

ORIGAMI CONDOM

issue #12

ULTRA POETRY • INTELLECTUAL LUBRICANT

origamicondom.org



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Origami Condom is a web based journal of poetry that is located at origamicondom.org

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Submission guidelines are available at the website.

Cover Art: scan of a hawk feather found by Kenneth P. Gurney on a hike at Petroglyphs National Monument, near the extinct volcanoes—there were several hundred feathers and signs a coyote ate well early that morning.



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a mini bios

☞ Luis Cuauhtemoc Berriozabal

I have you embroidered
in my heart. It was not an idea
where I thought things through.

These days I pull on the threads.
My head pounds in agony.

These days you remain
in exile.

A fuzzy blue
slice of bread:

proof evolution
is more than bait

for a preacher.
I suspect if

left longer alone
it would sprout

limbs and scuttle
to the dank cellar

where someday
intelligence

would perch cocky
and flag-draped. Perhaps

after seven days
it would have

religion then murder
of brothers.

But never would
it think it

a mistake to leap
from a moldy

springboard into
an empty pool.

Cheery-eyed jackdaws screech
the testament of change.
Mother Nature, like a dominating madam
clad in tight leather and chain,
cracks her whip
bringing the seasons to heel in submission.
Spent summer yields to the fickle days of autumn.
Forests burst into a splendor of color
only to taunt us by slipping into a
dismal, bleak world reminiscent of
a confused mind and severed ear.

On impulse, I dive headlong into a pile of leaves.
Laughing and thrashing about, I am shocked back to reality
when beaten with rakes in the hands of angry yard workers.
I had forgotten the second rule of leaf-diving:
Thou shalt not dive uninvited into the leaf piles of strangers.
The first rule, I learned the hard way:
Thou shalt not dive into piles of burning leaves.

Damn you, Proserpina!
Could you NOT,
at least, TRY
the seedless grapes!

As I stomp on pomegranate after pomegranate,
with the onlooking supermarket night manager
fumbling with his phone...calling God knows who,
I realize that it is all Pluto's fault
and swear to kick his ass...
Mickey's and Donald's too, if need be.

Autumn...such a difficult time.
But, soon winter will follow.
Full of tomfoolery and
too excited to wait for snow,
I pull off one of my shoes.
Pretending it a snowball, I throw it...
knocking the hat off a policeman.
He is not amused,
but gives me a ride in his squad car anyway.

Audition

(or meeting his mother for the first time)

☞ Emily Brungo

I apparently didn't rehearse enough.
I don't even have a monologue prepared.

In high school I once performed a soliloquy as an auditioning actress
who spoke lasciviously about corned beef, pastrami, and mustard.
I found it very easy to get that excited about nice, sliced deli meat:
Ooooooh, slap on that mustard!
But that would be a poor choice since the selection committee
is fundamentally opposed to condiments.

So maybe I'd be better off with a Vagina Monologue:
I could describe, in explicit detail, the intricacies of your touch
and the delectation I suffer when you're inside me.
No, she would not approve of that, either.

How about a chorus or two from Oedipus Rex?
On projection and prophesy, it's no myth,
your Jocasta's made her bed for you to lie in it.
A breathtaking perversity,
my own self-fulfilling prophesies,
I'm the one with the golden brooches poised
to gouge at my own eyes.

No?
Not good?

I hand over my head shot and my resume:
education, former jobs, special skills, my measurements.
I say:
*No, I don't play any instruments,
and no, I don't know how to speak Spanish.
Someone says I like to juggle,
but that was just a rumor.*

A resignation:
Yes, I know, I'm too heavy for this role.

"Short. Lose 8-10 pounds," she writes.

A realization:
Fuck. She really is taking notes.

And now a selection from the catalogue of the Carnegie International (Life on Mars):
I might as well live on Mars for I don't speak your language,
my tongue only good for lapping up the morsels of attention/affection
that are intermittently tossed my way.

I'm missing numbers in my Fibonacci sequence.
My digits just don't add up.
I'm Ziggy Stardust, traipsing alone in the galleries,

not understanding any of the art,
giant spiders in my cerebellum playing the guitar.
I'm wrapped in packing tape and tin foil,
can't move my extremities but my genitals are exposed.

I feel the same ache as always when I watch you from behind,
shoulders and calves and jean pockets that I want to put my hands in,
reach around and feel you
coming up with the tips of my fingers,
then I'd have someone's rapt attention.

A cold reading.
I'm sight reading.
Me and a piano.
...and that's good, isn't it?
Great, isn't it?
Swell, isn't it?
Fun, isn't it?...

Can I please start again?

☞ Emily Brungo

In June, The People's Republic of You issued a decree ending all trade with the Sovereign State of Me. For years, the relationship between these two great nations has been fraught with tumult and confusion, but also eras of peaceful harmony; so to cut off the connection and isolate the Sovereign State of Me places my government in a prickly internal situation.

