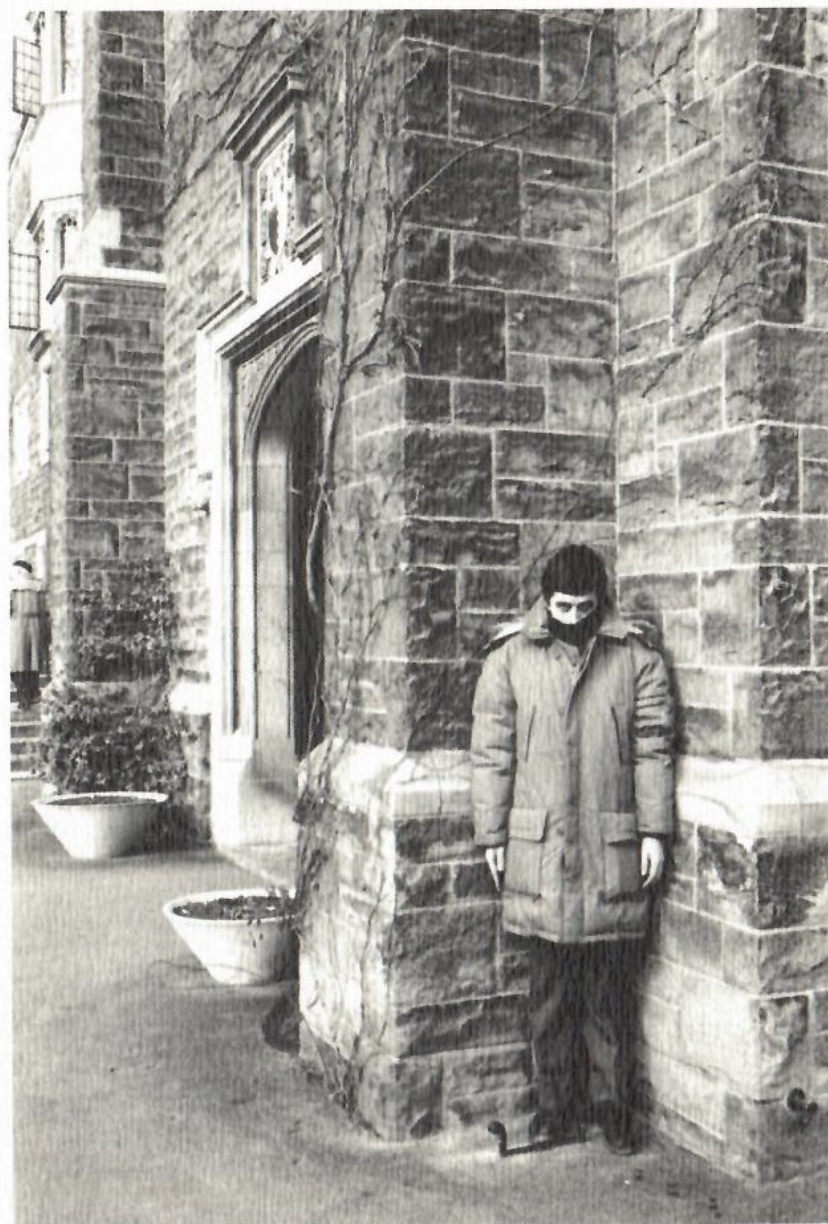
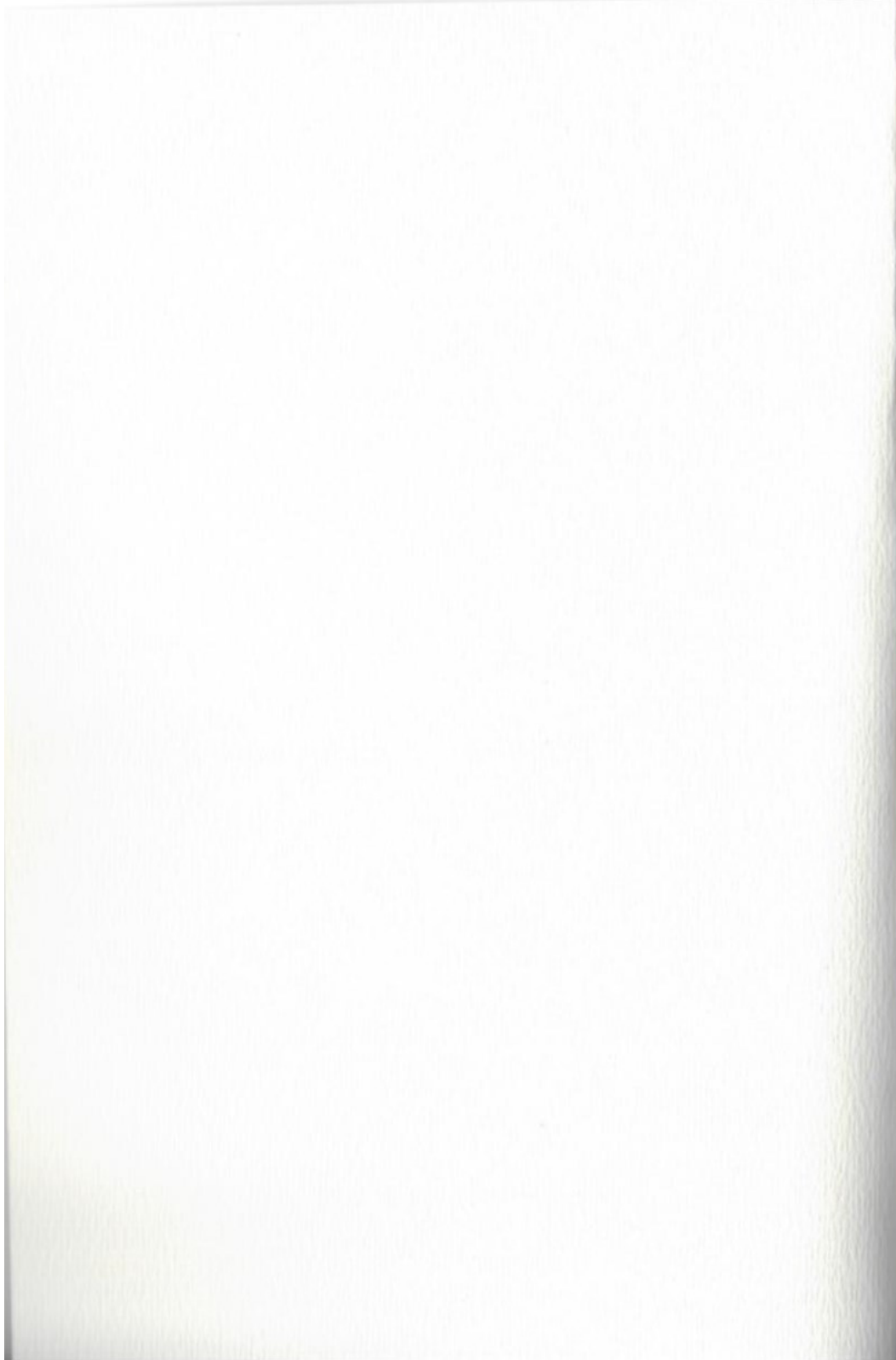


The Trinity Review

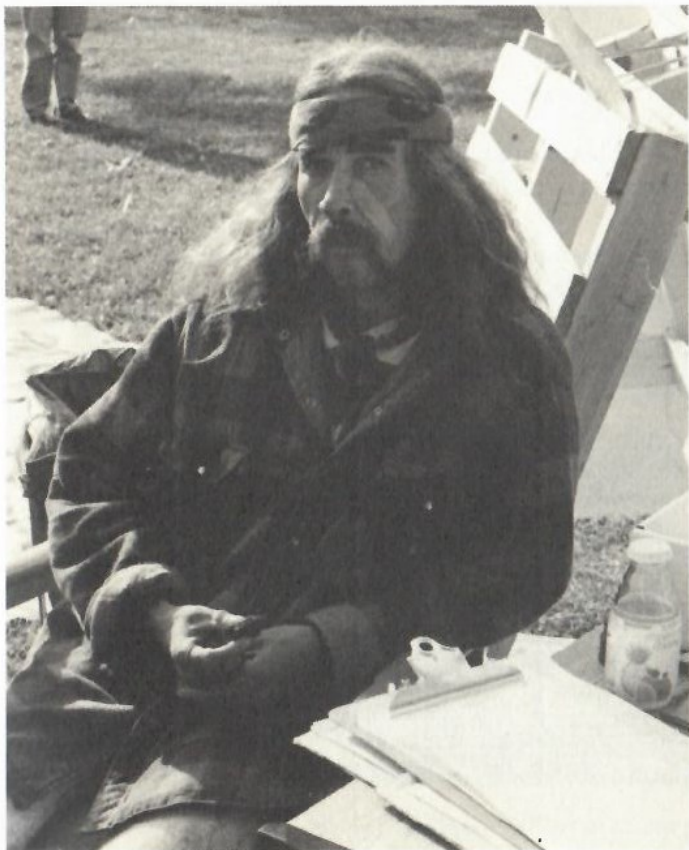
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The Trinity Review

