

Ox Family



a _____ manual for finding yourself when _____ is not on your side



A mid-afternoon snack is the best way to _____ your responsiveness to the wry
_____ in _____. "Time to smooth out the _____ parallels," my father
would call out _____, biting the skin off of his lower lip like a lettuce leaf. That was the
last time his _____ would ever distract me from _____ing the
indelible _____ I grew up in.

In order to find myself, I decided to _____ the ocean's edge and let a small _____
be carried out. I felt a shadow crawl over me, and when I looked up, a _____ was rising
with teeth as black as birdsong. To my surprise, there were miles of _____ unraveled as
far as the eye could see. At first, it seemed to me that the _____ option would be to
collect my _____ and succumb to the _____ that was presenting itself.

As one would expect if one was a believer in Murphy's Law, before I could take any action, the man
drew out his hand and _____ uttered only the following words: "Drink once from the fruit
of a _____, for tomorrow will be _____." At the time, I did my best to creep
away inconspicuously.

Ox Family: a range of motion
Printed in Montréal, QC 2007

Stationery Press | ISSN: 1715-2909

contributors:

Salvatore Difalco has a collection *Black Rabbit & Other Stories* (Anvil Press) out this May. He lives near the thundering Falls of Niagara where an overabundance of negative ions more than makes up for any hearing loss. What? sdifalco@cogeco.ca

Kelli Brat is 1/2 of MulletPony, a 2-person visual hybrid specializing in paintings-gone-wild and aesthetic-screams-in-the-night. Find them in the eye of paint-penned, glue-sticked hurricane, india ink in their teeth & black unicorn magic in their dreams. mulletpony.com

Jon Nussbaum says: me. 'I'm-an-ironic-dead-beat', I-might-as-well-just-out-with-it... what a catastrophe! That's my personality in short, my hobbies-include-soccer, hackysack and also just neat stuff! In general...also, I-happen-to-know-an-assortment-of-pretty-useless-things. (also too, a-play-in-short based on *ninja-turtles*: "lets go save everyone then have some pizza" "yeah, cowabunga man!") n.b. repent? high_way_61@hotmail.com

James Kieran McGonnell lives in an alternate universe where everything is sunny, no-one talks to you, there are films and books about great people who are just like me and the world is full of animals, birds and flowers. Jump right in, the waters fine! kieranmcgonnell.com

Paul Kremsky lives in the US capital, Chicago, is a firm believer in rock and roll, and will disappear if you say his name backwards. pkremsky@uchicago.edu

Aimée van Drimmelen is drawing. She grew up in the prairies and lives in Montréal, a.k.a. the Velvet Rut. She is working on a magazine called *Bad Kid Stories*, among other things. www.fortpolio.net

Claire Caldwell spends her days scribbling in the margins during lectures at McGill, and can often be found lurking in the campus newspaper office. She is searching for somebody to twirl barefoot in the grass with her. claire.caldwell@mail.mcgill.ca

Shawn Kuruneru was born 1984 in Toronto, Ontario and currently lives and works in Montreal. He has shown in Brooklyn, Montreal, Windsor, Toronto, and forthcoming San Francisco. gasoline_gut@hotmail.com

Laura Vladimirova gets confused when writing in the third person; it's like there are two cute little elves having a conversation in her head. one is named *laura vladimirova*, the other chooses to remain anonymous. They help her write poetry, bike ride, and make eggs. Except, they don't really exist--do they? Help at dirtykiev@yahoo.com

Vadim Bystritski. When deployed Bystritski/ sends long letters to his friends and relatives/ Naturally he does not leave out either his wife or mistress/ Like all the military he operates in secrecy/ not disclosing all that happens/ But on an occasion he cannot quite remember to whom/ he wrote and what/ Fortunately his wife and mistress are best friends/ and one can always tell the other about/ whatever he had omitted in his letters. vadimbystritski@yahoo.com

Brian Pierce currently crashes his hard-featured moss green bicycle in Hiroshima, Japan. He responds if you address him as horsemess, moonmud, or prickhat. He also does not care much for fermented soybeans thank you very much now beat it. brian.pierce@elf.mcgill.ca

Tom O'hare just broke his foot and can't work for a month and a half and is stuck with hospital bills that he can't pay. email tomohare3@gmail.com

Shepard McCallum was raised by a pack of wild hippies in the Big Sky country of Montana. He now lives in the Bed-Stuy neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Paste & Destroy! shepardsound@yahoo.com

Jeremy Taylor spent his boyhood years in Ottawa and cottage country. He thinks mostly about traveling and words and hockey. He now lives in Montreal. Check out his newest play "The King of Fifteen Island" at the 2007 Mtl. Fringe Festival. jeremy.bp.taylor@gmail.com

Paul A. Toth falls asleep to World War II documentaries and often believes himself to be the nonexistent illiterate son of Vladimir Nabokov. See www.tothworld.com for more information.