The effects of the embargo will undoubtedly make my nation suffer. We are already distressed from neglect, forced to till our own soil while we wistfully sing your national anthem. We long to hear our country's song come from your missed lips. At the site of not-quite-filled supermarket shelves, my citizens began to panic.

An embargo is usually used as a political punishment for some previous disagreed policies or acts. Alas, The People's Republic of You thinks that the Sovereign State of Me needs to be punished. Me punished for our infringement on your borders, for our disregard of foreign policy, our shaky infrastructure, our questionable interrogation techniques, and our treatment of political prisoners.

But the nature of the embargo frequently raises doubts about the real interests that the prohibition serves. The People's Republic of You thinks they know what's best for the Sovereign State of Me. But since the last Summit, Me thinks that You have forgotten my checkered history and the topography within my borders. Free trade may make Me feel better about itself, but You feels superior and powerful by withholding.

An embargo is considered an act of war. A typical reaction is the development of an autarky.

The Sovereign State of Me will be temporarily closing its borders.

The Total Woman

“A Total Woman caters to her man’s special quirks,
whether it be in salads, sex, or sports.”

—Marabel Morgan

☞ Emily Brungo

Submissive in Saran Wrap,
I shuffle like a geisha to the front door
with his slippers and a Sidecar.

I ask him how his day was,
then nod in enthused interest.
The children are soundly sleeping,
I think he’d like a foot massage.

After Chinese chicken salad
he chases me ‘round the dining room.
I adoringly suck him off
while SportCenter’s on mute.

© Joan Payne Kincaid

Unstable weather again global warming as they come to visit.

Wobbly and vague in the car we eat a moldy beach breakfast-boredom then
the boys play instruments apologetically; their parents refuse to buy the open
house with its little room-wandering doors in and out of.

What was it they wanted to do. Little open house down a street from the twenties
no more than two pieces to a room, ivory white woodwork especially I liked.

He pulled up backyard bamboo playfully bad boy!

All environmentally sensitive giving spaciousness and order. No not to be he can't
commute our familiarity. I can't call any shots a dictator says how to what to every
walking moment. I'd like to do what I like to do now. Now they're shooting darts at the
house now. Why. Can you tell me.

Rose clippings put here, weeds put there! "Just so." Summer starts to die.

Ow, thorns prick her hustling out murmuring something regarding art
sipping a martini in high temperature and humidity dog's all day thunder-mumbling
under the piano. Sundays don't matter anymore. Once upon a time, weekends were
special. When they leave they leave just a terrible emptiness family, so familiar, so
many dynamics beyond any one's understanding. Why, you could tell me
why but don't, fumbling and empty as the house.

☞ Joan Payne Kincaid

The kids next door scream and squeal
there is a rude sense of exits and dark questions
in the horrid heat and humidity
make note to sucker the tomato tentacles;
pathetic music keeps repeating like Gertrude Stein;
it repeats nothing worth repeating the way listless people do
tit-for-tat in a snow of lists and notes of war
willing to allow failure of food, climate, and corporate
development to cause demise of the world's poor:
the kids are only allowed a bit of time in tightly
controlled schedule they will suddenly disappear
like ice at the Pole twenty five years ahead of schedule, poof!
The music is too vivace the strings too manic for this turgid day;
in the village sunflowers at full height yet in the garden
a merry terror of bean hills, a sagging sort of laughter..
they've failed utterly for reasons unknown;
and there will be no more natural air conditioning
living in sci fi lacking compassion
or radio dirge fragmented and formless;
who among us gives a dam re: Polar Bear or Penguin;
the harbor blends greens and blues in a mirage mood
June melts into July and a/c's fail in brown and black-outs;
the Market echoes the '30s
and who were these children in Afghanistan
with innards hanging out and naked in the Times?
will styles follow the trend to trendy retro cloche hats
or the populace have a revolution the Imperialists dread
and maybe flapper dresses and shoes be dancing in poverty
Charleston twisting and sipping Absinthe glowing and green
the Green Fairy; but we're sipping ice tea at the beach
in a sauna sweat sinking feeling reminiscent of the Titanic
or dark novel accompanied by meandering English Horn
on an elitist music station hooting and tooting
cholesterol and downward bearish trends;
those who seek meaning must simplify,
go back and study the basic themes in, say Beethoven
touch base with what, as a child, you loved;
the beach is forgetfulness like death, a-float in gray water and fog
even children fade that way;
time to cut back, with even rice and corn unavailable
the once fruitful planet is past climax
but frozen water is found on Mars
they say asparagus will do well there.

∞ Megan Lamattina

We both rise in the stink of our sleep.
This room smells like sock, jock
sock, after a practice laced in sweat.

The decay of exercise, of a night
spent arguing over whose turn it was
to twist the words of excellence:

Mine, always.
A soiled sock in the afterglow.