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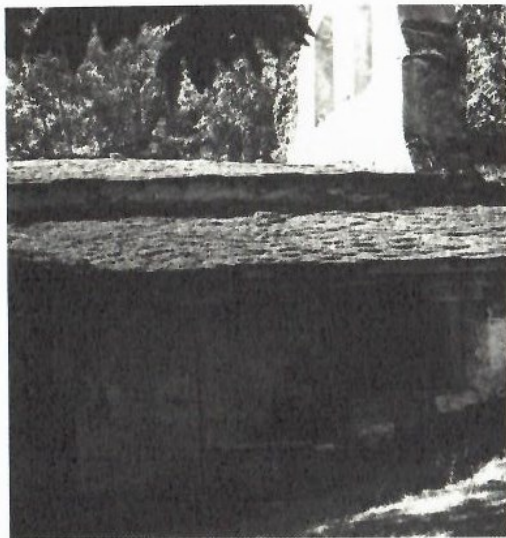


The Bored
starring –

Steve Collington	the Editerminator
Patrick Cain	the EdiTory
Kelly Baxter	the Editreasurer
Robyn Kalda	the Editerse
Martha Jo McGinnis	the Editorrid
Jason Taniguchi	the Editeriyaki
Danielle Etches	the Editermagant
Ursula Holland	the Editursula
Nigel Beck	the Editorpedo
Aparna Sanyal	the Accidental Editourist

and Hugh Thomas as H.T. the Editerrestrial

Special thanks to the Joint Board of Stewards of Trinity College
and Coach House Press



JOSE CARLOS LAMEIRO

Contents

Words

spine	Patrick Cain	<i>April 13, 1990</i>
4	Stephen Collington	<i>Alcoholism</i>
6	Chris Powell	<i>Garden</i>
7	Richard England	<i>Fatalism</i>
9	Hugh Thomas	<i>Disorientation</i>
10	Chris Powell	<i>Freud and Marks</i>
13	Erin O'Brien	<i>Sisyphus Revisited</i>
14	S.W.N.E.S.A.	<i>Three Nights Alive</i>
16	Martha Jo McGinnis	<i>Woman of Steel</i>
26	Ramona Luengen	<i>Journeys</i>
27	Chris Powell	<i>Rooms</i>
29	Colby Linthwaite	<i>Peel</i>
32	Richard England	<i>(To Mrs. Piekarski)</i>
33	Richard England	<i>'Spare Change?'</i>
35	Chris Powell	<i>Riddle</i>
37	Jason Taniguchi	<i>Duelling Authors</i>

Pictures

cover	Jennifer Shelton	<i>For Duncan, on His Wedding Day Just Sittin'</i>
1	Lise van Boxel	
2	José Carlos Lameiro	
8	Michael Kleinberg	
9	Tom Popyk	<i>Berlin: Christmas 1989</i>
18	Jennifer Shelton	<i>Icon</i>
24	André Moniz	<i>Jazz</i>
28	Michael Kleinberg	
34	Jennifer Shelton	
36	José Carlos Lameiro	
40	Jennifer Shelton	<i>Comfort</i>
44	Jennifer Shelton	
back	Lise van Boxel	<i>200 watts, and all pumping</i>

A Safety Reminder

courtesy of Joe Jaouni and Ravi Vakil

Damn am I proud of Trinity! It's positively gratifying to know that there are so many talented and creative people lurking around our little college in the sunshine – not that I ever doubted it, but here's proof! *The Trinity Review* is back, and it's just stuffed with good reading. For those of you who still buy *Mad* magazine, there's a flip book, complete with a timely moral. Student life gets yet more hilarious treatment in *Freud and Marks* and *Woman of Steel*. And for that summer-job-from-hell story, try the gripping and tautly-written *Peel*.

There's great poetry everywhere you look in this *Review* – even on the spine. Of particular note are the many pieces by Chris Powell and Richard England, but quantity's not everything – and *all* of it comes highly recommended. This does, however, bring up a familiar gripe about the *Review*, that too much of it is by the same people. To which we can only reply: we received over two hundred pages worth of anonymous submissions, shuffled them, and took what we thought was best. If you submitted, we'd like to hear from you again! Enjoy the pictures – we think they add to the stories and poems, as well as being worth a good many thousand words in their own right.

Lastly, we begin and end with a 'sweatshop.' Our first three poems were written in half an hour at the Hart House Poetry Sweatshop last October, where Trinity students walked off with first, second and third prizes (and no, we weren't the only people there). At the end is *Duelling Authors*, a virtuoso, one-man sweatshop which pits the forces of Dreer against the forces of Wackley with glorious results. Enjoy. And, if we may make a suggestion, try it sitting on a phone book.

Alcoholism

First Place – 3rd Annual Hart House Poetry Sweatshop

got off to a slow start
in my battered old Hemingway,
took a look under the hood
brooded suicidally
over the ignition key,
said, 'Damn!' in a tight, drawn way
and went careening down Italian mountains
in a half-ton ambulance
full of mud
and Caribbean heat-stroke victims



punctuating each turn
with a wrenching lurch
(no clutch in a Hemingway
only gears)
thought, 'Damn!' in a tight, drawn way ...
swerved to avoid a conjunction,
let the train roar by
as my thoughts fumed
beside it in the afternoon sun
this commandeered amb(ul)ience
splicing matador and bull
in a steaming pile
of nouns
marching trunk to tail
in the white beyond ...
anise, sweet licorice
smelling in my beard
as my line played out
and the earth moved
shaking ambulance
and ambulator
and narrator, in a tight, drawn way
Damn!
no right turns,
only tight, drawn ways ...
up rose sun
flooding red and gold
this arena of blood
and the sign ahead:
 slippery when wet
 eslippsy when wet
 ellipsis when wet
and right out into the goddamn blue yonder
leaving a trail of dots drifting
behind from the broken bridge
(forgot, we blew it up in Chapter 10)

drinking and driving
and the rough road of lurcherature
 who, oh who's my designated reader?

STEPHEN COLLINGTON

Garden

Second Place – 3rd Annual Hart House Poetry Sweatshop

I spent
the better part of my sweat,
and my blood, digging and planting,
planting and digging, seed after seed in that small plot
of land, in the north cemetery,
my son's gravesite.

Bitter winters I waited in my shed
taking stock, counting seeds – a dozen varieties
of plant, none of which grew.

Four springs in succession, summer
months flying by –
and four barren autumns.

The fourth winter I went away,
and built a cabin among the firs.

There I waited, as winter set in
and the snow fell thickly.

The cold was merciless – I almost died.

I was visited, and received ungratefully
two wolves, five foxes, a bobcat,
seventeen thousand small rodents,
and spent one night alone in the bush
encased in the growling of a wandering bear
as the trees howled to the wind, and the snow
obscured the stars.

My tears froze. I left a trail of gemstones
across the tundra
as I chased the sun back south again
to my home.

The tree I planted on my son's grave
blossoms now, and bears fruit. My shed
is empty of seeds.

CHRIS POWELL

Fatalism

*Third Place – 3rd Annual
Hart House Poetry Sweatshop*

by my bed I have remembered her
a bride without an edge
full-voiced and laughing
with the thunder

outside sun pours showers
two rainbows paint brick and leaf
Sex shears short storm flowers
and there

clinging

to the rose

like a wife to a widower
is an insect praying,
sudden, certain,
and ignored.

among sleeping hours, a dream covers.

In the public gardens after
alone, cold, rotting –
the still still factory of fears
falls deeper into obsolescence
I have worn out the shouts
we shared.

The unemployables, the future states,
orphaned children of the Fates
proclaim their faith in stone
in kites flown
on windless lawns hereafter –
cold and rotting.

- One day we'll understand
- To be remembered is not to die
- Till the day breaks and night is fled away
- Fondly remembered
- A Good Scout.

An angel stands nearby
melting in the rain –

INSTRUCTIONS
(FOR THE SLIGHT OF
BRAIN)
1. FLIP CORNER OF
BOOK WITH RIGHT
THUMB FROM FRONT
TO BACK



MICHAEL KLEINBERG

mourning last night's storm
and the letters it has left
between us –

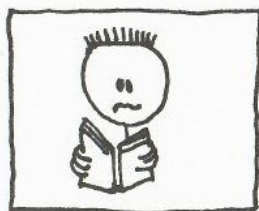
Each moment bridges
– spelt without words –
silence's abyss.
Far beneath us
fast blind water flows.

