

ORIGAMI CONDOM

issue #5

ULTRA POETRY • INTELLECTUAL LUBRICANT

origamicondom.org



WHEN
your diet fails

I'LL
beat you

BACK
into shape

WITH
a health club

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Submission guidelines are available at the website.

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The cat tells me
That you forgot to feed him again
And that he desperately needs a brushing
And that the dishes in the sink are repulsive
I make a parallel between the cat
And our relationship
You stare at me
Offended and astonished
I give my empty smirk
The one that says
I only do this because I love you
And you tell me
As my eyes brim with sentimental tears
That I forgot to take out the trash again

In Prague, no two toilets flush alike.
When the clackety clacks, the hatted man beckons
A housefly humming. What was I
Expatriating? The local lager tapped.

When the clackety clacked, the hatted man beckoned
Me across quartzite cat heads. How deep the cracks of
Expatriation! The local lawyer tapped
Fifty thousand Americans

Across the cat heads' deep cracks;
I among them, my tongue Baroque—
Fifty thousand Americans
Smarting for home.

I among them, my tongue Baroque,
Riding on the escalator, couples
Smarted for home—
Inked to the elbows: mimeoemergency.

Riding on the escalator, couples
Lip-locked, a social disease. Also,
Ink to the elbows, a common insurgency.
(Absinthe makes the heart go faster.)

Lip-lock is a common disease, also
Scoliosis, or curvature of the Vltava.
(Absinthe makes the heart go.) Faster
Metro! Smelling of mold and frankincense.

The Vltava curved scoliotically—
Like the girl beside me,
The metro smelled of mold and frankincense
Applied behind her bohemian knees.

Like the girl beside me,
A housefly hummed. For what it's worth,
I appealed to her bohemian knees.
In Prague, no two women kiss alike.

That moon's not really winking,
just shorting out forever.

Turn in the lot. Don't believe
"NO VACANCY." We have rooms.

Moon Wink Motel! Where the help
is tepid, and the beds sing.

Continental breakfast? Ha!
"Fruit Substitute" can't be beat.

Need directions? Here's some ice.
Follow the course of its melt.

Temperature regulation?
Windows coax the asphalt breeze.

Examine the print. Answers
are buried beneath the sand.

More desert lies before you
than healing, and more night, too.

As teenagers we said we could have fun in a vacuum.
With seconds to spare, what could we have done
To make much of time? Hold hands, swap spit,
Attach a nozzle? Listen, we now have the benefit of age—
Our motto should have been, “We could have fun
In a *partial* vacuum.” The suction could be sexy,
And at 600 torr, you wouldn’t need a suit.

Imagine the possibilities:

- 1) Hide and Seek – Your brown skin would’ve been the perfect
Camouflage in a bag of hair and dirt.
- 2) Ring Around the Rosy – From ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
The Fall. It would’ve been Biblical, baby.
- 3) Doggy, Where’s Your Bone? – This wouldn’t have been much
Of a challenge, since there was only the two of us and the bone
Would’ve been in my pants. “Doggy, where’s your bone?”
In my pants. “Doggy, where’s your bone?” In my pants.

The thing is I can now say I wanted that rosebud,
And that with some encouragement and little else to do,
I would have gone for it. But I tarried—
Worse times succeeded; youth and blood grew cold.

You got a man.

But all is not lost:
My new brown baby’s malted milk duds melt me.
If her tits fit in my purse, digging for keys would be so much fun.

I want to live with you.
I'm slightly drunk.
I'd like to go to a late movie

with you, watch Dracula
devour Bergman. Someone
should devour Bergman before

he makes me die of boredom.
I don't like the men around me
any more. I'm tired

of complicated intellectuals.
You're not a complicated
intellectual. Are you?

Away with your bespectacled unsuspecting
acolytes, lecturing about
the sexual rites

of some obscure Pre-Columbian tribe,
I bet you're not thinking about the two of us
at all. Is this going anywhere?

Things can happen,
at least in movies. Not Bergman movies.
Nothing happens in Bergman movies.

Do you know Bergman was locked
in the closet for wetting the bed
as a child? No wonder we're so glum.

He for being him.
Me for thinking about you and him.
What's your excuse?

