

children *churches* & daddies

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NATURE'S CUNNING

JASON ALAN DILTS

leaves to the wind, soft to the earth
turned and waiting, turned and taking
mouth of sleep, gaping empty
return to dreaming, turned from here

they know of life, they think of death
lie awake, they fear the sleep
children shiver, think of God
in the winter, the green has gone

right from wrong, life from death
all in all, just once i've gone
leaves on wind, gather drifting
how cruel the trees: return to green

branches straining, windows tapping
in the night, the children wake
long and gray, arms of willows
in the cold, with dropping snow

love and bread, always wanting
clay to clay, never more
anguish hunting, sleep is stalking
but nature's cunning, return to green

SAYIN' GOODBYE!
LIZZIE ROCK

When I met you from the start. I never dreamed you'd break my heart. I thought we'd always be together. I thought that we would last forever, but because of you last night I cried. Because of you last night I died. No matter what you say or do. I will never stop loving you. And although your feelings faded away. I'd have given anything to make you stay. You told me that you needed time. Meaning never again you will be mine. But though some crying and lots of pain. I've accepted things can't be the same. I don't know if we can still be friends. But i'm glad we made amends. I'll never regret falling in love with you. I love what you say and all you do. Time will heal this broken heart of mine. And although it hurts now loving you was divine. For over three months you were my guy. But now it's time to say GOODBYE!!

EVE'S
CONTEMPLATIONS
ON ORDERING FROM
THE MENU AT THE
PARADISE BUFFET

JENNIFER
MATTHEWS

It was the life “before shame,” but
not before annoyance. Let’s just say
Adam had his quirks.

Kept reminding me that
he was made in God’s image
and I was just taken
from Man’s rib.

I sometimes wonder
(in my less pious hours) if
that pecking order
was the reason I was the one
picking the fruit.

So what would you do

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if you were the “help mate”
to some guy who hands down
messages from God and

the only other thing that talks to you
is this walking snake that swears
you won't die
from eating apples,
but,
will instead receive
the wisdom of the Gods.

You eat

and offer some to Adam
(hearing no protests)
but when the Big Guy comes around
is the first to point his finger!

Listen,

even worse
than the pain of childbirth and
sorrows multiplied for my “faux pas”

is knowledge.

Knowing that God said I'd die,
but I didn't.
Knowing that the Serpent said I'd be wiser
and I Am.

THE LADIES OF EBENEZER

MILES C. DANIELS

He used to have a penis. At least that is what they are whispering from the pews of Ebenezer First Baptist Church. Sister Novella remembers him playing Barbies with her two daughters. He had loved to dress them in tight-fitting party gowns, and was known to steal Mary Kay products from her vanity.

The local teen darlings had idolized him, so did the church music director. When she first premiered Hair Spray, nobody recognized the fashionable woman. D-o-n-n-a, the beautician's name flashed in pink lights outside her corner salon. She owned a one-woman operation: hair, nails and appointment-only rubdowns.

Kneading was reserved for late evenings and that really flustered the god-fearing. At age seven, he'd been able to reach notes higher than any tenor in Camden County's cluster of church choirs. Each and every Christmas Eve he blessed the congregation with his own rendition of "Joy to the World", which sounded much like rock pianist Jerry Lee Lewis. Some church folk found it wicked, others commented on how Mrs. Johnson's boy could really tickle those ivories.

His minister, Reverend Chase, often preached against worldly knowledge. "Education, the Don Juan of faith" was one of his most famous deliveries. The church's tape engineer alleges that he sold fifteen copies of the exhortation that Sunday.

Male bars and dancing on tables in Raleigh were popular coffee conversations. Sister Pauline first heard about the jelly boobs and long hair at her Monday evening Bible study. The prescription for the permanent removal of facial hair bewildered the ladies missionary circle.

Three months and two days before she was diagnosed with the four-letter

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disease, Donna graced the old white church and sat on the pew next to the nursery. She sang the soprano line for “It is Well With My Soul”. And Sister Mazola, who just celebrated her thirtieth year as the church’s organist, swears she noticed a black tear dripping from her chin.

When the alter call was given, Donna quietly grabbed her purse and swaggered out the back door. Until today, that was the last time members of the Baptist church saw her.

She looks angelic all decked out in front of the communion table. Her hair is perfectly teased and her boobs look to have grown since the last time she haunted the sanctuary. The twelve-inch heels and sequenced black dress seem heavenly atop the maroon pillows.