I hold this day
close to me
as I cross.

There, quietly, across and out of time
of tide and meter
you wait
with eyes that stop
the silence and the small stones falling
as I cross.

RICHARD ENGLAND

Disorientation



Judd's over at Lisa's or I don't know
and it's impolite to ask when the time of judgement comes
because he may be busy or on a trip or asleep
and he gets so little rest.

God took upon himself human flesh –
how did his Roommate feel?

I am only an attendant lord, but the mermaids have been
singularly dumb
(Although I do hear them showering with large sweaty men
on weekends.)

Who may say St. Hilda's is not Paradise?
I have been there and I say: 'How shall I know it is not Paradise?'

If you have to ask, you can't afford it.
Get back to the bit about the mermaids.

HUGH THOMAS



TOM POPIK

Freud and Marks

*An Examination of Issues Concerning Modern Life
or Lack Thereof*

Please answer the following multiple choice questions by placing an 'X' over any letter that precedes the best possible answer to the question:

No. 27: *In High school, I:*

- a) participated extensively in athletics*
- b) was a rebel*
- c) studied hard and led a quiet, introverted life of continual social isolation, private angst, sexual frustration, and continual boredom mitigated only by brief moments of joy associated with absolutely godlike intellectual / academic achievement.*

—from a gov't survey of Trinity College, carried out circa 2050 a.d.
Just then, God spoke to the author, saying,

'Hear my word, for thy creator speaketh!'

I hear ye, I hear ye.

'Tell me, Job, why dost thou write such cynical trash? Dost thou not realize that the Lord's Creation is bountiful and good, full of wonderful life opportunities for every living creature?'

Well, I was just trying to find some way of expressing the essential existentialist dilemma of those of us who got to Trinity thinking that life was simple and success based on hard work and a steadfast renunciation of too much fun.

'Hey, don't knock Calvinism!'

I wasn't knocking it, I've just observed that for those of us whose first taste of real freedom is life in residence, the experience can be a little disorienting.

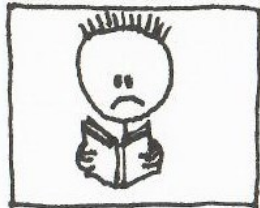
'Thou dost seem to be in dire need of divine guidance.'

Well not really. I'm in second year, experiencing a new crisis which is a reaction to my reaction to the first crisis, but that's not really what I'm trying to talk about.

'I see.'

You would.

So then, the sage turned to his most promising disciple and said, 'Grasshopper, for you to remain firm in your spiritual purity you must study the ways of the world. For what tree would stretch its



branches high into the sky but for the roots which penetrate deep into the ground? Or what dove would return to feed her young were she ignorant of the ways of hawks?' And the disciple thought, oh geez, not this crap again, and the old sage, seeing this, said, 'My words do not convince you; perhaps the magic pool will.' And the old man motioned with his gnarled hand to the magic pool of which he spoke and therein formed shapes, wondrous and enchanted, which rose into the air to provide illustration to the young disciple ...

Scene iv: (*superego and id are fighting, their hands at each other's throats, shouting at each other incoherently.*)

superego: Study more!

id: Party more!

superego: Work, success, achievement!

id: Party, hedonism, pleasure!

(*Satan sits in the corner laughing. Next to him is the key to id's cage, which he unlocked in Scene i.*)

Satan: Hahahahaha! Fools, both of them!

(*ego enters the room, dressed simultaneously in a sharp business suit of navy pinstripe with white shirt and burgundy paisley tie, gleaming leather black shoes; and in the outfit of a beach bum, with t-shirt by BodyGlove WetWear, loud, baggy shorts, sandals, (no socks) and a straw wide-brimmed hat. His shades are just too cool.*)

ego: Gentlemen! Dudes! Your attention please!

(*id and ego pause in their fighting and look up. Teaching equipment appears out of nowhere. An overhead projector, large-screen computer monitor, chalkboard and erasable markerboard.*)

ego: Conflict of this sort is both energy-wasting and unnecessary. You gentlemen are sadly misinformed of the facts pertaining to this case. Please observe Chart one.

(*The overhead projector displays several curves of various colours, all beginning at 0,0 on the bottom left and rising in a parabolic trajectory as perhaps a hurled object might. Some rise to higher peaks than others, otherwise little difference.*)

ego: This is a graph of attention paid by The Relevant World, i.e. grad schools, Teacher's College, Law School, Med School, etc. to the

marks a typical Honours B.A. or B.Sc. student obtains in years 1 on the left through 4 on the right. Pay special attention to the Med School curve, marked here in red, which rises to 50% importance early in Second Year and soon to 100% importance in each of Third and Fourth Years. You will notice that most of the other curves follow similar patterns, though most of them are also a little more laid back.

id: oh.

superego: oh.

Satan: (*under his breath*) Dude!

ego: Notice again that First Year averages below 10% importance. (*he turns to face the audience*) Gentlemen, we must prioritize. We must compromise. Study purity is impossible in a world where temptation exists and external social pressures do not unflinchingly enforce conformity. Superego, you are not going to be able to contain *id* forever. I suggest you employ this (*tosses superego a leash*), in lieu of the cage. I also suggest you use it very little in First Year. (*turns to id*) And you, though you may enjoy gratification for a while, should remember not to do anything so rash as to permanently affect this corporation's future life options, except those which I decide shall be absolutely undesirable. Any questions?

God: (*from above*) Source for thy statistics?

ego: Rumour and Gossip, sir.

God: I suggest you verify your information before making final decisions.

ego: Suggestion well taken, sir. Even now my minions scurry to write to grad schools, talk to dons and professors, and obtain academic calendars.

(*All wait. The information is verified. Entrance requirements for grad school in Self's chosen disciplines, Bootwanian History, and advanced Sociology of Exponentialism require marks in excess of 80% in Second, Third and Fourth year. No First-Year requirements.*)

ego: Put Academia on autopilot! Set a course for the previously unexplored!

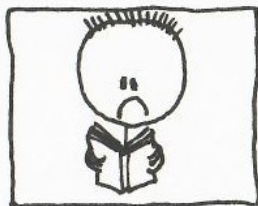
(*There is a moment of silence as the Starship Self begins its Mission: Explore Life.*) The allegory thickens beyond all palatability, and the film projector breaks down ...

Feel better about thyself? asked God.

Fuck, no, said I. But maybe someone will.

CHRIS POWELL

Sisyphus Revisited



Here, we make cocktail-party conceits
over inferior coffee and drop names
with the subtlety of bombs, parry
with words and tight, fanged smiles.

(On the other hand, if
you look at it this way, what
you're really saying is)
but we betray with every breath.

We might as well be stark naked
knock over this table,
clunking savagely together,
spreading saliva and ill-aimed
intimacy wide like jam over a bed
of pristine white paper.
I would love to tear those glasses
from your startled face and grind them
under jackboots to destroy
the reflection of a self-reflexive vacuum.
We torture from this charade.

I allow myself the luxury
of the seduction of banged
foreheads, stabbing hipbones
and incompatible teeth.
I would allow myself this,
except it implies that we are
capable of locomotion. It would
be wise to have us
shot at dawn
for we have vivisected all
and been murderers of the highest order.
You bled to death
in front of our eyes to help
us pass time, and we
mopped you up on 8½" x 11" Bond.

We are frozen
halfway up the hill, rolling over mythology,

knowing movement in either direction
would be a big mistake.

We cannot conceive of You,
You are vestigial and shriveled,
disintegrate in a chemical shriek
at any coincidental union.
You self-destruct, messiah;
the spleen sewer welds
us to chairs.

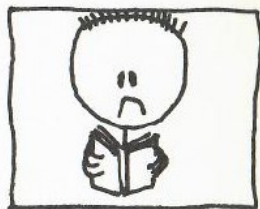
As you were saying
(with crypt-like eyes)

ERIN O'BRIEN

Three Nights Alive

Sunday in October

Imagining her still asleep
I drew pictures across her back
with the pillow of my index finger,
No image so soft as that which I put my lips to
She stirred
Her smile was tender to the dawn.
Outside the clouds lay
like patient loaves on a baker's table,
Perhaps it would rain today,
Beneath the sheets we held the summer's heat alive.



Ischhak

Stars are shivering like cracked glass
and the owl dips its wing to catch the scent
Somewhere nearby a forest
gives a sigh of pine-tinged regret.
A river wanders like a raindrop navigating a spider's web
Past centuries, centurions of red pine
Only the threadbare and hungry fox
knows how little time
there lies before dawn.