1.
with braces sewn to my teeth,
braces demanding
conventional smile

we find a shadow behind
a building, and kiss with tongue
until parents bark horns

2.
a dull summer sun,
raw against unsolved body,
shining onto exploring fingers.
children, never exposed this way

two babies wearing laboratory coats
examining the intricate
self against another self
how deliberate our bodies have been made

3.
Infusion of life without a manual
we bruised each other slightly,
trying to fit
trying to mold
into thoughtful desires, too far from us

4.
in and out of the classroom, in the hall
crimson glares in every year,
remembering the surrender.

5.
breaking rules
for nothing more than a satisfied hormone,
to be projected as love.

I see you at Honey Farms,
you ask,

“Do you know where I can find some pot?”

6.
shots of Absolut, scolding
the throat of freshmen
I've always loved you spilled without grace
from your lips, naked like our bodies
as vomit spewed into a neat pile of bile
on your floor, absolute
guilt

7.
seed to a tree, bitter roots.
Both unsuspecting to how unripe
some fruit can really taste,
years later

8.
11:27pm
gracious greens fill the car
as we spill around corners,
dipped in hesitation.

we make conversation
out of dry smoke bubbles,
sporadic pastime turned permanent.

9.
mushrooms eat, mushroom retreat
to the films of the gut,
soon bloom like bread baking
in a purple oven stomach

I see: flowers bud in darkness
charcoal pink to yellow
you age to 45, withering
beside a fire, leaves weave
into a 1970's maple carpet
leading to hell

10.
Experience: made us wiser to teach,
made us accessible.
Drugs: made us science
made us jagged in essence,
like a shining piece of broken
ornament glass still shines
with an idea of original splendor,
still so stunning while it exists
in pieces.

No desire in me before I saw you
scanning the horizon for your errant sailboat
unaccustomed boldness as the tide receded

suddenly aware of shoulders like bronze sculpture
conversation resonant in the lower register
turned my flushed face toward you my good ear

smile a flashing beacon in the twilight
stretched my tanned legs sucked in my stomach
feeling the pulse in my throat flutter

all my denial reduced to moisture
If today I do not touch your body
enclose myself tonight in a dark study

drift into sleep after solitary pleasure
imagining you hard and sweet against me

note: The title of this poem and the lines in italics are from *The Book of the Hanging Gardens* by the German lyric symbolist Stefan George (1868-1933). George's involvements were mostly homoerotic, but these poems were written to a friend's wife.

Someone else told me, I'd never
dare ask—your science reads the stars
strictly for navigation—but
you're a slippery one, all right
now with this woman now with another
confident in the water
and wary of hooks

 I dreamed last night
you called to me from a line
of loungers on the dock
and I, determined to ignore you,
turned in spite of everything and took the bait

then, waking, wondered on what date
you slid into the world wailing
like the storm outside Still, today my task
as responsible Virgo is to release
and watch you swim away—
a big one, succulent but not a keeper.

1

All cities are alike, they never sleep

This one coils about my feet, up my legs,
Tightening its hold on my chest, a cold snake coiled around an apple.

Taste me Mama
I am
The blue apple
Of anguish
Eat of me,
Fruit of your despair

I don't know why we did it:

Ruined, ruined
The deserted garden!

How I wish there were going back!

2

Are you more than a ghostly voice on tape, voice of a mad lady genius in stereo?

Loneliness, a wound that will not heal
I know it too, I don't know
Which way,
Which path...

But there's a slip of a moon in the window,
A lady's slipper hung on a star!
Oh starry night
Be enough
Hold the ground below me, hold me here
I fear I will float out of body out of mind out into the stars,

Are you more than a dark spirit voice telling me the truth of the darkness you endured?

3

The telling must be told, the poetry must be old,
Older than the serpent's wisdom, memory of God, the secrets He keeps for no one

In a room in deafening darkness in stereo
The lit face of a clock stares as if to say

"I cannot be denied."

And she, dear Anne, voice of the moon, darkly clear, lost soul rowing on a river

Between heaven and hell,
Asking where, where is my island?

“Shanti, gentle Fury, voice among stars; it is there, under your boat, the Island of God.

Rest, sleep under the sad city
Sleep with the snake
And an angel my dear

There never was a man worth your energy or love,
Only end rowing Anne and heaven will end your fear.”

☞ Rayn Roberts

I saw a kid in the super today who looked very much like your God.
He palmed a snickers bar; went straight up his sleeve as he walked out grinning!

Was that your God and is that how he acts?! He was a most beautiful boy
with evil green eyes that twinkled divinity from Fifth to Wall Street and back....

A most delightful urchin,

I followed to the subway; he went down to get a train. There he was
standing on the platform, a hip-hop cap screwed on sideways, lookin' real fly.

I went over to high five him on the slick job, but three archangels
with diamond wings enclosed him with a force field and I couldn't say "Jack".

He stepped on the train, gave me a peace sign and vanished...
Was that your God, is that how he acts?

He sure is a brainy brat, but cool man, he was way too cool...for his age.

