

LIEF



Summer 2012



I Had As Lief

MICHAEL FINLEY

Lief Editor-in-Chief



[More About Mike](#)

“I had as lief not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as myself?” – Cassius, *Julius Caesar*

In his last will and testament, Shakespeare uses the word four times, as a spelling for life:

“And I doe will and devise unto her the house with the appurtenances in Stratford where in she dwelleth for her naturall lief under the yearelie Rent of xiid.”

And then it comes up again more than a dozen times in the plays:

Falstaff: I had as lief they put rats bane in my mouth.” (*2 Henry IV*)

Oliver: I had as lief thou didst break his neck as his finger. (*As You Like It*)

Benedict: I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it. (*Much Ado About Nothing*)

Welcome to LIEF MAGAZINE. The purpose of this publication is to encourage the phrase *had as lief* to become a part of English once again.

As you can discern, the phrase, based on the Anglo-Saxon root *leaf*, is the rough equivalent of “I’m perfectly willing” ... “I’d rather this than that” ... “I would gladly, readily, happily.”

It is an expression of acceptance, of willingness toward whatever happens next.

The feeling here is that we don’t have enough of that, and we would be wise to restore it to the vocabulary, one lief at a time.

We invite you to enjoy the fruits of our leavings. Where possible, we have links to the artists’ emails – click on ‘em and tell the artist thanks.

This is [our email](#) – we’d love to hear from you, too!

Rosalind: An you be so tardy come no more in my sight; I had as lief be wooed of a snail. (*As You Like It*)

Art below by David Suter, who provided graphics for years for the Op-Ed pages of the New York Times.

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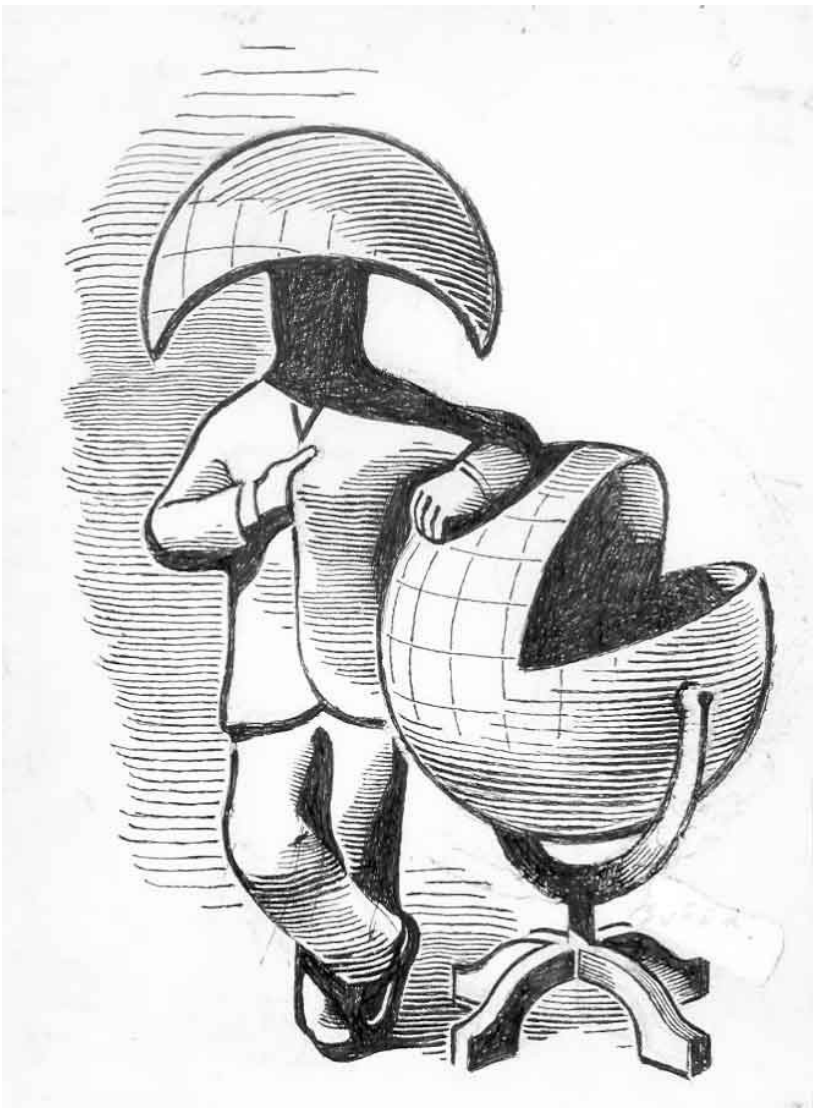
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issue: "Noble Predators Signify National Values," images and commentary by roving photojournalist Syd Fields.

Next



Two poems by Sharon Chmielarz

Pound for pound, [SHARON CHMIELARZ](#) writes the best poems in Minnesota. Ask anyone. She is also a children's author and travel writer. Check out her website and buy her latest title, *Calling*.

The aurochs (Bos primigenius), the ancestor of domestic cattle, are a type of large wild cattle that once inhabited Europe, Asia and North Africa, but are now extinct. They survived in Europe until the last, recorded auroch, a female, died in the Jaktorów Forest, Poland, in 1627.



Shit

My mother used it as an expletive all the time. If something hurt her, she said, “Shit.” I didn’t want her to hurt so I didn’t like to hear her say it. Mine wasn’t any wimpy genteel objection. Pretty soon I was using it all the time, too. In those days the s-word was like the f-word, which I didn’t hear Ma use. Didn’t hear that word at all until I grew up. Father preferred sow, slut, son of a bitch, god damm it and when the DAMN exploded it was a kind of Armageddon trumpet. You ran for cover. I never heard him say shit. Can’t imagine why not. Shit wasn’t so bad. Plus, it’s a truly ancient word. The Neanderthals for sure had shit in their vocabulary. “Look. Auroch shit. Get spears ready.” Shit stink? I don’t think they objected. To shit meant you ate. Eating meant you’d stay alive. Or, you were well enough to eat. Alive was better than dead. Alive was kind of holy. Shit is a direct descendent of Scheiss which isn’t bad to say in German either. Scheiss. It’s part of us. What’s the big deal if the colon’s working? If you want to sound really bothered say Scheissdreck. Now there’s a word to clear out the throat. Say that while chewing some boiled cauliflower, and you’ve got a real mess on the table to show what you think of the world.

Lois Lane and Clark Kent Kiss ... Lightly

in the newsroom. Between them the intercourse
of a desk’s modesty and reserve. Virility
disguised under worn, tan raincoats.

(Virile–such a self-assured word.
Beefy as a bloody filet mignon.)

On Krypton all embraces were passionate, en-
compassingly muscular, swooningly dear.
Exuberance abounded on that far-out planet.

(On planet Earth we keep love toned down;
restrained, it can’t leap a tall building.)

Can a used Brooks Brothers suit-seams
hold when a man takes off to fly?
That little leap, a skip, into a soar–

(A kiss from Super Man is a 24-hour
sucker that leaves you reeling.)

a definitely fortissimo whoosh, a burst
of surprise. The common man blows up
into a Soviet-size statue. Mythic big.

(An ordinary soul might never find her way
back from a Krypton kiss.)

Obviously this happened
in the days of telephone booths
on street corners & ten-cent phone calls.

(Outside the box, the slow hum
drum proceeded in a different direction.)

On the other hand, Superman’s awfully big.
Feeling is everything some hours.
He can’t be mistaken for a boy.

(Lights dim in the city.
A dim-light love tonight.)

When you think you’re the only two people
on the planet (who matter), kisses make
you feel bright blue, red and hot yellow.

(It’s clear some gods made love. Were love.
Out of the blue, just out of reach.)



Superman, a comic book superhero. An American cultural icon, created by American writer Jerry Siegel and Canadian-born American artist Joe Shuster in 1932 while both were living in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Devils

DANNY KLECKO

[DANNY KLECKO](#) is the CEO of the Saint Agnes Baking Company in Saint Paul. In addition to feeding the Twin Cities daily, he has been able to lecture in Europe and Asia on historic baking and business principles. Known as primarily a cookbook writer for the Minnesota Historical Society Press, he has also completed several poetry books and albums. His most recent is [30 Foot Pole](#) (Lucky Park Productions). Danny lives with wife Sue and four mean dogs in Highland Park.



A little while back, I was working in Siberia. In a French café that was run by Russians.

These bakers viewed me as some kind of magician and pleaded desperately for me to share a top secret American dessert recipe.

The first myth I should have dispelled is that America really doesn't have too many recipes that are indigenous; most of the items served from our kitchens were influenced by ancestors with history in other countries.

But then I began to think how baking soda and baking powder were developed in the USA, so I decided I would share a unique quickbread recipe that a girl friend from Paris had given me several years back.

As much as the Russians are intrigued by Americans, deep down many of them dream of living a French lifestyle.

Anyway, I told the head chef I was going to need three bananas, and she just threw her hands in the air while exclaiming...

"Somebody find Sasha, the *Americone* is heading to town."

It turns out that Sasha was an ex convict who made a pretty good living guarding people who transported valuable items throughout the Arctic, but were three banana reason enough to bring in security?

Apparently so, I was told that in the region I was visiting, 36 years old was the life expectancy of local males.

Rumors had surfaced that a guy from Minnesota had arrived, and he was toting back packs filled with Jack Daniels and Marlboro's.

In the diamond city of Aikhal, this was enough to make a guy disappear.

Eventually Sasha showed up, and backed into a makeshift loading dock in a flatbed truck.

It had naked Asian women painted across the

doors of the cab.

When he hopped out of the vehicle, I thought it strange that such a small body could be connected to such a large reputation.

“Don’t be fooled by appearances,” the head chef explained. “That man is mean as hell.”

After I boarded the truck, I realized I didn’t have a clue as to where we were going, but when Sasha pulled over in an empty field, I began to get nervous.

There were zero bananas in sight.

Maybe I’d watched too many Mafia movies, because I honestly thought I was going to get snuffed.

Sasha instructed me to follow him, so I did, and within a few steps he plopped his ass into a dirt field that went on for acres.

Other than the dirt, the only thing to look at was burnt brush that never would receive the elements needed to become lush, and there was also a sewage line waist high. The frost line was unforgiving here; all the plumbing was above the ground.

But on this late spring day, the sun was shining. So much so that my body guard removed his shirt.

Across his back were tattoos of czars, religious priest looking guys, soldiers and wolves.

Each one of them was framed by a rifle scope.

Sasha explained to me that this area we were sitting in was the most beautiful place on earth. As a guest, I wasn’t seeing it, but I didn’t dare ask why.

Instead I posed a more curious question:

“Who are those people and animals tattooed on your back?”

Sasha answered with a matter-of-fact response:

“These are the devils, who put me in prison, but this is of no worry to you. They are all gone now.”

I should have been more scared than I was, but at this point I figured if he wanted me gone. It would have been so by now.

So I just ended up pulling a bottle of sour mash whiskey and a pack of smokes out of my backpack.

I don’t know how much time passed before we left to find those bananas, but I do remember getting drunk enough to muster up the courage to ask why Sasha thought this nondescript landscape was so beautiful.

And even though I was a little wasted, and the answer was kinda cliché, it still makes me smile when I envision my friend’s response.

“Beauty is not how a land looks; it is how the land treats you. I worked very hard to buy this property, and every time I come here ... it tells me I am free.”

CHOCOLATE CURRY – BANANA PECAN BREAD

- 1 1/3 cup All Purpose Flour
- 2/3 cup Sugar
- 1 tsp Baking Soda
- ½ tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- ½ tsp Ground Ginger
- 1 ½ tsp Curry (of course this depends on the heat level, my curry is mild)
- 4 ounces Canola Oil
- 3 medium Bananas
- 2 Eggs
- 1 cup Pecans
- 1 cup Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips

Baking Instructions

- Preheat your oven to 400 degrees (F).
- Place your canola, bananas (mashed), eggs, into a large bowl and blend these wet ingredients together.
- Next add the sugar and whisk in with the other wet ingredients.
- Now add the flour, B-Soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger, curry and incorporate with the wet ingredients, but don’t over-mix.
- Too much gluten in quick breads is bad.
- Finally fold in the pecans and chocolate chips.
- Now fill your foils or thin cake pans with this batter.
- You should fill the cavity 66%–75%.
- Place in the oven.
- After 10 minutes reduce oven temp to 350 (F) and finish off the bake.
- Total bake time depends on the size of your form, but typically we are looking at 45-50 minutes.
- As the loaf is finishing its bake, you will note that the edges of the loaf will start to pull its way from the foil.
- And if you’re still not sure if it is done, just poke a toothpick into the middle of the loaf.
- When you can remove the toothpick without any goo, you are in business.
- This recipe is magic. Have fun with it.
- Bon appetit!
- Your friend Klecko



Everything Depends

A Short Play

TIM J BRENNAN

Characters:

Harry and Marcie both in their middle to late 20's

A waiter

A bartender

TIM J BRENNAN's one acts have played in New York City, Bethesda, Chicago, Rochester, and other nice places. He is a "Talking Stick" poetry winner and a 2002 Great American Think-Off finalist.