Surfing

Each night, the line between the sky
and the dark waters of the Gulf of Siam
met with the delicacy of an eyelash.
The warm wind made my skin feel loose and transparent
The engine's idle rhythm and the muted Thai vowels
set the pace as we waited for the shrimp to gather to the light
Near dawn, the nets would be brought in
like a virgin covering her knees

Back in the village I'd fill my bowl and smoke till dreaming

I awoke one morning with bronchitis and the desire to surf
the perfect wave
I had the image
How the wave rose with hunched shoulders
and charged forward to the beach with me on her back.
Yet I was secure in her grasp
and I was six years old
and my mother was teaching me to swim.

SINGLE WHITE NON-ENTITY, SEEKS ANONYMITY
OR SOMEONE WHOSE NAME ELUDES STEVE ALTOGETHER

Woman Of Steel

Saturday, May 23.

7:36. I observed myself in the full-length mirror one last time. The trick was to be scrupulously self-conscious while seeming not to be. An essential investment of forethought and preparation served to create a painstaking impression of carelessness. The image before me wore the ideal, half-tousled fall of curls; the desirable shade of lipstick, like a delicately ripe peach; the irreproachable skirt, not too bold, not too shy, displaying to advantage a dainty expanse of smooth-shaven leg. Her skin was uniformly creamy in its cosmetic whitewash, her nails honed and hued to perfection. A faint floral fragrance radiated from somewhere behind tasteful pearl earrings and vied briefly with soap, shampoo, hairspray, baby powder and toothpaste before successfully arresting the olfactory glands.

7:38. As I turned away from her, satisfied, I wondered whether it were not too daring to go and meet Jeremy. His roommates had an unsettling tendency to stand about, laconically ogling. Well, perhaps they would be out.

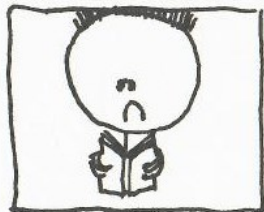
7:50. My hopes were in vain. A laconically ogling roommate answered my ring and ushered me up the stairs before him to Jeremy's room.

Sibyl was already there. I mumbled a reply to her effusive greeting and arranged myself casually on a chair. Leaning forward so as not to crush my blouse, I sat on the edge of the chair, to prevent my skirt from wrinkling. Sibyl was making flattering gestures at Jeremy's resumption of a humorous anecdote which my entrance had interrupted. Having failed to concentrate on the synopsis he had delivered for my benefit, I listened to what was therefore just so much gibberish.

A pause followed my silent reception of what was presumably the punchline. I laughed nervously, heh heh? being at a loss for any further response. 'Oh,' said Jeremy, glancing at me with exaggerated patience, 'I've gotta tell you about this amaaazing person we met in Greece.'

'Tell us,' squealed Sibyl. I gave her a look.

Pleased, Jeremy launched forth about the amaaazing person in Greece. 'Wow,' Sibyl cried, when he paused for breath! 'Great,' she shrieked, as he stopped to tie his shoelace! She finished the harmonious chorus with a clap of her hands!! a crescendo of giggles!!! and a sigh.



And that was nothing to the one about the night he spent in a small Alpine village.

8:45. We left, finally, three-quarters of an hour after we had intended to be there. Not that it mattered, as the café was open late. Still, I hadn't really intended to spend all evening with these two. Not that I had planned anything else. Not that there was anything else to plan.

I fell in step behind the other two, losing interest in the conversation. My shoes made hollow noises on the pavement. They looked small and elegant against the rubbled surface of grey concrete, and neon rivers squiggled along their shiny curves, so that I walked on a sliding cloud of reflected light.

8:58. The café was loud, crowded, choked with cigarette fumes. I reeled slightly at the onslaught of sound and scrutiny, gasping for breath like a fish trapped in a tank. The tables were small and round and hard, reassuringly so. Jeremy and Sibyl sat around it and I sank down opposite them. A TV in one corner of the room vowed to alter our existence with breath mints, nail polish and styling gel. 'WHY be your own DULL self when you could be POPULAR and WORTH-WHILE???!?!'

Jeremy shook his head in disbelief. 'It's like you're gonna just change your whole life. Wouldn't that be great? if you could just change completely just like *that*?' Sibyl laughed appreciatively. Jeremy leaned towards me with a pitying smile. 'What do you think? What would you change?'

Oh, do I get to talk now? My big chance. I stared down at the table, shrugging. 'I dunno.'

Pause.

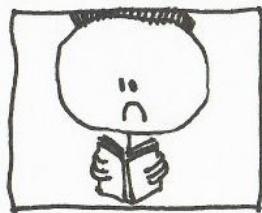
Jeremy turned to Sibyl. 'Well, what about you? What would you change?'

'Oh, you just want us to ask you,' she countered. 'Go ahead and tell us.' She sparkled at him enticingly. Good grief.

Time for lipstick and a breakdown. I pushed my chair back and threaded my way through the café to the ladies' room. A door at the back bore the proud emblem of a silhouetted stick figure in a dress. Recognizing it immediately as the universal symbol of womanhood, I went in.



JENNIFER SHELTON



It had to be the fluorescent lights that had turned me into a green-tinged staring zombie. I peered in the mirror, hoping for a more appealing angle, and found that if I tipped my head way back and to the left, all objectionable features became ... *less* prominent.

I sighed and thought about returning to the table. I thought about escaping through the bathroom window to some back alley where I would unquestionably be mugged. I slouched on the toilet, head in hands, hair falling limply around my face and eyes. Snuffling unattractively into some toilet paper, I wobbled to the mirror. I stared helplessly at the face within and she stared helplessly back at me.

'You've got to change this,' she said.

I glanced around to see who had spoken. Having assured myself that the room was devoid of other human life, I leaned forward and whispered into the mirror. 'Run that past me again?'

'You gotta change. You're making yourself miserable. What's more you're making *me* miserable.'

I eyed her suspiciously. 'And who are you, pray tell?'

'I'm the woman in the mirror.'

'I figured that.'

'Look, you've gotta stand up for yourself more. Be more tough. You're just drifting along.'

'Did I ask for your advice?'

'You're trying to tell me you don't need advice?'

'Okay,' I shouted. 'Everyone's such a goddamn critic. You want tough? I'll give you tough, all right!'

'Hey,' she called, 'I didn't mean -'

'Just *shut up*,' I shrieked, and flew out the door into blackness and a great sucking wind.

Saturday, May 23.

7:36. I slashed a swath of red goop across my mouth and tested the cemented spikes of hair round my head for solidity. Pretty damn solid. I surveyed my image with malicious satisfaction. Thigh-length high-heeled black boots, leather mini and jacket, biker's gloves and big, dangerous-looking earrings formed the main components of her attire. Her face was a pale death mask pierced by dark-ringed eyes,

with bloody lips twisted in a slight snarl of pleasure. She ran her nails through the nest of thorns posing as a coiffure. Bracelets jangled discordantly. I gave a feral growl and went to the hall phone. 'Jer, yeah, it's me. Come on down and pick me up before you go to the café.'

'Well, I'd love to -'

'Great.'

'- but -'

'See you soon.'

I hung up on his protesting voice and returned to my room. Blaring the most obnoxious music I could find at top volume, I stretched out on the bed. My nails clicked a luridly coloured pattern on the headboard as I propped myself up on one shoulder, tensely lifting my horrent skull out of danger.

7:58. I took out a magazine and did not read it. I flipped forward a page or two, back a page or two, and did not read it.

8:30. My quills were still intact. I noticed a small sticky ring where I had put a cup on the dresser. I wet a Kleenex with my tongue and rubbed it out. I slathered more red stuff on my face.

8:48. A knock over the din of the stereo. I leapt up and prowled idly to the door to meet Jeremy. And Sibyl.

'Jer,' I murmured, gripping his arms in blood-red talons. My lip-stick left a wound on his cheek. Releasing him, I advanced on Sibyl, my teeth bared, and crushed her stiff vertebrae between metal-studded gloves. She stepped back with a dark look.

'What a surprise,' I hissed sweetly, lifting my eyebrows towards her. 'I thought we were meeting Sibyl at the café.'

'She came to visit,' Jeremy stammered.

'How nice.' I turned to Sibyl. 'How pleasant for you to have so much free time. I always seem to be so busy, I just don't have the time to go chasing down young men in their lairs.'

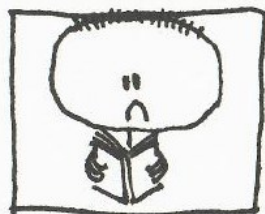
Sibyl made no reply, but fell in step behind us as we made for the café. Jeremy coughed. 'I was telling Sibyl about my trip to Europe -'

'You must have seen Spain. I've always wanted a Spanish lover. The passionate Mediterranean. I knew this amaaazing person once - I've gotta tell you about him.'

Jeremy's attention was recaptured by my pointed silence. 'Oh ... yeah?'

I felt his interest waning and struggled to hold it. It was a relief when we arrived at the café.