In
a
Chinese
pictograph
the word *And* looks like
a hand with three outstretched fingers
grasping at space, ready to seek or accept what is

there
with-
in reach
or beyond
reach though still subject
like the soft gold of a small bird
to our admiration, like the stars to our yearning...

But
the
Chinese
pictograph
for *Cease* is a foot's
firm imprint in the sand, as if—
after all the wishing and searching—one stops to rest.

If
you
live in
the city
you either embrace
noise and the nearness of others
or you'll go mad insisting on your right to silence

which
is
nowhere—
for even
in the wilderness
one must accept the crisp breaking
of a branch, the nighttime chirping of crickets, the birds.

And
is
it not
a strange but
precious gift to hear
them stumbling in the street below,
her telling him, *you can fuck me if you kiss my toes...*

⇒ Sean Ruane

It is all about the letter 'C', she whispered into his ear, the hot breath of a dream that wasn't his; digitized, re-enacted over space to a pinched timeline's remix, Frank, crooning into the depths of an empty trashcan. Poor Frank. The 'C' of coffee spilled on the trousers of a precautionary crooner; he wears three at a time, you see...The 'C' of clairvoyant hope; she knows and sees what is real and wraps it in her arms, smothering it; she is the quivering, skylarking Fata Morgana of a parched horizon. What the fuck? Yes; 'C', nestled between the softness of you and a redundancy you wish didn't exist. 'C' is for Chlamydia, he thinks; he couldn't exactly read the doctor's note and his imprudent answering machine message gave little indication of any phonetic blundering. 'C' is for prophylactic countermeasures. For Clare, an initial omission; a playful whatnot, a courage building whatif...unfortunate ubeity and self-conscious prudence! 'C' is for a giant cardboard cookie caught in the tentacled grip of a pederast's smile. 'C' is for the charm of a girl and a cask of red guitarists strumming arpeggios on the ribs of gaunt praise; broken soldiers tint the world red and impossible. 'C' is for Frank Sinatra's Chlamydia; it followed him all the way from New York and landed in his lap in the back of a Minnetonkan taxi cab. He rolled down the windows and howled at no broad or dame in particular, but all of them at once, rolling around town in three pairs of tweed Hackensack slacks. Frank Sinatra punches haberdashers and pharmacists; swings his arms like the blades of a surly windmill. 'C' is for the chatter of Dionysus' naughty nursemaids, maenads swinging thyrsi like fennel tipped fungo bats, clubbing profligacy, dragging it back to their caves. 'C' is for a one-way love, sick as a cough, keeping me awake. 'C' is for 'Cangaroo'; the fuck you say?! Dumbass! 'C' is for Cera, blind auditory cognate, a perpetual reflection in someone else's wine glass. 'C' is the most important letter of the alphabet she said I said and she dreams of these things.

The Donation

For the fictional Frenchman who in death, had his forty-pound colon removed and given to the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia

☞ Natasha Wang

When did you find this misbehaving piece of you?
Perched on bidet, your flower splayed to catch the water,
did it unfurl its malodorous petals, unwelcome in any garden?
Years before, you must have sensed roots,
a tickle below, vines winding up the labyrinth
of your lower intestine, through fertile soil of stomach.
It germinated. Fed by mother's insistence at the table—
raclettes of potatoes and emmenthal, fromage blanc
snowcapped in sugar, Brie wedges thick as wedding cake.
It grew into a hardy thing, crabgrass weeding into the spaces of yourself.

At first, slight discomfort as it spilled carbon dioxide
into your greenspace, growing abundant. People stopped visiting.
Smells like low-grade fertilizer, they'd say.
The commode gathered dust in that sun-starved W.C.,
toilet paper yellowing like autumn leaves.
How lonely it must have been, twenty-six years old,
hidden behind a bedroom door, rooted to a stained mattress,
the doctor's pruning the only sex you knew.

A century later, I stare in wonderment at its girth—forty pounds,
thick as a man, you carried this inside until it ate you whole.
Like ancient oaks revealing weather through rings,
your colon tells me about ratatouille in 1902,
Aunt Pauline's bistek and beans on your last birthday,
and how your heart, refusing to be swallowed,
fought the encroachment until your final breath.
You stayed pure until reaching that other tunnel, that other end,
the gates opening wide to let you through.

Wouldn't you rather
we walk down
the avenues of rain
trading verses from Poe
like black roses
and only take
our best memories
with us and the small
butterfly tattoo
on the back of your neck
wouldn't you rather
the government
forgot our faces
our names and when
we're faraway
and finally beyond
the boom of waves
wouldn't you rather
I put my hand
in the flame
between your legs
well I would

☞ Howie Good

Sure, you've reasons to weep,
who doesn't, but, please,
you still got me, with shelf
upon disorganized shelf
of inventory, and so what if
the sun sticks its thumb
in your eye and the ATM refuses
to recognize you, so what if
the guests leave for the wedding
in limos but never arrive,
from somewhere there's loud
and incoherent hammering,
bright tails of rockets
scorching flat asphalt roofs,
another solar system being built
just for you out of defunct immensity
and cannibalized parts.