Scene: coffee cafe or pub. Time: early evening.

(On set: Harry & Marcie are a couple. Their conversation has been going on for a bit. We are eavesdropping.)

Marcie: And please don't be so melodramatic, Harry. It's not becoming.

Harry: Well, you tell me ... what *does* one do with an English liberal arts degree?

Marcie: It's up to one's initiative. What do you want to do with it?

Harry: (Clearing throat) So much depends upon an English liberal arts degree / glazed with firewater / beside the White Elephant

Marcie: Oh, stop it. William Carlos Williams at least was a doctor.

Harry: But you don't understand, Marcie. Hell will freeze over and you....

(Marcie holds her hand up to shush Harry.)

Marcie: All I understand, Harry Peters, is that I love you. I have loved you since I first saw you in that poetry night class three years ago when you told that oompa professor that "many things could be glazed besides rainwater...donuts...a pot head's eyes...your grandfather's belly button ...or your girlfriend's vagina."

Harry: You know, girl, it's a conversation like this that makes me think I can do something with an English liberal arts degree. (They might chink glasses)
(Waiter approaches. Pouring more coffee or water or whatever)

Waiter: Couldn't help but overhear you folks...and I couldn't agree with you more. Me receiving my own English liberal arts degree is the best thing I ever did for myself. I too, have eaten the plums... so delicious ... so cold.
Degree received in 2007.

Harry: But you're working here?

Waiter: Don't be daft, man ... I needed to make a living, didn't I? Tell 'em, Jerry...

Barkeep: Liberal arts, English major here ... 2008. I worked my ass off to get it.
The cinders between walls hold the pieces of broken bottles, don'tcha know. Williams is my hero, too. And good luck, to ya', mate.

Marcie: Ignore these people, Harry. Listen to me...

Harry: (Harry holds his hand up to shush Marcie. Stands, offering a toast.) I love you –

Marcie: But Spring closes me in / With her blossomy hair / Brings dark to my eyes.

Waiter, Barkeep and Harry: (All raising a glass together.) Hear, hear...

-The End-

Vivian, in her grief

SUSAN KOEFOD



[SUSAN KOEFOD](#) has widely published fiction, memoir and poetry online, in print, and on the back of previously published grocery receipts. She is the author of the Arvo Thorson mystery series (North Star Press) and has also penned the intriguing and as yet unpublished *Albert Park: a Memoir in Lies*.

Vivian, in her grief, lost her singing voice so she turned to tuning pianos to make her living — she lived hand to mouth — mouthed the songs sung by beggars — begged for answers to her prayers, for release — released her coil of once-lustrous hair — hair gone pearl gray at her temples, scarcely waving now it was so thin — thinned her window-grown seedlings so the strong could survive and grow — grew whisper thin as the years passed — passed by in the streets unnoticed — noticed how the snow banks sunk into gray shanks of slushy foam — foamed mute with fury when they took her toy poodle to the pound — pounded incoherent on her ex-lover’s door though he’d died so many years before — before, she had inspired everyone — everyone who had loved her now-lost naive luster — lusted no more for her when the loss drove her mad, from his death-bed — bed to bed — to bed every man, though not a one was like him — he had gone off to war and died, taking her song and leaving her grief — in her grief, Vivian turned to tuning pianos to make her living.





Boy with Honeybee Hair

BARRY BLUMENFELD

BARRY BLUMENFELD comes from New York City and lives in Minnesota with wife Audrey. For many years he taught college-level mathematics. For even longer, he has wrestled with writing. Several of his poems have appeared in journals such as Cimarron Review and the late lamented Exquisite Corpse.



Appeared walking in my
Sleep along a path through
Some woods, trailed by pilgrims;

Wonder seekers. He perched
In a crotch of a tree
And said *I am a god*,

A god am I. As he
Sang the honeyed verses,
His hair became a halo

Of bees, a buzzing bronze
Cloud of wingéd thoughts and
The thousand eyes they have

For their dark journeying.
Woods are dark, they need things
Like that. *I am a god*,

A god am I, he sang,
And the bees shimmered, and

His forehead came apart
Like a pair of wings, and
Nothing was revealed but

Air, and more bees. That's what
Death is: nothing. *I came*
To tell you, he buzzed. He

Was bare from his shoulders
To his waist, and below
His waist, I don't know, legs

Of an ass, or a goat,
Perhaps. *I came to say*,
He said, *it's nothing to*

Be afraid of, death. It's
A place you go to rest.

After The Mayan Invasion

CURRENT EVENTS COMMENTARY BY TED KING

TED KING started writing 10 years ago at age 50. He writes Zen/Dada-inspired poetry and fiction and also recites/performs with jazz groups. Order his CD, *Close to the Cool*, [here](#).



Lucky it's not too hot today. I can't crack the windows. Not even a little bit. Snipers will get me for sure if I do. I'd be suffocating in this car if it was hot like yesterday.

Goddam snipers.

All I want is a goddam cup of coffee. Early afternoon I'm always groggy like this and I need that boost. I want my damn coffee. Pisses me off that they quit selling it in stores so I can't make it at home anymore. Risking my life for a goddam cup of coffee. Makes me wish we still had a police force in this town like they do in Cleveland. I liked it better when the Hippies were still in charge. I hate these snipers.

Anyway, there's the coffee shop and here I am sitting in this car and there's the street in between. Between me and my java. My joe. My fix. The black elixir. The invigorating cup.

In the alley next to the cafe I see two Irishmen leaning against the wall acting all nonchalant like they're ignoring me and they just happen to be there minding their own business.

She's a librarian. A librarian! First one I ever met. Hasn't been a library in this town since I can remember. I believe her, though. She's got those huge gazongas librarians are famous for.

Bloody Micks. Like I'm some tourist that's just gonna walk up to them and ask for directions or something. But I only see the two. I could take 'em if I had to, and they know it.

On the other side of the alley, by the dumpster, there's a hooker. She's got one of those sandwich board signs set up by the sidewalk with her whole menu of tricks and prices.

I gotta say ever since the schools closed the whores have gotten a lot more clever and articulate with their advertising. It's because of all those ex-teachers showing off their vocabularies.

Okay. Time for me to make my move. I need that coffee. I don't see the sun glinting off any rifle barrels in the windows. No suspicious shadows, no Northern European types lurking around and no Humvees parked nearby. Could be snipers' day off. Goddam snipers. Frustrated pissed off right wingers. They lose one bloody election and they start shooting people. Innocent people. Coffee drinkers.

They're so stupid. That election would have been close. They might even have won. Then they come out with that ad with her doing all that sex stuff.

"See, she's just like you and me. A woman of the people." Idiots. All the churchies freaked out of course. Bitch ends up with 6 percent of the vote. Then

they call for a recount. Then they start shooting people. Now I can't get a simple cup of coffee without risking getting my balls shot off.

But I'll die of caffeine withdrawal if I stay in this car much longer. Time to make my move.

Okay. I'm in the alley. Crossing was a breeze. One quick dash. No shots fired. Can't predict those guys. I say guys, but most snipers are women. You know, that whole "woman scorned" thing. Bitches.

Mary says it's like watching a silent movie. I ask her "What's a silent movie?" and she says it's an old-timey thing that was sort of like watching the video wall with the sound off.

The two Irish guys are sizing me up. I look at 'em and say "St. Patrick was kind of a dick, wasn't he?" I light a cig and turn my back to 'em. Funny thing. These guys are sober. Never seen a sober Mick before. Must be some kind of gang thing.

I go over and talk to the whore. She's a real sweetie. About my age, 70 to 75 or so. She's not an ex-teacher like I thought. She's a librarian. A librarian! First one I ever met. Hasn't been a library in this town since I can remember. I believe her, though. She's got those huge gazongas librarians are famous for. We do a little small talk and then I invite her in for a cup of coffee, on me. We both know the deal. A mocha and maybe a pastry buys me an hour or so in the dumpster with her. She's game. She likes her coffee.

I see another one of those Irish assholes across the street, getting ready to make a dash for the alley. I'm starting to not like the odds. So the whore and I, Mary, her name is Mary, we go walking arm in arm into the cafe.

We breeze through the metal detector and flash some ID at the door guys. My new whore friend is well known here so they don't give us any trouble. We all know the routine. She orders a fancy expensive Mocha and maybe a croissant, which I pay for, then she gets a kickback from the shop. It's all just business. We all gotta get by somehow.

Mary and I grab a couple stools by the window. Waitron comes by and takes our order. Mocha and a cheesecake for her, triple espresso for me. Prices are ridiculous here. Transgenders, gays, and Mexicans drink free of course, just like everywhere else. But an ordinary citizen like me gets hit pretty hard. Even worse because they think I might be part Irish even though I'm not. I'm Native. But I developed this brogue thing to get out of the draft and now it comes back to haunt me sometimes.

But ya gotta be a millionaire to get anything in here. Or own a diamond mine. Which I do. I own a diamond mine. That's why I can afford a premium triple espresso once a week.

It's nice in here, though. Worth the price. We're having fun looking out the window watching some wheelchair guy racing across the street with bullets zinging all around him. I guess the snipers are on duty today after all. They're just toying with him, though. Bitches could shoot the dick off a mosquito in the dark if they wanted to. It's kind of weird seeing the bullets bouncing off of things and seeing the wheelchair guy screaming like his hair's on fire but not hearing any of it because it's so soundproof in here. Mary says it's like watching a silent movie. I ask her "What's a silent movie?" and she says it's an old-timey thing that was sort of like watching the video wall with the sound off. She's a highly educated woman. I'm really starting to look forward to doing the dumpster thing with her.

It's nice that they have windows now. Everything was all bricked up till they came up with this transparent rubber stuff. Bullets hit it and just sort of thud and drop. The window makes for a more pleasant ambiance.

Mary gulps down her mocha like a frog hitting a fly. First cup she's had in a week she says.

Damn Irish scare away most of her customers. It's gotten even worse lately, she says, since they quit drinking. At least when they were drunk they were kinda funny and you could buy them off easy and talk them into doing crazy shit. Now they're just surly. Quiet and surly. Sober Irish. What the bloody hell, I'm at the bottom of my espresso and I'm feeling that sweet buzz coming on. Energy.

Inspiration. Vitality. The Muse. Sweet Caffeine.

"Excuse me for a moment please, Modest Mary." That's what I've taken to calling her, Modest Mary. It's because she's obviously very smart but she doesn't brag about it like those snobby-assed ex-teacher whores always do. "I need a refill on this jet fuel. I'll be right back and then it'll be Dumpster Delight time for me and you."

I walk over to the barista. It's a strictly enforced one-cup-per-customer policy here, but I've got a plan. I know better than to ask to see the manager or to be too obvious or direct with the barista. That's a good way to get you thumbs broken and get tossed out the back door where the Chinese have their little tent city set up. You'd be chop suey in a minute. Anyway, I've done this before and I'm pretty good at it. A little small talk. A couple of subtle hints and a double entendre or two and we've got a deal. He gets my time with Mary and I get another triple dynamite. He's had her before, of course. I'm not the first one to think of this. And she knows what's up. We all do. It's all about business. It's all about the coffee.

I go back to the window stool with my prize. Mary gives me a smile and a nod. She gets up and disappears behind the counter. I look out the window, enjoying the view of the street, quiet and empty now except for the dead Chinese woman at the corner. It's really quite a beautiful day. Not so damn hot like it was yesterday. Damn. This coffee tastes good.

Top Dog

MIKE HAZARD



A filmmaker, photographer and poet, Media Mike Hazard is an ekphrastic ecstatic.
In the beginning was the world. To see more, visit thecie.org

You got away for good this time. You were
always getting away, racing into the woods,
disappearing in a fast and furious blur of fur.
Cleverly teased home once by a trail of baloney,
you wolfed it slice by slice right up to the door,
then made another great escape as we
grabbed for matted hair and combed thin air.
Whenever you did get away, we hollered
your many pet names. You never obeyed,
always following the bliss of your nose and piss,
mapping and remapping the neighborhood.
On a leash, on late night walks, you heard
and kept the family secrets. Time after time,
patrolling the house in the darkness
we fell asleep to the tick of your toes.





"Don't worry. He's bound to mellow over time."

