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**children
churches
& daddies**

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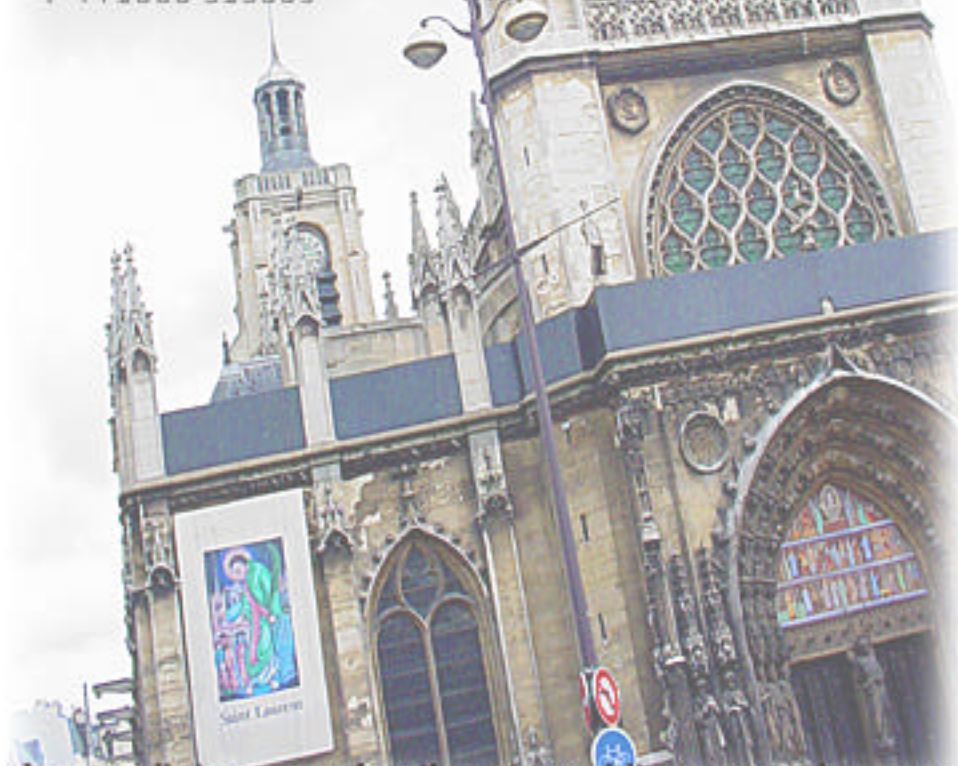
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& daddies

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the unreligious, nonfamily-oriented literary and art rag



WAS IT SNOWING

ART BY BRIAN HOSEY

**BACKGROUND IMAGE
BUILDING IN BRUXELLES**

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guest editorial

GUEST EDITORIAL BY JOHN YOTKO

KATRINA

The severity and scope of the damage that was caused by Katrina was not foreseen by anyone. Hurricanes have had a history of losing energy as they approached the city of New Orleans. This has happened so many times that the people had become complacent. One should not become complacent about hurricanes when living thirty feet below sea level in an ever sinking city.

The levees were designed to withstand a category three hurricane, which was calculated to be about a 1% probable event in a 200 year period. While the request for funding by the Army Corp of Engineers has been denied several years running, appropriations are made by Congress. The President hasn't that power, it is expressly forbidden by the Constitution. Am I saying Bush is not responsible? No. He is ultimately responsible but I see the problem as being more the result of the three branches of government being so well politically aligned that they have created a mutual support system where they have begun to feed on each other's half-truths as if they were immutable fact. So much for the balance of power. I could rant about the effectiveness of the Department of Homeland Security but I'll just compare its effectiveness to our cats. I have seen no mice in our house, therefore our cats have killed all the mice.

Governor Blanco did make the request per the Stafford Act, but it was for \$9,000,00.00 in aid from FEMA. We now know that will be a paltry sum when the entire bill is tabulated. The governor has the authority and responsibility to activate National Guard troops in her state for this emergency, which she failed to do in a timely manner. There are many Constitutional issues surrounding the use of Federal troops within U.S. borders. This usually requires Congressional approval first. The mayor of New Orleans could have used city owned public transportation to begin moving people to safer areas but didn't. Apparently New Orleans has a policy which implies they should have done this in the first place. FEMA should have begun moving on its own accord to preposition supplies to allow for a more rapid response.

This was one big fiasco on every front. The damage wrought belongs solely to Katrina. The preparation before hand belongs to the people and mayor of New Orleans and the governor. The federal response rests on the shoulder of the horses-ass loving director of FEMA. Bush is the horses-ass.

Why (Bush) would appoint someone with no Emergency-Response / Incident-Command experience to a position that requires a person with an Atilla the Hun's iron will to get things done now is beyond all comprehension. It is just one more example of how incompetent that man can be. Has he ever been truly successful at anything? I know he has been in charge of many things, each one it seems of them a sinking ship.



the boss lady's editorial

NATURAL AND HUMAN DISASTERS: KATRINA AND 9/11

I've held back on writing about 9/11. I tried to get a hold of my friends and family who were in New York and Washington D.C. for days, then the best I could do was talk about it in performance art shows. After this disaster caused by kamikaze pilots incarnate and after everyone pointed fingers and placed the blame from 9/11, I tried to stay out of that arena.

Then a few years passed of hurricanes. My parents (who live in south-west Florida) stayed in a hotel because of a hurricane one year, and my aunt & uncle lost parts of their home because of a hurricane once. And year after year I'd worry about my family because of the potential natural disasters

caused every season, but I never thought it was anything to write about.

