning oil,
honey-suckle in bloom,
cigarettes.
The kids from the village
play and flirt in the water—
with coarse shouts
and laughter.
Driftwood litters the sand
and garbage—
across the tracks
vines festoon the trees:
like the Amazon I
thought when I was little.
The cries of the gulls,
cotton clouds, palisades—
cliché
A Hudson River Painting.

—Lee Whiting



Steve Huddleston

maybe I'll be a flurist that talks to cows while dancing
away into nowhere