

No,
Dear

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Issue 5
Edges

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Icarus Views Himself in a Reflecting Pool

Chances are the boy was already lost
when every thing flying fell from the sky
and into his sandbox that first cold day
in November. This is not the first sentence
of a poem. Notice, if you will the lack
of tradition; none of syntax's awkward fondling
the open shutter doors of the seller selling.
Chances are, somewhere under all those wings
there is a hypotenuse of tiny shoulders
and the boy sleeking away, moving softly
down a narrow hall. Look how he drags
that massive string of bees behind him.
Look how the poem follows. Chances are
the boy was already lost that day in autumn.

* * *

The boy was already lost that day in autumn.
Look how the poem follows. Chances are
that massive string of bees behind him
down a narrow hall. Look how he drags
and the boy sleeking away, moving softly.
There is a hypotenuse of tiny shoulders.
Chances are, somewhere under all those wings
the open shutter doors of the seller selling
of tradition. None of syntax's awkward fondling
of a poem. Notice, if you will, the lack
in November. This is not the first sentence.
And into his sandbox that first cold day
when everything flying fell from the sky.
Chances are the boy was already lost.

Jessica Beyer

On the Elements of Anatomy

In medical theory, bones
fissure into paperclips. But I know
human abdomens breathe like frogs
under the paper hands of corner hospitals. Everything ruptures
in a country I cannot name.
Horses dissolve into dandelions.

Believe in me, Bellevue, and render your dead
as birds. I exchange prayers for talons in my cavalcades
of lungs. Diagnostics
torn off flutter.

Anything going into the sea
comes out, if at all, unrecognizable.

Deliver me, light or stone-laden,
to the ghost of your God.
In both hemispheres of the body, pigment
runs toward a surface of dirt, grapes become rice.
One out of ten children
calls the wrong man father.

If gauze covered the ocean floor, what skeletons would grow.

Matt Reeck

Eclogue with Noise

In a remote country looking out
like a glimpse through a looking glass.
The horizontal meant for traveling.
the back of the hotel over roofs
or bridge-towers on the horizon.

Then to see people again —
The walker in the marsh trees
The picture of the young family
pigeons at the traffic circle
in the bright dawn. Each hour's chisel.

In many and reportless places
"My life," the student says.
"My design," the teacher.
outside of town. A quiet morning
Leafless in the late fall.

in another language. Gray replaces
white: though living in the city.
clouds offer metaphors.
behind the Indian college the wildcats,
their ears pricked in the rain.

A Poem Circulates Among Them

When a meteor strikes the ground
the people develop an imaginary disease,

their lips and features become swollen,
in their beds they hide from the day

nothing can coax them back into
the meta-narrative

where the authorities are at war
with them. The bridges and rail links

to town are severed
the landscape takes on the dim

shapeliness of books. Or a poem
circulates among them.

When I began this they were
going to be objects of derision

but it was unsustainable.
I am the eye with which

the universe beholds itself
and that too is unsustainable.

If you want to retreat and cry
out your life in a corner

I really don't know what is
better, cake or pie

an imaginary pain keeps me
in bed all day

my ghost bends to
to bite my cheek

Skin Assignment

Science arises from the green and yellow star,
ready for panoramas, radiant with facts
and civic application. A few cats are playing with toys,
biting playfully but viciously into the rubber.
Children, too, are present, looking at their final bowls of cereal
before being called into service. Leaves like danger signals
appear in wild array outside the window,
flapping, flapping in silence. A jogger has just reached the end
of his understanding, and turned around. And there is a new moss
covering the exit signs, feeding on the moonlight, responsive to nothing but
alkaloids and music, its presence becoming a source
of confusion on the concourse. But all of this fits in the equation.
All that has ever been has been appropriate. My grandmother
has turned her mind toward tennis. She bought herself a pair of specially
colored sneakers and wanders around the park looking for victory,
and the equator, always partly imaginary, is covered now with turnstiles.
I live not far from the center, and nor do you. We've probably touched each
other at the little restaurant where the golden gelatin pours
onto the floor, and just keeps on coming. And they say that lions
have begun to appear in television studios at unscripted moments,
leaving behind a delicate stench, almost erotic, definitely
unkind to the potted plants, which have begun to curl
into relics. Do you feel the greater sway?
Nine thousand is the perfect number of unique insects,
and we're almost there. Today it seems more certain than ever
that the kindest gesture toward the world
is a half step backwards. It would be decent, it would be tasteful of us, to
loosen the lines of grime
in our palms, let eyebrows slightly disengage from our faces,
and tolerate the warm and salty sheets of air
entering the space between our lives and the sunlight.