And then hurricane Katrina came along, after hitting Florida and then ducking back out into the water before coming in for an attack again. Everyone in New Orleans was told to prep for a category 3 hurricane, so they figured that this would be like most other hurricanes and they could live through it with no problem.

They didn't know hurricane Katrina would be a category 5 hurricane.

But still, although it was touch, people still in New Orleans weathered the storm and started to go back into their homes.

That's when the levy broke.

And that's when most of New Orleans flooded, about the same time that hurricane Katrina started to move north and weak havoc on Mississippi and Alabama before being downgraded to a tropical storm in Tennessee.

So this was the second major catastrophe in recent years for me, but lucky for me I didn't have to call friends and family in this case — my parents were up in Illinois, the hurricane didn't do major damage to my family's part of Florida, and for writers as all know like Michelle Greenblatt, she survived as well. And although I hard many people discuss the terrible things that happened on 9/11, people did not complain as much about what the Government could have done until the 9/11 commission started getting together for find evidence for all of the things we feared could have been done to prevent 9/11 from happening.

But the things that



*Tree photos after Katrina in Plantation, Florida
by Peark Goldman*



make me want to argue and write usually stem from my hearing some loud-mouth's opinion on talk radio — and I heard it after hurricane Katrina came and left. And yeah, maybe I bring it on myself by listening to talk radio sometimes, but when I'm driving home and don't want to listen to music, I figured talk radio and news radio would be a good way to catch up on what is happening in the world, and what people think about it.

I know the problem with news radio and talk radio is that I'm actually catching up on what is happening in the world, and what *Republicans* think about it, and although Republicans have a lot of valuable points, some of the conclusions they jump to can be so inconsistent, that I can't *help* but rip on their conclusions, so I can come to be better conclusion of my own.

But the thing that usually happens is that I hear someone on talk radio making a rash complaint about something, and I have to clear the issue for them. Like last night, when I heard people on talk radio complaining about the lack of federal government assistance both before and after hurricane Katrina struck. Now, I heard that even though the news reports before Katrina struck were that it was only a category 3 hurricane, people still left New Orleans (a coworker of my husband has a family of 9 who came to visit after hearing the hurricane was coming and they had no place else to go). The problem was that (A) some people thought this was another bearable storm and that there wouldn't be a flood from a levy break, but the bigger problem probably was that (B) some people didn't have the money to get out, so were stuck in the storm — and trying to recover from the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

And that is where people start to argue that the government should have done more to help the poor. (Wait, that was probably politically incorrect of me to say that these people are poor. Forgive me.) I heard people complaining that FEMA should have been there earlier to help these people. Then I heard people get angry at President Bush for not setting in to help these states with national money to help them. I even hear the media comment that the help to these people in New Orleans (these "refugees") is slow for racial reasons (though no one has been about to ever verify that, but people like to find things to argue about...).

But as soon as I heard these thoughts I thought that as far as I know, FEMA is not a group to step in immediately to help people in situations such as this, but FEMA can coordinate what will be done in emergency situations when everything falls in place for proper execution. I also know that the federal government can't take action to help a state with a natural disaster until the state literally asks for it (in other words, states should control their fate, and that not all problems are the federal government's business).

I'd also go to far as to say that it's not the government's business to get people out of the way if they think the weather is going to be really bad where they live, but hey, I'm just a wacko who thinks the government shouldn't be in every aspect of our lives. But I might be wrong to think that the government shouldn't step in, because apparently the New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin declared a state of emergency, and ordered a mandatory evacuation of the city two days before Katrina struck, even though people without money or transportation could evacuate. People argue that the local government should have used any of the many public transportation buses or school buses to give anyone a ride away from town, to safety. Well, they have a right to argue, because the kick in the pants is that the City of New Orleans Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan clearly states that "The City of New Orleans will utilize all available resources to quickly and safely evacuate threatened areas," and "Transportation will be provided to those persons requiring public transportation from the area."

But they didn't. Have you seen all the photos on the news of all the buses stuck in feet of water on the streets?

So apparently the local governments *did* have some sort of edict out spend money to help people, and they didn't do their job. So not there are a ton of people *still* stuck in New Orleans, some sick, some with infants, all without food or water, as people now try to get them small rations of food and fresh water, since everyone is living in waste water until they can pump all of the water out of the city (which is estimated to take about 3 months).

So... for once maybe we shouldn't be blaming the federal government for our problems, but we could be asking some serious questions to the local governments for why they didn't step in to help sooner.



But it is nice to see how the American people join together to help those in need, whether it be for tsunami victims last year or to people looking for aid after hurricane Katrina (I don't know how many blogs there are of people trying to find a way to get a bus with food near New Orleans to help people and then to drive people out of harm's way, and I've heard people call in to talk radio saying they would house a family from the hurricane Katrina aftermath but they can't get the people up here from New Orleans, and every charity under the sun is collecting donations for the relief of these Katrina survivors — even Fed Ex said they would collect unopened products to deliver to the area), and the compassion reminds me of the compassion and empathy we all felt after 9/11 for all of those who were put in harm's way only because they went

to work in new York. I remember actually watching the planes crash because my husband was watching the news before he left for work that morning, and for days I tried to get a hold of my friends and family. My friend with the Aid Force was scheduled to have a meeting at the Pentagon that day, but they opted to reschedule their meeting for a week. My brother-in-law was supposed to be meeting at the World Trade Center that day, but he decided not to go there that day. And all I keep thinking about is that news reports were stating after 9/11 that if flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville Pennsylvania landed less than 30 seconds later, my nephew would have been killed while in school from that crash. Flight 93 crashed very close to my sister-in-law's house, and after 9/11, my nephew couldn't sleep for days. My friend who lived in DC wasn't near the Pentagon but dealt with the tight security and the constant roads being closed. He talked about how different streets would be closed on different days and that there were so many military guard there you felt like you were in a war zone, which in a way, you were.