Joshua Cohen's books are *The Quorum* (TSP, 2005), *Cadenza for the Schneidermann Violin Concerto* (FSP, 2007), *Alph-Bet: An Alphabet for the Perplexed* (Six Gallery, 2007), *A Heaven of Others* (Starcherone Books, forthcoming 2008). He lives in Brooklyn, NY. joshuacohen1@gmail.com

Jeremy Young: "Listen Pal..." "Woah, hold it Don Johnson, don't talk to my friend like that." "Yeah, well scum like your friend here shouldn't be terrorizing my streets!" "you're a goddamn wuss, you know that?" jeremy.young@mail.mcgill.ca

Danny Spitzberg and **Aliya Pabani** wrangled the oxen out of the corale and into the fire and onto the window sill (until cool).

They are the editors. Too, Aliya did the cover art. Danny did the layout. Learn more from the time capsule.



Ox Family

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[HTTP://www.stationaery.com/ox](http://www.stationaery.com/ox)

Mayan Roast

Salvatore Difalco

Conversation with the sun. You are burning me, sir. The sand burns my feet. You burn my head. The lady in green neon beside me phosphoresced silently as I suffered through my trials. She said she knew what I was going through, but did she? The sun whirled like a fireball plummeting to earth but surely not as terrible as that. I stretch balloons before I blow them up. This makes it easier on the cheeks. Blow a bunch up without stretching them a bit and tell me how your mouth feels afterwards. Go on. But most of you know what I'm talking about. I'm getting too far away from the beach, the white sand, the umbrellas, the towels, the smell of coconut oil. Who the fuck wears oil anymore? I wear nothing. My skin likes it hot. Look at my name, do you think it would not? The lady expresses a sigh, her upper lip dripping, her belly glistening. The hairs of her thighs tremble in the light breeze. Grains of sand dance across my feet. It's fair to say I have no business being here. Yet still I am in pain for it. My scalp is a boil. My gloom is palpable, I believe, yet she feels nothing. Neon green, tanned and slim. I glance at the sky. The skinny there is perfect soaring blue with three sheepish clouds unable to escape themselves.



Mused
MulletPony

Dirty love letter*

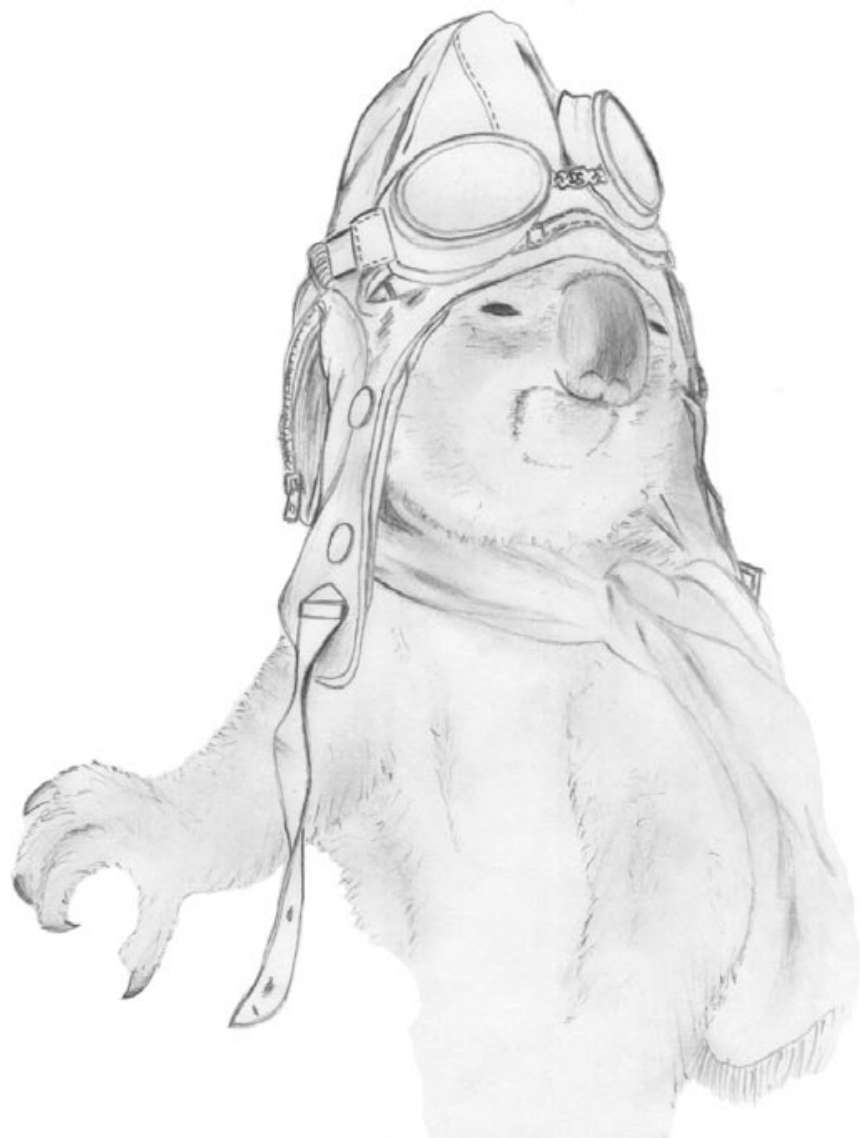
Danny Spitzberg

indulge me a moment
for a dirty love letter:

in some mexican dancehall
did you feel better
with some outlawed mogul
did you miss my shelter

with your reckless servitude
i will climb no higher

and this drinking's no good
but it makes me feel better



From Earlier (excerpt)