Cupid bow lips gasping for air,
exposing fleshy bloody torso,
she wriggled and screamed,

as if she was old gum the weakened womb
spat her out into her first infliction.

Her mother pushed,
pushed,
and will forever
keep on pushing her
New York baby. Her Mother may wish
that the heat would
cook the newborn alive,
but raw tiny fingers cling to
her fading affection—those little fingers
soon learn to let go.

Locked
in a dark closet, while her
mother turns tricks
to deflate the hunger
pains and cries.
Her virgin ears wait for
the moaning from the
those midnight lovers too come to an end.
The door unlocks,
she crawls.
Her saucer eyes
squint when lights strike;
it makes tear ducts drip
like a crack pipe.

When ever her father
appeared,
she felt him watching, though
even when he travelled—he
must have painted
his eyes on the wall—he was watching.
He loved her the same way
he loved her mother,
rhythmic inflictions crashing the word
home down upon her
H is for ___
O is for ___
M is for ___
E is for ___
Blanks are all there ever was.

The muscles on her neck would
taut with fear strain, because the
butcher knife

in her mother's hand
desired to slice
her throat with ease,
as if she was an apple.
Insomnia clutched her,
eyes flicked upwards
swallowing all the night stars.
Swallowing stars
till she sparkled just like one.
Swallowing stars
till she burned bright just like one,
the only one to shine so brightly.

She could never hide in the dark,
She shined too brightly.

∞ Danielle Jackson

Aesthetic comportment
immediate connection
safety of minds interlocked and entwined.
Converge:
Fingers clutch to hips.
Hourglass you seizes to the silk screen
Eyes unravel my trepidation like no other.
Our constellation of frivolous limbs now honour rhythmic sins.
Conventional worship is illogical.
Unconventional devotion is consistent.
Lips add season to hidden corners.
And here we are, both in disguise, touching each others edges.

∞ Renée E. D'Aoust

Oily, pungent, not fish, but a fisherman and a memory when sand mixed in hair because he reached for my body and with it the sand on which we had fallen together while the ocean stayed nearby. His hands swollen from nets, lines, hooks grabbed, unhooked, fish tossed into the hold, suctioned out to the tender; while I stayed on the shore, nearby and watching.

Later those same hands took my brush and began parting each hair, freeing each lone piece of sand, each lone bit of love pummeled and worn from the sea.

Holes were dug in the fifties
Fearful retreats
 echoes of forgotten caves
 broken bones and sinew
Every dream depended on
 the half-life of elements
 half-life
After we soiled the moon, but before
 Mars, the man caught his foot
 in a metal ring hanging
 from our planet
Now, what on earth he never finished
 but pulled on the ring
 and found one of those holes
This one was square, deep and plumb
 into a knoll on his land
 he'd bought with a deed
That had no mention of secret spaces
 but the man found it cool and dry
 and since the fifties were over
He lined the walls with a construct
 of fine wood to form secure
 pockets he filled with Bordeaux
Pinot Blanc Médoc and Chablis

Going west on Cerro Gordo
8 am
What is my original face?
A long time ago—in winter—I did not get what I wanted
In this same place
Where woodsmoke rises from the old adobes

if there is a context
it is repetition—
circumambulation
(the chorten in snow) (the past)
fragment of Bodhisatva
etched flowing
on white stone

if there is a pattern
it is the wheel
of the flock of pigeons
that roost on the wires
above the intersection
useless satori

o open way

I don't know if
you love men, or women
I won't even ask
if this is Rinzai
or Soto

someday, maybe I'll know
who hit the gong
108 times

Here we are again swimming
in the wind, daystar
behind us, glaring at shadow
networks broken among trees.
Music rises from riverbanks.
Everywhere we push against
silence, eyes wide and taken
in. We breathe a silver
luster, diamonds and white
gold, sparkling shards
of splintered glass, sidewalks
aglit with snow. Shattered
against beautiful brow of sky,
we open ourselves to the terrible
news. Everything burns, all a fire
of change. Supper simmers
useless on stoves, our stomachs
bend and bow with the scented
steam. By the time you get
this, we will have turned ourselves
to fish, pushing our anguished way
up the blood-maddened stream.
Too late we will have become mud
paste and gritty sticks, nothing
but vague shapes breaking in risen flood.

Since writing had been asleep,
I went mining.
And found my own runes
Painted hard and red
Like a rummage-sale sign.
I said:
/Come on out, off the wall please.
I've got a plane to catch/
Unmoved and undeciphered,
My internal alphabet would not talk back.
That knapsack stuffed with tools for excavation
That I carried almost everywhere:
Useless.
It was dark, dark, dark and
The last lines of
My own runes were silent.