I'm sure we all have stories of losing, or almost losing, someone close to us from 9/11. And these terrorists were stopped on 9/11 from being on different additional flights, and I believe it was in their plan that one of them was slated, I think, to sun into the Sears Tower. I know that for months afterward whenever we were driving toward the loop, taking the Kennedy expressway where you could see the Chicago skyline get closer and closer, I know that every time we drove by, I would be sitting in the passenger seat and I would imagine seeing a plane fly right into the side of the Sears Tower, toward the top, to the side, exactly like how it happened in the television footage to the second World Trade Center building. I imagined it, just like how you saw it over and over again on television, when we were flooded with images of it on the news. I'd see a plane flying right into the tallest building, this landmark to Chicago.

I saw that for a while, whenever we would drive into the city, but after all this time that image is starting to disappear from my memory.

After 9/11, we may have felt like we wanted to prove to the terrorists that we weren't afraid of them, that we would still fly in airplanes after they tried to use our technology and accomplishments to destroy our spirit. But although those images from that horrific day may fade from our short-term memory, we will *always* make a point to look over our shoulder and try to be both more cautious and more safe when we know that there are people that will try to do anything to tear us down.



Looking back over the years, I realize that there are many things that

can hurt us, but in our day-to-day lives, we think of things like car crashes, or things more mundane that can cause our downfall. It becomes so unsettling when the things we have to fear are either natural disasters, or enemies who try to use our accomplishments as weapons against us.

I guess as civilization has evolved we have always had battles to fight, so now that we don't have to fight wild animals for survival and food, and now that we have the sciences to save us from many viruses and diseases, we will still always have something fighting against us. Even though we



know where it is more safe to live because of weather patterns, we still will choose to live where it may be more dangerous. So we will continue to deal with natural disasters, and we will always have some sort of enemy to face.

Janet Kuypers
Janet Kuypers
Editor in Chief

poetry
the passionate stuff

CONSIDERING THE BUSH IN THEIR BACKYARD

COREY COOK

Approval rating down, it overlooks those who planted it, their plight shrouded by shaky statements, so they prepare to uproot.



FOX-HUNTING

MICHELLE GREENBLATT

Last night my head slipped
off my shoulders after I flashed
another one of those placid-I-don't-
mean-it smiles at some questioning
face of a family member
or friend. They weren't
shocked; it had happened
before.



I carried my head to the pissed
on walls of the alley, the spat
on floors—& a punctured
arm of a junkie rolled out behind
a row of silver garbage cans.

I stuck my head between the receptacles...certain
it was he this time. So certain.
But it was just an arm...& remembering an old lover's
saliva hissing at me from every gutter cut between
Miami to Northeast Broward, searching
every dopehouse until I screamed at the wine
dripping down my shirt—

I didn't realize I'd gone fox-hunting with a container
of bleach swirling with pink which was
not mine because it was no longer his
unless you count hoarding
for self-preservation (in other words, blackmail)

Finally I'd sewn my head
back on my shoulders but I'd had to pay
for the thread with my brain. "I'll see you later,"
I whispered, & reached into my skull.

7.19-20.2005

TRADEOFFS

JOHN GREY

for every unpaid bill
an empty liquor bottle,
for every promise
to pay off those debts,
another slug
of Jack Daniels to make
sure he won't,
for every soft
and teary pleading,
one of those bottles
flung furiously
at a wall
to smash into a thousand pieces,
for every morning
pathetic with light,
a shard of glass
to shimmer in the sun
then cut and draw
her blood.





THE MADMAN

ALEX GALPER

I cursed the Ukrainian steppes, their stale air & mud
I swore at the dust of Brooklyn roads
Denied when people thought me to be a Jew
I never believed that Jesus was God

I laughed when the Twin Towers fell
Guffowed at the carpet bombings of Afghanistan
I can't stand any kind of priests
I ain't no gay, but would fuck the rulers of the Taliban

There is nothing that I hold dear or sacred
I am breathing with hate in my gas mask, clinging
To a radio, with my ears sealed, in a tiny room
This mad planet is crying out for a major cleaning

translated from Russian by Igor Satanovsky and Mike Magazinnik

Saddam is crazy about America:
when his murderous sons are away,
he unfurls the Star-Sprangled Banner in his bunker,
watches baseball at night, orders pizza,
washes it down with a cold beer.
On the morning after the Thanksgiving,
he raids the fridge and secretly
finishes turkey leftovers.
Saddam blows all his oil money
on the latest models of "Nike" sneakers,
forces his enemies to listen to country music
and to dance hip-hop for hours.
Hundreds lost their minds from these inhuman tortures
or committed suicide.
The Butcher of Baghdad executes dissenters
by making them watch the complete
TV coverage of the Oscars.
Thus he's successfully rooted out Iraqi opposition
and continues to Americanize Iraq.
Make no mistake about it: if you
don't love Hussein, you don't love America!