Jon Nussbaum

I will write my errands on the wall
Then I will run them
& then paint the wall over white

When I realize what I have done
I will see it as exactly not very much
So I will write up more errands

I will search for this woman
Who I cannot yet, or perhaps ever, describe
I will ask her to stand against the sun
So that I can taste the flesh of her silhouette
I'll write the poem on the wall to make it last longer
Surely sorrow or despair or something dressed in the winter wind will come
Soon the walls shall call for another coat; bells will chime
Guests, friends & relatives will arrive; the walls will move in

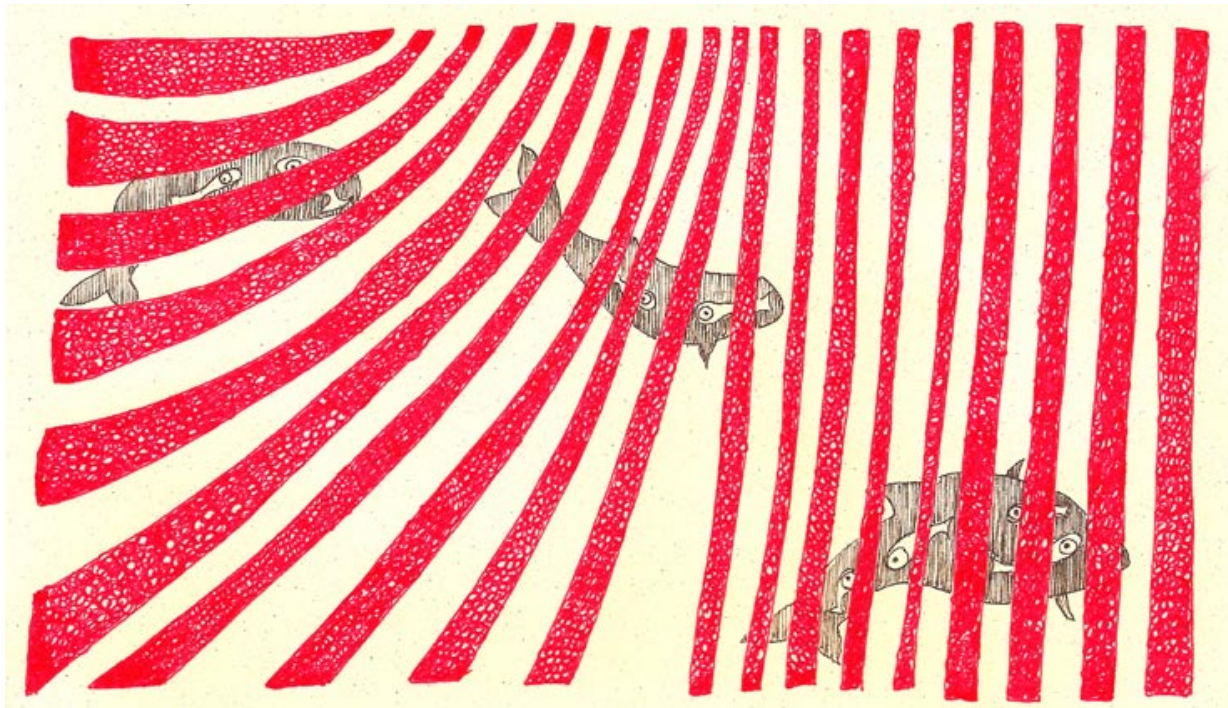
As I learn words like lugubrious
My meticulous practice will increase in complexity
As I run to many more places
The lines on the wall will become abysses on my face

Later, at some juncture, maybe a solstice,
a cat will wistfully glampse at me like some strange bird
Then I might decided it is time
To have a man of great vision
(for no woman will be able to bear the sight of me)
Come & decipher my masterpiece
He may well say I have no clue
& wonder why he has been brought to this tiny white room
Where we stand so insanely close together
[& I will point out the ridiculous grace of the moon]

The Secret

J Kieran McGonnell





Whales_1
Aimée van Drimmelen

Boiling Bread

Paul Kremsky

I would write about myself
 Boiling bread into a
 Holed circle. I would
 Paint it with salt and
 Garlic and raisins. I
 Would like to hold her
 Hand under water as if
 My hand were made out of
 Dough, and hers too.
 That would be as fine
 As sex. I would bake
 My circled bread until the
 Outside and the toppings
 Hardened in the heat. I
 Would like to take my
 Car and drive to New
 York City and stop
 Along the way in small
 Towns and ask them
 All to let me taste their
 Bagels with everything and I
 Would think about
 Which was best.

The Canoe Maker

Claire Caldwell

His canoe he built himself, his own hands as surface-soft as the floor of a musty barn, worn-down smooth, cracks filled with silt. The glassy varnish (honey, he thinks, when wet) a border, makes the boat a country. It squeaks an alarm when his finger strokes the gunwale, signaling invasion, reminding him he can't.