9:03. 'What a great place!' I spoke loudly over the hubbub. Breathing deeply of the toxic air, I felt the pulse of the music hammering down my spine. I motioned Jeremy to the nearest table and Sibyl sat down across from us.



The TV in the corner blinked its insistent offers at us. 'BUY ME, TOUCH ME, SMELL ME, TASTE ME' – a smorgasbord of sensations available at the drop of a credit card to the discerning consumer. 'START ALL OVER AGAIN,' it taunted and promised with the latest vanishing cream.

'Hey, how about that?' said Jeremy, looking steadily at Sibyl. 'Would you start all over again, if you could?'

She was silent a moment.

'I know *I* wouldn't,' I laughed. 'There's not a thing I'd do differently.'

Jeremy was still watching Sibyl.

'What do you think?' he asked.

Something crumbled and I stood up. 'Just off to pee,' I announced nihilistically. 'Back whenever.' I beat a hasty retreat through the door with the appropriate coat-of-arms (stick figure rampant in dress).

My spines were drooping and shredding, and the death mask looked more ghastly than ever. I had chipped the polish off the edges of my left fingernails. My feet and hands were sweaty in their leather sheaths and my legs were aching with the attempt to keep the mini-skirt at a less-than-obscene height.

I chewed on a fingernail and stared miserably at my reflection in the mirror.

'Some great idea,' I snapped.

She shrugged. 'Not my fault.'

'Whose brilliant notion was it to be tough? Stand up for myself? Hmmm?'

'So you went overboard. Can I help it if you don't listen?'

'Oh, *excuse* me, Omniscient One,' I grovelled sarcastically.

'Please. Endow me with the pearls of your wisdom.'

She regarded me in silence for some moments, then tipped her head thoughtfully to one side. 'No,' she decided, 'you obviously can't handle this.'

'Whaddya mean, I can't handle it? You think you could do better?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, so what are you gonna do, come out of the mirror?'

'Yes.'

The flatness of the mirror rippled, its colours pooling into a concentric pattern. At the centre the woman's fingers emerged, first separate, slender disruptions, then joined together as her hands broke and parted the surface of the mirror, so that it eddied around her shoulders and her knees as she clambered over the sink counter. Her substance was the mirror itself, and liquid reflection glinted over every inch of her. Her face was smooth, blind, a prism of shifting chromatics. Behind her the mirror flowed together and became a mirror again.

We faced each other, twin shapes before the empty mirror. She raised her hand in greeting, fingers spread wide, and I touched my own fingers to hers. I tried to take them away and found I could not.

I watched in horror and fascination as the colour drained from my arm into hers, leaving the flesh with the same silvery, insubstantial appearance as hers had possessed. As I stood motionless, the corporeal exchange spread out across our chest, down our legs, over to our other arm, and slowly, like ink draining through a blotter, up the neck to the chin, flooding up into the cheeks and ears, and spilling over the nose to the forehead and hair, extruding it strand by strand from its spikes, so that it fell down on either side of the face.

In a final surge I saw darkness tinging the double rings of eyelashes, white seeping towards the cornea, and then the last round discs of silver were

filled in and I faced the exact mirror image of my former self, fluidly argent and expressionless. I helped her up over the counter and she plunged into the mirror, so that it shuddered in her wake and, at last, closed over her.

The pale countenance of the image in the mirror regarded me accusingly. Her eyes were wide with alarm at the realization that she was trapped, sentenced to everlasting mimicry in the two-dimensional world where she belonged.

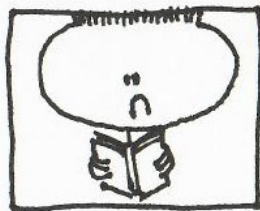
I turned from her and walked through the door into darkness.

Saturday, May 23.

7:36. It was a little early yet, so I opened my window and leaned out across the sill. The smell of cut grass played luxuriously on the air, a hot dog stand supplying a pungent obbligato. The ruffled sound of leaf on leaf muted the mumble of cars beyond my window. I warmed my arms in the ebbing sun.

7:57. There was no answer at Sibly's number. I gave Jeremy a call.
'Plans still on for tonight?'

'Yep. I'm running a little late, but I'll be there.'

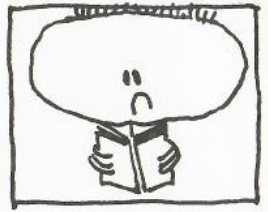


'I guess Sibyl's already gone, I can't reach her.'
'Actually she's here. She came to visit.'
'Oh, okay. Well, I'll see you there.'
'Hang on a sec.' Muffled voices. 'Sibyl says she's gonna go now and meet you at the café. I won't be much longer.'
8:12. The café was crawling with people and I stood outside for a moment. Sibyl's form emerged from the river of passersby. 'Hey.'
'Hey, Sibyl. How ya doing?'
'Okay, you?'
'I'm okay.'
Pause. Music thrummed from the café.
'Well, here goes another painful evening.'
Sibyl squinted sideways wryly. 'Thanks.'
'For what?'
'For noticing how painful it is for me.'
'Is it painful for you? I was talking about me. It's not easy being the third wheel. But I guess it's hard for you too.'
She looked at me strangely. 'Are you saying you feel like the third wheel?'
'Well ... you're very good about it ... but it's inevitable, really.'
Sibyl continued to stare at me.
'I mean,' I added hastily, 'don't worry about it or anything.'
'No, no,' she said. 'I'm not worried. It's just kind of ironic.'
'What, why?'
'Well, I always thought I was the third wheel.'
Pause, and we turned to face each other in amazement and curiosity.
8:30. Jeremy came up behind me, breathing hard from his run. 'Sorry I'm late.'
'Not at all,' I said. Through the café window there was a messy smattering of noise and colour and I touched my friends on the arm. 'Let's go in.'

MARTHA JO MCGINNIS



ANDRE MONIZ



Journeys

(i)

We stood on top of some East / Western world,
Our breaths shuddering
In the voiceless expanse.
The terrain,
Having lost its piercing fight with the elements
A thousand years ago,
Proudly admitted defeat,
Heaved its marred moon-rock remnants
Into position,
And waited,
Like a soldier of a long-forgotten war,
Left to endure the slow passing of time.

(iii)

The entire group
Decided to trade in their horoscopes
And become a water sign for the day.

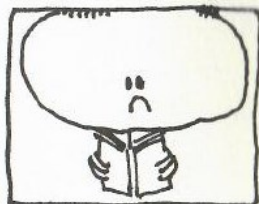
What a steal:

For \$25.00 and a total of three hours,
We travelled the Atlantic, transfigured
(In the shoes of a fisherman)
As fictitious outdoorsmen ...

Until the whale was sighted.
The delusion bubble burst
Through the flashes of instamatic cameras,
Leaving, as residue,
A boatload of common tourists.

RAMONA LUENGEN

Rooms



I

Piano
Keys. Dim,
Soft morning
Light. Leather-bound
Books. (Open books lying scattered
On the table. Pages
Everywhere.) Rug on the floor, cat
On the rug. A (battered) basket
Chair sits with its back
To the piano, face to the window
Which is covered with
(Crinkled) Venetian blinds, sun
Shining through freely, onto the bed.
(Rumpled, unmade, single bed for one.)

II

There used to be a larger room. It was
Spacious, well-aired, tastefully decorated,
With a huge picture window and a window ledge
Where you and I used to sit
On mornings like these.
The bed there was large, comfortable,
With satin sheets and a down comforter,
Neatly made always during the day, at night
Warm with you and I. We had a concert grand
Piano on a hardwood floor in the room we used
To contain our muses. My books and your books,
Poetry mostly, and your painting, my
Music, our life ...
Now there is only a small,
Unmade bed, cold
Most mornings. There is a battered,
Old upright piano, a few dilapidated
Books, empty books labelled philosophy. The tiny
Window with its crinkled
Venetian blinds, is always letting in
The light in the mornings, when I want darkness.

Outside there is only the grey city.
Where there were once bright lights in the dark night,
Now there are only mournful noises on foggy mornings,
And interminable grey afternoon downpours.

CHRIS POWELL



MICHAEL KLEINBERG

Peel



The light is yellow and cars are moving.

I'm alone with these piss-yellow birds, walking around the shop and smelling nothing but newspaper and animal, and I look out the window that says PETS and I don't see anything because of the glare. My legs are stiff, but I walk to the skinny cages that are stacked against the wall, all the walls except the back, and look at the animals. The dogs are on the bottom, the cats above them, the birds on top of the cats. And they haven't been fed or watered, and I'm not going to. Everything in here seems sticky, and the dogs walk in circles, always, always looking outside their cages, and I don't know what they see except me and other dogs and the window. But they walk like that for hours. Nothing is ever enough. The birds just pull their feathers out and make noise all the time.