I dreamt I was
A bend of
Light like you
Like red like
All the refractions
You are composed
Of, a splendid symphony
Of filament strings
Wailing, weeping
Wrapped and wired
Sparking lumens from
The bow

of light,
Curves and corners and
Arches—can we
Overcome or must
We approach advance
Draw towards but never
Turn never conquer never
Triumph around
The bends

of lights,
Everywhere, every inch
Of every thing is
A color a bend reflecting
—my fingers bend pink
Bent over a black-bent
Inkwell annexed to the
Page of black-bent
Lines, encoding
The dream

I dreamt
I was a bend of light
Like you, I was
Everything.

it began with Chancellor's
 Thunderous, booming voice like
 Orson Welles warming the
 Airwaves; then Lease
 Was sweating off his
 Former skin under which
 Was glass cracked and
 Splintered reflecting the
 Past: a broken faith is so
 Hard to mend; Shapiro,
 Shapiro—his thin voice
 His amiable stature and
 Quirks—simply stood and
 Murmured

*The twentieth century falls off below and fragility
 And the kitsch of flowers above, finesse of heaven
 No one can enter here, and there is nothing but hope
 which sank*

Into my memory as if
 It wore lead shoes—

Listen:

That story was
 Just a prelude: Exiting
 The building I received a
 Call:

*They are taking me to the hospital They are taking me to be treated They say I am unstable I
 am sorry I didn't call I was jailed four days Did I fail you as a mother They are taking me to
 the hospital I am sorry I am sorry I am*

rushing towards the
 Hospital I was still holding the
 Yellow book inscribed with a
 Chrysanthemum from David;
 I made its ends parallel and
 Saw my pale mother,
 Withdrawn, I calmly told her
 That flowers are gilded but
 There is nothing but hope.

Paper thin, lambent skin
Deceitful, luscious
You have caused war
Content and discord
You have found laws
Regarding my feet
And the ground
And fables regarding
My failed teeth
Penetrating, drinking
Your earthly body.

Your skin beguiles;
Be it golden
To the Greek sun
Or green as the leaves
Of the roof you've left
Or crimson in blush
Of the skull you've cracked.

Your secrets, arcane
Lie just below your flesh
Your blood is our science
Your trickery, our faltering;
If I could halve you
Separate side and seeds
Indulge in sweet, snowy wet tissue
I would defile all that is mystic
And call myself man.

Memories of a harvest moon, and yellow carnations
The birth of two children, and further back
Early spring, in her heart a crack, and
A fissure in her marriage
That might have saved her life
If she'd watched it closely
Watched it like a pan being removed from her oven
Instead of watching, like a person on a train,
Passing landscapes
Memories of sugar beets, and bright red blood
Scraped knee that the girl from summertime Bible School
Was sorry for, beneath the hot sun and the grass cool
But she hooked her shoe on a cinderblock
No one's fault
Thirty-six years, violins and pavement
Down to bullets and an insignificant parking lot
A jealous husband, snuffing out her tenuous flame
And now, two sons without parents
Separation
And the absence of music

If ghosts are paled
Then what are we but crayon-
 given spirits yet to be erased?
Walking fragile
Given only the chirp of an eclipse
To let our leaping curses free
Before the white noise of
Solar flares
Engulfs

☞ Christopher Lauriston Zuver

Everytime I ask him
A question in history
The man calls in new cohorts
 off the street
And reminisces without me
Mentioning like I was never
 there
He's ahead of me in
 his own backward ways now
He can't release the reverse
And can't reverse that release
 from reality

I spit a cloud of steam
Before walking off the set
 of war-fools

I'm a filthy young little
 old bastard
Scratching a cigarette
Rolled in a newspaper of good
 poems
Jealous coot am I

I was just honest
Filthy and trapped in the amber
But I'm only guessing this

That was when the muse
Flew in through a window
But I wasn't interested in
 listening
Still I did
And now you read this curse
this light
and this mosquito
Sitting next to me
In the amber
Telling me about the dinosaurs
 they once saw
Telling me stories of hunched,
 hairy bears
Swinging their smaller pair of
 feet like tools
Daring to call themselves men
The mosquito asked me if
 I was ready