Before the sandpaper rubbed his crude hands into jewelry-box carvings he was coarse as fire-hazard-hay, bristling. Hot wind would tangle his scraping stalks and for a while that was all he knew, but for the cool respite of whispering night, rare and often wasted in dead-still rest. His job required no less than this tightly-packed, flammable type- harmless until provoked, the epitome of potential energy. When asked if willing to be chewed all pulpy when nothing fresh had poked its periscope stems from the ground in awhile he simply, silently nodded.

What happened, then? How did a man of such rigid physiognomy come to fashion this canoe, as curving and perfect as a pair of lips? He crouches in it now, bobbing in the stream-current, his face a shadowy mosaic of leaf patterns. He does not ask himself these questions but we do, because his head is still too hard to reach into and his face looks soft enough to maybe give us an answer.

Our first theory, stereotypical and with only a cursory glance at the mechanics of his inner factory, is Woman. A hypothesis based on the concept of erosion: a cliff massaged by delicate wave-fingers, salty-sweet whispers filling its crevices, will resist at first but eventually lose its sharp peaks and unforgiving precipice. In some cases valid, but his proximity to the shore was inadequate; tide-pools materialized from time to time but evaporated. He is pockmarked with salt rings and the fossils of amoebic life forms.

Truly, his canoe is, was and will be his singular love affair. But between this bottled snapshot moment of quiet buoyancy and the callus of years grunting his past lies the plastic organ that will hold our anatomical model together. (We must here avoid turning to that clichéd metaphor of a puzzle- the missing piece of a jigsaw is filled in by the mind's eye in accordance with the overall image. What we require is essential to the understanding of the whole, a remedy for incongruity.)

So our lighthouse turns, and Cyclops-like rests its omniscient eye for seconds on each important moment in his life. Arranged in bottles they are labeled, cracked, transparent or opaque, some in impossible shapes or in illusion distorting their contents by snatching the light and bending it, twisting and reflecting and spreading it like fingers. The split-second shine reveals his brother's wedding, a high-school graduation, the deaths of a few distant relatives, an appendectomy.

What were we expecting to find? An epiphany? A deep trauma as aged and dusty as a vintage wine? A religious vision? Even a run-of-the-mill, jarring smack of inspiration, preserved in the plainest decanter would have been enough. But by now the lighthouse eye has swiveled too far, has turned its back on his memories, though we still hear the wind making music in their necks. In dejection it casts its beam on an empty field, raking half-heartedly through the flattened grass.

He crossed the country once by train, beginning in the very pit of its belly and toiling, upward upward, to the smiling mouth blowing bubbles in the sea. At embarkation he was calcified, a hollow carapace as fragile as a relic. His crumbling hands too cracked for delicate distractions, he brought no books, no crossword puzzles, not even a pencil. Besides, his eyes were coated filmy and his ears, in the throes of mechanical labour, had long been folded inward to the whale

frequencies in his head.

Movement is a plumber, though, and the rewind landscape wiped his eyes clean, unclogged the drain till the fields and forests and towns and sky dripped, trickled, flowed into the basin of his skull. They rippled through his spine, his thirsty bones, diffusing in juicy Technicolor through stiff, shriveled tissue. Supersaturated, soggy almost, he sought his swollen voice and learned a language: his own.

All this in the first hours stretched like gum, all this before the legs cramped, the children screamed, before the music players ran out of batteries and the magazines of pages. His filmreel feast ended in night; he consumed all fed him but was not satisfied. So he rolled round his straining neck and seeped into the stranger beside him.

We noticed far earlier her honey eyes taking advantage of peripheral vision. We noticed her tongue scooping words together, sucking, spitting them out disgusted. We noticed electricity sparkling between their arm hairs as they crossed. We hushed as he spoke, rumbling sheepishly, growing to steam engine force.

We followed shadow-like as he stepped off the train, an itch in his healing hands where invisible threads bound them together.

That vaulted-sky morning he bought a length of canvas and sweet-smelling cedar and in the shafts of sunlight dissecting his parent's barn began work on his canoe.

As inferential creatures we have unveiled the clue, the apparently innocuous bloodstained boot or torn curtain that bridges mystery and understanding. Yet now he is bobbing in the stream, cradled in the baby gurgles of interrupted water. Soon his paddle, an added limb fused by soil and sunlight to oiled-socket hands, will dip and glide in distant lakes the stream tastes only in rainfall ripples. Large lonely wilderness will swallow his voice to digest in layers of decay, words to letters to dirt disappearing. His hands will harden again, the glue of paddle-strokes drying to a solid gleam.

And on and on, though bottles may accumulate on that subconscious shelf and the wind will carve his body into the landscape, each dip will coat his paddle in a new sheen, sparkling in infinitely different patterns as he moves in all directions beneath the giant, rolling cloud-quilted globe of the sky.