The crowd is so large that the deacons had to fetch metal folding chairs from the fellowship hall. Mrs. Johnson is perched on the second row with a few distant cousins. Mr. Johnson decided to go possum hunting.

APES IN HELL

CHRISTOPHER
MULLROONEY

“and a little child shall lead them”
ay girl that were you
a million million years ago
when the fit was on
and wit poured like wine from your lips
sauce anyway

UNTITLED

SONYA EASTERDAY

Somebody took my
fifty cent rub on

Face cream
That I use to cover
The two-story scar
on my forehead.

Story one:

I fell and hit
My head
On the corner of the
Coffee table running
Through the house
Running down the
Hall chasing a
Ball
Turned the corner and fell
Right on my head.

Story two:

Late at night
After dark
Drooling sleep
Cock suddenly
In my face
Shoving back my
Throat

And all the screams
Held within.
Got turned over
On my belly
Fucked up the ass
Head banging on
The princess headboard.

Now I know why
I ended up here
Why I ended up
Queer
Weird to this society
And flailing deep
In the ocean
Drowning over
A man
A woman
A human
Being
To take this fear
Away.

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ONE MORE REPORT ON NASHVILLE

J. QUINN BRISBEN

(FOR B.H.)

The twisteroo in O. Henry's "A
Municipal report" is that Uncle Caesar,
Who talks like Stephen Fetchit, is
A killer in defense of sweet
Gentility, for Nashville had as much
Romance as anyplace even before
Minnie came from Grinder's Switch
To be seen from the Confederate balcony
Of the old Ryman, a few doors down
From the synagogue where boy ushers
On high holidays would misdirect
Country fol looking for the Opry,
Betting on how long it would take them
To realize that they were hearing
The wrong kind of nasal drone.

Athens

With a concrete Parthenon to prove it;
Signs in the park commenorating
A battle fought in 1864 with its 1960

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Sequels still inmarked in the grandeur
Of the old L & N depot, the lunch
Counters long since battered down, and
The gritty outdoors platform where
O. Henry once passed through and fugitive
Poets of the 1930s came and went..

In the
Distance glows the Opryland Hotel,
A slick and sanitary place where
I got busted with a mob of chanting
Cripples in 1993 and carted off
To a privatized for profit cell
Which could not hold our crowd,
For Uncle Caesar's descendants
Now sit in judgement locally.

Even
A fake baroque-style depot and
A fake Parthenon become real,
And "Wildwood Flower" and "Orange
Blossom Special" are wired to
Everywhere; and the twisteroo
Is that the jailbird pop writer
Porter, alias O. Henry, was
Absolutely right: Nashville, though
Unique as Vassar Clements' fiddle,
Is our common universal romance.

THE BODY

RICHARD WAGNER

One cannot release that which was never held.
Desire overcomes strength and will is able to
master desire. Control is the Key. I venture
to experience, I exist to conquer. I am lord and

master. All dark saying are secret things spoken
by the wise, only the wise heed the words of
knowledge; whereas, fools lack discipline and
die in their own negligence of what knowledge

grants. Knowledge is a power, understanding is
a tool. You are understanding, only knowledge
is lack. You must learn your power. A book
speaks silently and reveals itself to that which

would chance to open it. A book doesnot explain,
for it knows only that which is transcribed upon
its pages. Other then that, it has no order. I am
your book. Learn what is written there and

understand. Then and only then, shall you obtain
to all that you seek. I grant you my love, but such
power as you seek is a privilege that is gained by
an understanding of self. What I am, you can not

conceive, for thoughts cannot grasp it. Thoughts
cast a form, but I have no form. I am nothing, yet
all things express me. You can only love a thing

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when you learn to hate it. This is why it's so simple

to say; Fuck you. Measure the fullness of your cup
to be sure that your wants do not exceed your needs.
For verily I say unto you, you need me; but I want
you. You awaken each night to answer the voice of

nightmares; I sleep gently each day to receive the
blessing of your voice.

WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

JESSICA BAXTER

Azure Orbs
heavy with old grief
reminiscent of another pale soul
revealing salted wounds.

For me, that old feeling
mixed with forboding.
I understand the futility
of that pain
but cataracts blind the translucent blue
spooked because they cannot see
my good intentions.

I want to swim
in enticing oceans
though clearly,
sharks patrol those waters.

THE DUCHESS

ROBERTA A.
MCQUEEN

She's holding court again
at the senior citizen's club
dressed in the latest
fashion finery such as
rich embroidered blouses
she comes complete
with matching beret

She keeps her audience amused
telling stories of her life
yet her children never visit
seems no one really cares
her legs hurt
and she's so lonely
what's to become of her?