**SADDAM
HUSSEIN
THE
AMERICAN
PATRIOT
ALEX
GALPER**

Translated from Russian by Igor Satanovsky and Mike Magazinnik

REASONABLE ONE BLISTER

AARON WILDER

How long ago was it that you decided
to delete me from your life for good?
It would have been the best Summer
I could have ever remembered,
but now August will eat away at me
as its wine turned to acid in my mouth.
Your remembered image still burns my throat to this day.
Sky Harbor only haunts me now that you won't
speak to me in that Southern way.
You found a way to sneak in
through my barbed wire and concrete complex.
I let you break my rules and,
in the end, I guess I let you break me too.
So, hollow and abandoned, I stare out
at a completely different ocean than you.
Does this continent know it's letting you torture me with silence?
I guess you both have that in common:
neither of you give a damn.
I'm not sure what happened to you
after you lay over me,
reclined in the driver's seat of your old Nissan.
As the rain smeared the windshield,
I lightly brushed your hair aside with my fingers.
I told your eyes with mine that you were different
as the windows started to fog.
I felt a feeling for you,
one not felt by me for someone else in a long time.
I hope you'll never forget the sound of my stereo
as we looked over the city.
A city that's known me for nineteen years,
that only got a glimpse of your face.
Maybe this was all just in my dreams,

but I'm certain that reality just intoxicated me with your voice.
Maybe I'm just in love with the idea of you.
But of all the questions I can think of to ask you,
I can't fathom the answer to even one.
All I'm asking for is the reason.
If I'm ever near you, just know
that my guard will never be let down again.
I promise you'll be the only blister to callous me.

APOCALYPSE

NATALIA DOAN

When we live under a coat of gray
drops of smog smash on our skin
the people cry
they want to die
but not repent for the sin

of the world
and the things they have done
droughted the oceans
burnt up the sun
uprooted the trees
and left them to die
let the birds free
suffocate in the sky

clip off the wings
sell for a dime
and then reminisce
of all the good times.

GREED

KAREN R. PORTER

This sandy soil
soaks up rain
the way a barfly
sucks free beer.

FROM THE DESK OF A LONELY SCHOOLGIRL

BOBBI DYKEMA KATSANIS

perhaps I am the only soul on earth
who finds the art of making friends
a mystifying secret.

people terrify me.
I can't imagine
what they must think of me.
(In fact I can. I'd rather not.)

much easier to hold them at arm's length,
wonder obliviously
why no one likes me.
much simpler to be odd and unattractive,
just blame them. They're shallow anyway,
who needs them?

still, I would like to have a friend.
and so, I make a friend
of toads, of apple blossoms, of spring rain.
It doesn't last.



FAST (2005) **CHRISTOPHER MAJOR**

Daily, thousands wait ;
hungry rows, swollen bellies .
Trucks stop.....Drive through .



CATARACTS

**LUIS CUAUHEMOC
BERRIOZABAL**

No one gets along
with me because
I am different.
I see the world with
cataracts in
each of my eyes.
Everything seems hazy,
distorted, and
unreal to me.

In middle age I
see visions of
taking my life.
I have not done it,
or else we
wouldn't be talking.
I am going to
the eye doctor
to take his eyes.

I will make the switch
with a flick of
wrist. I'm handy
with a switchblade and
I'm desperate
to see the world
with different eyes.



**PAINTING
BY NICOLE
AIMIE
MACALUSO**

CANDID CAMERA

ARTHUR GOTTLIEB

in early evening
dressed to go nowhere
but your consciousness-
raising class,
you leave me
with a long last look
saying something like:
“Step back a bit. Give
me some space.”

seeing shock
you smile and snap
a picture of my amazement
with an imaginary camera.

barely breathing
i pose for your photo.
never looking
over my shoulder
i step back
into the past
fade fast out of the picture
finally in a freefall
like a cartoon comic off a cliff
backwards into the black
of undeveloped negatives.



A NEW DAY

ART BY EDWARD
MICHAEL O'DURR
SUPRANOWICZ



A KINDNESS OF GHOSTS

ROGER N. TABER



Seabirds, making
graceful flight;
Missiles, closing in
on us

Homeowners striving
for a good tan;
Refugees having to settle
for staying alive



Jagged rocks along
the seashore;
spent shells among
daisies on a lawn

Children crying - for
lost sandcastles?
World, weeping at
mass graves



Climate change - over
land, sea and air;
Nature, despairing at
our despair

Love, hope and peace
but as ghosts...
kept busy haunting our
better selves

NOWHERETOWN

RAY KARPOVAGE

I'm from a place called Waretown
some call it Nowheretown
and they're probably right.
We've got a WaWa
where you can buy a pack a' smokes
and an Italian sub heavy on the mayo
hold the oil and vinegar
at least that's how I like mine.
The rest of the world has never had a sandwich.



There's a friendly neighborhood
nuclear power plant
just beyond the edge of town.
Our taxpayers voted against it
so they put it there
and called us NIMBY (Not In My BackYard).



If it ever blew we would have
folded like the forgotten ash
of dying old man's filter-less Pall Mall.
We woke to 7am test warnings
that called like seagulls on steroids.
We all had our evacuation routes
sketched red on a map.

The old people say that the son of Satan
was born to these woods long ago deep in Jersey
some say he still sleeps on the
brown needles of the pines
and whittles out the devil's work
in the barren rusty swamps.

He was the thirteenth child of a witch
who cursed his soul and being

born with bat wings he flew from her womb
up the chimney and into the night.
Personally I've never seen him.