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Drawing #1

ANDREW WARD

Mike met ANDY WARD in New Haven in 1978, when they were both writing first novels. Andy was a quadruple threat, adept at writing, drawing, music, and knowing how things went down. He went on to write such classic novels and histories as [*The Slaves' War*](#), [*Our Bones are Scattered*](#), and [*Dark Midnight When I Rise*](#). The cartoons are just a way to spin off excess creative energy. Mike's great consolation in their friendship was learning Andy was not a particularly good speller. Andy now lives in Davis, California.



Andrew Ward

Surf

JOSEPH WATERS



Mike met [JOE WATERS](#) in San Diego several years ago and was amazed at his compositions and recordings with the classical/pop band [Swarmius](#), of whom one reviewer wrote: "It is Moby gone over to a dark side, where Yoko Ono is the Dungeon Master and Brian Eno keeps score." In 2011 he was commissioned to create a double concerto for violin (featuring Lindsay Deutsch) and alto saxophone (featuring Todd Rewoldt) on the subject of the ocean. "Surf" premiered in May 2012, featuring live electronics performed by Joe and live video created by Brooklyn artist Zuriel Waters and presented via software developed by Chris Warren.

[TO VIEW AND HEAR THE VIDEO, CLICK ON THE IMAGE.](#)



“Recognized Poet”

This arrived at Lief's 27th floor offices as a yellowed newspaper clipping this June. It is an old cartoon by Minnesota artist Jerry Van Amerongen, creator of *Ballard Street*, which no longer runs in the local paper.

We liked the old crumbly picture so much we did our best, using Photoshop and steel wool, to unyellow and restore it. We will try to get Mr. Van Amerongen's permission to use his cartoon, but if we can't, consider this a found object, an artifact that illuminates the crazy world we live in.

What is so delightful is how patently obvious it is that the poet, with his beard, earring and open collar, has little to offer ordinary people. Yet there they are, clustering on the sidewalk, hailing his approach as one would a passing emperor. Look at the delight he causes them, and dig their boundless appreciation for what he does.

If only!

Clipping supplied by Linda Back McKay



James Lenfestey, poet and redactor:

“Cartoonist Jerry Van Amerongen is a friend of mine, and I fear I may be the model for this cartoon poet, famous in his own small 'hood. Oh well, real poets can wait for 1000 years for a reader. This guy not only has a cheering family but an enthusiastic dog! Enough adulation for a poet for one lifetime.... “



Playground

WILLIAM RICCI

[BILL RICCI](#) moonlights as a writer when not knee-deep in the corporate world. He obtains inspiration from nature, water, attempts at prairie restoration, and the porcupine that is chasing him.

As children our playground stretched
for miles, from the ice rink to the old church
a bridge over Broadway, always
teeming with a new story,
the corner grocery store,
where for a nickel, sweetness found us
and the owner smiled

Weaving down Johnson, over to Summer Street,
there is Danny's house, I have not
seen Danny for some time, since we
were throwing rocks, it was his idea, to
throw rocks at the windows, I did not
think they would break, but the church
is old and the windows fragile, they
broke, and the sound was loud and
I think everyone heard, and someone
called the police, and the police came
and I have not seen Danny in some time.



Two poems by Tim Nolan



For Minneapolis' [TIM NOLAN](#), joy in poetry and joy in the law are both about paying attention to what at first seems insignificant. "Here is what a lawyer and poet must both be able to do: pick up a fact or image of nearly total insignificance — a mere marble along the way — and make it significant by paying attention." The "headlines" in the Melville poem that seem so contemporary, are in fact marbles plucked from *Moby-Dick* from 1841.



Illustration from an original edition of *Moby Dick* by Rockwell Kent

Our Introduction to Ishmael

He's a goofball
but we know him
as he speaks

He understands the damp
drizzly November
of the soul

He wants to knock
people's hats
off

It's important
to get paid
while going to sea

How about his headlines?

Grand Contested Election for the
Presidency of the United States

"Whaling Voyage by One Ishmeal"

"BLOODY BATTLE IN AFFGHANISTAN"

Could be right now
could be this now
has happened before

All this
before he even finds
his story or his ship



Song

At the funeral for the young man
I’m trying to sing
the complicated song

And I’m running out of
breath
there are too many

Changes in direction
in this song—
some parts

Are just for the choir
they sound great
up above in their loft

Then the men sing
and that’s surprising—
the women

Are tentative
when they sing
but sweet

The song is mostly about Jesus
who I think would be
a little embarrassed

With all the attention
at the same time
he might like the sound

We sound like birds
on a long summer day—
The good young man

Remains dead—we know that—
but still we want
to make a song

Because it seems it could last
forever—or just long enough
to get us through—

Poem Under the Knife

CHANSONETTE BUCK

Editor's note: I asked an old friend to send Lief something personal and strong. She had a poem, titled “seven daggers,” that marked a turning point in understanding her own life. For readers' sake, I asked her to annotate the poem, so we would be sure to know the depth of the backstory, which is interwoven with the history of recent American literature. This is what [CHANSONETTE BUCK](#) created.

“I spent my catastrophic childhood dreaming of the father I had lost at age two and a half holding on to some notion that he would come and rescue me and take me home.” Chansonette Buck lives in Berkeley with her family, her boa constrictor, and too many cats and dogs.



To tell the story that generated this poem, I must begin with my mother. She was an artist who felt trapped in the wrong marriage and didn't want a second child (me). After I was born, she wasn't around much; she spent her time developing her art. My father was both mother and father to me. When I was two years old, my mother left my father for the love of her life, poet Edward Dorn. After a six-month absence, she returned briefly, pregnant with Dorn's baby. I didn't recognize her. It was 1954. The Beat Generation was brewing offstage. Soon she left again to join Dorn, this time taking with her my older brother Fred and me, and my father's promise of child support and open-ended financial “patronage.”

A few months later, our new family headed east to Black Mountain College, where my mother and Dorn became part of a seminal movement in 20th century cultural history. For my mother, this was a dream come true and the beginning of what she had always imagined for herself – a big world she walked through hand-in-hand with the love of her life. For me, it was stranger abduction – away from my safe home with my beloved father and into a life of constant geographical dislocation and the daily trauma of living with an abusive stepfather who terrorized me.

As a result of this childhood, by age 19 I was psychotic. I would likely have been dead or institutionalized within a year but instead I set foot on a spiritual/transformational path, which began with what can only be described as a “Damascus Road” conversion to Christ. It took me well into my 40s to heal enough so that the verdict as to whether I would kill myself was finally settled and I was able to

choose Life with no Escape Clause. I still suffer from chronic PTSD (the kind that sends you under a coffee table reliving trauma as if it were still happening) as a result of my stepfather's abuse, but I am healed beyond my wildest imagination from most of those wounds and their aftereffects. Far from surviving, in my 60s now I thrive.

After my mother left him, my father remarried and settled in Menlo Park, California. In his new family he had a stepdaughter my age, Lisa, whom he adopted, and a few years later a daughter with his new wife, my sister Pamela. He died suddenly when I was 23, of cardiac arrest. I was devastated. He had visited us in Gloucester two years earlier, and he and I had just begun to forge new bonds. I had never given up the toddler's dream of Daddy. He was putting me through art school. We had begun corresponding. I had spent New Year's Day on a promising series of new mixed media works on paper. I fell asleep creatively sated, with a letter I had begun composing to him to ask if I could come visit that summer. I planned on finishing and mailing the letter the next day. For the first time in my life, I knew he would say *yes*.

I got the phone call from my stepsister Lisa at 3 a.m. My father had died of cardiac arrest. DOA at the hospital after collapsing at home. Now he was lost to me forever, and so was my dream. My brother Fred and I flew from Boston to San Francisco to attend the memorial service. There I met my half-sister Pamela for the first time. She was 17. I looked into her face and saw myself. We both have my father's eyes, his brow, his jaw, his cheekbones.

In 1986 my then-husband and I moved to the Bay Area, and I reconnected with my father's family. My sister Pamela and I are very close now. She lives in Sacramento and I live in Berkeley, and we see each other often. She and her husband came to visit last weekend. On Father's Day we spent a beautiful day exploring Golden Gate Park, and finished with dinner at Sam's Cafe in Tiburon. We got a table outside, right on the water, as the sun began to set. In the course of our conversation, I learned for the first time that Pamela had grown up not knowing about me, and that she had witnessed many arguments between her parents as to whether they should bring Fred home to live with them. I was never mentioned in those arguments.

I learned in that moment that the father I had spent my childhood dreaming of and waiting for fought with his wife over his desire to bring his son home. But not me. Not me. I didn't even come up in conversation enough so that my sister knew I existed, until after he died. Then somebody said to her apropos the memorial service “Oh. And Chan is coming.” She knew about Fred. She had met Fred, as he had been invited to visit over the years. When she heard “Chan is coming” her response was “*Who?*”

It took until the next morning for that truth to sink in. I woke up submerged in a new level of an ancient grief I had thought long gone. That information – and a metaphysical healing process I began to work through the overwhelming feelings it triggered in me – was the genesis for my poem *seven daggers*. The poem's images are a direct transcript from a vision I had while working on healing myself from this pain, and this pattern. As such, they are quite literal and quite prosaic.

I cannot tell you who my father was, because I did not know him. My knowledge of him stopped at the stage of toddler adoration; everything beyond that was sheer fantasy. But here's one thing I do know. My father abandoned me far more thoroughly than I ever imagined until I had this conversation with my sister. He knew what I was living. He had my mother's letters (now in Stanford's research library) to tell him that. It was my brother he wanted to rescue. It was my brother he grieved losing, sobbing, in his Stratolounger, in his den, evenings. Not me. Not me.

Berkeley, June 23, 2012

seven daggers

i

seven daggers
you gave me, seven
jeweled weapons i
must cease wielding
if i am ever
to love
another
man

ii

lay it down
the voice said
in the dark place
Pegasus flew me to
nestled on his broad back, my
thin arms around his neck, fingers
tangled in silvery white mane –
lay it all down – hate first.
hate? i asked
astonished.

iii

three cloud-levels up
against a crucible
of opalescent light
behind which my dark
family clustered, i
laid my
jeweled
daggers
down

iv

one by one
i laid them down
in the pearl-fire light –
hate, rage, grief, revenge,
vengeance, anger, fear –
all those daggers he
knew i'd plotted
to plunge
into my
absent
father's
chest

i

It is not fair to ascribe the seven daggers – and what they represent in my ongoing difficulty finding my way in relationships with men – to my father. My stepfather shares equal responsibility. They say that women abused as children tend to repeat that pattern in the men they choose. I was lucky. Or blessed and protected. I have never been attracted to abusers. It is the elusive, emotionally unavailable men I fall for, because they keep a safe distance. They are unattainable. And absent. I am at the bottom of their scale of priorities. They are like my father. So all the men I have ever loved have been a version of him. If I am to experience something different, I must lay these daggers down. I must choose to love a different man.

ii

Horses have always been my safe place. The summer I was 11 and falling asleep in the back seat of our car during a trip with Charles Olson from Gloucester to Manhattan a horse came to me in a dream. He was, I realize now, based on a horse Jack Kerouac seeded into my imagination when I was five – blood-red, ruby-red, magnificent and powerful. He was my horse. I swung up onto his back, leaned into his withers, tangled my fingers in his mane, and I was Home. This horse has been with me ever since. In my healing meditations sometimes he shows up as Pegasus and we fly places only a winged horse could go. All these places are sacred. This time we went to a cave, where I was shown the truth of my feelings about my father. *Hate* is the last thing I would have imagined I felt for him. But there it was. And it was time to lay it down.

iii

In these meditations, sometimes we stay right where we are; sometimes my horse turns into Pegasus and we fly deep into the center of the earth, and land on a ledge above a crystal city I cannot begin to describe in words. Colors so deep and rich, so clear and pure-hued. Structures that do not have human equivalents. All healing. Always there is a cave. Always we go in. Sometimes we fly up into the sky, and land in cloud landscapes. Also with caves. This time we flew up. As we flew I could see levels we were passing. We landed on a cloud landscape three levels up. I dismounted. Pegasus and I walked into the cave, a dark place. There I saw a round fire-pit. The fire was cool and spherical, the color of pearl. Beyond it all the members of my family in a semi-circle, standing in witness. And there, as I stood, the seven jeweled daggers emerged from the center of my chest.

iv

In my vision, seven daggers emerged from my chest and hovered in the air before me. Each had a name: *hate, rage, grief, revenge, vengeance, anger, fear*. They were beautiful, jeweled, precious things, glinting in the pearl-fire light. Each embodied a feeling and intention I didn't realize I have been harboring and nurturing within me. I have been working on acknowledging and letting these states of being go for decades. Now, it was clear I was still guarding these jeweled daggers as if they were precious possessions. Each one its own poison dart. What I hadn't realized was that I had been holding them in order to punish my father. I laid each one down on the floor next to the fire, consciously, deliberately, in surrender. It felt like laying down my armor.