Two Barrels
Shawn Kuruneru



This might be the first sentence ever written

Laura Vladimirova

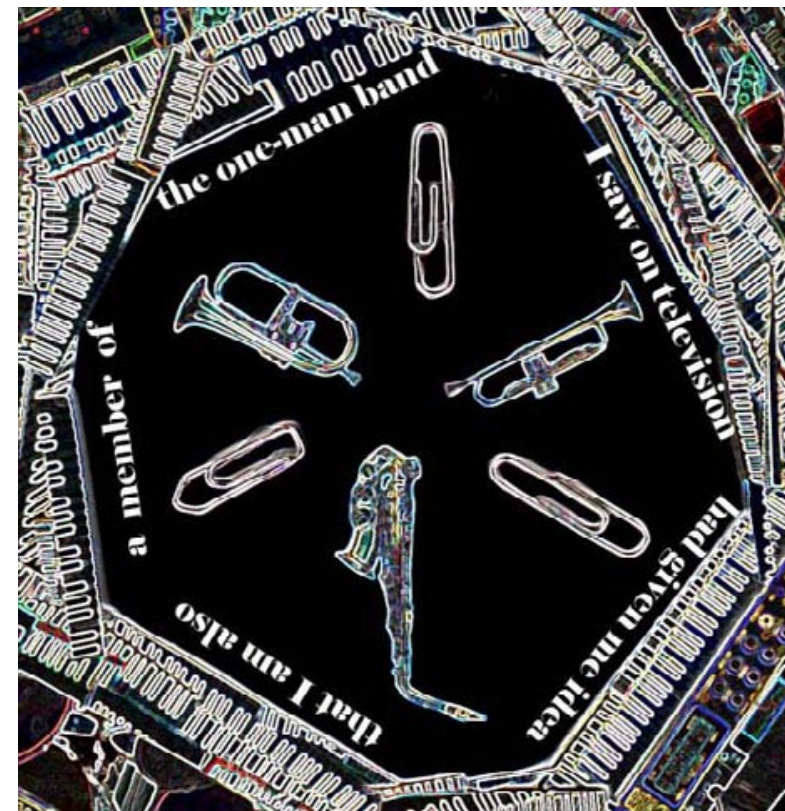
This might be the first sentence ever written
Is anything spelled right?

This might be something I make sense of:

I haven't had a milkshake
since I realized that you'll inevitably die one day
I was immediately heartbroken,
one day there will be no you.

For you,
I stored crosses in shoeboxes.
I was too sad to do anything else.

This stomach ache is eating me whole
and through all this,
the pigeons don't even know its rush hour.



The One-Man Band
Vadim Bystritski

Horsemess-Aha, or, Horsemess Who Fights

Brian Pierce

I had an extremely normal day today. Most would disagree, but I don't care. I consider the universe crazy, so if I have a routine day where mostly everything happens the way I expect it to, then I call that strange.

My subtle trowel and I unearthed an ancient scroll of mysterious origin while planting 9 titan arum bulbs. I plant them every year because I like their aroma. They smell good and delicious. I also make a killing with my side business. I design corsages and sell them to people. It pays my car insurance.

Everyone loves corsages. They make you feel sooper.

I rinsed it off with the garden hose. The scroll, not a corsage. Water would ruin it stupid. People rely on me.

I couldn't read it. My neighbor Armleg has five scrolls hanging in his kitchen. Everyone else calls him Roger. Armleg came from Somalia. He likes to exercise and practice arm wrestling in his free time. I call him Armleg because his arms look like legs. He also teaches Egyptology classes at the college.

He read the scroll fast. He told me that he liked it very much. Then his cousin brought us some hot Vietnamese coffee. Next he told us some questionably tasteful jokes about regrettable situations between married couples. I enjoyed them but I think Armleg had heard them before. He didn't laugh at all. Then we listened to a music CD disc that I had never heard before. I enjoyed the music more than the jokes. Jokes really don't make me want to dance very often.

Armleg told me that the scroll overflowed with predictions. Many of them had already come true. The people who made the scroll, probably Egyptians, predicted cars and gas-powered

rifles. They predicted scientific management and television bloopers. They even predicted perforated paper towels, although they didn't mention ply. That would have impressed me.

They had the date's pretty close. Armleg told me that but I haven't checked on it. I should go over to my mom's house and fish out my encyclopedias. He said that the last prediction at the bottom of the scroll would happen very soon, probably on a Tuesday. Humans would finally succeed, after a previously failed attempt, in penetrating Gantenbrink's door in the Great Pyramid with a robot machine. Many people would watch it happen on television, but they wouldn't see anything very exciting. They would have a late snack and go to bed at a normal hour. They would briefly discuss the non-event with a few co-workers the next day. They would feel a crisp sense of personal connection after these mutual acknowledgements for approximately four minutes. Then they would have to answer their phones and thank a lot of people for various reasons.

The scroll had a lot of detail. Armleg scribbled down one of his translations and let me read it. It said,

"Mighty Upuaut will open the way,
Probably on a Tuesday.
The exhaled breath of Horsemess-Aha will dance across the stars.
It will probably stink bad."