I should have cleaned the cages, some of the dogs are lying in it, but I hate getting that on my hands, and having the animal either trying to escape or trying to bite me. If I don't feed them, they won't need their cages cleaned, so I don't. It stinks in here, but spreading the sawdust around soaks up the pee, and I get used to it. There aren't any customers to complain, anyways, and I wouldn't care if they did. Getting fired would be a relief; I'd have real days outside instead of always looking through a window.

So I go into the back room, I don't know why, and I look out that busted screen door that opens onto the alley. It's cooler and darker back here. Across the alley is an apartment complex, low rent, and I'm washing my hands at the sink when this fat old lady walks out onto her balcony three flights up wearing this faded housecoat. And she's got her eyes screwed up all funny like she's about to cry, and you know how when you get gooseflesh your whole body gets cold? So this ugly old lady is standing on the edge of her balcony, and you're drawn to her, like you have to watch, and she turns around and pulls up her housecoat and squats down and starts to piss into the alley, right into the alley so everybody can see. And she's holding onto the railing so tight her whole hand is white. And you turn away and you realize you were so eager to watch that you left the water running in the sink. And you wonder if you're sick.

The light is red and cars are moving.

I sit behind the counter for a little while, but I don't call the police

about the old lady. I feel sick, and when the dogs start making noise I swear at them until they shut up. After a while, I open the cash register, and it's empty, so I swear again for a long time, hearing my voice and the words and the birds – the canaries and the macaws and that one single robin – and hating them because they couldn't stop living and leave me alone, because they make me pick up their feathers and spray the shop with air fresheners to cover their stink. I take a crumpled picture from my pocket, of a girl, and rub it. I'm rubbing it and mutter-whispering her name and telling her I love her, and I sort of mean it. But I want to mean it. I want to love her, because if I did I might not want to.

I feel hungry, clock doesn't work so it might be lunch anyways. But I don't know if I want to go into the back again, so I may as well eat out here. I got chicken, greasy wings and breasts.

Hey birds, goddamnbirds, look like anybody you know? I wonder if I could eat you, birds. I wonder. It's really hot in here. Chicken, chips and pop.

Then someone comes in, this old black guy with a bald head, a bald head that's shiny and smooth, and I clear away my lunch and put it under the counter. A customer, but he doesn't look at the PETS. He walks right over to you and you notice his sweater is torn and he doesn't have shoes and when he smiles, a helpless, scary, friendly smile, the mucus that's caked on his upper lip cracks. He says hello and you say hello, and he asks if you have pigeon feed and rabbit feed, small bags, cheap, because he's got some friends. You feel weird but say yeah, go and get it right over there, (scary old man with wrinkly eyes). And he goes and gets it, and he gives you the money, straight from his pocket. You don't ring it in, and he says goodbye and you watch him leave, wondering if he's married. You pocket the money because you need it, and because you hate this store.

The light is green and cars are moving.

I finish my meal, pulling the flesh from the bones with my lips and teeth (sort of like kissing, isn't it?). I drink my pop and throw the bones and scraps into the lowest cages. Dogs. Then I reach into my other pocket and pull out two shiny teeth, and put them in my mouth. I chew them and suck them, running them along the inside of my cheek with my tongue. They aren't my teeth, they're too big, two big molars, but as I look out the window that says PETS and watch the traffic and tip backwards on my stool I suck them like mints, and take them out of my mouth and throw them in the air and they fall back into my mouth. They aren't my teeth, and I've had them for a long time. They aren't my teeth, and I'm not sure where I got them.



I'm bored, thinking about the teeth and my father's wide hairy back and the nice way he has of digging his elbow into my ribs, right in there, when he is pleased with me. He did that when I got this job. Old man said I was going to show responsibility and learn how to live in the world. And now I've got eight fifty in my pocket and all I had to do was take from some old beggar and never tell. I don't know why I was so scared of that guy. He was just some old tramp, but that way he smiled and asked so nice I knew he knew I was scared. So I had to take something. He could probably smell fear, like they say dogs can.

I get off the stool, I don't know why, and kick this cage where this dog is growling and worrying some chicken scrap I threw him and go to the door. And when I open it, the sun is so different outside the window, not urine-coloured alley sun but real sun, and there is a little bit of wind, so I decide to leave. Screw it, you know? Screw the old man and the cats and the birds and cages and dampness that embarrasses you and leave, nothing more. And you go back to get the keys to lock the door so you can leave, leave, when you notice that that dog, the dog with the chicken, is shaking its head funny and kind of falling around the cage. So you go over to the cage to look, and this dog is shaking its head so hard that its head is hitting the side of the cage, and it's pawing at its face and its back legs are shaking, and the rest of the dogs are barking and howling and the birds are screaming, flapping around their cages, and you realize when the dog starts wheezing that it's choking, that it can't breathe. So you drop down on your knees and try to open the cage door but your hands aren't working – damn, damn, damn – and you pull at the cage door and the dog looks at you and his eyes are bulging and you imagine them filling with blood and he wheezes and shakes his head and you scream and you just pull the whole cage out from under the others, and the ones on top, the cats and birds and that one red robin, fall all over and the cage is open and you don't know what to do but you force the dog's jaws apart, shove your hand into his mouth, and he bites your hand and thrashes around and I'm bleeding – o god o god o god – his eyes like marbles, rolling back into his head, hand down his throat, feel something, hands work damn damn damn (bone) one finger pull,

now two fingers (bone) stare into his eyes we're crying, me and the
dog, never enough, never ever ever enough, and I pull my hand from
his mouth we're bleeding and I'm holding half a wishbone.

The light is yellow and cars are moving.

COLBY LINTHWAITE

(To Mrs. Piekarski)

If you were to die tomorrow
and never more answer the phone,
I wonder would I cry like the lady who cries
at old Piekarski's stone.

She's old too. Her coat is white
but dark under autumn's bloom
and her tears fall like leaves as she swallows and heaves
in silence at the dead man's tomb.

Her face is crumpled – like the old blossoms
that shrivel in the old bouquet –
her eyes hold too the dead begonia's blue
– she props them up and she gets down to pray.

I suppose it's all the same to Piekarski –
I suppose it'd be the same to you
pitying from above the extremities of love –
It's awful, but what else can we do?

If you were to die tomorrow
and I walked this cemetery alone,
I wonder would I cry like the lady who cries
at old Piekarski's stone.

RICHARD ENGLAND

'Spare Change?'

he asks, with a voice not wider than the gap
between yellow light and red,
a voice that grows like dry lichen
on the grating stone of rushhour motors,
gridlocked faces of commuting soles.

He (for it is not yet sexless) seems
so fragile here, alone, and just above
the surface noise of a godless sea –
touching no shore, drowning no love –
so fragile he seems, growing
out of a crack in the sidewalk –
some spore-seeded sessile creature
rootless and without dreams, that waits
with two words encrusted
in the ugliness of a salt city –
it is perhaps enough that he has power
to even move his lips –
breath – no matter how much it seems
monoxide and deceit – is miracle –

For here's no sage fool, no oracle,
space-suited in May against the spring,
in parka and construction gloves,
helmeted with dirt –
space-suited where no space can suit
where no air is clean enough to sleep
and feed – or breathe

Is it enough?
I might have heard and answered
I could neither change nor
spare such motion to the world which lies
extended, and begging credence of my senses.
I might have mocked and laughed
alone and left the bloke alone –
and said – 'Why no – I'm stark raving
broke

if sentences are what we go by.'



I might have gone by – and been broken
breaking this rag shelled bloke – what is spoken?
Is it enough
to bind some lines with ragged wit
to try to make a voice between
the yellow light and red
to try to stop the tide that rises over
this seaweed beggar, camouflaged
in salt city ugliness?
Is it enough to see, to breathe,
to sleep and feed, watch him drown,
and in the blind light's green
go on by?
Is it enough?
Spare change. Scraping from
the static surface
two words dispersed in the flow
of business. A call. A caller.
Is it enough? I stopped and did not look
at his eyes. Between the yellow light and red
I gave the bloke a dollar.

RICHARD ENGLAND



JENNIFER SHELTON



Riddle

The rhythm of the sun is love's first
bite into the apple, the
sunny-stream, drought-inducing, falling-off-of-horses feeling
that never sleeps that never weeps that
always keeps the time until we
wind our way upstairs in our
pyjamas.

I feel another myth in the marrow of
my bones dancing daily in the doors
spraying flowers in the breeze
And by the pricking of my thumbs
a new thing on the window sill
something wicked this way comes ...

I'll never stop again to shout or doubt the waves
of fallen dew until the spout
stops dripping onto you, you know, your
brown-haired head, until the
dew on that green apple forms
a new horizon in the
funny fuzzy sunshine of
my youth.

CHRIS POWELL



JOSE CARLOS LAMEIRO



Duelling Authors

dedicated to the Trinity Review (past, present and future)

Outside the building, a bluebird sang.