This is my town where we dig with our
toes in the mud for clams
and sell them to restaurants
3 cents for chowder and 7 cents for cheery-stones.
We have 3 churches and 3 liquor stores
3 bars and a video store.

When short on cash we could always chop
The copper tubing from underneath
a Bennie's summer home
and take it to the recycling plant.
When that Bennie would come back
with his red farmers tan we would all laugh
and yell "Bennie go Home!"
and he always would, Thank God
for this is the Devil's country.



WATERMAN
ART BY ROSE E. GRIER

I DON'T HAVE A CRYSTAL BALL

MARK D. COHEN

So John Roberts has been nominated to the Supreme Court
And it looks like he's seriously anti-choice
Without enough of a paper trail
For the Senate Democrats to wage a filibuster against him
So he's probably going to get confirmed
Someone in the W. Administration made a real smart move

As soon as he gets in the Court
The Conservatives are going to manufacture a test case
That's going to challenge Roe v. Wade
And it's going to work its way up to the Supreme Court pretty fast
Will Roberts overturn Roe v. Wade?
I don't know
I think there's a good chance he might
But I'm not positive

If he does, the next step is clear—
A good ten to fifteen per cent of the adult female population in this country
Are going to start screaming at the top of the lungs
And they're not going to stop

When will they stop screaming?
I don't know
When will they stop screaming?
I'm really not sure
When will they stop screaming?
I don't have a crystal ball
When will they stop screaming?
If you want my best educated guess,
They won't stop screaming until we get a Democrat in the White House

That's how my semi-cataracted eyes see the scenario between now
And November, 2008

Wednesday, July 20, 2005

FOR DAD (17.4.04)

ROBERT EISEN

Aged 45 he sat there
In his big armchair with receding hair
Thinking about what he'd done with his life
Where all those decades went
What all those days and nights meant
Working all those hours
Long past closing time
Just to make an honest buck
Trying to be good
Trying to provide
And to prosper,
But he couldn't justify his life to himself
He loved his kids
He loved his wife
He loved his house
But at the same time resented them
They had held him back
What else could he have been?
He thought to himself
There must be another level,
Perhaps an afterlife
Perhaps a second wife
Perhaps a new car
Perhaps a holiday
Perhaps a new kitchen
Perhaps a cup of tea
And with that he stepped out of his armchair
Laid down on the floor
And slowly drifted away.



KUND TSU
FLASH HAZE
ART BY XANADU

SWEATING UNDERNEATH THE ICE

DEBBIE KIRK

Insomnia is a gift
best reserved for the damned
The tick tocking is mocking
beating hard deep inside my chest
Glowing with irony
as it's long arms
touch me

And it may be an urban myth
but I often dream about
waking up in a tub full of ice

and the sharp ones are angry with me
as they spent hours cutting
only to find out the hard way
just how heartless I really am

Each time I have this dream
The men with the knives
have aged a bit

You come along and think you're the yellow brick road
to Oz
You've never seen me
hide behind my own curtains
pulling out my teeth one by one
and throwing them at paper.

If you see a girl who looks like me
wearing ruby red slippers
its only a coincidence

I can't even pledge allegiance to the flag
place your hand over your...
yet you want me to pledge my devotion to you?

You'd have a better chance
beating the flying monkeys
at a game of chess

I heard the glass crystal break years before I left Kansas

LEGAL PROSTITUTION

JENNIFER GENTRY

you go to retrieve lemons, limes, maybe tomatoes
the steel door opens
and you feel a cool breeze
you are alone with salads and veggies
boxes and bowls
hearing only the hum of the freezer
and the rustling of the cardboard boxes

you can't hear your laughing, joking coworkers
the noisy customers
the demanding woman with the mustache in section 5
YOUR section
she wants her third refill of Dr. Pepper
and the food wasn't that great, could she talk to a manager
and don't worry, she won't leave a tip

you forget about Carl
(the grubby man on the Harley)
he comes in daily and orders gin and tonics
his nickname is Psycho
he tells you that AGAIN & AGAIN
THAT and his proud stories of drinking
driving
and wrecking
he asks when you want
a ride on his Harley
and you have to be cute and perky and smile and think of a lie,
one that sounds friendly but also conveys,
"NOT ON YOUR FUCKING LIFE"

and you forget about the customer who keeps standing next to you
and "OOPS" touches your ass
you can go tell the manager
or get your twenty dollar tip
you decide

as you walk back into the restaurant
the lemons feel cool in your hands

poetry translations

Swedish

Translation by Sloane Emerson

(SAT IT IN THE FIRST PLACE)

Säga Den Inne om Första Ställe

när en främling talar du
var dag så pass du er skön,
är en lina er korsat?
Varför er du talande jag den här?
Gör JAG jämn veta du?

Vill du ignorera dem?
Vill du hoppas den vilja gå bort?