Whatever You Want

Tom O'hare

Let me get the details first --

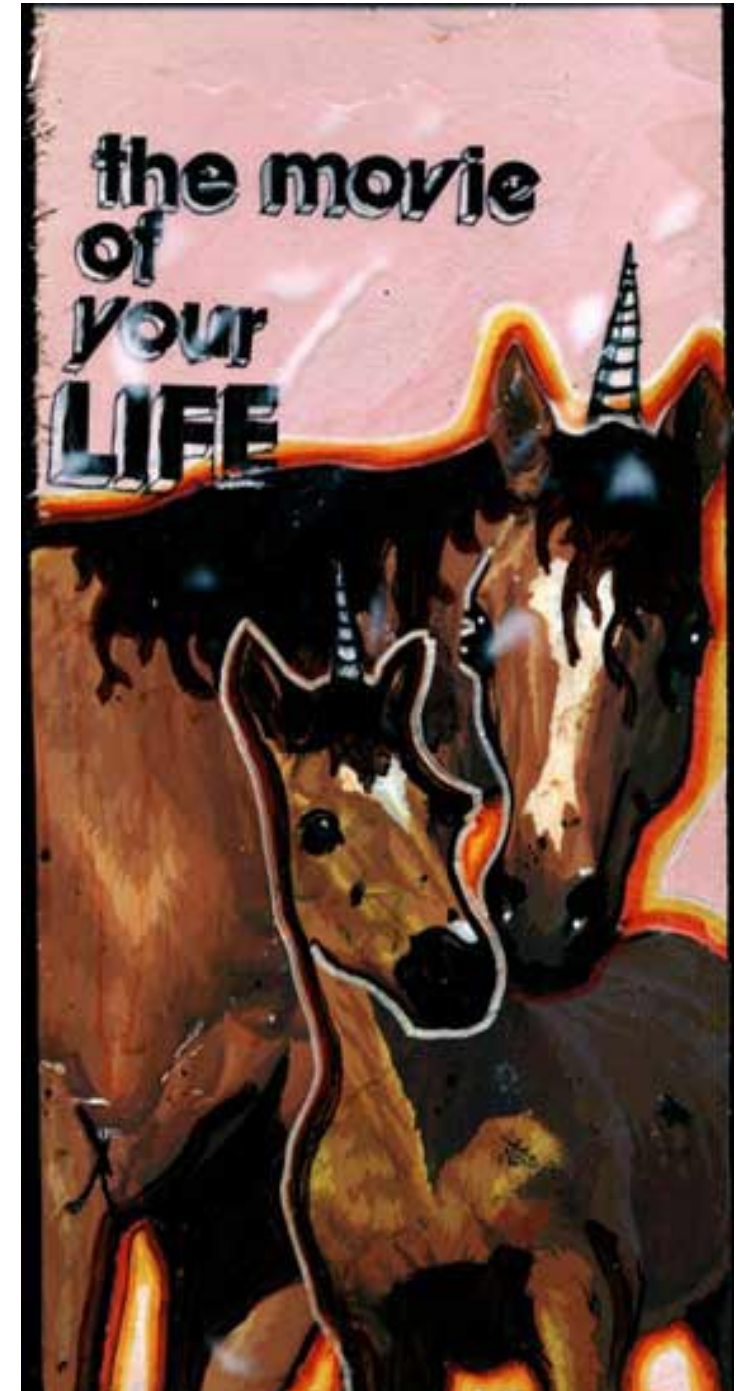
It's 4:00 in the afternoon and your job, on your third day at it, is already leeching you of your will to live. You are at a bus stop waiting for the nine, seventeen, or nineteen bus. The nineteen you missed, you saw it pass by before you made it to the stop, so you are waiting for the nine or the seventeen. The bus stop is on the bank of the Willamette River, on the west side of the Ross Island Bridge. The homeless man is standing at the end of the on-ramp with a cardboard sign depicting a smiley face and a redundant command, "SMILE." You smile at the man but you don't give him any money because you spent your last 75 cents on a Pepsi; or, rather, you spent your last 75 cents on a Pepsi to have an excuse to get out of that horrible, horrible office for a minute and a half. So you smile. That's what the sign says to do. That's what it says.

All right, then.