⇒ Philip Estes

Harry Callahan kicks into his speech—how a .44 magnum
would blow the punk’s head clean off, so the punk’s got to ask himself:
Does he feel lucky? Well, Does he?
Dad lays on the couch in the living room, watches
Dirty Harry blow the Scorpio’s brains out.
“Every son of a bitch wants to be Dirty Harry,
shit, do you want to go get a drink?” He asks me.
We get Blue Moons at a restaurant in the mall,
my dad sticks his finger out like a snub nose. “Those gaunt guys,
without guts, and mirrored sunglasses, they want their .44s and their SUVs,
so they can go boom, boom. Before your mother,
I loved this woman. She married a high school teacher; he was Dirty Harry—
guns, clean stomach, long hair. She wrote me letters
for three years and I never opened them.
I burned them in the hibachi for your mother in the backyard,
used tongs to hold the letters in the fire. I yelled:
Harry Callahans don’t burn old love letters.
Your mother never saw Dirty Harry, but she took my hand anyway.
I have to pee.” Dad came back from the bathroom with blood on his hands.
His blood, there’s no Scorpios at Ruby Tuesday.
“The doctor put me on thinners. I’ll be alright.
I just scratched my hand on the faucet.”

Surgical hair restoration, Tom,
the radio tells me. Just families
in the mall's lot on Sundays.
I locked myself out, this Chevy Colt
is running and has power everything:
A/C, auto-locks, a mouthy radio.
Jimmy Chung knows hair from your scalp zone
grows when applied to your bald spot.
Women at work will congregate
around the microwave, murmur:
"You see Tom's hair today?
Like Gary Cooper descends upon us.
I bet he drives a red Trans-am."
"Chicks don't know the Montana Mule
anymore." I tell the radio.

I buy a welding rod, \$5,
from the Ace Hardware inside.
I shove the rod into the door frame.
What about Hannah? You would watch
Morocco, your legs tangled under
covers together. She knew the Coop.
"Stop it please," I tell the radio.
God, I'm sorry Hannah.
You shaved your legs for film night,
propped up on the john's rim,
you used pink soap. I shouldn't have left,
bought this car off your Uncle.
The back of my head burns from the sun.
Your hair and dandruff rain
on the seats and the dash Tom.
The tip hits the auto-lock, I get in
the Colt, my hands like rotten bananas,
black and bruised. *You like pancakes*
right? "Yeah I like pancakes," I say.
Jimmy Chung's Hair Replacement Clinic,
on the Miracle Mile, they're near
I-Hop—eat pancakes with your new hair.
I turn the radio off,
and try to get my \$5 back at ace.
The rod curved like a crane's neck.
I tell the clerk "I bought it that way,"
but he doesn't believe me.
John Madden promotes dollar days
on a cardboard sign.
His head like Caesar, full white curls.
You creep back in Hannah,
like black smoke on the brain,
or belly fat from Rogaine side effects.

bag filled with smooth squares
letters and numbers
all lead either somewhere
or nowhere—both somewhere and nowhere

there are no absolutes
dissolve the antidote
with the poison
the poison with the antidote
they are the same and yet not the same

a vowel is not a consonant
but without it
the consonant may have no meaning
this is the way of scrabble™
the way of meaning-making
the way of long into the night
when the moon hangs just so in the night sky
where crickets scrape out their song
the clickclickclick of word formation
the glideclickclick of meaning making
the clatterclatterclink of tiles in a bag
as they walk labyrinths of meaning

the 10,000 blessings are these words
these words remind us to breathe through the night
these words that breathe us so that we may breathe

clickclickclickclick
clickclickclickclick

wild parrots screeching
on the electric wire at dawn
and what to do with three “e’s” and a “z”

a girl keeps calling me from a New York area code (646)

she calls a few times at night;
the latest one is always after 1:00 am, pacific time
i miss most of her calls and she never leaves any messages.
she calls me in the morning too while I'm at work;
the earliest is 6:30 am, pacific time

we've talked a few times:
she sometimes sounds drunk and worried,
like she's looking for someone

she asks if she has the wrong number and i say,
"i'm luis, do you?" she says something
and i don't understand and she hangs up

but the calls have stopped now

and there are nights that i lie awake,
waiting for her to call,
rehearsing my lines, getting questions ready,
tormented like a weak lover
unfortunately caught in the bad side of the relationship

and it's all too late: i think i'm falling in love.

I am the natural numbers;
You are the natural numbers;
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...
Wait what comes after five? SIX!!!
7, 8, 9, 10 Dot Dot Dot Dot Dot Dot!!!
There is everything odd about me,
And there is everything odd about you,
But there is Nothing odd about us,
As long as we are 2;
We are as even as it gets.

4 lips that made a single kiss,
4 eyes meet no interference,
As 2 hearts bah - boom bah - boom
bah-Boom baH-Phom Bah-PHOOM
Into a wall only as thick as doubled flesh and 48 ribs.

We are 6 Freudians The Id, The Id, The Ego, The Ego,
The Super Super Ego Ego;
8 limbs: our arms and legs;
5 by 4 by 2: 40 fingers and toes,
Not to mention our doubled nose;
There is Nothing single
When we come to mingle my dear;
We are the 1's and 0's of the sacred tree.