I looked puzzled at this great
 eternal vampire scourge
Who then asked me
If I was ready to see,
If I could drop my pride
And feel the feral hair
Left over on these baby legs
Before I scratch another poem
 out again

☞ Barbara F. Lefcowitz

The migrating geese must be afflicted with dance mania.
Do they whirl to ward off the plague or the approaching darkness?
A night person myself, I'd ward off dawn's light. If I knew
The right choreography. The creation of darkness came first.
Soft folds of darkness for winter nights.
Some dances camouflage aggression with elegance. Take the tango:
Sex on the devil's chessboard, red and black knights' sharp kicks.
Pavlova's entrechats and Hitler's jig; black roses, black lead.
The heart of darkness has many chambers; that's why poets love it.
Even in the sun, I think about rivers' deep-down dark beds.
Bones of the Danube's drowned Jews, the Ohio's drowned slaves.
Goodbye Yellow Brick Road. Someone used your bricks for a highway.
Like they did in Vilna with the Jewish tombstones.
My mother would dance and sing in front of an art-deco mirror.

☞ Scott Nichols

“Dad,” Lily says, “Daddy, the video has to say ‘and we’ll all stay skinny ‘cause we just won’t eat’ when Bloo won’t eat his vomit.”

I nod my head as I take notes for her. She’s doodling a picture of Lilyland, complete with her house exactly twenty-four steps from my house, enough space for her independence, I imagine, and a bus to take me from work to my house, and magic things, like a pair of cats that live in a teepee and a pair of dogs that live in an igloo.

“Why do the dogs live in an igloo?” I ask.

“So they can stay warm,” Lily says, matter-of-factly, coloring the sun in with her black pen.

Blonde round-eyed girl,
frosted pink lip gloss,
second skin
red leather
music pumped
through hips—
swivel of innocence.

Bare virginal Girl
packaged like a candy bar
sold with each poster,
with each little girl fantasy.

Belly button like a shrine.
Breasts bound by duct tape,
burning red stains
on powdered skin.
Pretty girl
living the life
of a Star(burst).

You and I,
our legs entwined
on the overstuffed olive green couch
as we read and the sun drips like honey
through the sheers that hang
on the picture window,

which frames a tree we have yet to identify,
a cul-de-sac of similar houses and
cars zipping past—
we have secretly threatened speed bumps.

You and a *National Geographic*
about the Proboscis monkey and
his unusually large nose—
I conjecture, “It’s a sexual thing.”
You say, “No. He’s from Jersey.”

My nose in a book about “writing down the bones”
and I’m feeling for mine;
dog-eared the chapters of particular importance.
Although it is hard to discern
sitting here in one of your T-shirts,
making saucy eyes at you,
which are meant to convince
you to go out
and come back
with another bottle of red wine.

This one is for dinner, I say, but really it’s meant to satisfy
our thirst for a sweettart delicacy that we have learned to savor
above words and curiosity; above primates,
and trees that come spring reveal their secrets
by dropping cherries like notes at our door.

☞ sudasi j. clement

what happens when you mix 215 pounds of crazy
with 125 pounds of unhinged?
potent fruitcake. 8 pounds, seven ounces
of multifaceted melancholy.
a boy with eyes so dark he can't see out of them,
and you can't see into them. a stranger stranger.

my love hasn't gone away,
it's just a little squashed from hiding under my heart.
the black-eyed boy's father used to say,
you know what happens when an irresistible force
meets an immovable object—what, i'd ask,
and he'd say i don't know, but baby, that's us.

aunt lou hurls her plastic cup
to the floor, then grabs and twists
old jane's right wrist—the one attached
to the hand that is holding a fork.
see jane eat. see lou grab jane, see jane
stab at lou. an aide intervenes, and lou
spits *you stupid people make me sick*.
when i was six my great-grandmother
would scream as soon as she saw me,
stai zita, brutta! i pestered my parents
until they told me what it meant.
see nonna scowl, see nonna scrape along
the hallway in an undershirt and diaper.
back in the dining room i start to speak,
to share what i witnessed this morning—
a coyote ripped a rabbit in half and loped
into the trees, gulping as he ran, another
slunk over and swallowed the rest.
i went to look around after they'd gone—
only a tuft of tail, no trace of blood, bone,
shit or pain. and thus i close my mouth
against this tale of merciful death
for the sake of my elders, who are busy
trying to get something, anything,
to stay on the fork long enough
to reach their lips.