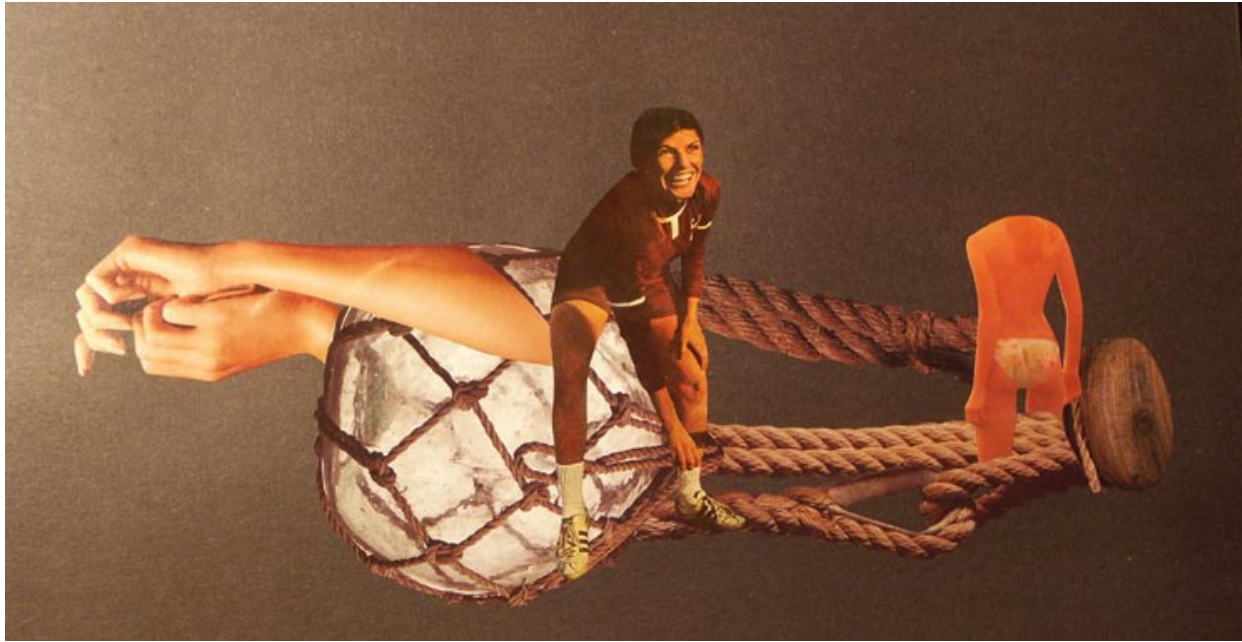
There are two mountains. You are on the bus. It's the number nine. It will take you up to 39th on Powell, you can take the 75 down to Woodstock from there. Only one of them is visible. I'm talking about the mountains: there are two that you can see from the bridge, but only one of them is visible today. It's Mount St. Helens. You see it there, to your left. Stunted by violence. Crater-topped, cloudy, stupid. That's Mount St. Helens. To the right, over the firs on a clear day, is Mount Hood. Up close that mountain looks mighty sturdy, but you read a geology book once about those Cascades: they're all going to blow one day.

Now you are riding home on the bus with Mount Hood ducking behind clouds and sweaty, smelly people all around you and all above the Willamette River, all of them miserable from meaningless existence, and you are pretty sure you are the only one thinking to an invisible Mount Hood,

"Blow, you son of a bitch. Blow."



the movie of your LIFE
Kelli Brat



Alive with Pleasure!
Shepard McCallum

How to Conduct a Great Poem

Aliya Pabani

Take for instance, Ezra Pound's Great Poem, "In a Station of the Metro":

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet black bough.*

On message boards, people may write:

"I actually like the poem; I find it *haunting*, at least,"

or,

"I'd say it's great because it manages to be so *haunting* with so few words."

Ignore these fools:

The Poem is Great because it exudes Greatness.

The only thing that is *haunting* is the unseemly rising cost of metro tickets.

Cut the poem up into little pieces, with each piece containing one word of the poem.

Imbue your mind with the mild-mannered madness of Benjamin Franklin!
Reproduce his kite-and-key-lightning-rod-inspiring-contraption.
Fashion a Grate-box out of wire coat hangers and tie it to the end of the kite.
Douse the mechanism with gasoline.
You genius! You are now his better.

Sprinkle the bits of paper into the Grate-box. Listen to the radio until they decide it will rain. Bring the contraption outside. Wait.

Remember to wear a coat. It would be a shame to have a sore throat while you are winning the Pulitzer Prize.

Once lightning has lit Ezra Pound's Great dismantled Poem aflame; wait a minute, since the anxiety of a Great Poet should only be manifest in emotional fervor, never physical ragtaggery.

Besides, if you wait longer, it is likely that forty years from now some oily pre-teen will reveal in a PowerPoint © presentation that your Great Poem nearly perished in the Great Fire of two-thousand-and-so-and-so.

When you stamp out the masterpiece-to-be with the bottom of your shoe, you will likely end up with a Great Poem™ like the one detailed below:

Petals
On wet faces
the crowd in black
these ion;
The boar of it.*

* note that brutally burned portions can be fused to create hypersensical superphrases™

Now fashion a bucket with the endless depth of your own Great Poem™ in order to contain the virtually obscene amount of money that you will be drowning in.
Go on now.

Next week: "How to Conduct a Great Orchestra"

An apology

Jeremy BP Taylor

home
for two weeks,
fast and disorienting,
and leaving town
i carry two images:

turning from
the unanswered door
of the tiny room
(which i've never seen)
where my grandfather lives
at the old folks' home,
alone

and the cat who still lives
at my parents' house
but has lost his vision,
his eyes, green and smooth like precious gems,
deep, without circumference,
cloudy.

and to these two solitary gentlemen
i offer an apology,
a new and strange taste in my mouth:
i'm sorry i don't visit more
and i'm sorry you went blind.



Fig. 3: This action will force the opponent downward. If he resists, it may result in the dislocation of his arm. *N.B.* All the previous actions must be performed at some speed so that the opponent is not able to withdraw his arm. As with all these techniques, much practice will be required before the student will find himself able to perform them effectively. *Fig. 4: COUNTER*—Deliver a knee kick to the opponent's face.



Bra Strap Groove

P Toth

“No, don’t.”