v

the family stood –
dark images in the dark
cavern the white winged horse
brought me to, this morning
when i was grieving
the final loss
of the final
father
dream

vi

pulled
from my
chest the tiny
daggers dangled
in midair until i
obeyed the
command:
drop them
and let
go

vii

i am the
diamond sword
created in the crucible
of opalescent light
i faced in the dark
place my winged
horse flew me to
the moment i
said yes i
am ready
to see
this

v

When I was writing my memoir *Unnecessary Turns: Growing Up Beat* I had a conversation with my aunt Ann – my father's sister and only surviving sibling (now passed on). I called her because I had realized I didn't know my father and I was looking for information: *What was he like? What happened when the marriage to my mother blew up?* And...I realize now, writing this: *Did he love me? Why did he let me go? Did he love me? Oh...please...did he LOVE me???* She told me many stories. The one pertinent to this poem is that the reason I didn't know my mother when she returned after six months with her lover is because my father had said to her “If you leave, you must never contact us. You must stay away until and unless you are ready to come back.” The Father Fantasy collapsed when I heard that. I could no longer see him as The Victim and my mother as The Abandoning Toxic Selfish Bitch From Hell. I know my mother didn't want me...but she stayed away from us for six months because my father commanded it to be so. Which ensured that when she showed up I wouldn't know her, and when she took me away from him it would be for me Stranger Abduction.

vi

Ten years ago I finished a hard-won midlife PhD program in English at UC Berkeley – something I originally thought would set me on a “career path” of being a tenured professor somewhere. Because of my family situation at the time, I made the decision not to continue on the academic job market. What this cost me was a vocation I loved – teaching undergraduates. I grieved and grieved and grieved that decision. I questioned myself over and over – did I make the right decision? Did I fuck up once again, as per usual? One night I had a dream. I found myself on a high plateau in a dusk/dawn moment. Campfires dotted the landscape, with dim figures sitting around them. On a plateau beyond a crevice I saw a Teacher. I knew he was my Teacher. I leaped over the crevice and stood before him. He laid his hand on my shoulder. He said *this is the place for letting go*. As he did I saw that sentence inscribed in fire in the dream-space. I have never forgotten it. As I write this I can still see it. *This is the place for letting go*. Written in fire. Letting go is my spiritual practice. Everything that shows up for me is fodder for letting go. And I believe that is the best advice I can give anybody else. Suffering? You must drop it. You must *let it go*. Is that easy? No. But *you must* let it go.

vii

When we face a truth we have most feared, one we have resisted knowing for an entire lifetime, something magical happens. For me that moment came when I learned that the father I lost at two and a half -- whose fantasy image had both kept me alive (literally) and emotionally crippled -- had never considered bringing me home. Truth hurts. It's like a sword plunged to our very core. We must allow ourselves to see the component parts of that sword – in my case the seven daggers. We must allow them to coalesce into one brilliance. We must allow that brilliance to enter and inhabit us as a positive. That is our alchemy. The power of the wound becomes the power of our capacity to live healed and brilliant and adventurous and loving in the world. But we must be ready to *see*.



True Lies

CHARLES POTTS

Mike met [CHARLES POTTS](#) in the spring of 1971, and has found power and inspiration in his work ever since. For more than forty years, Charles has remained true to his origins as a relentless and radical visionary. This selection of poetry, fiction, and memoir represents work he has published in hundreds of magazines and over 20 books. Edgy, irreverent, and innovative, lyrical and analytical at the same time, he is one of the age's true literary discoveries. His creative geography ranges from Idaho to Mexico, the Bay Area to Japan, from China to Utah, and now rests in Walla Walla, Washington, where his work continues to evolve.



Trail riding in late November
Up Blue Creek and on Klicker Mountain
The weather has the good sense
To rain at night.

By the time I learned what I need to know
It was too late to apply it.

When I touch Brandy and Fourmile on the nose
My heart falls thru my feet
Toward the center of the earth.

I treat my horses as if I were a Comanche Indian
As members of the family in other words.

I am staggered by the beauty of the sun.

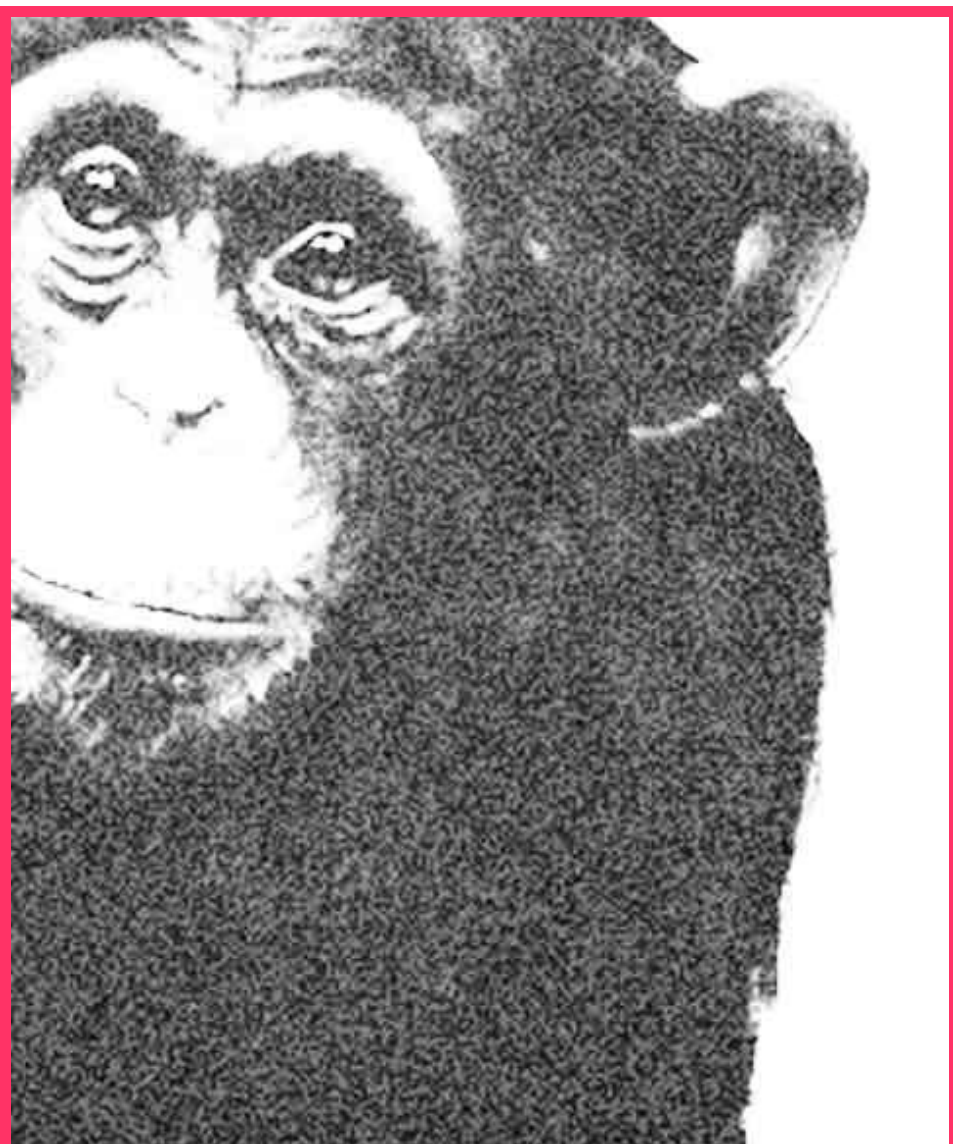


Two poems by Roseann Lloyd

[ROSEANN LLOYD](#) grew up in Missouri and now lives in Minnesota. She studied at the Poetry Workshop at the University of Montana with Richard Hugo, Madeline DeFrees, and Tess Gallagher. In 1986 she published her first book, *Tap Dancing for Big Mom*. Lloyd's latest book of poetry is *Because of the Light*. Nikki Giovanni has written of Roseann's work: "Roseann Lloyd is doing what poets have always been charged to do – take chances. The form is bending under the fine hand of a craftsman who loves her work."

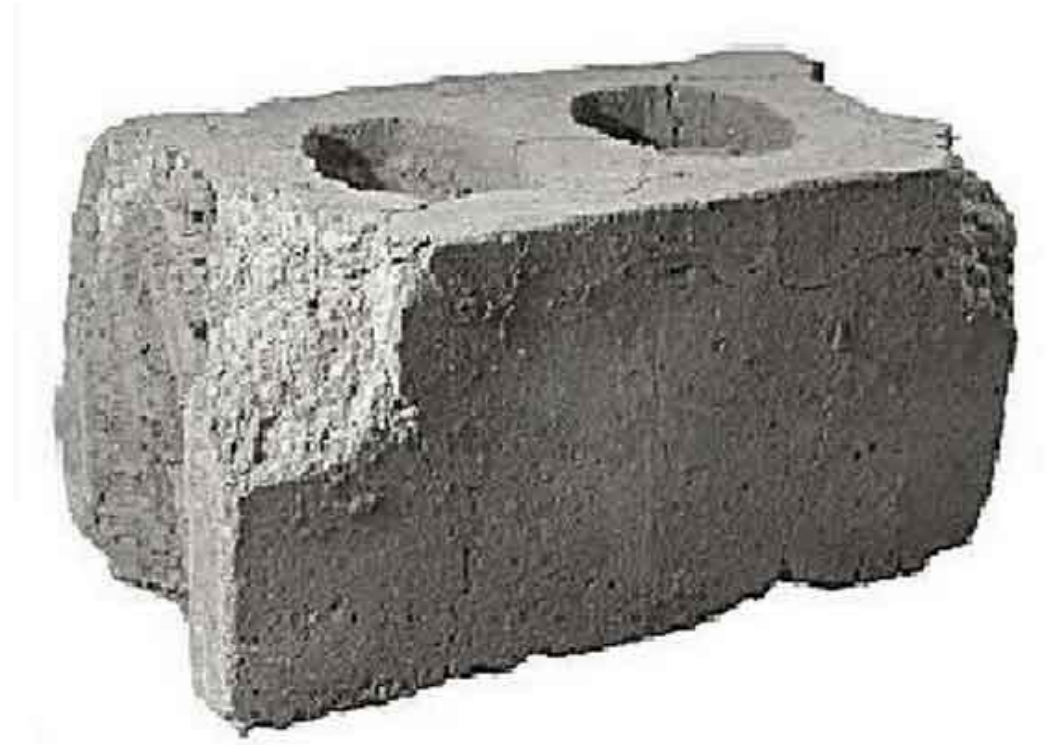
Rosie the Chimp

IN OUR FAMILY, TEASING started early. Learning to tease, I mean. Getting teased, I mean. Lloyd's first time at the Dairy Queen, and mine, roller-skating on a brick sidewalk, I'll save for another day. Today I'm remembering my crush on Rosie the Chimpanzee at the Springfield Zoo. I loved her. Was it only because we shared the same name? I talked to her through the bars. *What did you eat today? Surely you don't live only on bananas. Did you get born in Africa? Do you get lonesome by yourself so far from home? Does it hurt your feelings when kids go chee-chee-chee?* One day we drove to the zoo and surprise! Uncle Jack was there. A tall zookeeper stood by Jack. That didn't surprise me. Jack knew people all over town due to his TV job. The tall man said, *Would you like to go on a walk with Rosie?* I could've died right then and then. I nodded. He took out a big key and led me to her cage, opened it, and she came over to me. We were exactly the same size! We held hands and started walking down the path, then we came to steps, and I looked carefully so we didn't trip, she was probably more sure-footed than I was. Such soft hair on her hand that held mine. Human eyes. Or, maybe it was the other way around. I had chimp eyes. She mooshed her mouth out like my great-grandma. How old was she, anyway? Oh, I loved her. I loved her even when she wet herself and still kept holding my hand. At the bottom of the steps the tall man came to collect one Rosie. Only when they turned away did I realize Jack was laughing, also my dad, also my brother, a toddler following the lead. What was so funny? Jack, said from that time on, *Is she your cousin, Rosie?* I squinted with my sun-grin, eyebrows tight. *No, my sister.* What was this confusing laughter? Affection or its opposite? *Gullible girl, gullible girl.*



Blue Sparkly Boots

The house was on the edge of a rushing stream,
a culvert on the other side, straight up. No sidewalks.
No road in sight. The house was sited well
with all those pine trees behind it and the mountains
perfect as a Disney movie for kids. Room in the back
for the kind of garden that kept you home all summer.
The house, a concrete block shelter, looked roomy
enough. Inside was problematic, though, with all the rooms
at different heights. No steps between. And *burr* –
the concrete was cold. Anna was little, I had to figure out
which furniture to put on which level. Kitchen
by the front door – *oops* the only door. The piano was too tall
for the first level and leaned crooked. *Look!* All the levels
had ceilings way too low. Definately not
on the level. *Ha ha.* We'd have to move when Anna
got taller. Without a road how would I
get to school? *Here,* a friendly man said, *see*
*this isn't a culvert after all, it **is** a cliff. See*
the fancy bits of the granite catch the sun?
Oh, yes, I said. He showed me how
to grip the hand holds and walk heel to toe
along the ledge. *Be sure,* he said, *to wear your*
blue sparkly boots. Of course! They're wider
than my cross-trainers, I'd have trouble
on ledges but they're as beautiful as the night
sky in the country where my husband has to live
or he'll die. Now that I know the way to school



I can do this. I'll get Anna some new boots so she
can follow in my tracks. I'll buy a braided rug to keep
the kitchen floor warm when snow comes in the door.
I'll scoot the piano somewhere to a place it fits and keep us all
together, my little family. We won't have bunk beds
we'll have bunk rooms. *Ha ha. Don't debunk it*
until you've tried it, George Costanza might say.
We'll watch raspberry bushes spread over the years.
We'll visit Little Bear's grave on the three forks
of the Bitterroot River. I'll write essays
about wildflowers, Hanford nuclear waste
the flood plain. Be useful to the community.
Everything will turn out for the best.