She puts on her makeup
and a big smile
she's not complaining, mind you
no, the Duchess has it all
doesn't she?

RELATIVE
DIMENSIONS

GEORGE
CLAYTON
UPPER III

Keep that milk crate over there
and this one here.
They stack, I know, but
forget that for a minute.

That one looks smaller
farther away.

If I could have it there
and here at the same time,
it would fit into this one.
And then you'd have something.

What? Don't look at
me like that.

I'm just saying what if.
I know you can't do it,
but what if you could?
Then you'd have something.

STANDING
WAVES.
SABRA
LEORA

Glazing around with my head full of nothing
As we speak, my psyche is still humming
Seeing the tissue that runs deep in my eye
When it's coming at you and it feels like a pin
Drowning in my own heat of resistance
No recollection of the things that I just did

If I don't know how to be here now
Contamination will start hanging around
My flesh is flesh
My fear is sore
But not about being afraid anymore

So I'm finding the why
That fits the hole I can't find
When there is nothing left
Except water on the mind
Holding back in my mental rewind

DICTION

KELLEY JEAN WHITE MD

You tell me
I should listen carefully,
that,
when you speak
you have chosen
the words
with great care;
I should
respond
to what
you
say.

I am
responding to
your fingers drummin,
your mouth twitching,
your back,
your shoulders,
your stiff hard face.
so much noise:

I cannot remember
any words.

THE CICERONE IN THE TRIANGLE (FOR B.O.)

J. QUINN BRISBEN

Mapping before we escaped gravity
Was endless triangulation,
A theodolite on a tripod focussed
On two known points, angles calculated,
Then moved on to a new apex
Et cetera as infinitum,
Then grids were laid on triangles
To divide mine from yours
Which left out the natives who
Thought all of this was ours
And could never be divided.

Now triangles swell and fade;
The cicerone and his friend the planner
Find themselves edging a big one
Connecting three cities which are

Not urban according to planner
Because the young, old, poor, and crippled
Cannot access the needful on foot,
So downtown is down like thee
Family farm, although a few of those
Still exist, suffering from

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Changing tastes and poison and
Processors who want, as usual,
Power without responsibility

Unlike pilots in the last propellor war
They have no relief tubes;
They gyre off I40 to exchange
Fluids and stoke up in the
Always superb greasy fries;
They sit in Eames chairs
Where they are joined by a trucker
Both wired and wirelessed
Whose dispatcher told him by cel
To crash for a few hours;
his chin approached the table
More closely with each nod.

The planner admits a guilty pleasure
In driving these well-engineered
Slabs where you can go
A mile and a quarter per minute
To shop for bargains in outlet malls
With freedom to go anywhere
As long as the road goes there
And you have wheels and can drive;
“But this is slavery to many
And degredation of the land
And poison in air and bodies
To make profit for a very few
Who are hard to atack because
They have enclosed the commons
Where once we addressed each other.”

The cicerine nods in agreement:
“I love to loop and yo-yo on

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these roads listening to a tape
Of Edward Gibbon's Decline and Fall,
Glorying in freedom from slowness,
And from long hikes with no rest
Because benches are no longer there
To comfort those going nowhere;
I wish I could believe that you can
Reverse this fading century's race,
Confound Frank Lloyd Wright, and
Make elevators outrace cars
And rails trump highways afterall;
My slogan for the new millenium
Is HEY, HEY! HO, HO!
FOSSIL FUELS HAVE GOT TO GO!
And age will soon make me, as you say,
A slave and beggar to those with wheels;
I wish I could still take the North
Robinson bus from Grandma's house
To downtown Oklahoma City where
They had a bookseller who knew books
And a jazz buf behind the record counter
And a skid row, a place for misfits
Temporary and permanent, a relaxed stretch
Crowned by my uncle's Reno Street bar,
A chivalric and well-regulated dive,
Dealing in measured oblivion;
I miss it; I miss downtown;
The place where it used to be
Is a thousand miles west on I-40,
Which bulldozed the beery refuge."
The trucker lifts his head and says:
"I can score you some bennies,
So you can drive straight through."

we are begging you...

we want your writing, and we want to put it in
magazines like this and in collection books that scars publica-
tions and design does, as well as on the internet. so i **beg** of you...

send your writing (in the e-mail letter or as an attachment) and your
art to us, please!!!

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