Inside the building, the auditorium was redolent with a respectful silence as pencils were duly sharpened for the two finalists in the 4th Annual Write-Off. Upon the completion of the ritualized opening ceremonies, a murmurous hum resumed. It promised to be an exciting competition: this year's contestants were as different as cat and dogwood.

One might imagine that over the oak table standing impassively on the stage, the air itself altered by subtle gradations, being drenched in electric goofiness at one end and charged with dampening seriousness at the other. Were such a train of thought to avoid derailment, one might proceed to suppose that the air in the middle was either unbreathable or intensely fresh.

At the left end of the table (or 'Writers' Block,' as it was popularly known) sat the tournament's popular favourite, Greg Wackley. By request, his chair was several inches too low, to allow room on the seat for a thick telephone directory. He never called this an artistic affectation; he merely explained that you couldn't write unless part of you still felt like a kid, and that part might as well be your rear end. Greg Wackley was unstoppable in body and mind: one of his limbs continually twitched with nervous energy, and he was always visibly preparing wisecracks, of which he would verbalize only one out of ten. He was a one-man Salvation Army shop: blue jeans with a hole in each knee, second-hand running shoes, a bright Hawaiian shirt depicting a lot of tiny suns on a purple background, and a baseball cap that did little to conceal his barbed wire hair. His recurrent grin could most generously be described as 'toothy.' He regularly asked McDonalds cashiers for a bag of 'free smiles to go.' His favourite author was Douglas Adams.

Across from him sat, or rather posed, the gaunt figure of his formidable opponent, the contest's critical favourite, Domenic Dreer.

He was dressed all in black, from his head to his feet. He would have, and had often, been the first to call this an artistic affectation: dark boots, ebony socks, jet-black (and tight-fitting) pants, charcoal shirt, and midnight overcoat, all topped with a tarry bowler derby perched on shoulder-length hair dyed the colour of ravens. His fixed countenance inextricably comprised despondency, thoughtfulness, contempt, despair, bitterness, boredom, anger, anguish, angst and every other emotion foreign to smiles. His pallid, frozen expression enhanced his appearance as a postmodern, if not premillennial, scarecrow. He collected obituaries of people with his initials. His favourite author was Joseph Conrad.

To Greg's right, to Dreer's left, sat the audience and its babbling attention.

The judges signalled that the contest was about to begin, again muting the flurry of syllables. One judge leaned near a microphone to announce the first category: 'Topical issues,' she intoned. 'Thirty minute time limit.' A half-hour of dense creativity and tense anticipation began.

Greg Wackley tapped a complicated rhythm on his knee, culminating in a fingersnap and a wide grin. He immediately wrote at tickertape speed, stopping occasionally to chuckle. Domenic Dreer stared at a flickering light bulb for five minutes before he wrote in a careful script at a steady pace. Wackley was finished ten minutes early, Dreer only two. They devised and revised until the whistle announced that time was up. Wackley looked pleased; Dreer looked at the light bulb.

The judges declared that Dreer would read first. His adversary grinned at this news, for no reason whatsoever. The night-cloaked author strode regally to the podium. He adjusted the microphone, cleared his throat and quickly gauged the audience. Not all illiterates, he noted with grim satisfaction. Very well – he certainly knew to whom he was reading.

And this is what he read:

Immune Deficiency

'A penny for your thoughts.' Such a stupid phrase, her husband says it to her all the time; it's cute, it's stupid, she's stupid, how did it happen? 'A penny for your thoughts –' and she clings to it, it's safe, and she's got to stay calm, a penny for your thoughts, Penny, a penny for your thoughts.

'That's all they're worth now,' spoken aloud so she doesn't feel alone; except it sounds peculiar, words in an empty room, and people



in the hall might hear. The door's open, she hasn't closed the door yet, so she closes it and she's 'Home Sweet Home,' another stupid phrase, a penny for your thoughts, dear. She never thought she'd marry someone who called her 'dear.'

Oh but she loves him, she loves him and she needs him more than she's ever needed anything, and if only he were home. She's trembling, actually trembling; she has to sit down, why is she still standing? Dropping her purse on the floor, dropping herself on the sofa, the apartment feels smaller. She's smaller: a fly, a speck, a comma.

Consider the facts, Penelope: 'Just the facts, ma'am -' stupid, she's never even seen the show, isn't it amazing how you can know so much and so little all at once? You'd think she'd know something about the disease that's going to kill her - didn't her doctor mention something about a drug? but she wouldn't let him finish, she had to leave. She doesn't even know how long she's got to live, but then who does? except this is different, isn't it?

Why not admit it, she thought it was a gay disease, a male disease. God, she can't even think offhand what the letters stand for. It was so far away. She was safe in her uptown highrise with her P.R. job and her husband the lawyer and her nine tropical fish and her Agatha Christie collection and a lifetime ahead of her. She thought she was safe when she was dying.

How could it happen, how, how could it, how could he, she loved him, and he loved her, or is she just another stupid, naive wife? These things happen to other people. God, she'd been tempted too, but she thought marriage stands for something, and she thought that's what he thought too, how could he? How could she, whoever she was, or he, oh God, what's the difference, it doesn't matter, except it does, doesn't it? Let it at least be a woman. Stupid, stupid, stupid.

It would be worse not to know. That's something. At least there's no question about it, unless maybe Ted, oh shit, Ted Ted Ted, but that was twelve years ago - except didn't she read that it can stay dormant for that long? Twelve years, married for five, so seven years before that, remember the moment, Penelope, remember it: second year university, a rough year with your dad passing away, and you failed that exam, and Ted was so kind, making hot chocolate for the



JENNIFER SHELTON



two of you that night, just friends, just good friends. And you wanted to be so near, so close. You were burning up inside, you would have done anything he said. You both sat on the bed, and you took his hand, and your eyes were exploring his, so kind, so close, so perfect. And you wanted the perfection to go on forever. So you did the next best thing. And the most special moment came when it was over, and you lay there with his arms around you, holding you, locking you down, keeping you safe, safe from death and the future and the past and hatred and disappointment and the rest of the world and monsters in the closet. For just a few moments, he kept you safe from not being safe; and for just a few moments, it was perfect again.

You've never been safe since. You've always had something on your mind, some worry invading your thoughts, Penny. Whether he gave it to you or not, maybe that was still the moment you really started to die. And now, twelve years later, all of a sudden face it: you miss him. Not as a lover, not as a maybe husband, that's why you called it off the next week. But as a friend who drifted from you until he was too far to be reached, as an arm that held you so that nothing could take you away. You miss the perfect Ted, the perfect moment.

Penelope yawns. Maybe it was Ted, or if not, well, she's not the only one who had a lover before getting married. It could just be that. She'll never know; she's never known anything. Every day brings her closer to death, but that's nothing new either. There'll be pain, but she'll deal with that later. For now she's relatively safe.

The apartment door opens. Her husband is an hour and a half late. 'Evening, dear,' he says. 'Penny for your thoughts.'

Half the audience immediately gave a standing ovation. 'Brilliant!' they cried. Those of the second half who were not snoring scratched their heads. 'That's stupid,' they complained. 'Such depth!' the first half exclaimed. 'What a piece of trash!' the second half declaimed. A university student wearing reflective sunglasses slowly bobbed her head up and down, responding to an inner harmony. A street musician sighed as if he had heard the story too many times. A black feminist poet hysterically screamed 'Yes!' and fell to the ground in ecstasy.

One elderly gentleman, the editor of a respected literary journal, commended the skilful use of analogy, stream of consciousness, irony, subtext, classical allusions and effective colloquialisms. The young skinhead sitting next to him asked what the whole point of it was. The editor responded that the story used AIDS as a metaphor to underline the fact that none of us are ultimately safe. The punk observed that this was sort of an obvious moral. The editor retorted that it was a much more subtle and challenging work than that. His young companion asked why it couldn't also be more entertaining.

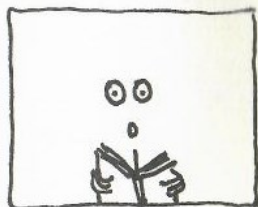
Not at all oblivious to the crowd's division into two camps, Greg Wackley approached the podium and waited for silence. He adjusted the microphone, cleared his throat, scratched his armpit and quickly gauged the audience. Not all pseudo-intellectual artsy-fartsies, he noted with a fatuous grin. Good stuff; he knew who his audience was.

And this is what he read:

Both Sides Are Pros

The sun brightly peeked over twin mountaintops, reflecting in the trout-filled lake under the crayon-blue sky. It was a cheap-postcard kind of day, just the way Joe Sturdy liked it. It was a morning that really made you feel like a man! Joe suddenly wondered what his wife felt like today. Ah, but no wife of Joe Sturdy would let herself be beaten by a mere figure of speech! She was in the cabin now, frying entire pigs and ostrich eggs for her robust, muscle-bound husband's breakfast. It promised to be a fine day, a happy day, an energetic, fun-filled, wood-chopping day that made you glad to be alive, in other words, a really boring story.