Drawing #2

ANDREW WARD



"Let's see him talk his way out of this one."

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A Family Is

BARRY CASSELMAN



Mike met [BARRY CASSELMAN](#) at the Renaissance Festival in Jonathan in 1972. Barry immediately became a mentor and friend, assisting as best man at Mike and Rachel's wedding in 1980. Over the years Mike's Kraken Press published three of Barry's titles: *Equilibrium Fingers* (1976), *Among Dreams* (stories, 1985) and an e-version of *Estimated Time of Arrival* (2011).

for Tom Casselman

In your beginning, after journeying here alone,
you always seem connected
to someone and cared for, a mother, a father,
usually a brother or a sister sooner or later,
aunts, uncles, cousins,
others in your family.

Strangers come later, and if you seek them,
friends.

A family is the world of those you know,
combined with those you come from,
and those you send on
into places you cannot not see
nor see again,
nor imagine.

Now to specifics.
Your father. Your mother.
All those curious persons with your name,
and the names that became your name.
Two grandmothers. Two grandfathers.
Uncle Leon. Aunt Sylvia. Aunt Reta. Uncle Sol.
Uncle Sigo. Aunt Rosalie. Auntie May. Uncle Morris.
The aunts and uncles you did not meet.
Aunt Frieda. Uncle Jerome. Uncle Joseph. Aunt Lucie.
Cousins, older and younger. Names.
There are billions of names.
Anyone can fill in their own.

As time goes on, those names are fewer,
and some are newer, your own,
those named by others,
including your friends,
including the multitude you do not ever meet
in the world you do not visit
or know little about.

Until you reach that moment
when you travel alone again.

Galaxies

The wheel that hurled
clusters of tiny orbits into place?

Just some invisible ropes flying wild
in space

in such a way that each world
sees the universe spin past

beloved homeland,
how did we let you steer us
so far from home?

Telling Time

Both of their eyes meet here:
Wistful lad imagining,
Busy man briskly managing
To tell time by the mirror.

In the parking lot,
clanging metal. On my desk,
a flag in the wind

our houses . . . our hills . . .
what is the snow's name for snow?
for rivers? for spring?

Luminous short poems by Peter Meister

[PETER MEISTER](#) is a friend of Mike's from college, at Wooster, 1968. The two would stay up late smoking and drinking coffee and discussing new directions in poetry. Once they were arrested in the late night streets for fighting, and they had to go to trial. It was so stupid. Peter lives in Alabama now, and is involved in the haiku cult there, a subset of the Haiku Society of America. For Peter, literature and religion exist along a continuum; he particularly likes haiku that seem or are grounded in Zen. He teaches German literature at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

'How Like a Cow The Sky Doth Break'

ESSAY BY KIM ODE

Scientists warn that a consequence of climate change is that rain will fall more often and much harder than we've grown to expect. Everyone senses we are living in a different time, while not being sure what that means. One question is whether our language is up to the task.

My concern isn't about documenting the facts of rain. For that, we have the rain gauge with its inches and tenths and, for drought-bled farmers, its hundredths of an inch. The gauge can tell us how much, but can't address the visceral aspect of rain: the "how" of its descent.

Do the drops fall in a shower, like spaghetti water through a colander? Or does the rain pour down, as if a pipe in the clouds has broken? Does it come in the sudden spurts of a squall, or settle in for the sort of steady drizzle that clears ball diamonds for the night?

The benchmark for rains is Noah's flood. The story begins, as do the best sermons, with understatement: "And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters."

Then it builds: "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered."

And ... that's pretty much it, maxing out at "exceedingly." *Exceedingly?* The word seems insufficient. Prim, even. Granted, the story came early in the book, and the writer knew he still had the plagues of Egypt to describe. Still, exceedingly disappoints. Clearly, there was room for improvement.

Shakespeare stepped up, having Lear rage against his storm with a dare: "You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!"

"Spout" is a superbly active word and the image of submerged steeples is an evocative special effect. But you know what's going to carry the day to most people's ears: drowned animals.

Which brings us to "cats and dogs." The origin of the image is a bit murky, with most phrase-sleuths tracing it back to 17th century England with its filth-filled streets. A deluge could flood the cobblestones, sweeping dead cats, dogs, rats, etc., along with the usual detritus into the gutters.

Jonathan Swift, he of the modest proposal, used the image in his 1710 poem, "A Description of a City Shower."

"Now from all Parts the swelling Kennels flow,
And bear their Trophies with them as they go."

And:

"Sweeping from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood,
Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud,
Dead Cats and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood."

Now that's rain! But here's why anyone who's fought to suppress a grin at the suggestion of a fricasseed infant must love Swift. The first documented use of "cats and dogs" came about 30 years later, in Swift's "A Complete Collection of Polite and Ingenious Conversation." (Thanks to WorldWideWords.org for this research.) He wrote: "I know Sir John will go, though he was sure it would rain cats and dogs."

Swift, in other words, as in love with his own words as any good writer must be, resorted to quoting himself. The phrase caught on and became the standard for describing a deluge that everyone understands, but no one knows why.

Reason enough to end here, on a note of commonality, leaving well enough alone.

Yet it's been a summer of rainfalls that have prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, particularly a deluge in Duluth that floated the zoo's polar bear and otter into the streets, burrowed under bridges, left cars' headlights teetering into sinkholes, and sent great blooms of iron-tinged red clay into the navy depths of Lake Superior.

A longtime Duluthian, trying to describe the

rain, said it fell with a force she'd never experienced – not as rain, anyway. But she knew exactly what the torrent reminded her of, with its unrelenting velocity: It rained, she said, "like it was coming out of the back end of a cow."

And then I knew. Then I knew how.

So thanks, after all, to Noah, and to his heifer, and to his thunderous bull.

Star Tribune writer Kim Ode is author of *Rhubarb Renaissance*.



Will, or 'A Way of Heming'

JOHN B. BURROUGHS

I hear Hemingway
said "There is
nothing to writing.
All you do is sit down
at a typewriter and bleed."
but he was a lying
son of a gun
just ask his mom
the more he bled
the less
he said until now he doesn't
say shit
though he wrote a lot
that was
published posthumously
sometimes you have to
put the bloody typewriter
away and breathe
"breathe in the air"
breathe out the error
and you
will
but the problem comes
when you
come to see
your whole
life is an error
to somebodies
you loved once upon
a time a whole lot more
than you do now
and they fantasize
about you breathing
and bleeding out
no longer in

I hear Hemingway
saying Fuck
this shit I'm sick
of the bell tolling
of the sun also rising .

and I know that

no matter

how hard
I try
my Garden of Eden
will
always be
fiction
and I'm tired
of telling
lies especially
if it means continuing
to bleed in to
my typewriter
my biggest fear
is that when I'm gone
you'll publish it anyway
without the ble'
before the Eden
and it will be
my worst
best
bullshit
you

will

if I must bleed
"let it be"
in a foyer away
from the machine but
through
my mouth
my brain
once
more
then run
under the front
entrance
and out
and you

will still

think you
hear me



John Burroughs is the regnant king of free verse in Northeast Ohio and parts of Michigan. Publisher, poet and enthusiast, he has done more to get people in the mood than any writer since Ezra Pound.



Meditation upon a field of skulls

T. K. O'ROURKE

Winner, 2012 KPV Kerouac Award



A schoolboy blows up the first frog with a firecracker
down its throat. The second frog utters a small cry.
I wake up too late to snuff the fuse.

This week I hear news of a rogue soldier going house to house
in an Afghan village and shooting two old men,
five women and nine children as they sleep.

Today I read a poem by a friend unable to turn off her lights
at night for the last twenty-five years after her rape.

Sometimes I feel like I'm standing on the gallows deck
waiting for the floor to drop,
familiar as the racial memory of head lice,

familiar as Agamemnon and Achilles brawling
over the right to rape and traffic Briseis.

How many ages before Troy and Afghanistan
does a teenager, gun held to his head, go from hut to hut
raping girls and bashing babies' skulls
against the hard-packed dirt road

executing boys over twelve
maybe letting some go with just the loss of an arm?

I am a soldier, a teen, young man who saves no one
and will fail again then journey home for decades
before my wife will let me sleep with her.

I am an old man impotent to protect Anne Frank so I gun down
black youths who wear hoodies on the corner.

For sixty years I hallucinate gore upon my hands.
I take orphans of America's atrocity into my home.
The antidote works briefly, like laughter and weeping.

My foster children, enrolled members of the Ihanktonwan Oyate,
have thus far survived the 7th Cavalry,
small-pox infected blankets and Hotchkiss machine-guns
mowing them down at Wounded Knee.
Perhaps they will survive the chemical warfare of alcohol and drugs.

Succeed or fail, I at times imagine myself redeemed
as I make myself useful in a world no longer mine.
My heart will break as these children take on monsters
of their own history.

Jim Denomie

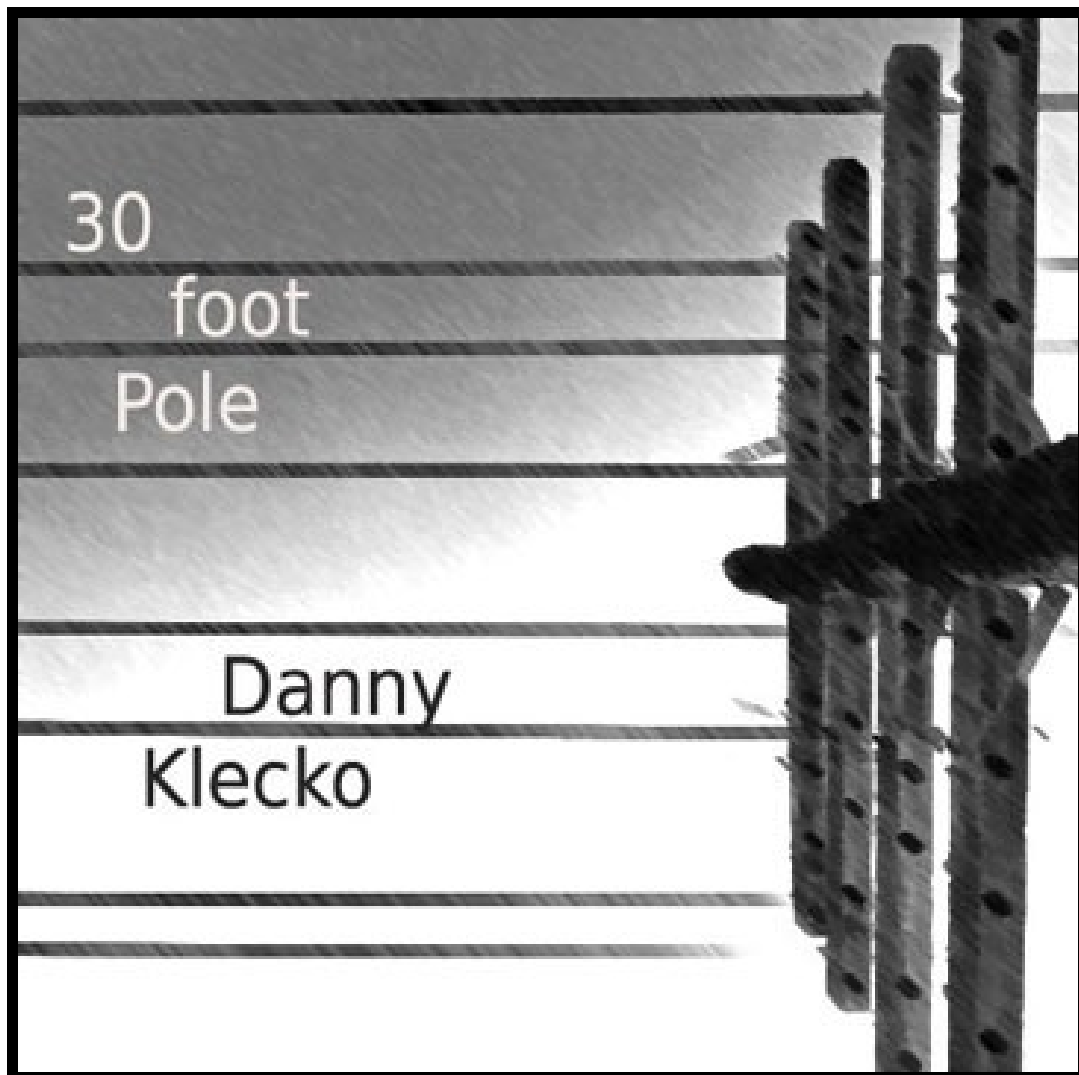
Koochie and Tuffy 20 x 24



J

Mindblowing artist [JIM DENOMIE](#) was born in Hayward, Wisconsin in 1955 and currently lives in Franconia, Minnesota, where he operates Wabooz Studios. Primarily a painter, Jim also works with ink, and oil pastel drawings. Jim is one of Mike's very favorite artists – arresting, provoking, amusing, touching, teaching.