Edges Pronounced Etches

there were others before me and there will be others since this is no dream
lying forever awake in a slip summer's sleep
the sincerest way of unknowing myself

for when the earth turns into a man made environment
the earth becomes an art form
fish do not know who discovered water

we don't either

between a truth and a lie, the difference
is that you've nothing to lose but losing yourself
to question the answer no one asks!

is in difference

funny go lucky in the age of nothing
have my cake and share it too

it's a mice
camp canceller surmised
there they're twice thrice trice!

1x2
3x4x5
6x7x8x9x10

i can see the skyline
then i will not remember
it won't bother me

flavor crystal

she's a total bomb blondeshell
encountering a destiny worse than fate

am i the king of the echo people?
why do you ask?
everything you forgot is true
beware of grape tasting shampoo

music to my eyes
mouth makes ear itch
efficiency replaces the soul
passing time bypassing time

words are but one way of telling stories
i am writing a poem about which I know nothing about
they're not laughing at me, they're laughing without me

believe anything you remember
it is my goal to become a religious person
today we figured this out

Driving West toward What Cheer, Iowa

Lightning makes an instant border

over two imagined countries:

In one, a white farmhouse,

the skull of a prehistoric mammal,

plain windows fire-lit.

In the other country a giant moth

strikes the windshield of a passing car.

She would've died on impact were she smaller.

Her abdomen splits.

Eggs in yellow fluid constellate the glass.

Her patterned wings

stick and pull.

The driver shifts gears, pulls

onto the shoulder, whispers

I haven't been near a woman in months,

as she fumbles half-bodied

onto his fingers. He rubs the velvet off her wings

without meaning to. The lightning's stopped.

He stands in the headlights.

What's the best way to do this, he asks her.

Agent Orange

1.

Whoever opens his chest
bound like an orange crypt
above standard-issue holsters
fatigues, badges & blouses
will be met by a boy.

A boy who's been scarred
by nails & falling off pigs;
a rural-type who knows sacrifice
is part of good work, honest
as stone; a trooper from
choked farms turned factory;
a VFW before his first tour.

No matter his station
another in a Florsheim box
develops in a fraudulent lens.
A two-dimensional private
& an expansive Princeton
confined to Hanoi silhouette—
the wry-smile of a potluck
on his thin, pursed lips.

2.

On step, he rests uneasy
before One Pillar Pagoda
where, according to court record,
childless Ly Thai Tong dreamt
he met the Bodhisattva
who gave him a baby son
seated on petals of a lotus
flower. It is May. 1971.
There is a chemical sting
in the air. This is his tour
& with few echoes beside
the emerald pond-water
from which the pagoda springs,
a pregnant letter from home
amidst spells of fire-fight
is nothing like his dream.
Neither is this floral temple
designed to resemble the lotus
the same landmine Vietnam
he read about as a recruit.

Eric Pitra

Blessed flags

I wake up at 4am with my light still on.
Think about the most gentle sunburn
you can imagine. Now multiply by eight.
Yes, that's right. Eight times more gentle.

A profoundly gentle sunburn.

My things, my objects, my environment
have been waiting in a magnified stillness
for me to become active. Wasted light hours.

Why is he just laying there, they probably
asked themselves. "Shuffle the furniture,
press buttons, try on shirts."

Steven Karl

Excerpts from Birthdays & Other Bouts With Breathing

The carp swimming in the tank lip kissing glass breath aghast.