☞ sudasi j. clement

at last we come upon a painting
the boys like. birds peck each other
until the lunar landscape is bloody.
tiny severed bird heads drip
atop itty bitty pikes. the boys' eyes
glitter and sparkle; their beaks
open and close in awe.

my breasts

sometimes I wonder if
maybe I don't even have any
that the tiny clusters of supple skin
are just my bones blowing bubbles

∞ Aimee Herman

in fear of shadows

she starved her shadow for seventy-eight days
until
it no longer followed her home

∞ Aimee Herman

Ad infinitum

© Ryan Nowlin

The heart, its stage.
The cash register,
Its drawers, the girls,
The arena of sex which
Turns upward
And rotates the night
Of the body.
The square off
Is Bombay Sapphire.

Testaccio

© Ryan Nowlin

Stands of urban lemon trees
Narrow pedestrian ways,

Deep in a tangle of winding
Back streets. Small spigots

From which a quiet stream
Of water falls into basins.

Origami

∞ Ryan Nowlin

Your body is like
Corfu Origami
On plum red sofa
An Indonesian Icarus
above, throwing rice
grains in our eyes.
My clumsy hands
crease than bend
talcum breasts.
Cicada drone and rest.
A lotus blooms
as I leave the room.

100 degrees red studio nudes

∞ Ryan Nowlin

wine bottles and plum red sofa
soft as velvetinviting,
easy on the eye paint
smearing clothes in a red wardrobe
smoldering cigarette couch
shards of glass gleam
in the Red Studio.
The window has been broken open.

Storm

☞ Ryan Nowlin

Already storm bands
of rain and churning wind
tear loose from the roving eye.
Skirts of rain unhook
tiles from rooftops
Lampposts sputter out.
bowing like converts,
trees convulse.

The Oceanic

☞ Ryan Nowlin

In the Interpretation of Dreams Freud recounts a dream where he was collecting neckties that washed up on the shore of England. Some ties were decorated with starfish; ties with ruminations, drawers. Freud saw blades. Perhaps sharks are symbols of the sexual complex transposed to the eating complex and vice-versa. Above the entrance to the Oceanic, a blue shark swims in a tank of red neon light, which flickers. The blue shark no longer smells blood or feet thrashing in the water. Its teeth have no bite. Its eyes full of ennui no longer care about the shafts of sunlight that pierce the cruel privacy of the shuttered sea. Waves slap against the shivering pier legs. From the pier deck of the Oceanic, I watch the sun scrambled gulls. The pelicans scoop up fish with black spatula beaks and skim the sea. Ladles are like severed swan necks. The oceanic backdrop seems to freeze. The incoming waves spit out shark teeth.

before there was this woman of loose tongue and hips
tongue of venom and nectar hips of birth and ejection
tongue of dissonance and assonance hips of trance dance
and consonance continent of irreverence tongue of sustenance
and every color in the past hips of fearlessness and recovery
scarred but developing a knowledge of this woman

before there was this woman of words and music
inconclusive beads of a threaded life lived wandering
in wildness smoking at the base of century old trees
praying with herbs in an earthen pit crying to god
while flesh on flesh in flesh of flesh to transcend

before there was this woman of independence
there was a little girl ice eyed and no language
a long haired girl of foreign speak words given
by the same source as late night incest
her throat was wound with moonlit out-of-body

survival and long brown hair her throat was bound
by monster finger and unwelcoming bed sheets
like shark infested white water her mind was chained
by god-fearing guilt guilt of being there with no voice
guilt of being born girl and hollow a gap to be filled

before there was this woman who reveled in mind voices
and the lovely darkness of not wanting to remember
the invasion of the past there was a little girl trapped
in a small body she did not own did not want
like an overseen snail shell she broke too easily

now see this survivor woman in-sane woman
wild woman free I am the breath in between the runs
I am the spotlight I am the inspiration I am the dedication
I am the revelation of woman and birth and truth and worth
I am lost and found in my maternal duties in my years

of searching I am the red wet soil that nurtures seeds
that births mountains and seas I am the fire that rushes
in wind and burns what is dead to make way for the new
generations I am the gateway to the birth chambers
the waiting indigo I am the song always sung in silence