Welsh

Translation by Carter Donovan

(ON THE FLIP SIDE)

Acha 'r Chnithia ochra

oes mwyach sanity i mewn 'r byd
Fi jyst all t choelia a bodola anymore
Fi aberfa t 'n weledig unrhyw braw
ag a fi ll choelia a mae na braw
a fel Bwysa 'm chyflwr

Slovene

Translation by Steve Errman

(CHOICES)

izbire

ne sovraĵijo sebe
za izbire si naredil
praviāen izdelava desni izbire

Papiamentu

Translation by Kyle Mackenzie

(WHAT DO YOU DO) kû bo hasi

kû bo hasi si abo kasi muri
bo wear bo seat faha mas
bo no bai pa motosaikel rides
bo kamna further fo'i e kaminda
algun por bati abo ei, abo konosé
kû bo hasi si abo kasi muri
bo bisa hende abo stima them
bo tema mas
kû bo hasi

Braille

Translation by Dagny Hendrikus

(I MUST BELIEVE)

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Marathi

Translation by S. Anderson

(YOU WILL)

योउ विल्ल
पिएचेस ओफ़ थे पुज्जले: इ कनोव
होव थेय फ़ित
इवे हद तो दो थिस पुज्जले
थिन्ग फ़ोर येअर्स अन्द ईम गोओद
अत इत
अन्द इ कनोव इ मके योउ व्होले
इ कनोव इत वोनत तके लोन्ग
अस इ सैद, ईम गोओद अत
थिस
योउल्ल फ़ेएल गोओद अबोउत
इत व्हेन इतस दोने

prose
the meat and potatoes stuff

CHALLENGE THE SYSTEM

FRANK ANTHONY PH.D.

The last time I interviewed John Kenneth Galbraith, one of the Great Americans (my opinion) gas was a dollar something a gallon and Americans, buzzing around in guzzlers, were wasting it. He hoped it would get up to \$4 a gallon. Well, the Bush-Arabian dynasty is seeing more gas-guzzlers, no end in sight! Iraqis kill off a Marine a day at billions of dollars a month, no end in sight there either. Is it any wonder Americans suffer from a help-less syndrome, maybe feeding more cancers than ever before!

Death of the human spirit is reflected in more ways than political approval ratings. Staying home, around TV is one way to beat the system. Challenging the system itself is another, taking the bull by his horns! A local lady called recently asking me to come look at the dark grease the McDonalds next door spewed on her house. Calling headquarters was doing them no good! I went to the day manager and told her my analysis of the problem. She said she would refer it.

Today the lady called; her house was cleaned of the grease and the McDonald's filters and stacks are to be fixed. In a world laden with negative energy, it is good to see corporate America take responsibility. In a few short weeks there shall be thirteen places, in which to eat, in our little town area. Less than 4,000 people, is this cause for alarm? Or thinking positively, we can take advantage of the diversity, take mom out and enjoy the situation.



DAMN WOMEN ASKING ME QUESTIONS

DAN PROVOST

“Am I real?”

Oedipus Mass asked me while tripping on acid for the 9th time in her life.

“The eternal question.”

I answered, and then headed toward the church exit.

Went home, to masturbate and ponder when the phone rang.

“Am I alive?” Esther Greenwood asked, panting and choking from gas fumes that radiated from her oven.

“Not much longer.” I told her while I cleaned up my mess, and then turned on a Plasmatic album.

Then someone entered my room—a black woman who was dressed up in a maid’s outfit.

“Am I free yet?” Old Dilsey asked me as I turned down Wendy O. Williams screams.

“I don’t know.” I said—“You might have to ask Rita Dove that question.”

As Dilsey left, I locked my door and turned off the turntable, wondering what other women were going to ask me questions I had no answer for.

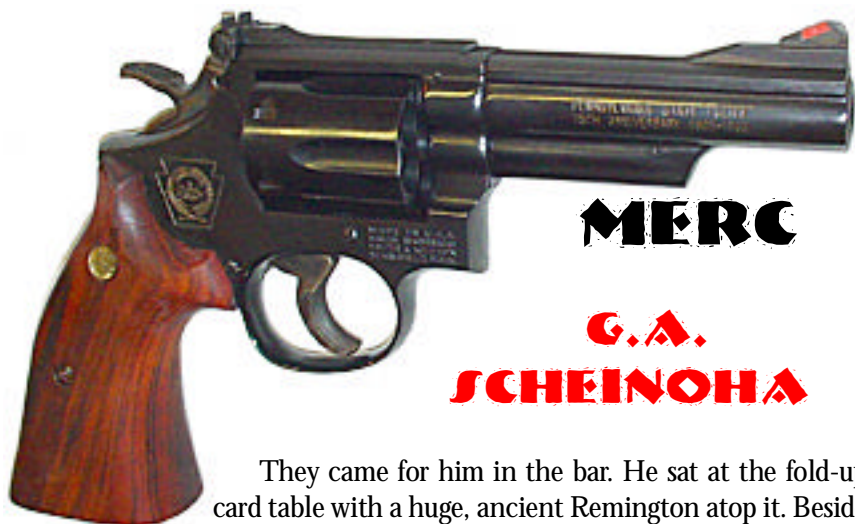
I clicked on the TV, when a naked Vietnamese girl appeared running down a street that was cluttered with dead bodies and bullets being fired.

To my surprise, she stopped, quizzically stared at me and asked,
“Will humanity ever come back?”

I didn’t answer at first...instead I went to my closet, took out my .45 Colt, put it to my head and responded...

“No, never will humanity come back...I don’t know if it even existed.”

Clang...clang...clang...



They came for him in the bar. He sat at the fold-up card table with a huge, ancient Remington atop it. Beside the typewriter lay a gun, as ancient as the typewriter and its operator.

The old warrior glanced up, his two index fingers perched, hovered a mere inch over the keys. Poised to strike. This simple action froze each man in place. All three fingered guns.

“We can do this any way you’d like.”

The leader of the trio, a tousled thirty year old scratched at his beard with less than clean fingers.

“We could skip it.”

“Too easy, old man.”

“I gave you a chance.”

Nearby, the warrior’s nephew leaned against the bar, a drink rested uneasily in his left hand, right strayed to the middle of his back where the hunting knife pierced the dirty cloth vest.