So meanwhile in a city courtroom that has absolutely nothing to do with the previous paragraph, it was a profoundly shitty day for everyone. For Martina Shloop, who wanted an abortion but was being legally blocked by her boyfriend's second cousin's sister-in-law's old high school math teacher, the day was a pile of horseshit that you tread on in high-heeled shoes. For the frustrated forces of the pro-life movement, and equally for the aggravated army of pro-choice supporters, the day was, um, someone else's shit in an unflushed toilet. For the presiding judge, who was missing *The Price is Right* for this, so it had better be good, dammit, the day was, oh, let's see, baby shit in a disposable diaper. For the stenographer, the day was, ah, how about, like that mashed potatoes scene in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, a mound of carefully sculpted ...



'Step forward,' decreed Judge Sludge, thankfully interrupting the narrator, who, having suddenly regained control, proceeded to apologize for the disgusting extended metaphor which he had forced upon his readership, though chunks of it weren't bad, especially that part he hadn't finished yet, about the mound of carefully ...

'Yes, your Honor,' said the leader of the pro-lifers, Chelsea Sturdy (no relation), whose day was like ... 'I have here in this hand-bag something that should impress upon you all just what's at stake.' She reached in and pulled out a foetus. 'Look! Look upon the face of the so-called non-person that you'd destroy for your own selfish concerns! Look at the human being whom you'd murder! Look at the baby deprived of a happy, wholesome existence in a suburban condo ...'

'Oh, give it a rest,' squeaked the foetus.

'... who'd probably vote Conservative, you keep out of this, kid, and who ... uh ...' Chelsea's rhetoric slipped on a banana peel and fell face first into a strawberry cream pie. 'Did you, er, say something?'

'You betcha, sister,' the foetus replied in a pitch astonishingly similar to that of Mickey Mouse. 'I toldja to quit with the moralizing. You think I would've been happy as a kid? Pfagh, I say to you! To you I say, pfagh! I've been talking to folks in the Fates & Destinies Department, and I happen to know for a fact that my parents would have made me take piano lessons and eat spinach for dinner every night! You call that a life? Jeez, I would've wound up being a talk show host! You think I want to contribute to the decay of Western society? Thank you very much, but I'm proud to be a foetus.'

'Oh, gimme a break!' came the Jiminy Cricket voice of a foetus that jumped out of an embarrassed geneticist's briefcase. 'You can't apply such a dumb-ass argument to the general case! For example, I'd have been a Nobel Prize-winning physicist who reversed the greenhouse effect, thereby saving the world from imminent death and destruction, not to mention from repetitive magazine cover photos of melting globes. Chew on that when you get some teeth!'

'Oh yeah, who asked you, Toothpicks-For-Legs?'

'Hey, at least I've got brain waves, buddy! Makes me human, by my way of thinking!'



JENNIFER SHELTON

TOO MUCH
STUDYING
MAKES YOUR HEAD
EXPLODE!

'Great! I know a few dolphins who'll be overjoyed to hear that!'

'Fuck the dolphins!'

'Sorry, don't have the parts.'

'That's not what I mean. It's a morality thing: I wanted the chance to live!'

'Well, your mother didn't seem to think it's such a hot idea.'

'Fuck my mother!'

'Sorry, don't have the ...'

'I am more important to me than my mother is!'

'This is my point: who wants to bring a mother-hater into the world?'

'I don't hate my mother. I just didn't want her to kill me! Is that so much to ask?'

'Well, I didn't want mine to give birth to me just because she felt obligated! Is *that* so much to ask, you stupid foetus?'

'Don't call me that! I prefer to think of myself as 'naturally challenged.'"

'Oh, does that mean we have to give you a job now?'

'Fuck off! Jesus, you're the type that gives foetuses a bad name!'

'What, you mean other than 'Shrimpy'?'

'Um,' interjected Chelsea.

'Excuse me,' offered Martina.

'Shut up!' cried the foetuses. 'You keep out of this!'

They resumed their argument, and within an hour the courtroom was cleared of all humans, or, well, possibly all but two. They name-called and debated and insisted and refuted and counter-attacked back and forth, making each other's day generally shitty, like, you know, when it's really, really hard and no matter how much you push ...

'Shut up!' the foetuses repeated for the narrator's benefit, who proceeded to return to Joe Sturdy's cabin just in time for lunch, where people might be boring, but at least they weren't so damn touchy!

The half of the audience that had been laughing and giggling started to hoot and holler wildly. The half that had been dour and

unamused were dour and unamused. 'Juvenile nonsense,' they muttered. Immediately the appreciative half began to chat among themselves, asking what was your favourite part, do you remember how the foetus argument went, and didn't you love that bit about the shit? Some of them already began to make in-jokes out of the best lines. The editor of an anthology of Renaissance poetry wept loudly, despairing of the future of good taste. A young architect insisted to anyone who would (or wouldn't) listen that this was the first treatment of the topic she had heard that she could take at all seriously. Someone's grandfather muttered that he didn't get it.

One computer programmer turned to an English professor and said, 'Now *that's* a story!' The scholar suggested that the narrative in question was fraudulent, unfocussed, offensive, embarrassing and simplistic, and that it did a huge disservice to an issue of serious import. The programmer added that it was funny. The professor noted that so was *Three's Company*.

The next category announced by the judges was 'Poetry, open format, fifteen minute time limit.' Each author paused to survey the gabbling audience, as if to pinpoint precisely which half preferred his works over the other's. Dreer nodded; Wackley grinned. They knew whom they were appealing to.

To the hypnotic strains of the audience's chirruping, the authors wrote.

Dreer was first to read again. He spoke with smooth confidence.

conditions

i would not love her.
it doesn't help; i say it so often.
i would not love her.

he would be no worse –
perhaps –
he would be no better.

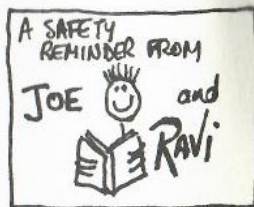
the conditional tense
defines a condition.

it would end;
it would burn out;
it would die down;
nothing would be left.

we're just friends.
is friendship really just?

we would know each other –
perhaps –
we would be alone.

i would grow distant.
i see her so often; it doesn't help.
i would not love her.



A famous comedic actor groaned, as if from actual physical pain. Several high school English teachers nodded their heads thoughtfully. One aged housewife, grandmother of seven, smiled with tears in her eyes. A few teenagers parodied the style, laughing abrasively. An infamous semiotician declared it to be the best poem he had ever heard. A local librarian called it the worst. An advertising executive said it sounded very impressive, and he had no idea what it meant. A spectacled lady pointed out the obvious influence of Walt Whitman. A bearded gentleman ran up to the stage and delivered an impromptu lecture about the poem's use of dualities, juxtaposition, iambs, stanzaic form, symmetry and ironic ambiguities. Only half of the audience took notes.

It was Wackley's turn next. He spoke with smooth confidence.

Modern Religion

There was this fine fellow named Jesus
Who was nailed to a cross by some sleazes.

But the guy chose to die

For our sins. Don't know why.

I guess he assumed it would please us.

Two priests left the auditorium in protest. A renowned atheistic author applauded loudly. Several academics shifted uncomfortably in their seats. An octogenarian jazz pianist interpreted the poem as a statement of genuine faith. A shy girl struggling to find meaning in her life suppressed the sudden urge to kill the author. A Shakespearean director denounced the limerick as an 'invalid art form.' A sitcom producer called the limerick the 'sonnet for the '90's.' The teenage parodists of the previous poem laughed uncontrollably; when it became apparent that they were not going to stop, they were

taken out back and shot. 'Kids today got no respect,' yelled an old veteran. Half of the audience nodded in agreement, not at all realizing that he was talking about goats.

It was then, as the audience was busy passing judgment, that the tragedy occurred. It was then that both authors, by an incalculable coincidence, died at precisely the same moment.

Domenic Dreer died when a congenital heart defect finally caught up with him, and he collapsed from a sudden heart attack. His last thought was: 'It's not fair. I have so much left to do, so much left to write. No time less than eternity would have been enough, but why did it have to end now? Every second is so precious, and God, I've wasted so many. Who will write my books now?'

Greg Wackley died when a falling piano crushed him. His last thought was: 'Say, what's that big shadow?'

Inside the building, the auditorium was ablaze with the assured chattering of an audience that was able to agree only that the world had just lost one great author.

Outside the building, the bluebird continued to sing its intensely personal song; several children stopped to listen.

JASON TANIGUCHI





Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!

Cerwin-Vega!