I

pulverize tree pulp
rehydrate press
timber skin

a tree stands
speaks an oxygenated language
of roots soil wind seasons and blight

a tree felled composition fission
fusion of text and foliage
interspecies hybrid of language

II

she could only make love while an open copy of Blake's,
Milton, lay under the bed while her lover lipped her anus
she would grunt "Albion awake" to which her lover would become
increasingly engorged thinking she had named his member Albion

covers:
moleskin
leather
paperback
or hard

spines:
I like them worn to show their experience but never frayed or
expressing signs of abuse or neglect like my copy of Anne Sexton's
Complete she was given to me by the avant-garde composer who had
scored a piece to *The Death Baby* her spine is severed in three places

Stoic
captive
always under direct supervision

Winged thermostats everywhere
a symphonic
communicative in 4 movements

In the middle of a madhouse
The Queen
dutifully trapped

Attended to in worship
as those before her
she'll kill
or be killed
by an ambitious daughter

The eyes of yellow orchids
appear in all of her nightmares

Gold
bits of sun
prepared for a nursery
she will never see...

Like the scene from Fellini's Roma—
soldiers crowded
in a brothel's waiting room

Some jumping up
hungry
just to catch a glimpse

To taste
the scent
of her guarded smile

Dominion
of honey
to them belongs the language of movement.

Endless
fox trot
their steps are sweet. Gardenia, Magnolia

Jasmine
& Clover—
old covenant friends of these ancient pollinators.

Here
males do not rule
it's all about rhythm; the geometry of a journey...

On their legs
lemon & orange blossoms
The pollen gathered from a thousand rhumbas.

Acrobatic, defying
the pull of a full moon
their dance card is of cinnamon sticks, vanilla bean.

Agenda like
the best DJ in town
they know how to keep a beat; to communicate.

Morse code, the alphabet
has as much use
on their dance floor as a blindfolded giraffe!

I have, maybe, five listeners,
give the weather each half hour,
wait for a caller to make
a request. The board's red
and green lights are my electric
Christmas tree—here in

 sticky July. I cue
my favorites. Playing
 Tony Orlando before
Marianne Faithfull
is like hanging a bra
next to a banker's shirt
on the clothesline. The news

stinks. People keep losing homes.
 Murderers take office. Who
listens, who needs to hear
what I play, what I say,
when loneliness thickens

and a single song might stand
 between a mouth and too many pills
 or the possibility that a long
needed rain will come,
 something to hold on to

in a room with a broken
window shade and clammy sheets.

cold prairie winds
carry off many
of my Illinois poems
which now paper
graveyards few visit
so I go to Ohio
where brown water
drips in the tub
of our Zanesville motel
and dusk sky just
before we hit Wheeling
is a guy in un
buttoned pink jeans
and we give him
a ride

A poet reads about his wife
and he having sex. Applause.

A singing former chiropractor strums.
“Oh, I’ve always thought highly of Jesus/
He really changed the world.” And
“Oh, my sweet grandmother/
we’re so proud of you.” Applause.

Was his potato-peeling gran also
a racist? Gay-hating?

Cookies. A white-haired mummy reads
about when he’s in a store and sees
gay sailors, he has to run, run, run
out of there, oh my,

I bite the brownie to keep
from screaming. Loud applause.

⇒ Lynn Strongin

But to watch the sun top these copper ruins
to count the body toll
of roses
is beyond...

Does it matter how she died? she died.

Everything freezes up on you: Soapy faucets keep you up at night:
hardware, desktop.

You bury your nose in a spy novel. The light is dim. You say, "It is
a beautifully done assassination."

Grief is the place everybody comes to at the end:
the rubble

at first bleak take, point-by-point shone.

The old ballast is not yet made into sculpture

but the forced gates are split asunder

like the two lovers: There has been a paradigm shift:

the wreckage says, I love you, I did my best:

Pilgrim, you have made a long journey: Welcome home.

∞ Lynn Strongin

I have committed the act of hurry of hiding fear
The birds on our terrace are the peaceable kingdom
but sculpted iron.