30 Foot Pole

Master baker DANNY KLECKO set the world on its ear with his premier album **30 Foot Pole**.

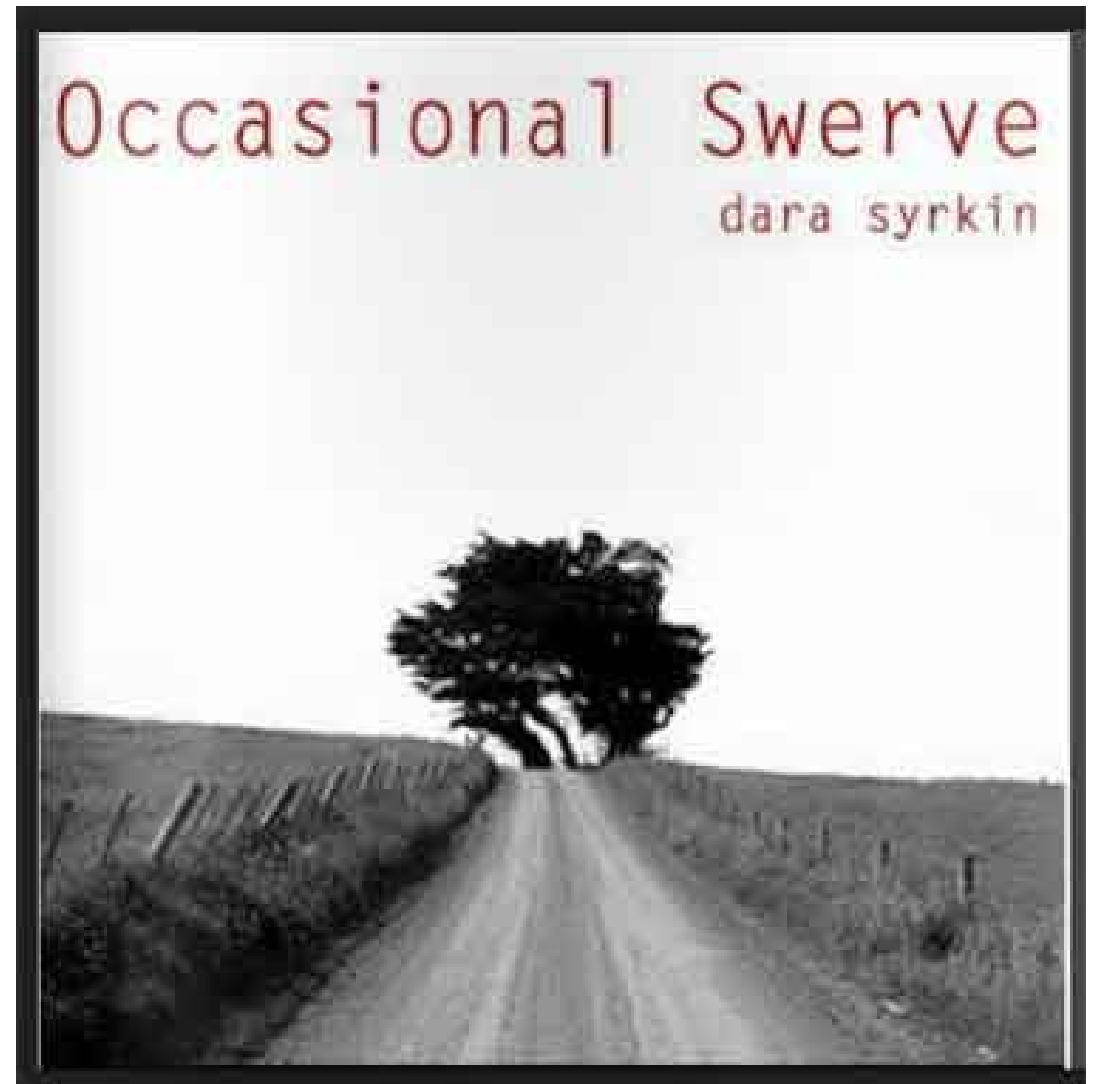
His unique sound combines romance and passion, with a glimpse up the skirt of the ineffable.

30 Foot Pole features such hits as ...

- *I Love You Jane Goodall ...*
 - *Marlene Dietrich ...*
- and (Who can forget) ...
- *Christmas in the Monkey House*

[Do yourself a favor and click on 30 Foot Pole without delay.](#)

The stars of Lucky Park Productions on your turntable today!



Occasional Swerve



DARA SYRKIN soothed a grieving nation with her debut recording **Occasional Swerve**.

The album is an honest, unstinting look at the romance of the road.

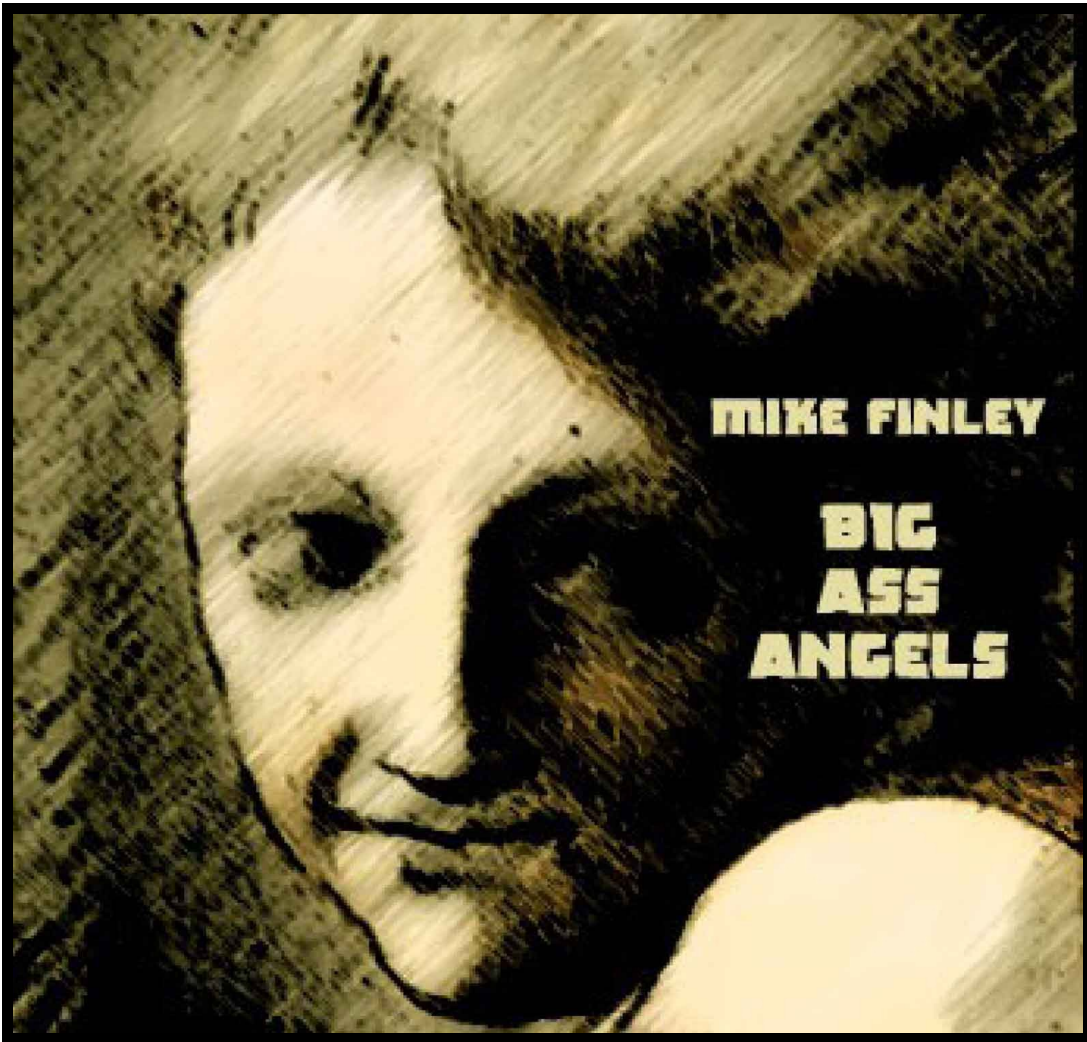
Hits include:

- *Glimpse*
- *Please Forgive Me*
- *No Curves*

Long known as a recluse who substitutes pictures of her bike handlebars for an actual portrait, Dara Syrkin has touched the hearts of millions with reflections.

Dara Syrkin. You know her, you love her, you can't stop thinking of her. Now contractually obligated to perform exclusively for Lucky Park Productions.

[Time to pony up and download the record that lifted all our hearts – Occasional Swerve.](#)



Big Ass Angels

Mike Finley rocked the world of entertainment with his blockbuster 500 complete works, [Yukon Gold](#). Now he's gone in the opposite direction with **Big Ass Angels**, crafting an entire suite of poems in a single hour, while biking around the state capitol.

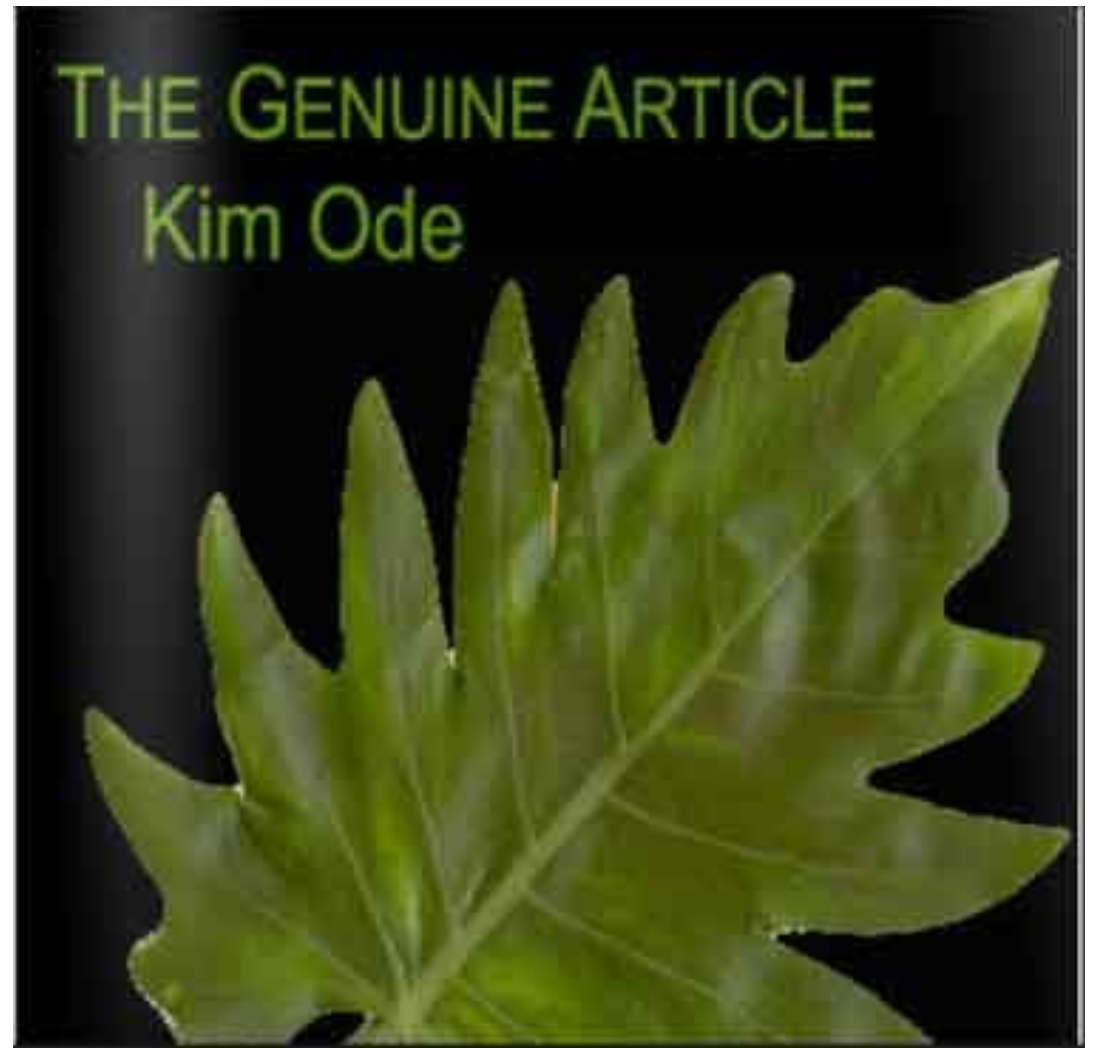
Thrill to Mike's sleek new interpretations of:

- *What Need Have We of Paris?*
- *Instructions for Falling*

And who will dare forget the winsome stylings of the title track, disavowing all that our eyes tell us?