Dad slept on his back
in the top bunk

on the overnight journey,
and I would feel its cold

bouncing down,
as if it were a lake of ice

and I, a fish meant to be
trapped underneath,

along with the frozen chunks
of the life he once had

crashing into one another
as they had always done.

Fulton Street

After Walker Evans' photo 'Girl in Fulton Street'

∞ Christian Ward

This is not the city Frank
wrote about. There are no
hum coloured cabs or men
stopping for a cheeseburger
and malt shake. Lana Turner
has not died and the sky
has not worn its funeral coat.
This is the city made of glass
where people wear alien nouns
like Fedora and Cloche Hat
and sniff the air like gundogs,
eager for the scent of their identity.

Her breath rises and falls
like a tide. The tulips

in the vase by her window
watch her blanket drop

with each outgoing wave,
her hand letting go as it slips

out of reach. It never sees
them crumple in her sleep,

wanting that familiar touch,
as if it could waken, unlock.

He walked into his classroom wearing jeans
shirt tucked in, no belt
(reminiscent of the Paul Riser and/or Jerry Seinfeld look of the early 90's)
Hawaiian tattoo inked into his forearm / an ethnic turtle
He told us how the U.S. raped Hawaii
He told of the government
clearing native Hawaiians off their land
in order to build a memorial to native Hawaiian's
He said that was one of the main tactics
of the oppressor
to reduce their victims to subhuman beings
thus justifying their dominance
and genocide
it happened in Germany
the Holocaust...

I'm thinking I can buy into this
so I talked to him after class
I told him that I wrote poetry
A socialist poet attacks capitalism
they write for the cause he said
as he cupped his hand and rested it on my shoulder
I paused
feeling the full weight of the hand
I turned and left
I just couldn't do it
I couldn't share
my infrequent conjugal visits
from the muse with
the cause.

His medium frame
sat at the bar
his tan bald head
sat in a soft nest
of gray curls
he was talking
about regrets and
unfulfilled dreams
moving to New York
and *taking a shot at painting*
I asked what stopped him
he lifted his stump
of an arm high in the air
it served as an unspoken
explanation point

A farming accident he said

You couldn't paint after you lost your arm?

No, that's not it,
his voice lowered as he leaned in,
I couldn't bring myself
to leave the people
that knew me
—you know
before the accident

...I still paint though.

Mini-Biographies

Alex Deleuse (-)

Burgess Stanley Needle (AZ) is a Tucson, Arizona (USA) poet whose work has appeared in *The Hiss Quarterly*, *Origami Condom*, *Kritya* (India), *Zafusy* (UK) and *Free Verse* [February 2009]. He co-edited *Prickly Pear/Tucson*, a poetry quarterly, and co-directed the summer program of the Southern Arizona Writing Project in the past. After thirty years as a school librarian, Burgess is currently editing a journal he kept as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand from 1967 to 1969.

Christian Ward (UK) is a 28 year old London based poet who recently graduated from Roehampton University with a degree in English Literature and Creative Writing. His next chapbook, *Bone Transmissions*, will be released in March 2009 courtesy of Maverick Duck Press. He hopes to start an MA in Creative Writing next year.

Daniel S. Irwin (-) Writer/Artist (both a joke of late). Poems, fiction, and illustrations published in various journals, magazines, and whatnots world-wide...nothing in Bulgaria...which means nothing as each piece must stand on its own. Work burned on a regular basis by religious fanatics of all faiths.

Danielle Jackson (England) is 26 yrs old. She lives in Sheffield, England. She has been published in issues of *all things girl*, *Horace Magazines*, anthologies by *United Press*, *Sheffield Star*, *Psyke.org* poetry, *Gothic Fairy tales ezine*, *origami condom*, and *the Argotist online*.

Emily Brungo (PA) Her poetry has appeared in or is forthcoming in *The New York Quarterly*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, and *Shampoo*. She is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon's creative writing program and she lives, works, and plays in Pittsburgh's East End.

Eric Lochridge (SD) is a poet and editor in Rapid City, SD, where he grew up and currently raises his family. He is the author of *Father's Curse*, a chapbook that was published in 2007 by FootHills Publishing, and *After Long Busyness: A Poetry Blog*.

Howie Good (NY) a journalism professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz, is the author of six poetry chapbooks, including the e-book *Police and Questions* (Right Hand Pointing, 2008), available at <http://www.righthandpointing.com/howiegood/> You can visit him at <http://apocalypsemambo.blogspot.com/>

Jason Fisk (IL) lives in the Chicagoland area with his wife, two children, and two dogs. He tries to find time to write between changing diapers and cleaning up dog poo. You can visit his website at www.jasonfisk.com.