Marriage is a fluted gown
blown about them
but the gown has been burned
is torn
as if by children
with hungry hands.

Indeed
their children are hungering
each-by-each
one-by-one
boy in a gifted class
girl, Fragile X. in “Our Lady of Sorrows”
once her frailties could be thumb-indexed, now a meltdown indicates temper beyond taming,
out of tenderness. The nuns find themselves hurrying her with a harm-inclined hand.

∞ Lynn Strongin

days before Christmas
Lo conservative country federal gray
has no carpet of crimson from rock to sea. A black bannock day in the blue ridge.
Separated by birth eldest brightest
Let her slip, rip at the fire lip
deformity define
cape of Horn.
No nursery
a heightened aura of who runs the show
of a tapas bar in Chelsea with even less space than its diminutive, beloved older sibling
Angels iron & stone
go down on a playground
swings against the sky
an abandoned theme park
the old woman's shoe
the old woman & all her children burned
go boot, laces, buttons, scorched to earth, smoking oven, torn clean

Does the bird have built in template of song?

(Benazir Bhutto 1953-2007)

⇒ Lynn Strongin

God moves one hand the house of love turns to cardboard
the houses on the whole curved row of earth. The woman does not want to continue the marriage
Sky a Griselda-mood.
My love's a cool kid.
I now see that they rooted me on but I did the running.
In an hour, a fool will be here cackling like a rooster, laughing like a castrato.
The sky has no balls.

They took her out Pakistan's prodigal daughter
BB the woman children point to when called Pakys:
A winter bird who knows cold like his bones
his flight feathers parks on this wintry terrace
cold sharp as splinter, dank as Christian's heart:
laddering up & down a rose bush finding seeds picking off insects
reflected in the reddish brick glass will he get to the top of thorn-branch before one draws blood,
piercing him?

Why the moonglobe roof?

What the dare? Recant. The wheelchair that took me to college, to New York, which I lived in
for half a century, more, the boy jumped on to fold steel & x-bar, pancaked in an hour.

☞ Joan Payne Kincaid

when the maple tree had to be
cut back to be able to see
and fat had to be put out in racks to see
the goldfinches and a cup of tea
had to be brewed

and it was decided that speaking tubes
were obsolete so a trip to Staples
was essential to find the latest method
to speak to each other all at the same time
not to mention that it was mid June
and the zinnias still sat waiting impatiently
in their flat.

You are in the past and I am in the future
and it is always thus...
you crave history
and I crave the moment
there can be no resolution;

both agree life is tilting at windmills
a dream in which we imagine ourselves;
today the hanging baskets were reversed to catch the sun
insides had to be dead-headed
roses were unscrambled back to their places;

so much to do in mid June
wet gray mode lethargy that swallows as a giant whale...
little mold spores strong as sleeping pills;
tonight the Black Widow Spider discovered in the cellar
released in the woods and the wind was tossing like wild elephants.

I'm walking around with a dead bird
in my pocket
hoping the warmth will bring her back
but it's been an hour
and eyes remain closed to wishes.

Today yelling and screaming how to deal
with hypertension brought on by yelling and screaming...
flying toward us like a blessing, cabbage white butterfly, lightness and beauty;
out in the dark
a bird sings an after-thought.

☞ t. kilgore splake

early morning darkness
moving through cemetery orchard
across fields beyond piney woods
to climb the cliffs
last quarter rays dancing
filtered through rustling autumn leaves
stepping from shimmering pool
to another roschack moon splash
black soundless watermelons
bleeding honey nectars
sustaining wild raspberries
sweet rose-red breakfast
mountaintop sanctuary
watching pale first light
painting far horizon
mountain shadows vanishing
another welcome beginning

lit-mag small

pages poems
self-obsessed banalities
rare bardic gem
edgy spritzzy voice
like 13 year old
frida kahlo
self portrait

☞ t. kilgore splake

at last

graybeard poet
racing toward summit
death in hot pursuit
leaving sadness behind
riding lazy thermals
building snug nest
soft gentle cloud

☞ t. kilgore splake

look
extant stars
let's not and say we did
she said
as in
i am unconscious inside this pen in my hand
even as a colleague speaks of community i feel none
the rumbling in her black neighborhood
others hear ghetto on her tongue
& a twitch of frost from uninsulated surfaces of her children's rooms
when all i hear is how to avoid the gun
the man
the needle
when they wait at the door to get high
with the woman who does what she must do
exposing her breasts
as enticement
to salvation
to death
& nothingness
forever & ever
forever amen
unchanging
universal
cosmic
oh no

☞ Maurice Oliver

She likes an occasional view from a fireman's ladder.