[Don't be dull. Download **Big Ass Angels** at your earliest convenience. It's free!](#)

Click on the covers to hear today's NOW sounds from these gifted artists!



The Genuine Article



Kim Ode raked the media roost for years as Star Tribune writer. Now she returns to her first love, Appalachian hymns and flapdoodle reels.

The Genuine Article features Kim at her more luminous, singing songs of power and delicacy. You are sure to enjoy:

- *Airborne*
- *Jetsam*
- *Pessimists*
- *Optimists*

And who could pass up a poem titled *Sweet Revenge*?

[Hear Kim sing **The Genuine Article** in the privacy of your own home. All downloads are 100% free!](#)



JUICY TRUTH


CHEWING GUM FOR THE SOUL

YAHIA LABABIDI


[Take a look at Yahia's newest project, here.](#)

Aphorist [YAHIA LABABIDI](#)'s latest book, *Trial by Ink: From Nietzsche to Belly Dancing*, is available for sale internationally.


It's not easy to say wise things. Yahia manages to pull it off on a reliable basis. His book, *Signposts to Elsewhere* (Jane Street Press) was named Book of the Year by The Independent. Mike and Yahia met and became mutual admirers online.




Artists are parasites. Their independence is a myth tolerated by countless hosts.



Just be yourself, they say.
Which one, I think?



To enter every day with empty hands,
trusting you will receive what you need.
Such is the spirituality of poverty.



There is something inherently tragic
where either power or greatness
are concerned.



Dancing is a form of exorcism.

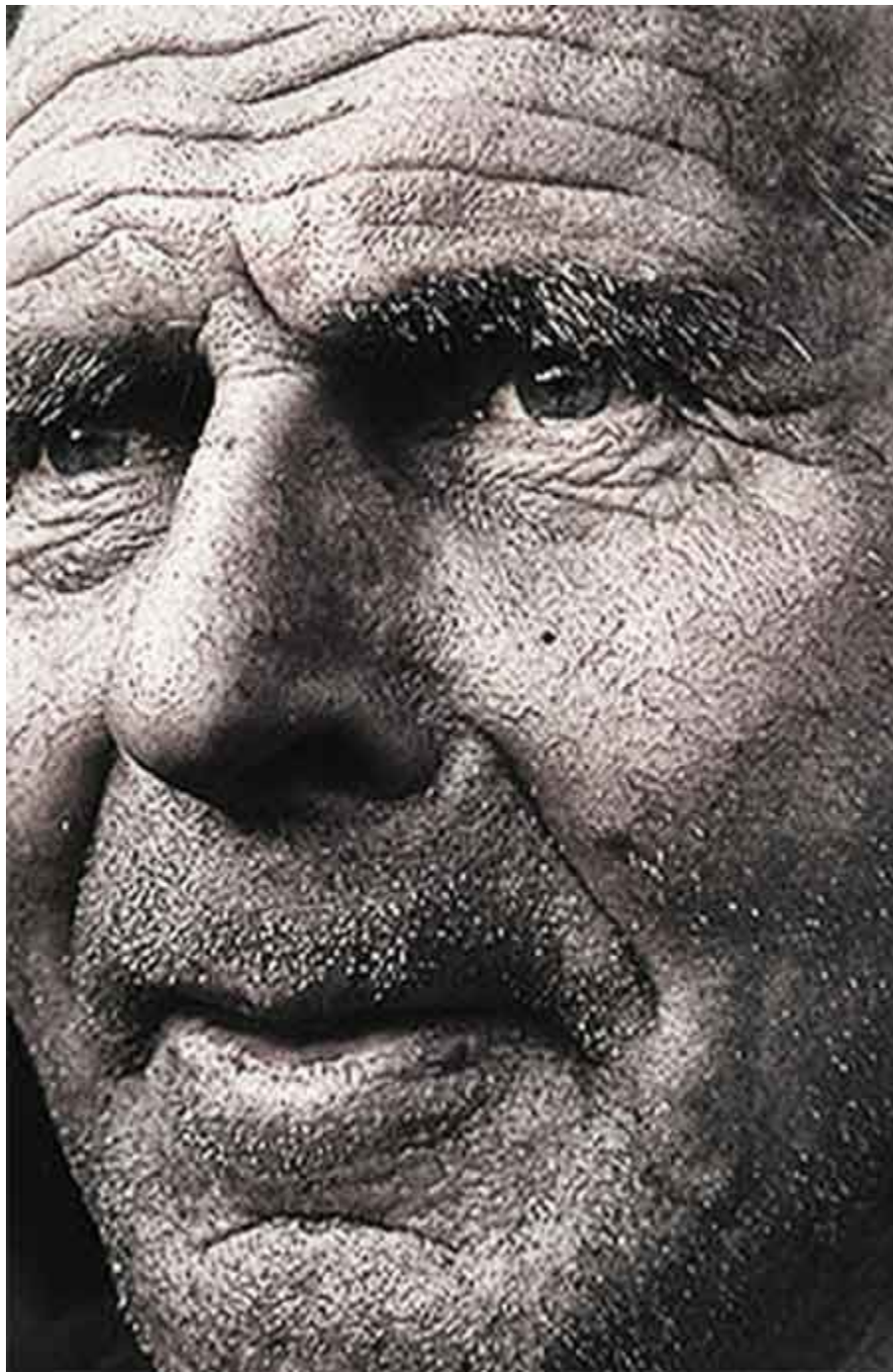
The Stockholm Syndrome begins at home.

To aestheticize is to anesthetize.

Those for whom the natural is extraordinary,
tend to find the extraordinary natural.

Eight Minutes with Byron Moon

DANNY KLECKO



He was the king of American literature,
until he went to the dogs.

I was coming back from Canada, driving a rented mini van down Highway 10, when I started to fade.

I still had a couple hours left behind the wheel so I stopped at a Pamida store to buy a Diet Mountain Dew and an energy drink.

Inside I felt out of place. Most of the customers were guys, dressed in camouflage or blazing orange.

They knew I wasn't from around there.

I grab my soda, hop in line and there's an older gent handing his stuff to a young lady in a red Pamida smock. The uniform wasn't doing her figure any favors.

While I'm standing there, I looked at the older gent standing ahead of me in line.

The older guy looked to be in his early to mid-70s and he stood there with a hand basket that had all kinds of heavy items. And I couldn't figure why he didn't place it on the checkout conveyor belt.

His other arm was being used to balance one of those 50-pound bags of Purina Dog Chow on his shoulder.

The old guy kinda looked familiar. I watched him a little more and a thought hit me:

Is this guy Byron Moon?

Boy, it sure looked like him, or at least the pictures I saw on the backs of his books that my mother had.

Finally when it gets to be his turn, the chubby little cashier seemed to know him and called him by name –

"Time to feed those mutts again, By?"

By? It had to be.

So I flat out asked the guy:

"Excuse me, sir – but are you Byron Moon?"

The old man totally threw me off because he was nice and unguarded. He smiled a warm smile that was missing an upper right bicuspid and said:

"Yep, that's me. Do we know each other?"

He turned to the cashier girl, who had put her fingers to her mouth. "You know, Delores, at a certain age you no longer know who you know," and the two had a good laugh.

"No, Mr. Moon, you don't know me, but your books were in my house growing up. I still picture my mother sitting at our kitchen with her feet up, smoking a Merit and reading *The Horns of the Dilemma*."

"Aw," he said, waving a soft do-not-tempt-me hand my way. "That's the bullshit," he said, smiling beautifully, as if the thought embarrassed him, but pleased him, too.

"No sir!" I promised. "She really loved that book, with the blue cover and the yellow stars. I remember the foil stamp on it, saying it was a National Book Award winner."

Byron Moon tugged on his hat brim. "Well, I'll be," he said. Delores' mouth was wide open. She had no idea By Moon was famous. It was new information about a customer she already liked very much.

She comes to, and starts ringing up his merchandise: a car jack, an Old Spice deodorant stick, a tin of Planters cashews and a two-pound bag of Twizzlers.

“Flat?” I asked.

“No, I kind of run a junkyard, and sometimes I recycle or sell the old tires.”

“The Ponderosa,” Delores muttered, “out on Piccadilly Road.”

I followed his cart out to the parking lot. His pickup was only a couple spaces from my van. Even before he drew near, two big dogs inside began jumping around and whining. A shepherd and some sort of retriever-looking dog. He stopped to rub their heads and briefly put his head against theirs. It occurred to me that this famous recluse was a well-loved man.

He sauntered over to where I was holding a bag in front of him. “Twizzler?”

I thanked him and declined, but I could not help mentioning that Twizzler is the only candy bar not taxed.

“Why is that?”

“Because,” I explained, “it has flour in it, and you can’t tax food that contains flour.”

“Ah, that’s the bullshit,” he reiterated, breaking off a bite, pleased with the new knowledge.

We were at the end of the conversation, but I had to ask.

“By, what happened that you packed it all in?”

“Oh, God, you ask that like a reporter.”

“Well, I am kind of a writer. I write about food and stuff.”

Byron Moon squinted at the sun setting behind me.

“Maybe if I did that, writing *about* something, I’d still be at it. But I became a sort of celebrity, and things got weird. I think I went almost three years without anyone treating me like a human being. Besides, I really didn’t have that much to say.”

The dogs were shouting from his Ford, and jumping over one another. “Besides,” he said. “I’ve got the dogs. These here, Junior and Sam, they’re just the tip of the iceberg. I got 16 others back at the Ponderosa. Each one worse than the other. They’re very loud, but they’re very sensible about it.”

“Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Moon,” I said, holding out a goodbye hand.

“That goes both ways,” said the 1974 Pulitzer Prize winner for literature, clasping my hand strongly.

“One last thing,” he said, index finger pressed against his teeth. “Are you going to rat me out to the world? I like my life the way it is.”

I laughed. “I wouldn’t worry. If I ever do write this up, it won’t be for a long time. And I know the perfect magazine for this story.”

Byron Moon closed his eyes in bliss. “That really is the bullshit.”





When It Doesn't Add Up



DIANNE BORSENIK

Dianne Borsenik is cofounder of the popular monthly Lix and Kix Poetry Extravaganza at Bela Dubby in Lakewood, Ohio. She recently published an anthology of end-of-the-world poetry, *Buzzkill: Apocalypse*. She is a member of Mike's Ohio Consortium of Bards and Blowhards.

When the world of even
meets the world of odd,

everything tilts, just a little. The earth shifts
uneasily, blinks, tries to bring it all into focus.

There's a rumble, a squall line, a storm front
where the two converge; hail, rain, tornadoes,

an outbreak of weather that spreads like a rash.
Even the dogs sense it, and howl arias to the sky.

When the world of even
meets the world of odd,

tsunamis ravage coastlines of the heart,
skin no longer fits its frame. Magnets

don't line up, won't kiss and connect. Colors
lose their cohesion, dissolve in pools of white.

As Bette Davis said, so very long ago, "Fasten
your seatbelts; it's going to be a bumpy night."



Jim Denomie: Edward Curtis, Paparazzi-Skinny Dip



Behind Bars

with Sarah Bane

*This month we're visiting Manhattan's West Side
to speak with the king
of retro cocktails and "Dice Cup"
bartender, David Prue.*



Sarah
Bane

SARAH: Hello David, and thank you so much for joining us behind bars. The first thing I'd like to discuss with you is during the last year, almost every happy hour or dinner party I have gone to seemed to have been heavily influenced by mixed drinks from the '50s.