Muted color. Dingy things of flesh.

Did they dream of fucking their cousins.

Oh those koi & all their color.

Even as fin tickled surface the air remained silenced.

To swim circles in a rectangular thing.

To swim rectangles in a circular thing.

Distant lovers denied each other.

Sometimes the mind hears what the ears missed.

A beautiful brown thing hovering.

A slow fall. An unstretched wing.

A finger staining print on an ivory key.

Marina Blitshteyn

I was of two minds

I was of two minds
two peaches on each limb
two sweet picks of a plumb
I saw two kinds

of birds in my tree
two round tweaks of wings
two flippant flutters of wrong
I too was free

in two broad sweeps
two met paths at a peak
speaking of pathos two pecks
on a sweet cheek

two swept peaks
of snow like two puckered
lips under teeth or punctured
and raw like two chapped

chaps licking
each other's wounds to death
I was of two breaths
in parallel directions

one liked
the thrill of trilling birds the other
preferred the fur on each peach
I took

a look at the facts
and thought two arms were enough
to hang on and strong
enough to be hung

Levi Rubeck

Founding Fathers

This is your card key. Already
a student attacks. No one is safe in colonial
graveyards. Night of the never-ending

square dance. We've come for your bread
and to take in the bay in the evening.
Faith bobs on the water like milk fat.

I understand why so much metal leaks
out of Boston—all these always-illuminated
churches and cocked-up trees. See the gravel

and the yellow grass around the foundry.
Don't go there without a torch.

Contributors

Jessica Beyer lives in Manhattan, where she attends the Creative Writing Program at NYU.

Marina Blitshteyn is a poet and writer living in New York City and working towards an MFA at Columbia University.

James Copeland is the author of the chapbooks *A Constructing Egg* and *Why I Steal*. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, and works at Ugly Duckling Presse.

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Steven Karl is the author of chapbooks, *(Ir)Rational Animals* (Flying Guillotine, 2010) and the collaborative chapbook, *State(s) of Flux*, with Joseph Lappie (Peptic Robot Press, 2009). His poems have appeared in or are forthcoming from *Eoagh*, *Coconut*, *Free Verse*, *Barrow Street*, *Eleven Eleven* and others. He lives in Chinatown, NYC.

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Contributors

Martin Rock does not take No for an answer, unless it is followed by Dear. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Diagram*, *Tuesday*, *an Art Project*, *Mississippi Review Online*, and other journals. He has a collaborative chapbook with Phillip D. Ischy, *Fish, You Bird* out with Pilot Books.

Matthew Rohrer is the author of *A Hummock in the Malookas*, *Satellite*, *A Green Light*, *Rise Up* and *A Plate of Chicken*. With Joshua Beckman he wrote *Nice Hat. Thanks* and recorded the audio CD *Adventures while Preaching the Gospel of Beauty*. With Joshua Beckman and Anthony McCann he wrote the secret book *Gentle Reader!* It is not for sale. Octopus Books published his action/adventure chapbook-length poem *They All Seemed Asleep* in 2008.

Levi Rubeck is a poet from Wyoming. He recently graduated from NYU with his MFA, was Editor-in-Chief of *Washington Square* for a time, and teaches creative writing to 7th and 8th graders in the Bronx. He was recently published in *Maggy* and interns at Ugly Duckling Presse.

Adam Wiedewitsch is the Coordinating Editor of Pirogue Collective and an Imagine Africa Cultural fellow at the Gorée Institute in Gorée, Senegal, where he served as Development Officer. His poems and articles have appeared or are forthcoming in *New Contrast*, *Carapace*, *Teachers & Writers* and *Children of Warriors: Inheriting War Anthology*. He is a 2010 resident of the Ledig House International Writers Residency and his chapbook, *Your Guns May Crash Around I'll Not Hear* will appear very soon. Adam lives in Brooklyn and is a teaching artist for Teachers & Writers Collaborative.

Helen Witherspoon is a poet and vorticist living somewhere in New York City.