She has a hostess job and a CC degree in restaurant management. In this scenario she's the hammer and I'm the 9" nail. We've rented a 2x4 for the weekend. "When I was a little girl I thought I'd grow up to be a Pincushion one day," she admits, as she polishes my crossed eye. "O yeah, well I dreamed of red snow until I turned ten," I reply, smoothing down the hairs around her wrong-sided heart. We both had a crush on the same artist colony, but it turned out to be gay. We think of ourselves as being compatible. She enjoys a long cakewalk platter and I get-off on copper beacons. Nearly spilled but not. Bullpen etched in an Easter kite. Maple golf balls riding piggy back. Either way, Kandinsky never threw a knuckle punch or unleavened bread of redemption. Instead, he took karate lessons.

Diamonokus, who's your friend.
Watch that candle!
The oarsman sighs as Charon shores Caesar.
Watch that candle!
Abraham Lincoln screws at midnight.
Watch that candle!
And it's cold in the Springfield pantry.
Watch that candle!
Helen's brow in the District of Columbia.
Watch that candle!
Go away, Macbeth: be the patron of crows again.
Watch that candle!
Light it with your rod, Othello,
Desdemona's cold.
Baby, drum it, flickers, have a cup of tea
leaves to sprinkle spring blossom in your hair.
Watch that candle!
Kitty, stalk that volcano!
We belong here when we dare to feel like it.

Mini-Biographies

Aimee Herman (NY) has two chapbooks of poetry out (*tastes like cheesecake* and *if these thighs could talk*) and a book/spoken word cd coming out in February, *self diagnosed lactose intolerance* (baobob tree press). She has performed poetry on the radio, in bars and cafe's and currently hosts a weekly open mic and monthly erotic salon.

Angela M. Meredith (FL) lives in Tallahassee where she spends her days taking care of her two year old son, and her nights teaching literature and writing.

Barbara F. Lefcowitz (MD) has published nine collections of poetry as well as poems, stories, and essays in over 500 journals. She lives in Bethesda, MD and has won awards and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others.

Christopher Lauriston Zuver (MO) was born and raised around the greater St. Louis area. He loves writing, music, and scaring those who don't understand him. He is currently enrolled in St. Charles Community College and pursues a future in music and writing.

Joan Payne Kincaid (NY) is a writer, painter, former opera/concert artist, briefly public school vocal teacher until becoming mom; live/work in Sea Cliff with Rod, 2 siamese cats, rescue tabby, and a parson russell terrier after a long line of dobermans; as birder and gardener, she finds truth, beauty and peace in an unreal world; examples: delphinium, cardinal in sunlight, tomato on vine. New book of poetry, with Wayne Hogan hot off the press entitled: [Blue Eyes Wise and Dancing](#).

Joan Varini (FL) contracted the poet's virus at a young age. She utilizes visual art, music and her body to portray verbal hallucinations. Her writing shows symptoms of a symbiotic obsession with nature, a fascination with the oldest faith systems, and being a mother. Joan has studied and performed poetry at venues and universities from the Pacific Northwest to New England. She has also self-published five chap books. Joan is now working on her MFA and teaching at the University of Miami.

Joseph R. Trombatore (TX) Houston Poet, Outsider Artist, whose work has appeared in *Right Hand Pointing*, *Foliate Oak*, *Prose Toad*, *FRiGG*, *Underground Window*, *Pyramid Arts & Poetry Journal*, *Ithuriel's Spear*, *Clean Sheets*, & *The Panhandler*. Pushcart nominee for 2006. Winner of the Joanie Whitebird Chapbook Contest, "Screaming at Adam" Wings Press, 2007. Editor/Publisher of the online e-zine - www.radiantturnstile.com

Kenneth Pobo (PA) Check out *Silenced Press*, *Raving Dove*, and *Best Poem* for recent poems published online. It's winter, so I'm cheered by an early blossom on the winter jasmine. I'm cheered too that Tommy Roe's *Phantasy* album is finally out on CD. And even more cheered that I finally got to see Bergman's *Face To Face*. The ending collapsed but Liv Ullman was thrilling beyond words (no surprise there).