Joan Payne Kincaid (NY)

Jacqueline Lapidus (MA) a Boston-based editor, teacher and translator, was active in international feminist groups for many years, notably in France. She currently edits a French-language Web site for Oxfam America, advocates for universal access to health care, and serves as fairy godmother to an adorable four-year-old with brittle bones. Her poems have appeared in many literary magazines and anthologies, and she has three published collections: *Ready to Survive*, *Starting Over*, and *Ultimate Conspiracy*.

Luis Cuauhtemoc Berriozabal (CA) 38, was born in Cuernavaca, Morelos (Mexico), and lives in Southern California. He works in the mental health field. His poems/prose in English and Spanish have appeared in *The American Dissident*, *The Blue Collar Review*, *Pemmican Press*, and *Struggle Magazine*. His first book of poems, *Raw Materials*, was released by Pygmy Forest Press. His chapbooks, *Without Peace*, *Keepers Of Silence*, *Next Exit 7* (Co-Author Ronald Baatz), and *Garden Of Rocks* were published by Kendra Steiner Editions.

Luis Rivas (CA) lives in the San Fernando Valley, California. He was a telemarketer, construction worker, assistant drug dealer, flower delivery driver, fast food cashier, sales clerk, package handler/zip code sorter. His work has appeared in the following publications, some of which he contributes to regularly: *Unlikely Stories*, *Cherry Bleeds*, *Thieves Jargon* and others.

Megan Lamattina (MA) 21, is a senior at Framingham State College pursuing a degree in Communication Arts. Megan was accepted into the Salem State Poetry Seminar in June, the first notable achievement of her writing career. As a relatively young poet, she takes part in various open mic readings around the Boston area.

Miriam Sagan (NM) is the author of more than twenty books, including the recent collection of poetry *Map of the Lost* (University of New Mexico Press). She has been an artist in residence with the National Park Service at Petrified Forest and the Everglades and is at work on an installation “Laundryline Koan” at *THE LAND/an art site* in Mountainair, New Mexico. She founded and runs the creative writing program at Santa Fe Community College.

Natasha Wang (CA) has been writing poetry since early childhood. At the University of Texas at Austin, she won the James A. Michener Undergraduate Scholarship in Creative Writing, and holds a BS in Advertising Copywriting and a BA in French. Natasha attended the Palm Beach Poetry Festival in 2008. She has worked as a publicist for six years.

Patrick Ryan Dunn Sullivan (-) is a mathematician, linguist, and poet living indefinitely in a secret location. Previously published works can be found by scouring library aisles and internet search engines.

Philip Estes (-) grew up in Dayton, Ohio. His poetry has appeared in *Kill Poet*, *Lamination Colony*, and here in *Origami Condom*, with poems forthcoming in *The Great American Poetry Show*, *The Portland Review*, and *This Zine Will Change Your Life*.

Rayn Roberts (WA) lived and worked in Japan and Korea for 15 years; the last 8 out of 9 years in Korea. He recently settled in Seattle, a city he’s always loved. He appears in print and online in *Rattle*, *The Sow’s Ear Review*, *Voices in Wartime*, *PoetsWest*, *Chronogram*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *Rattapallax* and other journals plus four anthologies. <http://this.is/poems/hope/main.html>.

His poetry is heard on radio in PoetsWest programs and is available on CD from PoetsWest in Seattle. In 2006, Celestial Arts, Berkely/Toronto, included him in their book, “Illuminations” on interfaith understanding. www.illuminationsbook.com His last book, “Of One and Many Worlds” and others are available from Poetic Matrix Press, Amazon, Barnes & Noble and numerous small book dealers. <http://www.poeticmatrix.com/Press/Rayn.html>.

Renée E. D’Aoust (ID) lives with her Plott hound Truffle in northern Idaho (think trees, not potatoes). D’Aoust’s current book project is *Travels with Truffle: A Canine Tour of America*, and she is grateful to the Puffin Foundation for a grant supporting completion of the work. She was a 2008 Fellow at the NEA Journalism Institute for Dance Criticism at the American Dance Festival, and her essay “Graham Crackers” was recently published in Robert Gottlieb’s anthology *Reading Dance* (Pantheon, fall 2008).

[Sean Ruane](#) (MD) lives in Baltimore, Maryland. He has been published or has work forthcoming in *decomp*, *Storyglossia*, *Eyeshot*, *Sien Und Werden*, *3 A.M Magazine*, *Elimae* and other places. He writes shit in a grad program at Johns Hopkins University.

[Steve Klepetar](#) (MN) is the best known Shanghai born Jewish-American poet in the entire Central Minnesota area.

[Terrie Leigh Relf](#) (CA) lives in Ocean Beach, which is in San Diego, CA. Writing keeps her sane ... or perhaps it just staves off a modicum of madness!

[Tony Leuzzi](#) (NY) writes and teaches in Rochester, NY. His work has been published in *Arts and Letters*, *Jacket*, *Harvard Educational Review*, among others. His first book, [Tongue-Tied and Singing](#), was released by Foothills in 2004. His two poems in this issue of Origami Condom are part of a sequence of fibonacci poems he's gathering into a new manuscript.