“Not so fast kid.”

Leader stepped in, seized nephew’s arm, twisted it behind him till the knife clattered to the floor.

“Let him go. This is between us.”

Leader saw something in the old man’s eyes. Something he hadn’t before.

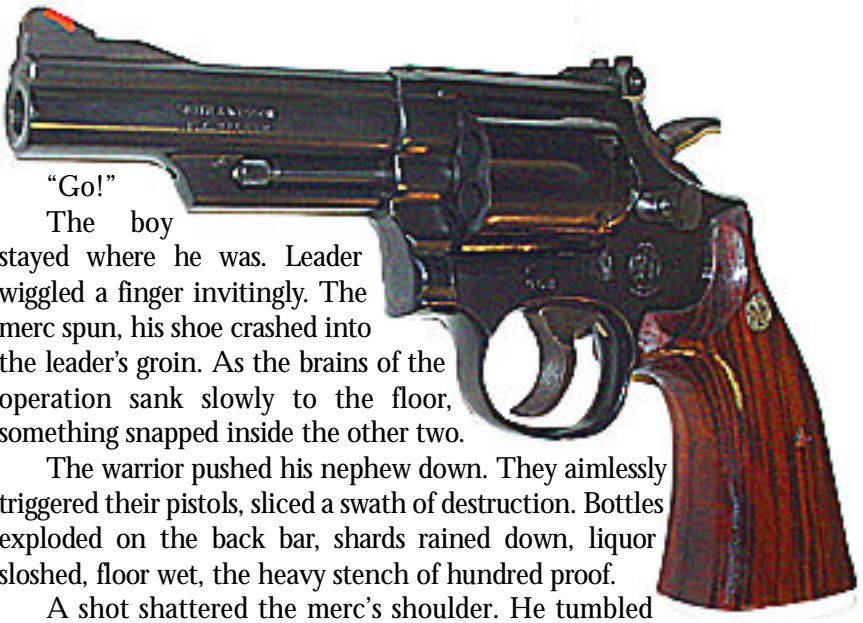
“We’ll settle this.”

“That we will.”

The mercenary rose unsteadily from the table. His folding chair collapsed suddenly, noisily.

“I wanna piece of you myself.”

They circled each other warily. His uncle shoved him roughly aside.



“Go!”

The boy stayed where he was. Leader wiggled a finger invitingly. The merc spun, his shoe crashed into the leader’s groin. As the brains of the operation sank slowly to the floor, something snapped inside the other two.

The warrior pushed his nephew down. They aimlessly triggered their pistols, sliced a swath of destruction. Bottles exploded on the back bar, shards rained down, liquor sloshed, floor wet, the heavy stench of hundred proof.

A shot shattered the merc’s shoulder. He tumbled sideways. The boy lunged for his knife.

“No!”

The scream was torn from that fearless throat. The old man rose on one knee, snatched up the Colt. Hammered six bullets into one of the pair in an eyeblink. Just a second later, the gun jammed.

He flung it at the third gunman. Rising like a wounded lion, he charged death. Number three smiled. His only shot pounded past the merc.

Then he was seized in two powerful hands, twisted until he went limp with the loud, sickly snap.

They sat at the upright table later. The pain was already edging in but the warrior felt the effects of his third whiskey combating it.

“I’m sorry I never believed you.”

“Forget it.”

“You really were a mercenary.”

“ . . . a long time ago.”

The boy glanced at the sheet in the typewriter.

“Will you let me read it?”

His uncle hastily covered the paper with his forearm.

“Someday,” he smiled. Someday.”

The boy gave his uncle a final glance. Left by the side door a moment later. The merc stared after him a full minute. Then as an even bigger smile spread across his face, he began to pound the keys furiously.

performance art

Poetry Fest **Sensuality in Poetry** 08/28/05

GRAB THE OTHER'S NECK

I don't know where to start
I don't know where all these feelings come from
I don't know how to stop them



These feelings seem to come rushing up to me
And I don't seem to have any control over them

And I hate myself for this
And I'm not supposed to be having these urges
And I hate myself for thinking that you may want me too

You know, I don't know much of anything about you

And I guess you don't know much about me

But I like what I know

Because in some respects you seem like me

Yes, I like what I know

That you work too much

And have too much drive

And you have a wild side

And you do your best to keep your wild side in check

And I still want to

Be able to straddle you

Take off your glasses

Mess up your hair

So you get strands falling around your eye

touching your cheek

And touching you

To remind you of me

And grab the hair at the back of your head

And cock your head back

Just so I can see your mouth starting to open

Because God, I want to see that
And it would make me know I'm right
And it makes me know that you want me too

And I'd let your hair go
And you would stare at me
And give me a look I just can't explain
And can't argue with
And have to submit to

And when I want this
I would wonder
Who would grab the other's neck
For the kiss

I still don't know who would make that move
Or who could make that move
So I'm begging you to start this cycle
I'm pleading you
I don't want to be the only one with these fantasies

Tell these stories to me
Tell me you've thought these things too
Tell me you know that we're both stuck
Because you know there's nothing we can do

And I know this too

But I'd like to hear you say it
To validate my fantasies, in a way,
Because I'd love to hear you talk that way to me

I'm a sucker for that, you know

But tell me I'm not alone in this
So I'm begging you
I'm pleading you
Tell me I'm not insane for thinking about you
Tell me you have these fantasies too



PRAYING TO IDOLS

every once in a while i question whether or not there is a god. but i changed my mind - i thought i have found him.

