

No,  
Dear

No, Dear

Issue 3

*Consumption*

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*from Said*

I.

Language takes a stab at being  
the ice-pick, thinking—  
I am the ice-pick. Once  
the great innards rolled out  
like a carpet paper. Blue dust  
and misinformation.  
Blue wind and nobody listens.

III.

Language. An old sink. A failsafe.  
Repetition does it.  
People renaming their adopted  
dogs and children. People forgetting  
the password for entry is inevitable.  
I am like the snow,  
covering for you and melting eventually  
into the ground. On occasion  
miraculous, a wet shoe, a wet dove  
dive-bombing into the pulpit.

The Yankee Tourists Refuse in their Hearts Dessert

Blackstrapped beans,  
fault of butter,  
biscuits on their backs  
in honey

stir an appetite  
for saying no,  
the wish to pit  
sweetness against sacrifice  
and win.

So when the waitress  
sings tonight's pies,  
*pecan, cherry*  
*buttermilk, key lime*  
*rhubarb, shoofly...*  
until the Jessamine  
shadows wilt  
with names

the time has come  
to groan like death,  
to sigh and say  
with studied regret,  
*no just the check.*

And it works  
at first, until the hitch,  
when she whirls back  
not with the check  
but an obtuse slice  
of buttermilk pie,  
trembling furiously  
on its saucer.

first avenue walk with fruit

sunlight suckles  
raw flap-grass  
men on the corner—precious, linda, baby, beauty, mami—

her hands are filled with

voices

oh, a  
tamarind—husk  
split damp fruit

tongue)

kiting away (on the

## RECAPITULATION

it is believed by scientists  
 and explained by the heterotroph hypothesis  
 that the first life form on earth  
 some three and a half billion years ago  
 was a single-celled consumer  
 which finally came to be  
 after thousands of years of inorganic molecules  
 tried and tried but simply could not *become*  
 until one day the spark of life arrived  
 here was our great-great-great-etcetera-grandthing  
 gobbling molecule after molecule from the primeval ooze  
 feeding this first impulse to consume, the impulse  
 weaving its way into our ever-evolving genetic code  
 strengthening as the millennia slowly passed  
 it was in the ediacarans of the cambrian  
 and the trilobites of the ordovician  
 it was in the jawless fishes and the early amphibians  
 when *Homo sapien* first appeared, a million or so years ago  
 it was this same impulse that kept us alive  
 day after day we gathered bark, we gnawed on roots  
 our ability to collect things meant nothing less than our survival  
 today, agriculture and technology have rendered the means obsolete  
 but the impulse to consume remains, gnawing at us like a phantom limb  
 perhaps now too powerful to be quenched  
 so what do we collect, if not those ancient herbs and roots?  
 we venture into the wilderness of the local target, the internet, the thrift  
 stores  
 we justify our incessant binges with the excuse of obsolescence  
 the fact that our survival does not depend on last year's models  
 makes us feel powerful, immortal even  
 despite all forecasts by the climatologists  
 we are destined to satisfy the demands of our master, DNA

## untitled

eat your soup, mother, where ever you are in your mind. an armadillo  
 strikes you so you reupholster a lake. defeat a lily pad soundly. roses! and  
 when you can no longer smell? in the end, mother, your mind is dusty with  
 split pea and ham. you have never seen an owl but you have birthed two.  
 pray. oh a maid with a needle, a child, a rest. you wait on waves but cannot  
 tell whether they are beginning or leaving. if the sky is blue, we do not  
 exist. the mother is water. firs resist salt. light is mistaken for warmth. the  
 scriptures loom. bloom, occasioned space.

## TAFT

Everybody remembers Taft as our fattest president. Teachers telling us the story: how Taft got stuck in his own bathtub, how it took four grown men to dislodge him. We'd gape at the comedy of it: Taft holding out his fat arms for pulling, *One, Two, Threeeeeeeee...* and nothing. The three men wiping their sweat brows. *We need another man.*

Poor naked Taft, President of the United States, and stuck in his cold marble tub, moustache wet with exasperation. How long did he sit there cold and silent, realizing he needed help? Freed, how long did he stand naked in front of those men to thank them? Or did he dash off, modest towel fluttering behind like a white flag? Don't think

he didn't know. His college nickname was *Big Lub*. He once sent a telegram to the Secretary of War which read *Went on a horse ride; feeling good* to which the Secretary responded, *How's the horse?* Even during his campaign, his opponent passed out pins that read: *Nobody Likes a Fat Boy*. He was six foot and three-hundred and forty pounds.

He knew. But Taft could give a fuck. He was ballsy. Ballsy enough to have a new bathtub built for the White House, a *huge* bathtub, big enough for six men, or one President. Ballsy enough to let Mooly Wooly the cow graze brazenly on the White House lawn just so that he could gulp all the fresh milk he wanted. Ballsy enough that when a senator named Chauncey Depew put his skinny hands on Taft's wide belly and asked *What are you going to call it when it comes, Mr. President?*

Taft just replied, *Well, if it's a boy, I'll call it William; if it's a girl, I'll call it Theodora; but if it turns out to be just wind, I'll call it Chauncey.*

## The Theory of the Leisure Class

*It's a word we rarely use  
for the things that we refuse...*

Calories

Orthodontics

Neapolitan

Saliva

Unicorns

Marlboro

Ecstasy!

*from* SOFT CRACK STAGE

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Actors are adept at improvisation:  
we do not make fine distinctions.  
Panocha is not temperamental;  
just talk back to it firmly.  
Divinity takes a lot of beating.  
Pralines are granular by nature.  
Sugar, if treated with respect,  
is agreeable and co-operative,  
fondant, obliging as a daughter,  
but chocolate is the devil incarnate.  
The basic things to know  
are what it is for and how it must be  
cajoled into displaying  
acceptable behavior by observing  
its mechanical tendency to generate forms.

*I collected rare molds to decorate the walls.*

Holiday Special

She took him back at the end of the hour.  
True, he was a complete dick. But the boob  
tube must obey a strict code of conduct: hair  
will be glossy, it will snow big fat flakes,  
and estranged lovers will reunite at  
Christmas. Out here, the rules are likewise  
clear: checked baggage will spin and spin on  
its doughnut until claimed. Cars will circle  
until a space opens up in the lot.



house fire

bent over the knee  
comes sipping  
fawn-like at windows,  
pooling at the floor

sleep  
as a padded winter's coat, unrested  
puddled heaps tucked in pressing walls

—the slicing off the air in the air  
something came as they do, peeling  
like the first draw of heavy hands in merciless strings—

everyone weird and pink,  
everyone watches,  
as everything leathers,

dropping pearls  
in one blink on the feathered eye of sleep.  
And we all swim, barreling

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Franklin Bruno's writings appear. So do his recordings. The most recent, respectively, are *Policy Instrument* (Lame House) and *The Human Hearts' Civics* (Tight Ship Records). [fjbruno@mac.com](mailto:fjbruno@mac.com)

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Anastasia Webb has recently (thankfully) returned to the East Coast. She is an actor, writer, and activist and is so, so honored to share a place with the poets in this or any publication of *No, Dear*.