Louie Crew (NJ) age 71, lives in East Orange, NJ with Ernest Clay, his husband of 34 years. Crew is an emeritus professor at Rutgers and is the author of over 1,854 published poems and essays. Over 800 visit his resources for poetry every day, at <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/poetry.html>

Lynette Ledoux (LA) received her BA from Millsaps College, her MTh from the University of Glasgow, and her MA from the University of Southern Mississippi. Her fiction has appeared in *Product* and in *Ducts*. She lives in New Orleans.

Lynn Strongin (BC) was born and raised in New York. She has poems in numerous journals and anthologies. Her most recent books are “Amanda Flamer: (U.K.) “Rembrandt’s Smock” and “The Girl with Copper-Colored Hair.” A five-time nominee for a Pushcart Prize, she has made British Columbia Canada her home for almost the past thirty years but she considers her voice to be intrinsically American.

Marla Cordle (VA) is the author of Silencing Sarah (Resplendence Publishing, 2007). To keep her sanity intact, she turns to writing poetry and excavating early American home sites; always hopeful of the next big (or small - she’ll take whatever’s there to find) discovery. Please visit www.mlcordle.com to learn more about her poetry and her next two novels.

Maurice Oliver (OR) After almost a decade of working as a freelance photographer in Europe, he returned to America in 1990. Then, in 1995, he made a life-long dream reality by traveling around the world for eight months. His poetry has appeared in numerous national and international publications and literary websites including: *Potomac Journal*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Taj Mahal Review* (India), *Dandelion Magazine* (Canada), *Stride Magazine* (UK), and online at thievesjargon.com, interpoetry.com (UK), kritya.com (India), blueprintreview.de (Germany). He edits the ezine *Concelebratory Shoehorn Review* (www.concelebratory.blogspot.com).

Roger B. Smith (NY) was born in Rochester, New York, 1939 and was raised to semiconsciousness on a fruit and dairy farm on the stoney shores of Lake Ontario. In 1957 he escaped bucolic isolation to study painting at The Art student’s League, in New York, and later at the San Francisco Art Institute. Currently he lives in the Adirondack Mountains of Northern New York State and works as a Community HIV/AIDS Educator for AIDS Community Resources, Utica, New York.

Ryan Nowlin (NJ) received his MA in creative writing from Temple University in 2003/04. His concentration was in post-modern American poetics and 20th century literary criticism and/or mainly French philosophy ala Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan. Recent publishing credits at *Oyez Review* and *Idiom*. This year he is actively involved in the St. Marks Poetry Project workshops in the Bowery NYC.

Susana H. Case (NY) is the author of The Scottish Café (Slapering Hol Press, 2002), Hiking The Desert In High Heels (RightHandPointing, 2005), and Anthropologist In Ohio (Main Street Rag Publishing Company, 2005).

Scott Nichols (CA) lives, writes, and paints in Long Beach, California.

sudasi j. clement (NM) is the poetry editor for the *Santa Fe Literary Review*. Her poems have recently appeared in *Nerve Cowboy* and the Harwood Anthology, and her beadwork has been featured in *Bead & Button* magazine and *Amulet Purses* by Nicolette Stessin. She lives in the high desert with her partner and their two teenage sons.

t. kilgore splake (MI) is the editor and “blog-master” for CLIFFS: SOUNDINGS, published by miskwabik press in calumet, michigan. splake has published several poetry and prose chapbooks and a listing can be found at www.miskwabikpress.com.

Taylor Gorman (LA) is a sophomore New Orleanian schooling at Louisiana State University; majoring in Creative Writing and Literature, he plans to live impoverished yet happy as poet and proser... which unfortunately is labled “poser” (proet sounds much cooler).

Tony Manns (FL) nears the end of his undergraduate career at the University of Florida, is terrified of graduating, and averages one cat related injury a week.