he had dark hair, almost black (just like a god should), and he had these blue eyes - not just blue, almost white, so light they look like glass and you could almost see right through them.

and could i see right through you if you gave me the chance?

i'd clasp my rosary necklace and pray to the right gods (and wouldn't they be you) and i'd let the necklace drape over my shoulders around my neck, and i'd let the rosary fall between my breasts and you would forgive me that much more for my sins.

how many hail marys would you want me to say, i'd ask.

i cannot believe i have seen you and i have talked to you - and does everyone get to see their god like this, and does everyone remember?

why do you have to be my god? why did i have to see you and talk to you...and realize how young you are, and realize how inexperienced you are (i mean, you're supposed to be the god you're supposed to be teaching ME)?

is this what people think when their gods let them down (did you let me down or did i just never know what i was looking for)? is this what people think when they realize they are only praying to idols - what then?



THE MUSE, THE MESSIAH



I

I can see you now
hunched over, pouring yourself into
your work, scattered papers,

dim lights flooding
white over the glaring screen, in
your otherwise

darkened corner of the
world. And I know you can feel me
now, feel me rushing in

through the window
that you leave only slightly open
at night,

rushing in with a faint
whistle, circling around your neck, curling
up around your

jaw, opening your mouth
so slightly. You can feel my rush
chilling your teeth.

You tilt your head
back, closing your tired eyes
from your problems,

from your future in front
of you, on those pages, on that screen,
under that white

light. You let me open your
mouth more and more, you feel me
swirling around your tongue,

down your throat, into
your lungs, like smoke from a clove
cigarette when you hold

your breath to feel
the high, feel the ecstasy just a little
longer, or like steam rushing

down your throat when you
take a deep breath the summer morning
after a heavy fog.

You open your eyes.
You lick your lips. I make you
do that, I make you

forget your world. You can
feel me there, you can't escape me. I'm
there. I'm your muse.

II

And I'm sitting in my
apartment, and when I reach out my arm
shadows of my hand

stretch across the wall.
There is no music, but I begin to
move my hands, like

a ceremony, as if to
a drummed out rhythm, like the pant
of a mistress as she

walks down the hotel steps
into her car after seeing her savior, like waves at
the sea slowly crashing



at the shoreline.
The phases of the moon are changing,
and the waves are crashing

with more and more
intensity, with more and more
power, faster and

faster. And at this very
moment you walk down a street somewhere,
it is daylight,



and you see the white moon
peering toward you from the sky. The
moon was looking

for you. It wanted to
watch you. You divert your eyes,
step off the curb,

and for no reason walk
in the middle of the street. There is no traffic.
You are safe. And

the moon watches the stride
of your step, and the moon watches my hand,
and the moon hears

the rhythmic pant of
intensity, and the moon rises the water.
We feel the drumming beat.

The phases of the
moon are changing. There is no reason why
you should question this.

You can feel me. I
will keep you safe. I will keep you
alive. I'm your messiah.

THE WAY YOU TEASE ME

What I think I like the most about you
is the way you always leave me wanting more.
When you kiss me, and we start to pull back
I want to cock my head and kiss you again
but I never know if you'll let me.

What I think I like the most about you
is the way you roll your sultry deep voice over me
like a wave of heat on a summer afternoon.
You use a pause to tease me with your words
until sweat dances down my hairline and tickles my neck.

What I think I like the most about you
is the way you slide your arms around my waist
and make me just want to collapse in your grasp
and run my hands up and down your back
until I hear you moan and sigh.

What I think I like the most about you
is the way that absence makes the heart grow fonder
and when we touch you say we should take it slow,
take our time, enjoy every moment
and you know, you couldn't be more right.

What I think I like the most about you
are the things that make me think I have to fight for you
are the things that make me second guess myself
because nothing's ever easy, not you, not me,
not relationships, not sex, not love.

What I think I like the most about you
is the wondering, is the waiting, is the teasing.
That's what I like. This high-charged guessing game.
The flirting. The first touch. The first everything.
Thinking about the possibilities. Yeah. That's what I like.

IKEBANA

Rolled up sleeves,
Dark denim, strings pulled
At the buttons

Fall into
Place so gracefully.
You create

Your hands, the
Rough edges, the nails
Jagged, not cut

Symphonies,
Move mountains, Seas
Part for you.

Your fingers, I've
Noticed them: one has
A long scar

You can do
Anything. I
See that now.

Along the tip, and
Your skin is rough
Along the nails

You must be
My savior. Let me
Follow you.

Your hands, they're
Skilled hands of an
Artist at work:

Let me create
Beauty in your
Name, let me

And like a
Conductor, you
Orchestrate

Feel your power.
It's all in your
Hands, your heart,

Bring beauty
From the dying
Flowers at

Your mind:
I've seen you stop
Wars, feed the

The table. They
Line up quickly,
At attention:

Hungry. Why are
You so strong? Why
Are your flowers

So beautiful



DESIRE

The light, the flames
from you leap up.
Licking my lips,
touching my skin.
The fire moving in its
dance of desire.

The smoke intoxicates me
as the remnants of the inferno
drum a rhythmic beat.

The ashes fall sprinkling,
tickling my face;
Sliding down my throat,
coating my lungs;
Making every breath
a desirous pant.

I chain myself. My body falls limp.
I am entwined with the desirous world.
The desire from you.





CHAIRS

ART BY CHARYL TOWNSEND

**BACKGROUND IMAGE
BUILDING IN BRUXELLES**



children churches & daddies

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