“Why?”

“Because...” (...because they were planted with my naming and reached fruition in sixth grade, when ‘Melanie’ became ‘Melons’ due to a faultline cleavage that made the boys quake. I tried the shrinking but that could only go so far, never far enough, a focused anorexia that had no means of expulsion other than to cram my breasts into undersized bras and wear the kind of sweaters most often seen at a Weight Watchers meeting.) “Just don’t, okay? Take off the rest.” (*That’s invisible when I’m clothed and never caused me any trouble, though I’ve seen a gal or two wear jeans so tight that it, everything, was exposed.*)

“Man.”

(Stop struggling: It’s a button not a zipper, for Christ’s sakes. Hurry up. I know every second, you’re wanting and needing to know, to see for yourself, for them, for all men: Melanie’s melons. And you won’t. Not tonight. Not ever.)

“Sorry.”

“It’s okay.” (LummoX. But I latch and snatch when I find your kind. The ones who look me in the eyes.)

“Got it. It’s a button!”

(Your degree is in the mail.)

“Hoo, huh.”

(Always the same, like shaved apes.)

“Stop. I said not to.”

“I wouldn’t care if...”

(If I’ve had a mastectomy, right? Heard that one before.)

“They hurt.” (Last resort. And I know what’s coming next, even in the middle of sex.)

“You’re not -- or something?”

“Uh-uh.”

(I got the shot. Pregnant? Not me. Nor will I ever be. Think I need my boobs going Dali, drooping like hurricaned sandbags? Now would you -- there. Okay. Faster, yes. Ah, hmmmmmm. Now get it over with. Because I know that when you finally figure out you’ll never see them, not once -- never break the code or learn the a-bra-cada-bra -- you’ll take off for pastures greener with the smallest grapes.)

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhh.”

(Roll over. Laugh...I *knew* it.)

“So what’s the deal with --”

(Make up a new one. Make it good.)

“My father used to touch me there.”

“Christ.”

“I don’t want to talk about it. It’s too awful.”

(Go ahead and think while I twiddle my toes. Nothing yet, but something will emerge. His lips part. Here it comes.)

“That’s so wrong.”

(God, just go.)

“Like I said, I don’t want to --”

“Okay, okay.”

(He’s so relieved I’ll never bring it up again. And I won’t. Cross my bra. I might confuse tales. I convinced one dummy I had five nipples. He said, “I heard Keanu Reeves has three.” I suspected he was gay, to say a thing like that.)

“Well...” (As in, “Leave. Hit the bricks.”)

“This might be love.”

(Love? Lord above. But I go soft. It’s such a stupid thing to say, I give him bonus points. Maybe, *maybe*, this time will be -- no, don’t even think it. Sooner or later, he’ll beg to titty fuck me, or I’ll find porn magazines filled with photos of lactating women, or something worse, something unimaginable...He might get his own breast implants. Hey, not a bad idea.)

“Listen, I know you’re a breast man. Just admit it.”

“Breast man? Give me some credit.”

“Not just you; all men. It’s a matter of time. One guy chased me around the house for an hour before I called the cops, all for one peek.”

“And you told him what happened to you?”

“Uh-huh.” (Actually, he was the one who thought I had five nipples.)

“You poor --”

(Think hard. Don’t say “thing.” You’re smarter than that. Probably working on “girl” right now. “No,” he thinks, “she might be a feminist. But then, ‘woman’ sounds wrong, too. How ‘bout --”)

-- soul.”

(Bingo. Son of a bitch.)

“I’ve got a confession.”

(Don’t ruin it. Please.)

“I know it’s weird, but I can’t stand breasts. They’re just fat. I don’t get it. It’s not something I tell friends. They’d think I’m -- you know. Actually, at first I thought you weren’t my type. I usually go for the -- the -- ”

“The flat ones.”

“Right.”

(So let’s make pancakes for breakfast, Mister. There’s syrup in the cupboard. I got milk in a carton. And that’s the only place I’ll ever have it.)

“So why were you trying to lift my shirt?”

“Because I’m supposed to, I guess.”

(We’re in the groove. Not the bra strap groove. Or the groove below. A groove like a record. Remember those? The last time I played one: sixth grade. After that came compact disks. Both flat, but there was something better about the vinyl ones. You couldn’t touch them without leaving a scratch. But if you were careful, they were yours for life.)

IT IS SAID OF THE EMPEROR FU KANG
Joshua Cohen

It is said of the Emperor Fu Kang; that He, with eyes unflinching, and a hand at peace, would have His enemies, and He had many, executed by decapitation. Further, that He would have their heads scooped out, embalmed then impregnated with magnet: the cavity that held the brain would be filled with iron, mined in the furthest West. During His ample leisure, He enjoyed tossing these magnetized heads at a metallic surface. Actually, in later years, with His son gaining influence, His Empire modernizing, and so falling to ruin, this metal surface was often the door to an enormous refrigerator, then the largest to be found in the universe (to open it required two teams of oxen, and an equator of rope). Inside this fridge, the Emperor kept his foodstuffs, luxuriously imported at our expense, at a temperature most appropriate.



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Jeremy Young

"The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary."