Do you think this is a fad influenced by the AMC series *Mad Men*? And will your sales diminish when the show's ratings eventually dip?

DAVID: Thanks for stopping in Sarah. Yes I do think the resurgence of interest in the '50s, and early '60s for that matter have helped us quite a bit. I know it sounds strange to say this, but many of our younger clients have no connection to Sinatra, or Dean Martin, but if we put a picture on our menu of Don Draper drinking a Sidecar or a Pisco Sour, the kids will be all over it.

I've been told that the Dice Cup has been afloat now for 31 years. That's really amazing for a small cocktail lounge that specializes in niche drinks. Has the sailing been fairly smooth, and do you feel optimistic about the future?

Oh God no. First of all, not to sound too finicky, but on New Years Eve we'll be celebrating our 33rd anniversary. The two guys who opened this place (Tony Simone and Mario Novella) always said "Every concept is destined to fail.", but the real hope we have had was to put 50 or 100 years behind us before the place goes under.

Sources have pointed out that there has been a pretty deep division here between your clientele. Apparently some of your old-timers have become annoyed by the band wagon jumpers who have discovered your lounge and decided to use it, and I'm quoting here, "as an imbibing playpen for kids who want to use their cocktails as fashion accessories." Would you care to comment?

Whoa...(David laughs) I didn't know you were going to hit me with the hard stuff, but sure. It doesn't surprise me that somebody said that. After all, people come here for all kinds of reasons. I have old guys guzzling Rusty Nails early on a Tuesday morning, and then later that evening I'll have a table of six young ladies drinking Pink Squirrels or Blue Hawaiians. Shit, those things will give you cavities before you can even cop a buzz. But I'll tell you the truth. I've been stuck in this little mouse hole for quite a few years, and if I didn't have a diverse group of people bringing me in new of the world, this place could have gotten stale a long time ago.

You mentioned Tony Simone a little earlier. He told me that there've been a couple of times the Dice Cup has been close to shutting the doors for good. What were the circumstances behind those times when you guys

almost pulled the plug?

Well, of course there was 9-11, but that wasn't just us, that was pretty much everybody downtown in the hospitality industry. But other than that, when was wine huge, like 2006-2009? You see alcohol trends switch biennially.

The first year is beer, the second year is cocktails, and so forth.

But then when wine sales went through the ceiling, it wouldn't relinquish it's stronghold. Wine bars were going up on every corner. Even beer was becoming frightened, and that scared the hell out of me since I had never seen beer become afraid of anything. And when that craze slowed down a bit, well that's about the time that the economy tanked. But whether it's been from stubbornness or ignorance, we've been fortunate enough to keep making a go of things.

David, thanks again for taking time out to share your world with us, but before I let you go, would it be possible for you to share one of the bars signature recipes with us?

Absolutely Sarah, and I'll tell you in closing that Zombies have quickly become one of the better-selling drinks around here. What happened, was in the autumn, a bunch of college kids in the area started doing these Zombie pub crawls where they would put make up on to make themselves look dead, some of these kids even had realistic looking organs hanging off their bodies. And they would march slowly from one pub to the next and get so shitfaced that they almost turned into zombies. But after that got popular, a lot of the local customers kept ordering this drink as a regular staple. The recipe we use was created by a bartender who no longer works here, but she deserves the credit, so salute to you, Darla Keller.

The Immaculate Zombie

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ oz brown rum
- ¾ oz dark Jamaican rum
- ¾ oz light rum
- 1 oz lime juice
- ¾ oz pineapple juice
- ¾ oz papaya juice
- ¼ oz simple syrup
- 1 dash Angostura bitters
- ¼ oz 151 rum

INSTRUCTIONS

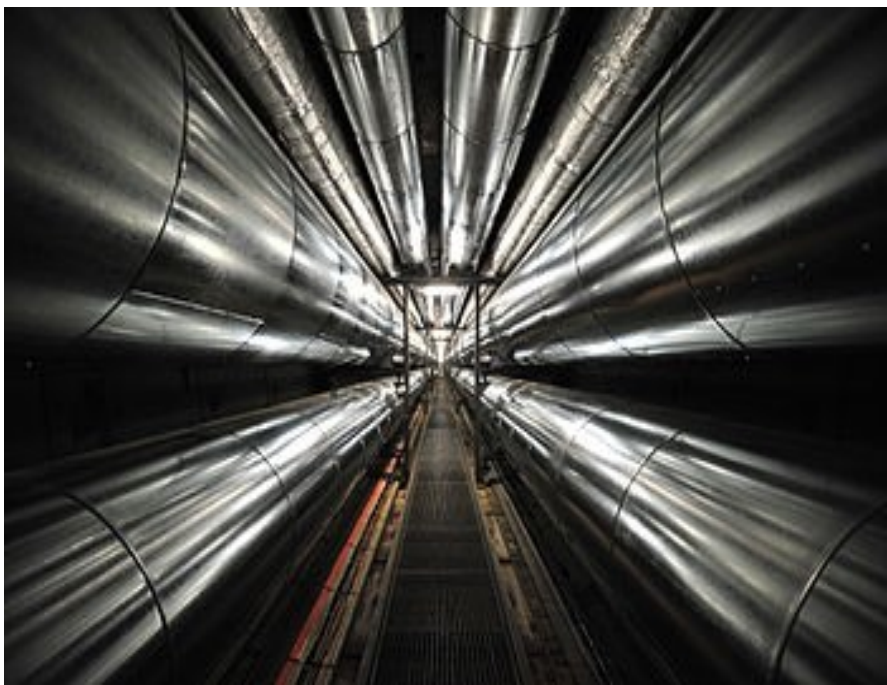
Shake all but 151 over ice and strain into a chilled tumbler or hurricane glass filled with ice. Float 151 on top and garnish with a Maraschino cherry and a pineapple wedge.



Colonoscopy

SANDY BEACH

[SANDY BEACH](#) is a poet, with an MFA and lots of publications as evidence of that. She once received a grant to study in Italy, and she went and had a wonderful time there. The world is beautiful, she knows, but consciousness struggles to do it justice. Since giving up TV, Sandy has been spending too much time on Facebook.



I expected
pain or
embarrassment
at the very least
that doctor word
"discomfort"
I expected,
in fact,
to feel my age.

I'd hoped
for a minimum
of the above.
What happened
instead was
surprising.
The best-ever
drugs
kicked in,blissed out

I didn't
feel a thing.
Watching
the video
monitor was like
a Disney ride.
Swoopy.
In my head,

I heard
the narrator
from grade school
health class films:

"This is
your colon,
a very important
organ of the
digestive system.

Notice
the healthy
pink color.

Wait, here's
something.
Your physician
will now snip
the polyp.

Snip!
Not to worry,
it's a little one.
Only three
centimeters."

What happened

was
I don't have
cancer.

What
happened was

I felt
overwhelming
tenderness
for my insides.

What happened

was
my colon
was spic and
span,
so shiny and
pink,
I vowed
to stop
eating meat.

I managed
for three
whole weeks



Little Red Riding Limerick

BY EDWARD EUBANKS



I asked my old friend ED EUBANKS, one of the pioneering figures of the old BBS days, prior to the Internet, to give us something for Lief. Ed was a major player in our regional galaxy of Citadel bulletin boards, known for his trickster wit and the ability to pass off immense hoaxes that tingled to the toes. This is a limerick he wrote 25 years ago. I still like it. – Mike

This poem's about Red Riding Hood's

Adventures deep back in the woods.

We begin our brief tale

In an idyllic dale

With Red taking sick Gramma some goods.

A wolf who was lurking nearby

Her innocent beauty did spy.

He asked "Where you goin'?"

And then with the knowin'

He off to Gram's cottage did hie.

And he, being first to reach Gammer's,

Did go right to work with the hammers.

He drug her from bed

And he bashed in her head

Then he put on her cap and her jammers.

Not knowing, Red entered the home

And exclaimed how big Gram's eyes had grown.

The wolf thinking quickly

Did feign a voice sickly.

"The better to see ya," he moaned.

"But Gramma," Red Riding Hood cried,

"Your ears stick way out to the side!"

"It's better this way

to hear what ya say,"

that wily old lupus replied.

"I would not alarm you said she,

but your mouth is as wide as can be."

Then that debauched creacha

cried, "I'm gonna eatcha!"

and lickety-split, oh, did he.

The moral: Beware of surprise

When taking sick Gramma supplies

and heed all foreboding

Or wolves in sleep clothing

will pull the wool over your eyes.

Two poems by Richard Broderick

Hans and Greta: A Bedtime Story

They were the older cousins who went on ahead.
They were the ones who seeded the path,
who turned it into a route for migratory birds
that now flock to the footsteps of children.
They were the ones who named the hills,
who folded the map and left it in the hollow
for lost travelers who might come this way later on.
They were the ones who set out to follow
the river to where it gives itself to the sky,
the ones who gave themselves up so that
they might lull the witch into self-confidence,
leaving her careless around open fires.
They were the ones who went on ahead,
the ones we've been searching for,
the ones we've never seen again,
the ones to whom we want to give
thanks, the ones whose clues we
keep trying to decipher every day.

Liquor Village

– A bottle shop on Ford Parkway in Saint Paul

We're always a little irritable, the citizens
of Liquor Village (it was going to be
a real city some day, but we got drunk
and started arguing over the plans).
Mornings are quiet, the silence broken
only by the sound of snoring next door,
or a dog barking, then whelping with pain,
or a neighbor growling, "Don't even try
talking to me until I've had my coffee!"
The clouds rinse out a sour taste,
the river stumbles by, emptying
its guts, the bell in the church tower
throbs like a vein in a gray forehead,
and, down by the dam, gulls hang around
and complain about friends who never
drop by and see them anymore.

Remember how your hair turned blond
each summer (and where did you
leave those damned pictures anyway?),
how you squinted into the camera
as though you were staring into the sun,
how a breeze would always wrinkle the lake
beneath a sky as clear as Bombay gin?

Now another night gathers. Lanterns
smoke behind a screen of gibbering trees.
The dark fills again with shouts of laughter
and of love and of bloody vows of revenge.
everything jumbled together, like the cries
of some goddamned catbird mimicking
the old songs of passion and regret.

After the Rain

NORITA DITTBERNER-JAX



The smell of earth, of moisture and dirt
sparrows in the oak among the acorns
which drop like hailstones on the roof.

In the garden, prodigious weeds and a foxglove
bending from the weight of its bells.
The alley cat still homeless and shaking its paws.

In the schoolyard across the street, workers seed
new grass for the recess to come.
The east side of everything illuminated.

The Parting Shot

A sunset recitation by revered western bard Buffalo
Brick. Click on pic to behold the vision.



LIEF Magazine

MIKE FINLEY and DANNY KLECKO, editors

DARA SYRKIN, director of quality assurance

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We publish stories, jokes, photos, artwork, videos, music, poems and reports from the world.

- Have a heartbeat.
- In all things, be economical.
- No submissions with the word *grey*. Or any other adjectives., for that matter.
- Items should be fun to encounter.
- Write like you are telling your best friend what you just learned.
- Items about grieving will be cast into the fire. We don't care what troubles you've seen.
- Don't be the hero of your own story. Or its victim.
- At all costs, don't just pull something from a drawer.
- We like news, things that you yourself saw, things that actually exist.
- We are not interested in your wonderful mind. We want to know, what gift are you offering?
- Humor is good, but surprisingly hard to pull off.
- It helps to know the editors. If you know what we mean.

NOTE: LIEF will continue for at least another issue. If you are in now, don;t expect to be in then. Wait till Halloween to send your items. But feel to correspond generally. Do not get upset if we don't respond right away, or ever. Acceptance comes quickly; rejections, because they are painful, take the slow train. Meanwhile, there are plenty of other things to do in this often beautiful world.

Submit: mfinley98@gmail.com



THE KLECKO CHALLENGE: Match the Monkey!

Over the years, celebrities and important people have pursued their life's dreams with some sort of primate – a monkey, chimp, gorilla or orang. Can you match the person on the right to their primate they chose as life partner?

Tarzan	Hanuman
Elvis	Bonzo
Clint Eastwood	Koko
Michael Jackson	Scatter
Dian Fossey	Cheetah
Kardashian Sisters	Hiriko
Cameron Diaz	Suzy
Taco Bell	Clyde
Rama	Bubbles
Ronald Reagan	Digit
Francine Patterson	Flo
Jane Goodall	Whiplash the Cowboy Monkey

[Answers here](#)



Soldier's Mom



The Kiss



LIEF



We
hope
it
was
good
for you
too

